

Pathwork on  
**When I See a Shortcoming in Another**

Quote from Pathwork Lecture 32 Decision-Making

34	QUESTION: In the last lecture you talked about the feeling of shame that manifests itself in guilt feelings, and so on. This [ <i>shortcoming</i> ] often has an effect on others. What should our proper attitude be in a case like this toward such a person [ <i>who has a shortcoming such as this</i> ]?
35	ANSWER: It is already of tremendous help to realize that a person to whom you are close has that shortcoming. This realization will give you an understanding and a compassion that, even if you do not mention a word of it, must help. This realization will prevent you from being hurt unnecessarily, for people who are in any deviation of spiritual law and are therefore suffering often hurt others, because they think hurt is a means of protection. The other person hurts back and a vicious circle is set in motion. But when you do understand what you are doing this cannot happen. Furthermore, there is the undeniable fact that one's unconscious affects the unconscious of the other person. In a case like this, unconscious shame and guilt is unconsciously absorbed by those around you. Because all this is going on unconsciously and is therefore not properly understood on the deeper emotional level, something sick and negative is felt and a very negative and unfavorable reaction comes forth, contrary to the desire of the person who has the shame and guilt feelings.
36	There is nothing as contagious, my friends, as emotions, thoughts, and attitudes, conscious or unconscious. This, too, is a universal law. So, the moment a sick current is recognized by another person and fully understood, a vicious circle is already broken by the mere fact of understanding. The full understanding of the facts as explained here will help even more and inject the more constructive force of truth into the person's psychological and emotional world. As for outer action, there the procedure varies. Caution is, of course, necessary. It is often better to say too little than too much to a person not mature enough to understand the nature of the soul or one who lacks the willingness to do so. But if the person is open and has the understanding to grasp these things, one may feel one's way around how to reach her or him. If you pray for guidance and inspiration and keep yourself open, the right moment will come when there is receptivity. But if the receptivity is lacking and you come out with the truth too bluntly before the other person is prepared to face such truth, the effect will be negative and he or she will only close the door of the soul even more tightly. A safe way would be to first discuss the general subject, staying away from the personal, and to see how this is received. See whether the person becomes thoughtful and whether he or she has understanding for it in principle in the first place. If you see a somewhat favorable response, then slowly, little by little, you can give stronger doses of truth, always asking for inspiration and guidance. If you do that, your spirit friends will be around you and eager to help.