

Pathwork on
Setting Spiritual Goals – One Step At A Time

This quote from Pathwork Lecture 85 *Distortions of the Instincts of Self-Preservation and Procreation*, talks about the dangers of setting long range and lofty spiritual goals. Rather, the spiritual journey is taken one day at a time, one moment at a time. And each moment has its goal. This lecture quote suggests one focuses on this goal, this next step in life, this moment in life, rather than the ultimate goal of life.

58	... But I might say it is always dangerous to take on a distant goal when you first have to attain nearer goals. The dangers are manifold. For instance, you may be tempted to skip a very necessary phase that is unpleasant at the moment but without which you cannot reach the ultimate goal. It may lead you further into increased self-deception, the very same self-deception you want to uncover instead of avoiding. This should be one of the near goals. Only gradually can further goals be envisaged, until true serenity will come by itself. The view of the far goal may enlarge the idealized self-image. So the near goal should be the next step, not the end result.
59	The near goal would be, "I want to become aware of what really is in me." When that is accomplished to some degree, the next goal will present itself.
60	This is like being a wanderer or a mountain climber. If you are wise you will not set out with the final goal in view. The distant summit you eventually want to reach may take days and weeks of hard climbing and endurance. By contemplating this very distant peak you will get tired before you begin. You may then lie down and dream that you are walking up. The dream may seem very real, but in reality you are not moving one inch forward because you are too tired to reach the top before you even get started. But if you set your goals hour by hour, where you can see the objective, rest, and then proceed again, you will not become exhausted. You will not have to deceive yourself by only dreaming you are moving up. This is what I have to say.