

Pathwork™ in Texas

ABUNDANCE VERSUS ACCEPTANCE

Quotes from Pathwork Lecture #130

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There are two philosophies about life and spiritual reality which seem completely contradictory. The one says that the spiritually and emotionally mature person has to learn to accept the difficulties in life. It says that in order to cope with life he has to accept what he cannot immediately change, what is beyond his direct sphere of influence. It says that lack of acceptance breeds disharmony, anxiety, tension, and increases the difficulties. It destroys peace of mind. The ability to accept the inevitable -- such as death or other acts of destiny -- is a gauge to maturity and to a well-rounded personality.

The other philosophy says that nothing negative need be accepted, that all hardship, even death, is unnecessary. It says that there is no destiny other than the one man molds for himself, that man, whenever he decides to, can mold a new destiny in which he no longer suffers. It postulates that true spiritual awakening is marked by the realization that suffering does not need to be accepted, that the universe is open in immeasurable abundance available for all human beings -- right here and right now.

Now, my friends, why are these two approaches not mutually exclusive? Where do they combine? Where is the common denominator, the key that unifies? The answer lies in the element of fear. If you wish happiness because you fear unhappiness, happiness remains unreachable. If you wish happiness for the sake of being happy and not because you fear its absence, no block toward its attainment exists. And this is an enormous difference.

As long as you fear, it is sometimes -- although not always -- inevitable to go through that which is feared in order to lose the fear. If fear can be shed by realization of the truth that there is no reason to fear, then it is not necessary to go through it. But man is often incapable of doing so, hence he must familiarize himself so much with the feared circumstances that they lose their threat. ... As long as you wish the positive because you fear the negative, this fear barricades the way to the positive. This sphere of consciousness, the planet earth, with its individuals in their overall state of development is distinguished by the fact that most personalities desire the positive because they fear its opposite negative.

The more man fears to let go, the greater the imbalance of his soul movements, and the more he must lose the final control over his destiny. The tight control he grabs at is a pseudocontrol that does not achieve anything. It merely makes him tense and anxious. It prohibits peace and confidence in himself and in the life process. The only way this confidence can grow is by entrusting himself into what seems the "unknown," by giving up the tense hold. Thereby he eventually gains full mastery, without fear of losing it, for he now knows that there is nothing to fear.

The truth that man, in his highest evolutionary state, is in control of his destiny includes his ability to let go and entrust himself to greater forces than himself. In fact, only by doing so can he become one with these forces. When man refuses to let go, to relinquish control, he naturally does so out of fear and distrust. Thus he blocks against that which is most benign, which is his power, his liberation, his bliss. ... If man desires pleasure because he fears pain or fears the absence of pleasure, the door to pleasure remains closed. Once he has learned that the absence of pleasure is not the abyss of darkness he has shrunk from, fear will no longer prohibit him from fulfillment. ... Every facet of living applies to this principle. If man desires health in a spirit of fearing sickness, he barricades health. If man fears the aging process, he barricades eternal youth. If man fears poverty, he barricades abundance. If man fears loneliness, he barricades real companionship. If man fears companionship, he barricades his self-containment. So it goes on and on all across the board.

The great enemy is fear. The best way to meet and conquer this enemy is first to ascertain, admit, and pronounce it. This will diminish it to a considerable degree and open the way to further measures of ousting it. Of course, this desire must, as always, be clearly expressed in one's thinking and intentions. However, if fear is worked against due to fear of fear, it will be difficult. Therefore the calm admission of it, the momentary acceptance of it will do more toward eliminating it than fighting against it.

A long time ago, we discussed that the three major stumbling blocks in man's soul are pride, self-will, and fear. The more man unifies, the more does he always reach one basic point. The same applies to this triad. Pride and self-will are easily

overcome when there is no more fear. If you do not fear to have your dignity impaired, there will be no need for false pride. And if you do not fear to be controlled by elements you have no influence over, you will have no need for self-will.

Fear is the great locked door which prohibits man from entering -- right here and right now -- into all that which is immediately available the moment fear is uprooted from his heart and soul.

When man hears the admonition that it is necessary to learn acceptance, this always seems to imply that he has to accept an ultimate fate of suffering and deprivation. When he is admonished to learn letting go of his control, this implies that he releases himself into an abyss of danger, pain, hardship. This is why his fear increases, and so does his tense reluctance and stubbornness. He more rigidly shrinks and cringes from that which is his liberation, his life eternal, his bliss. In truth, acceptance must bring him to the realization that he is called upon to accept that which is most desirable for him. Giving up control, the little self-will, finally proves to man that this releases him into a new freedom, into something positive and desirable rather than negative and undesirable. So there is no longer any need to fearfully hold on to control.

But where the soul is not yet ready for this realization, it has to learn that there is nothing to fear. It does so through being involved in a world that expresses this ignorance -- for only thus can the ignorance (that there is nothing to fear) be broken through. The truth must be discovered by the self that even that which hurts and deprives at the moment is never quite that which one fears.

The most important element about fear is the unknown quality about it.

The more known an event is, the less is it feared. A vicious circle exists in that fear prohibits the faculties to get to know. It dulls the senses. But every vicious circle can be broken. You may argue that actual pain can be very much feared. But, my friends, think about it. Pain is inordinately feared only when one does not know where it will lead, when one suspects something dangerous in it, a serious disease and finally death. If it is known that a pain will not bring any threat to one's safety, it can be borne in a relaxed state of mind and thus cease to be pain.

When you meet your fears and squarely acknowledge them, it is important to understand and specifically ascertain the unknown element about it. Then you have a chance of making the unknown element a little less unknown until perhaps completely eliminating the unknown character of it in certain instances, while, in others, consciously accepting the fact that some element must remain unknown for the time being and simultaneously accepting the fear.

Where there is an uncertainty what the future will bring, there is fear. Nothing one truly knows, even the greatest difficulties, are really feared. In order to make the unknown known, the feared unknown must often be entered into -- just like the experience of dying. But this must, by no means, be construed to mean the looking for negative, painful experience.

When you open your whole psyche for positive experience without a trace of fear of the negative, then the unknown must become more and more known; life becomes more and more of a fulfillment on all levels.

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MUTUALITY -- A COSMIC PRINCIPLE AND LAW

Quotes from Pathwork Lecture #185

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Mutuality is a cosmic or spiritual law. No creation can take place unless mutuality exists. Mutuality means that two apparently or superficially different or alien entities or aspects move toward one another for the purpose of uniting and making one comprehensive whole. They open up toward one another, they cooperate with and affect one another so as to create a new divine manifestation -- in whatever form this may be. New forms of self-expression can only come into being when the self merges with something beyond itself. Mutuality is the movement that bridges the gap from duality toward unity. Wherever there is separation, mutuality must prevail or come into being in order to eliminate this separation.

Nothing can be created unless mutuality exists, whether it be a new galaxy, a work of art, or a good relationship between human beings. This applies even to the creation of the simplest object. To illustrate this principle, let us take the example of creating an object. First of all, the idea must be formed in the mind. Without such an idea, without the creative inspiration and imagination by which the mind extends itself beyond its previous awareness of what already exists, not even a plan can be formed. This creative aspect must then melt with the second part of two mutually cooperative attitudes: execution. This implies labor, effort, perseverance, self-discipline. Unless the creative idea and all those activities which are more mechanical and ego-determined work together, hand in hand, in harmony, the object cannot be created. The first aspect -- creative thinking and inspiration -- can never complete creation unless the second aspect is brought to bear on the venture. This applies, without exception, to everything. Whether you create an object, compose a symphony, paint a picture, write a novel, cook a meal, search for new scientific discoveries, heal illness, create a situation of mutual love, develop on the path of self-realization; it applies to all endeavors, to all successful completion, to all meaningful self-expression. This synthesis of creativity, imagination, ideas, on the one hand, and execution, on the other, must take place. These are apparently alien attitudes.

The creative attitude is a free-flowing, spontaneous manifestation. Execution is an act that comes through the determination of the ego-will. It is more mechanical, more laborious and requires consistency and effort. This has totally different characteristics from the spontaneous, effortless influx of creative ideas. Human beings are uncreative for two reasons: either they are unwilling to adopt the necessary self-discipline to follow through on their creative ideas, or they are emotionally and spiritually too contracted to open their own individual creative channels. In the first case, they childishly refuse to be bothered by the difficulties, the trials and errors. In the second they lack inspiration. Both these lopsided attitudes gradually balance themselves out when the individual grows on the path and begins to resolve his inner conflicts. The healthy, balanced person who has found himself always finds his personal creative outlet that yields the deepest satisfaction to his life.

The whole universe consists of this harmonious interplay of effortless creative imagination and execution. The latter always requires labor, investment, commitment, self-discipline. This bridge of mutuality is a very important aspect. Mutuality is not the same as the unified principle itself, which is opposed to the dualistic principle. The difference between the unified principle and the principle of mutuality is that the latter leads to unification. It is the movement toward it. It is not yet unification itself.

For mutuality to take place, there must be an expansive movement toward this other attitude, aspect, or person. In other words, there must be two expansive movements flowing out toward one another in a harmonious interplay of giving and receiving, of mutual cooperation, of positive opening. To put it differently, two yes-currents must move toward each other. We know from many of my previous words and from what you find in your work on the path, that the ability to accept, bear, and sustain pleasure can only be gradually increased in human beings. It is one of the most difficult goals to obtain. This ability depends directly on a person's integration and wholeness. Hence, mutuality depends on the entity's ability to say yes when a yes is offered.

... This brings us to the second section of this lecture. How does the principle of mutuality apply to humanity's present state of development? Man's development can perhaps be determined by the following three gradations in regard to mutuality. [1] The human being who is least developed and still most enveloped in fear and misconceptions is able to expand very little. And since expansion and mutuality are interdependent, mutuality is impossible to the degree that expansion is denied.

However, when development proceeds a little more, the longing becomes stronger and more conscious. There are many degrees and many alternatives, but roughly speaking and in an oversimplified way for the sake of this explanation, the next stage is [2] the person who is willing to open up but is still afraid of doing so in an actual mutuality. The only way the bliss and pleasure of expansion and union can be experienced is in a fantasy situation. This leads to a very common, frequent fluctuation of the following kind: such a person is convinced that this longing indicates his actual readiness for a real mutuality. After all, he experiences it so beautifully in his fantasies. The lack of it in reality is ascribed to his lack of luck to meet the proper partner with whom he can realize these fantasies. ... But failure in the relationship always indicates that the self is not yet ready to put true mutuality into practice. ... But at one point, every individual comes, on the road of his own evolution, to the full recognition and significance of this painful fluctuation, which subsequently leads to a commitment to open mutuality and fulfillment, to interplay and expansion, to cooperation and positive pleasure. This always requires relinquishing the negative pleasure and the pseudosafety. The soul is then ready to learn, to try, to risk mutuality, love, pleasure, to function safely in an open state.

[3] The third stage is of course the person who is relatively capable of sustaining actual mutuality -- not in fantasy, not in longing only, not in an "as if" situation. It is needless to say that not all steady relationships that exist on this earth indicate real mutuality -- very, very few do. Most relationships are formed on the basis of other motivations; or the original motivation of mutuality could not be maintained and was replaced by other reasons.

... Now let us come to the third and perhaps most important part of this lecture, and that is: what are the factors that prohibit mutuality between two human beings? ... Mutuality can exist only to the degree the individuals involved are aware of and in contact with their previously hidden destructive side, the evil. Conversely, to the degree that there is a rift between the consciousness which strives for goodness, love, and decency, and the unconscious, which is still bent on its destructiveness, hate, negation; to that degree, mutuality cannot take place. You may note that I emphasize here that the cause for it not taking place is not the actual existence of the still present evil aspects, but lack of awareness of it. This is an all-important distinction. ... If you are alienated from your own unconscious, you must act out what you, deep in yourself, know to exist within yourself, with the other person and affect that level of the other person that is similarly concealed. Unless this key is totally comprehended and applied, relationships must falter or be unrewarding. Mutuality in the true sense cannot take place.

The split between you and yourself must reappear as a split between you and others, unless you are fully conscious of the former. Becoming conscious of the former is the beginning of mending this rift, for consciousness diminishes the rift.

Mutuality between you and yourself is absent when you reject the evil. By rejecting the evil, you ignore and deny the vital, original creative energy that is contained in all evil. This energy must be made available to the person in order to become whole. ... No matter how evil and unacceptable any specific traits may be in you, no matter how undesirable and destructive, the energy and substance they consist of is vital force without which you cannot fully function. Only as a whole person can you sustain pleasure; only as a fully conscious person can you be whole.

Your disunity with yourself cannot bring unity with others. It is utter folly to expect it. However, you do not have to wait to first become unified in the total sense. But if you take your ongoing relationships and use them in the sense I describe here as yardsticks by which you gauge where you are in your own inner split within yourself, where you stand in your ability to accept the negative in you, you will grow into greater self-acceptance. Simultaneously your ability to have mutuality will grow proportionately.

Eleven Irrational Beliefs

Albert Ellis (1962) identified beliefs that are frequently found in American culture and probably in many others as well. Here is a summary of 11 of these irrational beliefs.

1. It is absolutely necessary for me to be loved and approved of by nearly every person with whom I have close contact.
2. I must be thoroughly competent and adequate in all respects or I am worthless.
3. Certain people are bad or wicked and must be blamed and punished. (The person fails to recognize that badness is in the eye of the beholder, and that punishment for its sake alone is irrational).
4. If things are not the way I like them to be, it is a terrible catastrophe.
5. Unhappiness is caused by external events over which I have almost no control.
6. Some things are terribly dangerous and life threatening, so I must keep thinking about them most of the time.
7. It is easier to avoid difficulties and responsibilities than to face them.
8. I am not able to do things myself; I must find someone stronger on whom I can rely.
9. What happened to me in the past determines what I do and think now, and because some event was traumatic in the past it will be traumatic now.
10. I should be very upset over other people's problems and disturbances.
11. There is always a right and precise solution to human problems, and if that is not found, I must be very upset.

Perception and the conditioned reflex. Oxford: Pergamon Press. Turk, D. C., Meichenbaum, D., Genest, M. (1983)

Rational-Emotive Behaviour Therapy (Albert Ellis 1962)

Ellis originally trained in Psychodynamic therapy but came to believe it was quicker and more efficient to tackle the symptoms of mental disorder by challenging people's irrational beliefs and so make them more stoical.

The REBT framework assumes that humans have both innate rational (meaning self- and social- helping and constructive) and irrational (meaning self- and social-defeating and un-helpful) tendencies and learnings. REBT claims that people to a large degree consciously and unconsciously construct emotional difficulties such as self-blame, self-pity, anger, hurt, guilt, shame, depressive feelings and anxiety, and behaviours and behaviour tendencies like procrastination, over-compulsiveness, avoidance, addiction and withdrawal by the means of their irrational and self-defeating thinking, emoting and behaving.

Exercises to Develop Sensory Imagination

Exercise 1

This imagery appeals to all five senses. Be certain that the subject / partner is completely relaxed before beginning. Say the words slowly in a relaxed voice:

Imagine in front of you a pure white plate with a lemon on it, resting on a table. See the glossy yellow of the lemon's skin against the whiteness of the china plate. Notice the texture of the lemon. It looks clean and fresh. There is a knife on the table, next to the plate. Now imagine that you are picking up the knife. You hold the lemon on the plate with one hand, and with the other you cut the lemon in two, hearing the knife cut through the lemon and hit the plate. As the keen edge slices into the lemon, the juice runs out onto your fingers and onto the plate. The citrus odor immediately hits your nose – sharp, clean, pungent, juicy, invigorating.

Now you pick up one of the lemon halves, with the juices still dripping onto your fingers and onto the plate. Using the knife again you cut a wedge from the lemon half, raise the wedge from the lemon half, raise the wedge to your mouth, and touch your tongue against it gently. Every taste bud in your tongue is drenched with the tangy lemon juice as your mouth puckers instinctively. Maybe a shiver goes up and down your spine, and your shoulders shake. Picture for a moment the lemon, the cutting, the tasting, the smells,...

(after a pause) Whenever you are ready, you can bring this image to a close and open your eyes.

Exercise 2

This imagery is useful for stress reduction.

Imagine yourself standing in a grassy meadow – a quiet, peaceful meadow with a small stream flowing through. You can hear the sound of the water gently trickling over shining stones. Imagine that you walk over and sit down to relax on the soft, warm, green grass against one of the many shade trees close to the stream. You feel a gentle breeze brush against your face. Notice the blue sky and fluffy white clouds. The pleasantly warm sun shines on the stream, reflecting and sparkling in the crystal clear water. It's beautiful here, peaceful, serene, and not too cool, not too warm. The air is fresh and clean with the sweet smell of flowers in bloom. You take in the sounds of the water, the feel of the gentle breeze, and the soft grass against your skin, the sweet fragrance that surrounds you. You feel peaceful and calm. As you look upstream, you notice a large colored leaf, slightly upturned at the edges, gently floating close and close to you. As the leaf nears you find yourself letting all your worries and cares flow out of you and settle on the leaf. Let the shimmering clear water take the leaf downstream, carrying away with it all your concerns. A feeling of deep peacefulness and contentment sweeps over you and your senses are all enhanced, you are at one with nature and feel both relaxed and refreshed. Enjoy the scene and when you are ready to return, gently bring the image to a close and open your eyes.

Exercise 3

To develop an imagery scene of your own, you first have to think of a place you might have once visited, seen a picture of, or always dreamed of. Then think of various things in this scene. Are there mountains or beaches? Is it sunny? Are there plants and trees? Are there any birds or animals? Try to capture salient features of your scene that appeal to all your senses. Once you have accomplished this, take a moment to describe them in appealing terms, enhancing the sensations and beauty of the scene. These pleasant and relaxing elements of the scene then can be put together in a narrative form. Try not to worry about making complete sentences, simply develop a scene that you can follow and feel good about.

Once you have developed your scene, you could record it on audio tape. Then you can play it back in a quiet situation to help develop your skills for relaxation further. After a while, you will not need the audio tape but can use imagined scenes to relax on your own.

Perception and the conditioned reflex. Oxford: Pergamon Press. Turk, D. C., Meichenbaum, D., Genest, M. (1983)