

Pathwork™ in Australia

Notes for The Defense

Quotes from Pathwork Guide Lecture #101

Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org

Defensive behavior is hard-wired into our biology; survival outranks quality of life. The body responds to danger automatically and without discussion / negotiation. Priorities follow physiological function; trunk safety (=core organs) trump all other needs.

Emotional interpretations of danger can trick the body into believing that the threat is real, triggering a response of flight/fight. The resulting hormonal reactions can prevent us from seeing / thinking clearly, creating a mimicry of trunk safety (=central belief systems).

Quotes from the Q&A section of pgl 101 about listening to criticism:

1. Calmly listen and evaluate. Could there be some truth in the criticism? Observe your inner reactions of fright. You will soon discover that your fright is unjustified even if the criticism be wrong. Nothing can happen to you, you are not in danger.

2. The very feeling of annoyance is the proof and expression of your defensiveness. Without defense, you would not be annoyed. How could you be? You would evaluate and either find that in it there may be some truth, little truth, or none at all. What can this criticism do to you that causes annoyance? Have you ever analyzed it from this point of view? Justified or unjustified criticism cannot really harm you unless you think you cannot be loved and respected if something to be criticized is found.

3. [Lies] cannot harm you by looking at it calmly. Your defense against it is the harm. The lie itself, or the erroneous judgment, could never harm you. And the less defensive you are, the more adequate will you be to straighten out an outright lie or misunderstanding.

4. It is certainly "natural" to have immature, unproductive reactions because everyone else has them too. But that does not mean they are really natural or that it is not possible to grow out of them -- not forcefully, not by superimposition, not by feeling guilty that childish reactions still exist, but in the way that I always advocate.

A simplified version of #176 Overcoming Negativity originally suggested by Carolyn Tilove, which can also be used to find where we are in defense and unwilling to be open and transparent even to ourselves:

1) Name a negativity (that can take a long time). These would be destructive patterns or their consequences; see pgl #100.

2) Feel the pleasure in it - the negative pleasure - the secondary gains, the aliveness. Honor the places where this negativity worked, where it was better than nothing.

3) Collect many, many examples of the effects of this negativity in your life. Without a mountain of data you will not feel motivated to change *what has felt life-saving*; remember that your defense was originally designed to resolve a conflict, and it must have worked for a while to become part of your operating strategy.

4) When you feel that you are really ready, speak these three sentences about each individual negativity or the pattern that you have discovered. *Respect yourself and your process*; if you are not ready to speak these, deal with them, or let them go, spend some more time seeing how you feel they are still needed to keep you safe.

A. The way I operate(...name it, as best you can...) no longer works.

B. The reason it does not work is....

C. "I wish to operate in a different way". Challenge yourself to be creative – what other ways might be possible today that were not possible in the past? How can you have both – safety AND a positive outlook and way of operating? Don't ask that this be perfect or final – just play with it, and see possibilities.