

Pathwork on

## **Toward Perfection: Inner Leadership from the Higher Self vs. from the Mask or Ego Self**

This quote from Pathwork Lecture 234 *Perfection, Immortality, Omnipotence*, gives us guidance on inner and outer growth and leadership – both when this leadership is True and coming from our inner Source and when it is in distortion and coming from our mask self, Idealized Self Image or ego. This lecture’s wisdom applies to personal growth as well as to leadership in groups that are growing and changing.

In leadership, when do we stand firm? When do we yield? If we are caught in our personality aspects and ego/mask self we shall be hopelessly lost. From our mask self (Idealized Self Image or ego-self) we do not know when to stand firm or when to yield, and we can be misguided by emotional reactions (ours or those of others), fear, pride, or self will – all making us rigid and attached to our fixed ideas about how things should be done. Higher-Self leadership on the other hand is flexible and spontaneous – in the dynamic and ever-changing flow of the Life Stream – firm when being firm is called for and flexible when flexibility is being called for. Leadership from here is relaxed and infused with Love, Joy, Creativity, and Peace. It includes positive aggression as discussed here and in Pathwork Lecture 258.

09	Let us begin with <u>perfection</u> . The striving of the higher self for perfection is of course a legitimate movement, for the soul knows that this state of reality exists as a living, breathing reality of its own. Perfection of the spiritual entity is very different, however, from the way the ego conceives of it. Perfection in reality is an ever-changing flux. There is nothing static about it. One thing is not in opposition to another. Truth, beauty, love are ever-changing manifestations, changing always appropriately to the occasion. Therefore perfection is a constantly moving state. But the ego consciousness conceives of perfection as static, very limited and exclusive, rather than inclusive. Therefore perfection deteriorates into perfectionism. When this happens, duality takes its toll. One thing seems good, another bad.
10	You must give up striving for perfection from the ego point of view to truly reach the perfection of the higher self. Let us consider the motives for perfection on both levels -- that of the conscious ego personality and that of the higher self. Along with that, let us look at some of the qualities and traits manifesting in both states.
11	The <b>motive</b> -- if there is such a thing from the higher-self point of view -- for being perfect and wanting perfection, is <b>love</b> . It is the recognition that <b>only a state of pure love can further creation, can aid the great evolutionary plan</b> . God is perfection, therefore the <b>Godself is perfect</b> -- in wisdom, in love, in beauty, in unity, in all-inclusiveness and in the undivided reality in which what is good and desirable for one must also be so for all others. True perfection is a <b>relaxed state of being in which no fear, pride, or self-will exist</b> . It exists for its own sake, simple and pure. Real perfection harbors within itself a state of

	<p>deep self-recognition that contains <b>respect and love for the self as much as for all other things in creation</b>. Hence <b>no proving</b> is necessary. Perfection is wide open and knows <b>no formula and no rigid rule</b>. Inner freedom and security make it possible for the entity to <b>decide spontaneously when to be soft and when to strongly assert a position</b>. There is no maudlin sentimentality that shrinks fearfully from confrontation. The <b>courage to risk rejection for the sake of help and truth</b> exists without becoming an extreme position of punitive self-righteousness. <b>Expanding, giving, joyful and vigorous expressions of divine reality surge forth in the state of positive aggression</b>, as well as in the state of <b>soft receptivity and acceptance</b>. Perfection is a breathing, living force that <b>heals, grows and creates</b> because it <b>exists for its own sake</b>. In that state it <b>constantly expresses a variety of divine qualities, not only love, truth, justice, beauty, but also creative vigor, vitality, myriad expressions of self, of life forever alternating for the deeply innate purpose of spreading divine reality into all of the void</b>. This is a very limited explanation, my friends, for human words do not exist to describe this state. So you need to use your innermost feelings, the intuitive faculties of your inner soul, to feel what I mean to convey here.</p>
12	<p>Now how does striving for perfection look when it comes from the level of the <b>ego personality</b>? What are the motives? What are the attitudes? Obviously there is pride -- the need to be perfect in order to be <b>better than others</b>. That feeling alone totally distorts reality. As I have often said, when you compare in this manner, you are in the illusion that there is a limited quota of perfection available, so that you have to jealously guard your own and take it away from others in order to reach your goal. At the same time, another person's already developed state appears to diminish you. Attempting to become perfect at the expense of others obviously defeats your very aim, for nothing could be less perfect than the inner greed, jealousy, envy, tight ambitiousness and vanity involved here, not to mention the very imperfect, limited view of life in which such exclusiveness seems a reality to you.</p>
13	<p>Another distortion in striving for perfection on the personality level is the <b>fear of inner imperfection</b>, a hidden sense of <b>worthlessness</b> that you never face squarely, comprehend, work through in its details and small everyday manifestations. Instead, you <b>put on a mask of perfectionism</b> to prove to the world and yourself that the worthlessness you fear and suspect does not exist. Perfection then becomes a superimposed solution for the worthlessness that you do not want to experience and examine. So here we are also dealing with evasion and untruth. You are untruthful in the sense of not wanting to see what you really feel and think about yourself, but rather striving to appear what you are not. On the ego level, perfection becomes, or is, outer-directed. It exists for the sake of others, <b>for the sake of appearance</b>.</p>
14	<p><b>So if you seek perfection -- a divine state -- in a state of untruth, the false search must lead to a rigid distortion</b>, truly a caricature of the real state of perfection. Such a prideful, fearful, untruthful attitude indicates <b>lack of faith in your own deeper nature</b>. Therefore you <b>hurriedly try to pretend that you are in a perfect state, without it having developed organically</b>. The pretense of</p>

	<p>appearing perfect -- which may apply to specific aspects of the personality and not so much to the total personality -- implies a deep dishonesty on the part of the lower self. It is truly cheating, <b>wanting to skip the laborious work of becoming</b>, and wanting to attain the desirable result <b>without paying the price</b>. This, in turn, increases guilt and a sense of worthlessness that is diffuse and not pinpointed in conscious awareness.</p>
15	<p>The superimposed perfection -- or rather <b>perfectionism</b> -- is <b>always blind, unsure, and therefore rule-bound</b>. It uses truth often in a misplaced way, in generalizations that do not fit the occasion. <b>The self then becomes at times wrongly soft where confrontation and assertion would be appropriate and intolerant where acceptance would be appropriate</b>. For many personalities one or the other of these two attitudes seems to be "godly" or "right" and is used blindly, because it has become structured into the personality. <b>Because you refuse to face your deep lack of faith in yourself, you always project it outward in a cynical and negative attitude toward the world</b>. Alternatively, you may put on a false "appearance faith." The self-judgments that you do not face openly distort the personality into becoming self-righteously severe with others. Religionists often distort reality in that way and rationalize their narrow attitude by using religious doctrines. Or you may project self-indulgence and guilt in a different way by becoming overly permissive and sentimental, developing a false, mask-self acceptance that is only an appearance.</p>
16	<p>You can see very clearly, my friends, that <b>you must abandon the claim for perfection for the sake of the truthfulness and the humility of accepting your imperfection</b>. And that is indeed the threshold you must go through in order to make room gradually for the <b>ever-existing and unfolding perfection of your soul, a perfection that you will experience so differently when you approach it in this way</b>. The <b>humility</b> of giving up perfectionism and the <b>honesty of paying the price for developing slowly into a more genuinely perfect being</b> are indispensable prerequisites which are, in fact, aspects of your real perfection. It may seem paradoxical, but <b>accepting humbly your imperfect state and looking at it creatively, constructively, and specifically so as to understand and make connections is already a manifestation of the Godhead within</b>.</p>