

MEETING THE PAIN OF DESTRUCTIVE PATTERNS

Greetings, my dearest friends. God bless each one of you. Blessed is this hour.

Most of my friends who work on this path approach a certain area of their soul problems where they encounter pain. To understand the meaning of this pain, I should like to give you an overall view of the process for dissolving it, and resolving your inner problems and conflicts as well. I shall attempt to give you a comprehensive view of the entire process. Such understanding will help toward the further resolution of conflicts and enable you to cope with the afflicted area of your psyche.

First, let us briefly recapitulate. To begin with, the child suffers from imperfections in the parents' love and affection. It also suffers from not being fully accepted in its own individuality. By this I mean the common practice of treating a child as a child, rather than as a particular individual. You suffer from this, although you may never be aware of it in these terms or in exact thoughts. This may leave as much of a scar as the lack of love or attention. It causes as much frustration as the lack of love, or even cruelty.

The general climate in which you grow up affects you like a constant minor shock that often leaves more of a mark than one traumatic shocking experience. That is why the latter is so often easier to cure than the former. The constant climate of non-acceptance of your individuality, as well as the lack of love and understanding cause what is called a neurosis. You accept this climate as a matter of course. You take it for granted. You believe that it has to be so. Nevertheless, you suffer from it. The combination of suffering it and believing it to be an unalterable fact, conditions you to develop destructive defenses.

The original pain and frustration the child could not deal with is repressed. It is put out of awareness, but it smolders in the unconscious mind. It is then that the destructive images and defense mechanisms begin to form. In the past we have examined the various defense mechanisms rather extensively. The images that you create are defense mechanisms. Through their wrong conclusions you seek a way of fighting against the unwelcome influences that have created the original pain. The pseudosolutions are a way of battling the world, the pain, and all that you wish to avoid.

When your pseudo-solution is a withdrawal from feeling, from loving, and from living, it is a defense against being hurt. Only after considerable insight into yourself will you see what an unrealistic, shortsighted "remedy" this is. You will want to change and would rather welcome the pain than the self-alienation of feeling nothing, or very little. Continuing the work and courageously going through the temporary periods of discouragement and resistance, you will come to the point when this hard shell breaks down and you are no longer dead inside. But the first

reaction will not be pleasant. It cannot be. All the repressed negative emotions, as well as the repressed pain, will at first come into awareness, and it will then seem to you that your withdrawal was right. Only after plowing ahead will you have the reward of good, constructive feelings. About this we shall talk in greater detail a little later.

If your pseudo-solution is submissiveness, weakness, helplessness and dependency as a means of having someone care for you -- not necessarily materially, but emotionally -- that is equally shortsighted and unsatisfactory as a solution. Dependency on others creates fear and helplessness. It further diminishes your lack of belief in yourself. As the solution to withdraw makes you feel dead inside and robs you of the meaningfulness of life, so does the solution to submit rob you of independence and strength; it creates just as much isolation, although through a different inner road. Originally you wished to avoid the pain by providing yourself with a strong person to care for you. In reality you inflict upon yourself more pain because you can never find such a person. That person must be yourself.

By making yourself deliberately weak, you exert the strongest tyranny over others. There is no worse tyranny than that which a weak person exerts over the stronger, or over his or her entire environment. It is as though that person was constantly saying: "I am so weak. You have to help me. I am so helpless. You are responsible for me. The mistakes I commit do not count because I do not know any better. I cannot help it. You must always indulge me and allow me to get away with everything. I cannot be expected to take full responsibility for my actions or the lack of them, for my thoughts and feelings or for the lack of them. I may fail because I am weak. You are strong, therefore you must understand everything. You cannot fail because your failure would affect me." The self-indulgent, lazy self-pity of the weak makes stringent demands on their fellow-creatures. This becomes evident if the unspoken expectations, the meaning of emotional reactions, are investigated and then interpreted into concise thought.

It is fallacious to think that the weak person is harmless and hurts others less than the outright domineering and aggressive person. All pseudo-solutions bring untold pain to the self, as well as to others. By withdrawing, you reject others and withhold from them the love you want to give them and that they want to receive from you. By submitting, you do not love, but merely expect to be loved. You do not see that others, too, have their vulnerabilities and weaknesses and needs. You reject that part of their human nature, and thus hurt them. By the aggressive solution, you push people away and openly hurt them with false superiority. In all instances, you hurt others and thus inflict further hurt upon yourself. The hurt you inflict cannot help but bring consequences, and thus the pseudo-solutions, intended to eliminate the original pain, only bring you more pain.

All pseudo-solutions, in addition to various other aspects, are incorporated into your idealized self-image. Since the nature of the idealized self-image is self-aggrandizement, it separates you from others. Since its nature is separateness, it isolates you and makes you, and those you deal with, lonely. Since its nature is falsity and pretense, it alienates you from yourself, from life, and from others. All of that is bound to bring you pain, hurt, frustration, unfulfillment. You chose a way out of pain and frustration, but this way has proven not only inadequate, it actually brings you much more of what you wished to avoid. However, to clearly recognize this fact and to put the links together requires the active work of sincere self-search.

The perfectionism that is so deeply ingrained in you and in your idealized self-image makes it impossible for you to accept yourself and others, to accept life in its reality, and you are therefore incapable of coping with life and resolving your own problems. It causes you to forgo the experience of living in the true sense.

Most of you, my friends, have come across many recognitions and insights that dealt with your wrong conclusions, misconceptions, images, pseudo-solutions. You are, to some extent at least, aware of the particular nature of your idealized self-image. You have some inkling in what way you are self-alienated and perfectionistic. You have therefore realized the extent of the damage you have inflicted upon yourself and upon others and have seen how unsatisfactory these pseudo-defenses and protections are. All of you may not be fully aware of all these factors, but most of you are sufficiently aware of them to be inwardly ready to give them up. Some of you have actually reached the threshold opening the way to a new inner life of being emotionally willing to let go of all the defenses. Constantly observing your unrealistic and immature emotions and reactions weakens their impact and begins a process of dissolving them almost automatically. When a certain dissolution has taken place, the psyche is ready to cross the threshold. But the act of crossing it is painful in the beginning.

You would expect, when crossing this important threshold, that the new, constructive patterns can immediately replace the old destructive ones. Such an expectation is unrealistic and not according to truth. Constructive patterns cannot have a solid foundation before you go through the original pain and frustration you had run away from. You have to face and feel, understand, come to terms with, and assimilate all that first. Then what is unhealthy and unrealistic can be dissolved, what is immature can mature, and the healthy but repressed forces can be brought into their proper channels so that they can work constructively for you. The longer you delay this painful process, the more difficult is it bound to be when you are finally ready to pass from childhood into adulthood. Even if you die in this life as a child, at one period or another of your spiritual development this threshold has to be crossed. The pain is a healthy growing pain, and the light is in sight when you overcome your resistance to the process. The strength, the self-reliance, and the capacity to live fully with all your constructive patterns beginning to work, is ample compensation for all the years of destructive and unproductive living, as well as for the pain of crossing the threshold into emotional adulthood.

Can you imagine being spared experiencing the pain against which you instituted the destructive patterns? You used them to run away from something that occurred in your life, whether actual or imaginary makes little difference. It is the wishful-thinking process of running away and looking away from something that is or was, thus not facing and coping with your reality, that caused your soul's sickness. Hence it is this area that has to be tackled now. This is why those of you who have made your first tentative steps over the threshold -- there may be occasional relapses for no inner process develops in just one smooth action -- are puzzled by the acute pain you experience. Often you do not quite understand why this is so. You may have some vague idea and some partial answers, but this lecture will help you to arrive at a more profound understanding.

Intellectually, you all know that this path is not a fairy tale in which you find your deviations and misconceptions and evasions, and, after having done so, nothing but bliss follows. In the last analysis it is true, of course, that being freed of your shackles of error and deviation is bound to bring you happiness. But until you reach that stage, many areas of your soul have to be experienced

until your psyche is truly equipped to make the best of life. Even after the acute pain has been properly assimilated and is no longer present, the unrealistic, although often unconscious expectation exists that now life will always grant you what you wish. No, my friends. However, the reality is much better. In reality you will learn to cope with the mishaps and difficulties, rather than becoming broken by them. You will not fortify your destructive defenses. This, in turn, will equip you with the tools to make the best out of each opportunity, and to derive the maximum benefit and happiness out of every experience of life.

Needless to say, this is never accomplished with your destructive defense mechanisms and various images. Let me repeat here what I have often said: First the outer negative events will continue to come your way, as a result of your past ingrained patterns, but you will encounter them in a different way. As you learn to do so, you will become aware of many opportunities for happiness that you ignored in the past. In this way, you begin to change the patterns, until very, very gradually, perhaps over a process of several incarnations, the unhappy outer events cease more and more. But when you find yourself at the beginning of this stage, do not expect immediate fulfillment and happiness in every respect. Do not expect it to come from the outside without your creating it by learning and experiencing in a productive way. First you need to see your possibilities and opportunities and independent ability to choose, instead of being utterly helpless and waiting for fate to bring you happiness.

By now you must understand that in many respects you have caused your own unhappiness through your own destructive and unrealistic evasions and defenses. You will now realize, with a new sense of strength, that you can bring about your own fulfillment and happiness. Again, this cannot be done by intellectual understanding. It is an inner process that grows organically. As you now deeply understand that no unkind fate or cruel god has punished or neglected you, so you will deeply understand and know that it is you who can create all the fulfillment your soul craves for -- a craving you were not even conscious of when you first began this path.

The new consciousness may emerge only after a fuller understanding of all your pseudo-solutions and misconceptions, whose depths will make you aware of your needs. The primary result on this path is the understanding of your own causes and effects and of the sense of strength, independence, self-reliance, and justice that this understanding gives to an individual. How much time it takes to reach the first tentative beginnings of this new strength and later to increase it, depends on your efforts, your inner will, and your overcoming the ever-present resistance which wears off only after you gain sufficient recognition of its devious ways.

Now, my friends, when you come across the pain, is it really merely the pain you once experienced as a child? Is it really the frustration the child suffered from the parents, and nothing more? No, my friends, this is not entirely correct. It is true that the original pain and frustration have afflicted the resiliency of your psyche and made you incapable of properly dealing with it. It caused you to turn away from it and look for unsatisfactory "solutions." But the pain you now experience is much more the present pain of unfulfillment, caused by your unproductive patterns. Consciously you cannot distinguish this. You may not even be aware of the original childhood pain. It may take time and self-observation to distinguish the pain at all. After you do so, you will see that the more acute pain is your despair with yourself and with life now, not in the past. The past is important only because it caused you to institute the unproductive ways responsible for your present pain.

If you do not shy away from the pain but go through it, becoming aware of its significance, you will realize that your present unfulfilled needs cause the pain. Your frustration will be with your inability, at this time, to bring about fulfillment. You cannot as yet see what you can do about it. You feel caught in your own trap, not seeing how to get out of it, thus being dependent on outer intervention over which you have no control. Only after courageously becoming aware of all these impressions and reactions, will you gradually see a way out, and thereby decrease your helplessness and increase your independent strength and resourcefulness.

In a previous lecture we discussed the subject of human needs. Before you uncover your various "protective layers," you cannot even be fully aware of your real needs. You may know some of your unreal, superimposed needs, but only after a fuller understanding of yourself do you gradually become aware of the basic, naked needs that you have held in check. When you experience the pain, before crossing the threshold into emotional maturity and productive patterns, you have the possibility, if you so choose, to become precisely aware of these needs. This is inevitable if you wish to come out of your present state of unproductive living.

As you go through the process of becoming aware of your needs and of the frustration of their unfulfillment, you will find first the stringent need to be loved just as the child needs to receive love and affection. However, it cannot be said that the need to be loved is childish and immature. It is only so when the adult person has locked his or her soul and refused to grow in his or her own capacity to give love, so that the need to receive remains isolated, as well as covered up. Through your destructive patterns, you pushed your painful need to receive love into the unconscious. Due to this unawareness and to your defense mechanisms of various sorts, your ability to give could never grow within your psyche. However, during all the work you have done, you have not only become aware of so much that was hidden away, but, you have also begun to dissolve certain destructive levels. This has allowed your ability to give love to surface, even though you may not yet be fully aware of it.

As you encounter the pain, you actually experience the tremendous pressure of your needs. On the one hand, you face the need to receive which remains ungratified as long as the destructive patterns prevail. It requires some time to gain the necessary strength and resourcefulness to bring about the fulfillment of this need to receive. On the other hand, the need to give cannot find an outlet until this stage is reached. Thus a double frustration is caused -- and this generates tremendous pressure. It is this pressure that is so painful. It seems to tear you apart.

Do not believe, my friends, that the pressure, the frustration did not exist before you became aware of it. It did exist, but it created other outlets, perhaps in physical sickness, or in other symptoms. As you become aware of the central core, the pressure and pain may feel more acute, but such must be the healing process. You thus draw your awareness to the central cause where the problem really lies. You focus your attention on the root. You shift your emphasis from evasion to reality. The real pain has to be experienced in all its shades and varieties. You have to become aware that your needs are exactly both to give and to receive. You need to feel and observe the frustration of the accumulated pressure, the momentary helplessness about finding relief, the temptation to evade yet again. As you battle through this phase and grow stronger, you will no longer run away from yourself and from the apparent risk of living. Opportunities will come your way. You will see them and make use of them. They will teach you to further your growth and

strength until your needs can find partial fulfillment, and then little by little increase it as you grow and change your patterns.

You must understand that at this period you find yourself in an interim stage. You have become aware of your need to receive, which is in itself healthy. But this need has become exaggeratedly strong and therefore immature, because of your repression of it and the consequent frustration of the healthy fulfillment of receiving. If you do not receive enough, your demand grows out of proportion, especially when you are unconscious of it.

Due to your progress and to the growth that has taken place within you, the mature need to give has also grown. Before, you could not find an outlet for this because the destructive patterns were still in effect, perhaps only partly, or in a modified form. You may even have made attempts to compromise between the old and the new, desired, way. However, do not forget that effective results can come only when the new patterns become an integral and almost automatic reaction in you. Your old patterns have been in existence for years, decades, and often through several lifetimes in which you have shied away from facing the same problems, and facing life as it is. Now, as you learn to do so and have begun to change inwardly, outer change does not come at once. In this period, the pressure inside may become most stringent. However, if you realize all this and have the courage to go through it, you are bound to come out a stronger, happier person, better equipped to live in the true sense of the word. Beware of turning back into evasion all over again. Do not believe that this temporary period in which you encounter all the accumulated inner pressure, with the accompanying helplessness, inadequacy, and confusion, is the final result. It is the tunnel through which you must pass, my friends.

After you do so, your sense of strength, adequacy, and resourcefulness will grow steadily -- with occasional relapses, of course -- but if you make each relapse serve as a further stepping stone, further lesson, the new patterns will eventually establish themselves in your inner being and will make you see the possibilities you have overlooked for so long. You will then have the courage to explore these possibilities, instead of rejecting them in fear. Thus, and thus only, will the fulfillment come.

It is so important for you to understand this and deeply absorb it, my friends. If you do, it must help you. Is that clear, my friends?

Are there any questions regarding this subject?

QUESTION: When I go through certain phases of various fears, is that connected with the subject you discussed tonight?

ANSWER: Yes, it is, indeed. Fears are so often a subterfuge to hide from the basic core of pain. They come into existence as a result of your evasion. In this work, you have often noticed that, after certain progress, the fears begin to vanish more and more, and then you become aware of the pain. The fear is an inadvertent result of the evasion that was not deliberately chosen, of course. But all evasion must have more unpleasant results than feeling the original pain. Unpleasant as the original pain may be, once one accepts its truth, it is so much better, so much easier, so much more honest and healthy to live with than any result of evasion, be it fear or anything else. Since fear

vanishes only after it is faced, met, and come to terms with, pain, the underlying cause of it, has to be dealt with similarly.

It is not only the pain of unfulfillment that you cringe away from, however. You also do not want to take upon yourself mature self-responsibility. This may not apply to all your outer material life, but may affect the emotional plane. If you do not wish to love, and live in fear of being hurt, if you do not wish to take the risk of living upon yourself, you wish to remain the child who waits helplessly for life to fulfill its needs without the necessity of self-involvement. The price you pay for such evasion is very high. Many of you do not yet realize how high that price is. This running away from self-responsibility and from the apparent risk of living and feeling is caused by an original sense of inadequacy, and continuing to run away increases that sense of inadequacy. Only as you change this pattern will you find your sense of adequacy and self-confidence. The psychic law that says that running away from the original pain of unfulfillment increases the unfulfillment, and therefore the pain, operates here, too.

QUESTION: In the process of my work, I have, of late, occasionally felt the need to give love, and not only to receive. But this feeling goes away again. How can I learn to always feel the need to give?

ANSWER: My dear friend, it would be very misleading to say you can learn it. This is something you cannot learn by a voluntary act. Attempting that would amount to a manipulation of your feelings, and, in the last analysis, this would be dishonest. If it is real, it happens naturally and by itself, as you have already noticed. This will come more often, and last longer, and become stronger, but only if you do not force it directly. The best way to get to this point of growth, maturity, and productive living, is by simply observing your emotions. Note how they are still geared to the one-sided, childish desire to merely receive. The more you observe yourself objectively, the more you will find the underlying causes for such an imbalance, and the more you will speed the process of growth that finally will enable you not only to experience the need to give as much as the need to receive love, but eventually also to find the necessary outlet.

I must repeat again and again that inner growth cannot happen suddenly. First you have a glimpse, a momentary experience of a new way of feeling. Then it goes away again. If, at such a time, you are not discouraged and do not give way to the feeling that it is of no use because you have apparently relapsed into the old way, but persevere instead, the periods of healthy, good feeling will come more often and will last longer. Each relapse seems to lead you to the same old tunnel, but it does not. It is a new one. If you pass through it, the momentary glimpse of strength, love, and light will come again, until it finally becomes a part of you.

QUESTION: I discovered in my work that mixed in with healthy and productive pleasure is also destructive or self-destructive pleasure. The latter can't always be recognized as such and is difficult to get rid of. There seems to be in me a confusion between the pleasure principle and rejection, as well as between happiness and selfishness. What can you suggest?

ANSWER: Apart from the question of masochism about which I have spoken considerably in the past, and also in answer to a recent question, I have this to say: Here the either/or attitude of the child prevails. The child in you feels that if you are in pursuit of pleasure, you are not in reality. Reality means rejection and unpleasure, therefore you escape from it and build your pleasure in

fantasy. This, then, seems to confirm the contention that reality and pleasure are incompatible. To a lesser degree, this can be found in every human being, but to a greater extent it is found in emotional and mental illness. If, to begin with, this misconception did not exist, if one knew that being in reality is not only feeling rejected, but also being in pleasure, one would not need to seek pleasure only in unreality. This is the confusion. By the same token, the confusion between happiness and selfishness is also based on the principle of either/or. The child in you feels that if you are happy, you must be selfish, while all unselfishness automatically goes against your interest and gratification. Needless to say, this is not so in reality. Only the process of growth will give you the inner understanding and conviction that happiness and unselfishness are not incompatible.

QUESTION: You said in the last lecture that the effect of one person being in truth is of greater cosmic importance than we can possibly realize. Can you explain this?

ANSWER: If you think for a moment of the effect of the negative, distorted soul parts of a human being in the sense discussed tonight, you will also understand the opposite. Any pseudo-solution is bound to reject another human being. When you submit, you do not experience the truth of the other person's humanity, of his or her needs, vulnerabilities, problems, and insecurity. In your demand to possess a strong and ever loving protector, you must be disappointed, perhaps unconsciously so, and in your disappointment, you become hostile -- perhaps again unconsciously.

When you are aggressively arrogant, denying your own need to find love, affection, communication, you reject the other person outright. In your withdrawal, you never give warmth, you never fulfill the other person's needs. When you are self-alienated and perfectionistic, you cannot help but hurt others. When the pretense of your idealized self is at work, you do not let another person come near you, out of the unconscious fear of facing exposure, and you are bound over and over again to reject him or her, perhaps without ever realizing that you are doing so. All the rejection, isolation, and pain that you inadvertently inflict onto others is bound to strengthen their own destructive defense mechanisms, just as their destructive defenses fortify your own. This persists unless you are on a path such as this and begin to see the process for what it is.

Now, reverse the process. Imagine the effect it must have on your surroundings when you are no longer defensive, fearful, withdrawn, and falsely superior. You are then open to life and to the heart of another person. The courage to live and to love enables you to help others to weaken their own defenses and destructive patterns, even if they are not yet developed far enough to choose a path of self-finding. Everyone you come into contact with is therefore affected. And this effect extends over all of those with whom they, in turn, come into contact. It draws rings upon rings of effect that interact. If you think about it in these terms, you are bound to visualize the truth.

My dearest friends, be blessed, each one of you. May these words be a further key and a help for your continued growth and liberation. May they help you to become yourself, to be in full possession of the individual you are, with all the resources, the strength, the ingenuity, the creativity and love force that is inherent in you, waiting to be allowed to function freely. Be in peace. Be in God!

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