

Pathwork™ Steps

Self-Confidence: Its true origin and what prohibits it

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 77

Week 1: What is self-confidence?

Week 2: What causes conflicts and deviations?

Week 3: Forcing Currents

Week 4: How We Collude with Self Doubt

Week 1: What is self-confidence?

When your real being, your real self, your intuitive nature manifests, there is no uncertainty in you, no doubts as to your right reaction or action, and no wavering. Your instant and spontaneous reaction is of such a nature that you know deep down, through and through, "This is right, this is so." That has happened to all of you at least occasionally.

Under certain circumstances your real being could express and manifest, unhampered by the disturbing layers that usually cover your real self. Whatever the occasion required in such instances, you lived up to it. You coped with it in the only way possible, and you knew through and through, without a shadow of doubt, that this was so. When this occurs, genuine self-confidence is automatically established.

The ultimate aim of this work of self-search is to free you from superimposed layers so that your real self can take the reins and govern your life.

You know your real self. It is not far away. You have nothing to fear from it. Your real feelings come from your real self which is right close by, right underneath this tense, compulsive emotional behavior pattern of yours. Once you stop believing, as you unconsciously believe now, that this compulsive drive, whatever its direction, is a necessity for you and therefore stop using these currents and use instead your real feelings, then your intuitive nature is bound to emerge.

Self-knowledge, a true and realistic self-evaluation, is the only thing that can bring forth the maximum ability, creativity and healthy strength.

With such honest self-appraisal, proper decisions must finally result, and lead to ability, creativity and healthy strength.

PL 77

Self-esteem or self-liking or self-value -- whatever name you may give it -- is sorely lacking in every human being who experiences uncertainty, fear, insecurity, guilt, weakness, doubt, negativity, feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. To whatever degree any of these feelings or attitudes are present, to that degree self-esteem is inevitably lacking, only it is not directly recognized as such.

And that is all the more damaging for the person, for he is then less capable of tackling the problem directly. Only considerable insight into the self, as a result of hard work, brings this direct awareness, **"I do not like and respect myself."**

I have shown in several instances in the past how misconception splits a truth into two opposing halves which confuse man and make it impossible for him to make satisfying choices. He is then torn in inner dissension and painful confusion.

In this case, the dilemma is how can you accept and like yourself without falling into the danger of self-indulgence and self-justification for the destructive traits that exist in all human beings, no matter how concealed they may be?

Or, on the other side of this conflict, how can you confront and accept and admit those negative, destructive traits, those weaknesses for which you feel inadequate, those little selfishnesses and cruelties, those little vanities that often make you vindictive and unloving? How can you confront, accept, acknowledge them, and nevertheless not lose your self-respect? How can you not fall into the danger of destructive guilt and self-negation, of self-rejection and self-contempt?

This is a deep-rooted conflict, and most human beings, whether or not they know it, battle with this very profound question. It is a profound human predicament and a typical dualistic confusion, which makes admitting an unpleasant truth and self-acceptance apparently two mutually exclusive opposites.

...You may fall into the erroneous attitude of being defiant and justifying yourself because you believe that by admitting your undesirable traits you must dislike and reject your entire person. You cannot differentiate, as I have often pointed out in the past, between rejecting a trait and rejecting the person (with yourself and others). Therefore you fall into the error of justifying, denying, falsifying, and rationalizing -- and often even beautifying -- a very undesirable and destructive trait.

Since you do not believe that you can essentially be anything else but that which you dislike, you have to hold on to it nevertheless because you do not wish to cease existing. This is the crux of this dualistic confusion.

In order to come out of it, life in its essence must be understood. No matter how fixed it may appear, it is only one tiny part of the whole story, my friends. Underneath all these personality aspects you believe are fixed, final things, the fluid life exists -- a life in which change is constant, in which feelings branch out in all directions spontaneously and wondrously forever self-renewing; a life in which there is vibrant pulsation, that is movement in itself; above all, a life in which you are free at any moment to think new and different thoughts that are the creators of a new and different life expression and personality.

If you can conceive of yourself as the essence of life with all its incredible powers, possibilities, and inherent potentials, as a forever changing expression of life, you will indeed know that you are deserving of your own esteem and acceptance. You will be able to see the traits you hate and still not lose sight of the fact who you essentially are.

Self Esteem PL 174

I suggest a specific little exercise you might find quite helpful.

Put down in writing everything that you dislike about yourself. Have it down in black and white. Look at those traits when they are written down.

Then feel into yourself and ask: ***"Do I really believe that this is all there is to me? Do I really believe that I must be these traits all my life? Do I believe I have the possibility to love? Do I hold forces locked up in me that contain all the good imaginable?"***

By raising these questions seriously, you will get an answer on a deeply feeling level, a level where the answer is more than a theoretical concept. You will experience a new power in you that you do not need to fear, and a new gentleness and softness that does not need hostility or other defenses.

Then you will know how much there is in you to love and respect.

Self Esteem PL 174

Finding the 'Grain of Truth'

So I beg of you, my dear friends, consider the outer conflicts that come to you as an answer to your prayer. If you will only turn into the other direction. Instead of becoming defiant and hurt, turn inside, turn around, no matter how wrong you think others may be! Ask yourself, ask your Father in heaven, ***'Isn't there some grain of truth somewhere? By recognizing it, I will continue to learn and develop.'***

Three Personality Types: Reason, Will and Emotion PL 43

The Guide refers to Daily Review PL 28 as 'spiritual hygiene'.

Exercise: Keep a record of incidents that disturb you. Focusing upon subtleties may help us from becoming distracted by exaggerating or over-dramatizing a situation.

All you need is a ½ page of lined paper per day. Create 4 columns. At some point during each day, jot down brief notes about each incident (limit:10 per day). Eventually, this can become a thought process.

1. Two to three words to identify each incident (no details)
2. What feelings or emotional reactions came up
3. The judgments or conclusions you came to at the time

At the end of each week, read through your entries. This month, focus upon any 'grain of truth' in your lack of self-confidence. Complete the last column:

4. What do you notice today that you did not notice at the time? Are there patterns?
5. Using your preferred form of meditation (sitting, walking, or while doing 'mindless' chores) consider what the 'Grain of Truth' might be within any lack of self-confidence. What forcing currents are you able to notice?

Week 2: What causes conflicts and deviations?

Broadly speaking, it is your desire to be happy, or to be loved. In order to be happy, to be loved is a necessary requirement and therefore constitutes a major part of your compulsive drives. Then there exist the subdivisions, such as the desire to be approved and admired. This may take the place of your desire to be loved.

But there is also a second aspect. The child in you imagines that **you can only be happy if your will is done**. At times, this may simply mean that your will is to be loved and admired. At other times, it may concern other aspects of life. You may feel unhappy if your close and dear ones have certain shortcomings that you particularly disapprove of, or if their opinions vary from yours, or if you are prohibited from pursuing a certain aim. **All this is against your will**. It concerns any objective or subjective disadvantage in life. The child in you thinks that this prohibits your happiness.

So you grow from childhood with this deeply hidden, rarely consciously felt conviction: **"In order to be happy, my will has to be done."** As long as you have not found this hidden conviction as a personal recognition, you cannot really successfully arrive at the liberation you desire. The more your intellectual concept and conviction is adjusted to reality but conflicts with your hidden emotions on that subject, the more difficult will it be to unearth this deep-rooted misconception.

This misconception creates a tight, tense current -- the one I called the **forcing current**. It creates a constant struggle, tension, and anxiety. The more unaware you are of this aspect, the more potent it is within your psyche. Unconsciously, you feel that getting your will is a matter of **life or death**. Not to get it represents the abyss. Not to get your will spells annihilation for you -- unconsciously, of course.

This is so strong that you often do not permit yourself to admit you have not gotten your will. You go to all sorts of means of pretending that what you really wanted is no longer desirable for you. This is not merely pride, it is based on this misconception: not getting what you want means terror, darkness, unhappiness, perdition.

Find this harsh, tense, rigid, and, at the same time, wavering current of "I want." Find also all the means you resort to, either in order to get it or to "protect" yourself from the horror of not getting it.

PL 77

Self-esteem or self-liking or self-value is sorely lacking in every human being who experiences uncertainty, fear, insecurity, guilt, weakness, doubt, negativity, feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. To whatever degree any of these feelings or attitudes are present, to that degree self-esteem is inevitably lacking, **only it is not directly recognized as such**. And that is all the more damaging for the person, for he is then less capable of tackling the problem directly. Only considerable insight into the self, as a result of hard work, brings this direct awareness, **"I do not like and respect myself."**

Uncertain Confusions and Hazy Motivations PL 174

Finding the Real Self

There is only one way to find this real self of yours that you are so ardently looking for in this work. **Find and become aware** of this forcing current, this current of "I want" on one hand, and "I fear that I will not get what I want" on the other.

Once you are clearly aware of this current in you, not as a generality but how, in what particular way, it manifests in you, you will be able to let go of it. Then and then only can you give it up.

If you do that again and again, soon you are bound to become aware of the feelings of your real self, which slowly rise to the surface after you have banned them in fear for such a long time. You did not trust them, therefore you could not trust yourself.

You can reverse that process only by becoming aware and then removing that element [forcing current or pseudo-solution] which you used in their stead.

The real feelings are calm. They do not mind being patient. When they express themselves, there will be no doubt, no wavering. Since they are one with the stream of life, they will carry you in the right direction, and you will have no doubt about it if you are but willing and patient enough to trust them.

Once you reach that state, you will experience certain feelings which are almost impossible to convey in words. You simply have to experience them. All I can say is that the relief of a burden you have unnecessarily carried will be so tremendous that **your joy and liberation will be a strongly felt reality.**

What you have so far experienced only on isolated occasions, the manifestation of your intuitive nature, will become more and more a constant reaction. You will have this deep inner knowledge, not in the region of your brain but in your solar plexus, that your reaction or your knowledge or your decision is right, without either guilt or pride, without superiority or doubt.

You will spontaneously be the best you can be: poised, unrepressed, without inhibitions. You will say the right thing at the right time and know when not to speak. You will be relaxed and concentrated at the same time, fully aware and alive to the moment and its requirements. You will know that nothing that should be yours could fail to come to you. You will not need to be in a frenzy about it, worrying whether or not you do too much or too little. You will just do what is necessary and eliminate that which is unnecessary, without fear and worry.

This serenity sounds like an ideal that is impossible to attain on this earth. And I do not say that you will reach its perfected state overnight. But gradually and surely you will increase it, having more and more seldom the first unavoidable setbacks.

PL 77

Personality Traits of Reason, Will and Emotion

Traits and Adaptive Behavior	Personality Type as outlined in Pathwork Lecture 43 (PL43)		
	REASON	WILL	EMOTION
Core 'Angel' PL43	Wisdom	Courage	Love
Core gift to all PL84	Serenity	Power	Compassionate Love
Core childhood pain, worst fear	Pain, rejection, chaos	Helplessness, annihilation, losing	Rage, frustration, abandonment
History or perception of child	Parent rejected child or rejection was possible	Parent defeated child or child felt unimportant = powerless	Parent frustrated child, aggression or withdrawal not permitted
Life/Death generalization 100/100 PL143	Love or no love	Control or no control	Pleasure or no pleasure
Forcing current PL77 & PL84	Withdrawal	Aggression	Submission
Primary defense PL101	Aloofness	Winning, safety	Bartering for love
Main Image: "to be loved I must..." PL93	Get approval, validation, objective proof	Be seen and heard or famous and successful	Be good, do it all, please others so they must love me
Idealized self image PL84	Glory, approval	Triumph, fame, success	Vanity, spiritual pride
Real need PL192	Love, capacity to love, approval from one's own real self,	Being seen and heard for real self, valuing being as well as doing	To express and assert real needs for pleasure while accepting reality
Real Self Qualities	Harmony, balance, clear perception	Leadership , direct knowing, courage,	Connection, unity, oneness

Chart prepared by Jan Rigsby ©2011 www.janrigsby.com

Week 3: Forcing Currents

After some constructive work and valid insights have been attained, you are bound to become aware of this compulsive current, and feel it distinctly, almost as a separate foreign substance within yourself. You will then understand that all your wrong conclusions and images are a product of this basic current, which I have also called the forcing current.

This forcing current, in turn, is based on a **fundamental misunderstanding about life.**

These inner strivings are directed towards finding the fulfillment, on the one hand. On the other hand, you are in constant fear of not succeeding, and unconsciously, you labor to find the means to hide the "failure" from yourself.

Thus a current is set up, **flowing in two directions.** One calls for your pushing ahead, trying to force life, people, circumstances to succumb to your will; to conquer the reality in which everything cannot go according to your desire.

The other direction of this current is that your fear of not getting what you want -- or even the conviction that you never will -- causes you to adopt other means which are so defeatist and negative that again you sabotage that which you ordinarily could have.

The underlying core as well as the various means by which you try to combat a nonexistent factor (either always getting what you want or never getting it) are unreal. All the impulses and drives you employ are equally unreal, imaginary, and therefore utterly ineffective and damaging. They are the superimposed layers which cover your real self.

Is it surprising then that you lack self-confidence? Your innermost self knows perfectly well that on the level you function, you cannot trust yourself. **If you cannot trust yourself, you cannot trust life, the world, or God.**

PL 77

Submission

In submissiveness, you cling, and hope for the love of others. In order to obtain it, you forsake your own self, your own opinions; you do not stand up for yourself. You always put yourself at a disadvantage, thus losing your dignity and self-respect. All this is covered with the rationalization of unselfishness, sacrifice, and your ability to love. In truth, you just use the forcing current in the most blatantly self-centered way. It simply tries to make a bargain and says, ***"If I submit to you, you must love me and do my will."***

Submission must never be confused with love. It may outwardly look similar, but the inner content is very different. When you appease the other person, you strongly want something from him. In fact, you grab for it, not waiting for it to be given freely. The stronger the submissiveness, the stronger the forcing current, thereby directly expressing your desire to get your way.

PL 77

Aggression

There is another attitude, often chosen when a person is more inclined to be hopeless of ever getting from others what he considers necessary for himself. The only hope he sees is that he uses all his power, all his selfish, ruthless drives in order to defeat the enemy who always stands in his way. Thus he becomes hostile and aggressive because he thinks the entire world is hostile, and his hostility is the only means of getting some of the happiness he desires.

Needless to say, that the opposite effect is the result. He is bound to antagonize people so that they, in turn, actually do become hostile to him. This only strengthens his wrong conclusion. He does not see that he has caused this condition and is constantly aggravating it.

This, as well as all the other attitudes, can be so hidden that, at first, it would be impossible to trace. In fact, often the stronger this hostile attitude is, the more it is covered with opposite facets.

While the former attitude of submissiveness is outspokenly dependent, the person with the aggressive attitude deceives himself into believing he is independent of others -- he stands alone and fights alone, never bending to the will of others. In truth, he never realizes that he is just as dependent as the other type, only he chooses different means to overcome this inner conviction that he must get what he wants in order to be happy. His way is to oust emotions, affection, and what he may consider as softness. To him, all this represents a danger that will definitely stand in his way. Instead of real or pseudo-positive emotions, he will manufacture in himself a hardness and aggressiveness that is no more real than the submissive kind of "love."

Withdrawal

Still another way of coping with the basic will to be happy is the attitude I have so often designated as withdrawal. In this case, the person is so convinced of never attaining happiness. This seems such a tragedy to him that he protects himself from such disaster by pretending he does not want anything from others, life, or the world.

He withdraws into isolation, thereby never experiencing the defeat he dreads, but never realizing what a dreadfully poor bargain he has contrived to make with his life. He may protect himself from certain disappointments and failures which would not hurt half as much as he now imagines, but on the other hand, he would experience much happiness and joy, that he now thinks he does not miss, simply because he vegetates without any real life experience.

Although a person with this predominant attitude may appear more cheerful and well-adjusted than many another, deep down there is a greater hopelessness of ever receiving happiness out of life. Otherwise, such drastic means would not have been resorted to.

PL 77

Numbness

Still another way is to cripple your real feelings. In one respect, this also happens with the three attitudes described before. But what I mean here is something more.

In this attitude (which does not necessarily exclude any of those already mentioned tonight), you never allow your feelings to function freely or naturally. Either you whip them artificially into a more dramatic state than they would naturally be in -- you exaggerate them, overdramatize them for reasons that seem to you expedient. This expedience is of course another way of forcing the other person to love and obey you. It serves as a sort of obligation to the object.

Or else, if you fear to be defeated, again you do not allow either your natural intuition or your real feelings to guide and carry you safely through the stream of life. Instead, you artificially cramp, prohibit, and squash your natural feelings. The negative result of this is that you prohibit growth of something that is alive, a living organism; for feelings are that.

You do so when you exaggerate and dramatize a positive feeling about a person. And you do so when you artificially talk yourself into resentment and contempt for a person because you believe that this is protection against the seeming tragedy of being rejected. So finally, it is not surprising if you no longer know what you really feel and want, nor who you really are. Your feelings are the expression of your being.

Now, if you constantly prohibit your real feelings from functioning and substitute them with artificial ones, you cannot know them, and therefore you cannot know your real self.

PL 77

Example of a Forcing Current of Superiority:

I was rather startled, as a teenager, to be introduced to a rationale for judging others that had frankly never occurred to me. I spent a weekend with other teens participating in what was called a spiritual "encounter group."

A member of our group admitted to being prejudiced. He wasn't happy about it. But he wasn't ready to put it behind him either. In all honesty, I can no longer remember what group he was feeling "superior" to, but I do remember asking him, "Since you know it's wrong, can't you let go of it?"

He looked straight at me, and with no little anguish as well as passion said, "No! I have to feel that I'm better than *somebody*."

He felt so small. He felt so insignificant. Singling out a "them" who were by definition less than he, gave him a feeling of self-worth that he otherwise lacked. As I got older, and had more opportunities to study the world around me as well as history, I realized he was not alone. One important factor in our willingness to judge others is our own insecurity, our deep and relentless doubts about our own value as human beings. Judging others gives us power and a feeling of worthiness. It's nothing to be laughed at, or sneered at. It's real, it's more prevalent than we may realize, and we need to understand it. I think it plays an important role in the, "I may be a failure, but God loves ME. ME and not you!"

'Our Third Year' by Reverend Steven Greenebaum <http://livinginterfaith.org/?p=452>

Week 4: How We Collude with Self Doubt

The hidden, feared, guilt-producing, and denied thoughts and feelings are more powerful in their negative creation than anything you deal with on the conscious level.

Man's Innate Capacity to Create PL 208

Today, when the masses understand much more than they did thousands of years ago, truth can be given more directly, less veiled. But still, misunderstanding cannot be avoided, and therefore the dosage or proportion, as to how much chance can be taken, how much can be revealed, has to be well weighed. Sometimes more truth can have a worse effect and lead to greater harm than less truth. For misunderstood truth leads to half-truth which is the most dangerous of all.

PL 78, A Q&A Session

The higher the development, the more truthful and real an entity's thoughts and concepts are, the more powerful will be the energy with which the entity creates. There is also a correlation between the accuracy of knowledge, visualization of new possibilities of expansion and experience, proper concepts, on the one hand, and receptivity of soul substance, on the other. When concepts are real and the limitless abundance of the universe is therefore perceived, attitudes will be positive and in accordance with the cosmic laws of truth and love; hence no defenses are required.

Meditation: Its Laws and Various Approaches

PL 194

Your real self knows. Trust it. Your superimposed compulsive behavior pattern is completely blind. Even if, by chance, it may at times pursue the same goal that your real self would, it matters very much out of which level you operate.

The one is haphazard. It may be right or wrong, but you remain unsure. It is an unnatural forceful procedure. The other is functional and in harmony with your nature and your life. Therefore, whatever happens, it is organic and right.

If it is right to feel for someone, you do not need to increase your emotions artificially. You will feel as strongly as you should feel if you allow your personality to grow freely. This cannot happen with all the deviations and the basic false premise you depart from.

PL 77

Self-will is the will of the little self, the little ego. Self-will strives to get what it wants, regardless of the consequences, regardless of harm that may be done to others and therefore ultimately also to the self. Only, the little ego is too blind to understand this. And self-will in its blind and immature state is equally too blind to realize that what is desired against spiritual law must bring hardship and imprisonment to the self.

Test your feelings, translate them into clear and concise words so as to realize *"Here I have a desire coming from my little ego, from my self-will, that does not correspond with the other part of my nature that is equally as real as this heretofore hidden part."*

Pride, Self Will, and Fear PL 30

The Power of Perception

We are often under the illusion that seeing is a very simple thing. You see something, which is taking information in, and then you evaluate, which is the hard part. But in fact perception and evaluation are the same thing. We carry around unconscious mental maps, built by nature and experience, that organize how we scan the world and how we instantly interpret and order what we see. "Poets, prophets and reformers are all picture makers — and this ability is the secret of their power and of their achievements," Frederick Douglass wrote. This is where artists make their mark, by implanting pictures in the underwater processing that is upstream from conscious cognition. Those pictures assign weights and values to what the eyes take in.

David Brooks "How Artists Change the World" New York Times

Haidt shows how our responses to political debate are almost pure intuition; quick-firing moral reflexes that our brains overlay with rationales after the fact. The other vital insight involves what Haidt describes as six types of intuitions—or, as he calls them, moral foundations: care/harm, fairness/cheating, liberty/tyranny, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation. These combine to form the unconscious attitudes that animate each of us, to form our sense of morality.

The Righteous Mind by Jonathan Haidt / Quartz review qz.com

"Does everyone feel this way? When I was young, I was perpetually overconfident or insecure. Either I felt completely useless, unattractive, and worthless, or that I was pretty much a success, and everything I did was bound to succeed. When I was confident, I could overcome the hardest challenges. But all it took was the smallest setback for me to be sure that I was utterly worthless. Regaining my self-confidence had nothing to do with success...whether I experienced it as a failure or triumph was utterly dependent on my mood."

Michael in The Reader by Bernhard Schlink ©1997

"I always had the feeling that no one understood me anyway,
that no one knew who I was and what made me do this or that.
And you know, when no one understands you, no one can call you to account."

Hanna in The Reader by Bernhard Schlink ©1997

How Advertising Works

1. Emotional responses: most of the decisions we make in daily life are Unconscious.
2. Targeted insecurities: most of us are horribly insecure AND unaware of it. We are uncertain of our Images, averse to Loss, and our responses tend to be fight/flight.
3. Instinct: our evolution favors obtaining things based on set criteria. We want shiny things and fast gratification!
4. Planning: advertising wants to engage all of the above, change the baseline of our thinking (On sale! = retail price was set deliberately high so that we fall for a 'bargain'). We cooperate by overestimating our ability to resist.

Summary of charts from <https://marketingtechblog.com/how-does-advertising-work/>

Shifting Baselines

Shifting baselines affect the quality of life decisions you face daily. Shifting baselines are the chronic, slow, hard to notice changes in things, from the disappearance of birds and frogs in the countryside to the increased drive time from L.A. to San Diego. If your ideal weight used to be 150 pounds and now it's 160, your baseline -- as well as your waistline -- has shifted.

If we know the baseline for a degraded ecosystem, we can work to restore it. But if the baseline shifted before we really had a chance to chart it, then we can end up accepting a degraded state as normal -- or even as an improvement.

And, in a more philosophical vein, we should consider the shifting baselines in our own lives, examining how and where have we lowered our standards to the point that we accept things that once would have been unacceptable. Our environment has clearly suffered from our increasing comfort with shifting baselines. I suspect our lives have suffered in other ways as well.

Randy Olson http://www.shiftingbaselines.org/op_ed/

Excellence as the result of PRACTICE

(Suggesting that anyone can become excellent at anything if they work at it)

Excerpted from Bounce by Matthew Syed

But there was one difference between the groups that was both dramatic and unexpected; indeed, it was so stark that it almost jumped out at Anders Ericsson and his colleagues at Florida State University – the number of hours devoted to serious practice. .

By the age of twenty, the best violinists had practiced an average of ten thousand hours, *more than two thousand hours more than the good violinists and more than six thousand hours more than the violinists hoping to become music teachers*. These differences are not just statistically significant; they are extraordinary. Top performers had devoted thousands of hours to the task of becoming master performers.

But that's not all. Ericsson also found that there were no exceptions to this pattern: nobody who had reached the elite group without copious practice, and nobody who had worked their socks off but failed to excel. Purposeful practice was the only factor distinguishing the best from the rest.

Ericsson and his colleagues were astounded by these findings, sensing that they heralded a paradigm shift in the way excellence is understood – that it is practice, not talent, that ultimately matters. “We argue that the differences between expert performers and normal adults reflect a life-long persistence of deliberate effort to improve performance” [vs. being ‘just’ a matter of talent].

In Outliers, Malcolm Gladwell points out that most top performers practice for around one thousand hours per year, so he re-describes the ten-year rule as the ten-thousand hour rule. This is the minimum time necessary for the acquisition of expertise in any complex task. It is also, of course, the number of hours that top violinists had practiced in the Ericsson experiment.

Example from Outliers: The cutoff date for all age-based hockey in Canada is January 1. That means that a ten-year-old boy born in January could be playing alongside another boy born almost 12 months later. This difference in age can represent a huge difference in terms of physical development at that time of life. “This being Canada, the most hockey-crazed country on earth, coaches start to select players for the traveling ‘rep’ squad – the all star teams ‘ at the age of nine or ten, and of course they are more likely to view as talented the bigger and more coordinated players, who have had the benefit of critical months of maturity. And what happens when a player gets chosen for a rep squad? He gets better coaching, and his teammates are better, and he plays 50 or 75 games a season instead of 20 games a season... by the age of 13 or 14, with the benefit of better coaching, and all that extra practice under his belt, he really *is* better, so he’s the one more likely to make it to the Major Junior A league, and from there into the big leagues. [The result: players in professional leagues such as hockey have an incredible number of January, February, and March birth dates.

Minor advantages, such as support and encouragement by family members, living next to a coach, having the money and space for equipment, living near a practice center, gives someone a slight head start – which is sufficient to create a *trajectory of development* with powerful long-term consequences.

Matthew Syed, Bounce@ 2010

Your real self functions only in reality.

It cannot function or manifest in a self-created world of illusion, in a world based on wrong assumptions.

In reality,

- you are not unhappy if you do not always get your will;
- you are not unhappy if everyone does not love and admire you;
- you are not unhappy if others do not always agree with you
or have faults other than those you could tolerate.

It is **not** reality

- that you can never get what you really wish;
- that you can never be loved and respected;
- that life and the world is hostile to you
and prohibits you from unfolding the best you have to offer.

You do not have to fight, nor do you have to retreat and withdraw so as to avoid the danger of life. You do not have to beg, cry, submit, and sell your soul in order to get what you want (inwardly and very hiddenly, this is constantly being done). Nor do you have to defend yourself against constant defeat (another fact your subconscious often takes for granted). Your real self knows all this to be untrue.

When you consider the illusion of the importance of your wish fulfillment and your feelings remain as tense and un-free as before, there must be something hidden there that you have not yet found. You will see that the intensity of your feelings stands in no proportion to your intellectual view of its importance. Emotionally, your life seems to depend on it, while you know perfectly well that it does not. This will show you the discrepancy between the issue at stake and the intensity of your feelings.

After realizing the precise wishes and their discrepancy to your actual needs, and if the intensity still remains, you will have to find if the desire stands for an imaginary protection against an imaginary danger. This may often be the case. Needless to say, you have to find your particular imaginary danger. Unless you are aware of this, you cannot let go of the "weapon" of this forcing current.

PL 77

My dearest friends, let me part from you tonight with the assurance, once again, that this is a benign universe, that you have nothing to fear if you come out of your illusion, if you give up the fear as well as the error that your little self can be the judge of what brings you happiness.

The more successful your earth methods will become, the more will they integrate with the basis of all religions. For the laws work eternally within the psyche, and this will be discovered more and more to be so.

Rejoice in the knowledge that reality must make you happy. Be blessed, be in God! PL 77

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