

Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 121  
1996 Edition  
January 10, 1964

## DISPLACEMENT, SUBSTITUTION, SUPERIMPOSITION

Greetings, my dearest friends. God bless every one of you. Blessed be this hour. Blessed be every step toward growth and unfoldment each of you undertakes. To those of my friends who are already deeply involved in this path of self-confrontation I say: may your progress continue. And may those of you who have not yet stepped onto this path in a more direct way find the realization and enlightenment necessary to start the work within yourselves.

Tonight I should like to discuss a subject that has come up before but which none of you fully understand in its deeper significance: that is, displacement, substitution, and superimposition of feelings and needs. This topic deserves careful scrutiny and understanding, particularly at this time. It is essential for all of you to understand these concepts in order to make further progress. Some of you find yourselves in negative involvements you cannot fully understand and, therefore, cannot resolve -- unless this vital factor is recognized as it applies specifically to you as individuals.

Whenever a person is confused in a situation, negatively involved in a relationship, and cannot come out of a disturbed feeling in spite of certain recognitions, it is an absolute sign that some emotional needs or specific feelings have been shifted into different channels or superimposed by other feelings. No matter how deep a problem, how severe a fault, it could never create an abiding disturbance if the person were completely aware of it in its original form, without displacing the genuine feelings, substituting others, or superimposing other feelings over the genuine ones.

As you know from my previous talks, each emotion, each feeling, each thought, each attitude, each need is an energy-current. There are many different types of energy, corresponding to the type of feeling or need. The integrated individual with a full rich life expresses a variety of needs and feelings -- not just a few. The more integrated a person is, the less do the various needs interfere with one another and the less friction they cause within and outside in the life of the person. The healthy psyche requires fulfillment in many directions. The entity is destined by nature to attain this manifoldedness.

Exclusion of certain fulfillments at the expense of others is the result of erroneous, unconscious concepts, limited understanding and lack of self-awareness. For example, displacement and superimposition result in a conflict between the need for vocational self-expression and the need for mutuality in a love relationship; between the need for solitude and the need for companionship; the need for physical and mental activity; the need for sexual and creative expression; the needs for self-assertion and for flexible adjustment; the needs for ego-gratification and for unselfishness. These, and many other apparently contradictory needs and self-expressions, can harmoniously live side by side in healthy interaction only if no confusion exists as to the rightfulness and fundamental genuineness of these different forms of expression, so that no superimpositions and displacements occur. What appears as contradiction to the conflicted, blind

person is no contradiction in reality, but merely proof of the richness and variety of creation. In the healthy psyche, one type of self-expression supports and strengthens the other, rather than causing conflict.

If you believe that a need or feeling is necessarily wrong, this belief eventually makes it wrong. Uncertainty, fear, guilt and shame about the existence of a feeling you believe you should not have -- while actually suffering from thwarting that need and resenting the "necessity" to do so -- creates an unhealthy climate that makes the healthiest emotional need into something bad. This fact requires hiding, denying, repression. The existing energy does not dissolve into thin air. Like a stream, it seeks an outlet. The original energy converts into a different type -- displacement, or it changes into its opposite, due to the feeling that the original emotion or need is unacceptable.

It is very important to become aware of what may seem like two contradictory needs and to realize that they are not necessarily so, but a part of a full life. The most prevalent denial due to false guilt is in the area of receiving. Anything you wish to attain for yourself often carries with it a vague feeling that this is wrong. Because the need to receive is completely disapproved of or denied, its counterpart -- the need to give, as part of a rich, healthy, fulfilled life -- cannot grow into maturity. Denying the need to receive causes the psyche, in this respect, to remain childishly selfish, so that a one-sided greed exists. The greed may then be superimposed with a false, compulsive giving which - - just because it is superimposed and not the result of natural growth -- brings disharmony, resentment, self-pity, and invites unjust exploitation.

A good example is the need for sexual expression. I have discussed this in a different context. Due to false guilts, a person's sexuality may remain selfishly childish and is therefore unable to meld with the need to give and receive love and affection. Consequently, the need for sex is denied and superimposed with substitute needs.

Feeling erroneously guilty about the natural need to receive, automatically impairs your capacity to give -- no matter how forcefully and artificially you may practice giving in order to squelch the gnawing guilt. This impairment encourages the false assumption that wanting to receive is wrong, thereby increasing the denial, displacement and substitution. To recapitulate: unfree, compulsive, problematic giving is often the result of denying a need to receive. The latter may have grown disproportionately strong, just because it is thought wrong and bad and therefore repressed. Each individual has to specifically ascertain in what particular respect of his or her personality this holds true. By unraveling this whole process and taking cognizance of it the soul experiences great relief.

There is a particular and quite common conflict between the compulsion to give and the guilt for receiving. These two emotions may be comparatively easy to recognize. The person feels unfairly treated, exploited, victimized, resentful, while still being unable to stop the compulsion to give and the guilt for desiring to receive. He or she is faced with the unsatisfactory alternative of either giving and resenting it or receiving and feeling unfree, inhibited and guilty. He or she cannot find the way out of this predicament. If such is the case, you may be sure, my friends, that you have not faced an underlying selfish greed, nor have you fully understood that the greed is merely the result of a confusion which ignores the fact that you are entitled to receive. If this conflict is worked through, your giving will be freer, and so will be your ability to receive.

I said before that if the original fault were fully conscious, there would be comparatively little disturbance. Let us apply that truth to this particular facet of the human psyche. If a person could clearly see the childish, greedy selfishness and express it -- "Since I am so selfish that I want everything for myself, I do not deserve to receive" -- the conflict would cease, even before the greedy selfishness entirely disappeared. The mere fact of being aware of the selfishness -- and its consequent wrong conclusion of self-denial -- would enable the person to understand that while the hitherto hidden greed is unfair, the subsequent measure against it -- complete self-denial -- is equally unfair in the opposite extreme.

Whether it concerns the aspect of giving and receiving, or any other natural, legitimate need and self-expression, hidden one-sidedness often creates overt one-sidedness in the opposite extreme. This form of substituting the disapproved need or emotion with its opposite is very frequent and at the bottom of many a conflict which, in spite of various recognitions, does not dissolve.

Let us take another current problem: self-assertion. Suppose a man feels guilty about expressing his healthy, masculine aggressiveness, confusing it with unhealthy, hostile aggressiveness. He finds himself in the following predicament and conflict: he desists from expressing his natural need for masculine self-assertion in the confusion that this makes him wrong. Consequently, he emasculates himself. His weakness causes self-contempt and resentment toward others, whom he blames for the unpleasant results of his weakness. Or, he expresses aggressiveness, and because he vaguely feels that this is "unkind" or "unspiritual," he wavers. This wavering, in itself, makes the expression of self-assertion -- independence, natural healthy aggressiveness -- problematic because his own attitude toward it is uncertain, either consciously or unconsciously. In addition, his resentments -- the result of suppressing his natural aggressiveness -- now mingle with the confusion. He no longer expresses the healthy facet of aggression, but, instead, a negative version of it.

Some of my friends on the path have reached the point where they recognize that they have a conflict between two unsatisfactory alternatives: weakness versus hostility. They cannot find their way out until they realize that they denied their original need to express natural masculine aggressiveness, out of ignorance that it is a healthy need. When you give aggressiveness a right to exist, you will have no reason to feel hostile, so expressing aggression will not create guilt. You will also be able to make the distinction between the rightfulness of this need and the equal rightfulness of the need for interdependency, relinquishing, and flexibility. These latter aspects are most ardently denied by the person who weakens himself due to the above-mentioned misconception. He substitutes for the weakness and shame its concomitant -- an exaggerated "strength." He confuses flexibility, adjustability, the ability to take advice with weakness, and rigid stubbornness with strength. He constantly wavers between giving in at the wrong time and place -- because he disapproves of his aggressive tendencies -- and asserting himself where reason indicates that to do so is detrimental.

In addition to substituting the opposite trend for the one that is denied, another form of displacement is shifting a need into another channel. Wherever there is an exaggerated involvement, an involvement which disrupts inner and/or outer peace, an involvement that leaves other important functions in life unfulfilled, one may be sure that such a shift has taken place. Let us again take some illustrative examples. An overconcern with one's creative abilities hardly leaves room for other needs to be expressed, regardless of how constructive such self-expression may be in itself. Such over-emphasis may be an indication of a denied need in another area of the personality.

The resultant inner friction may only gradually become noticeable, after extensive progress in self-awareness. Tension, frustration, discontent, inexplicable hostility, overreaction -- where one sees that the intensity of feeling is not commensurate with the occasion, yet is unable to prevent it -- or numbness and impoverishment of feelings in other areas, are frequent indications of inner friction, which is the result of denying a rightful need. Outer friction with one's environment is often a further result.

There are many possible reasons for denying or ignoring the rightfulness of the original need. Whatever the specific circumstances, early influences or personal images may be, you must recognize that this original need does exist, even though you fear to acknowledge it. At earlier periods during your life the need may have clearly manifested. Now it may manifest in a displaced form. If you are truly desirous to know the truth about yourself, it will not be too difficult to synchronize the feelings of the original, denied need with the feelings of the substitute need. Doing so will bring immeasurable relief and peace.

You may be frightened of love and substitute your need for it with the expression of a talent. You ignore the fact that there is room for both -- and for many more forms of expression -- in your emotional life. Your fear of acknowledging the original need forces you to abandon a different, but equally legitimate need. You may still lack the necessary information about the inner misunderstandings and misconceptions which are responsible for your fear of love. You are afraid that you will be forced to plunge yourself into it when you recognize the existence of the need. Therefore you battle against recognizing the displacement -- or if you do recognize it, you do so only in a flat, intellectual way. You also ignore the harm you inflict upon yourself, apart from the perpetual starvation you expose yourself to.

Any unfulfillment, hurt, rejection or disappointment causes an infinitely deeper suffering in the displaced area than the suffering connected with the original need. If you are fully aware of your psyche's expression -- "I am still afraid of love. I do not yet fully understand why and therefore I am not ready to love and be loved. But I know that love is a universal need. What does its denial do to me? How do I really feel this lack? How many of my emotions involved in my substitution actually belong to the need for love?" -- your growing peace, insight, and ability to cope with issues with which you could not previously cope will prove how essential it is to live in truth. Even though you may still shirk love, you gain full possession of yourself by not shirking truth. Thus you prevent accumulating avoidable real guilts and putting yourself unnecessarily under the power of detrimental influences which encourage that in you which is so harmful.

Shifting original needs into different channels may take various forms, apart from the example cited above. Fear of love may, in other personalities, create an overemphasis, an exaggerated need for purely sexual expression. A compulsion for sex may also be a denial of one's need to assert oneself, or of one's need to develop a creative talent. An unbalanced, one-sided need for spirituality and seclusion may be the manifestation of displaced needs in any of the aforementioned respects: fear of love, sex, self-assertion, vocational expression. The fear, I repeat, is the result of ignoring that all these needs, and more, are in healthy interaction, natural and universal, and therefore no cause for guilt and denial.

A generally ignored need is that of ego gratification. The most enlightened people are under the impression that any need for it at all indicates neurosis, disturbance, immaturity. In the well-

functioning personality, the need for ego-gratification is acknowledged, but it is not exaggerated at the expense of other functions and expressions of the self. Lack of ability to give the ego its necessary gratification is a result of ignoring its healthy, unexaggerated existence. Being dependent on others who fall short of fulfilling this need is the sign that the self disregards its rightful place in the overall scheme. However, if you are able to acknowledge, "I do need some measure of approval, some degree of gratification of my ego," chances are, provided you do not feel guilty about it, that ways will begin to open affording you this fulfillment. And it will be infinitely easier to find certain factors within yourself which prohibited the fulfillment of this need, certain destructive behavior patterns you could not see, once you can guiltlessly acknowledge this need.

It is of utmost importance, my friends, to ascertain all your needs -- to what extent they are fulfilled, to what extent unfulfilled. Think about the variety of universal needs, and then see if you have given them all a rightful place. Ascertain which particular needs cause you to feel guilty and ashamed. Ascertain which needs must remain unfulfilled due to your personal images, main problems, unresolved conflicts, pseudo-solutions and idealized self-image. Look further into your personal displacements. How have you displaced your needs -- by substituting the opposite or shifting the need or denied feeling into a different channel -- and to what extent? Then look at your displacements from the opposite approach. Examine your present negative involvements, disturbing emotions, the impasses from which you cannot extricate yourself because the alternatives available to you -- both inner and outer -- are equally unsatisfying. What possible real needs are at the bottom of such a nucleus? What needs have grown disproportionately strong due to denial and false guilt?

The value of such an approach to yourself cannot be measured, my friends. I can see that for all of you it is of utmost importance to undertake this vital step. Many a lingering negative situation is the result of ignoring it. After extensive insights have been gained, your permanent personality problems and unfulfillments often require only the final application of these principles before a true, liberating transformation can take place. This process is also the best way to increase your ability to accept yourself in a spirit of realism.

Displacement and substitution occur not only with one's fundamental problems, main images, inborn conflicts, all waiting for the necessary understanding in order to be resolved, they also apply to temporary situations. After a poignant disappointment, an individual may deny a hitherto accepted need and, subsequently, shift the relevant energy into a different outlet. It goes without saying that a fundamental personality problem may, in some way, be connected with this way of reacting. Nevertheless, the displacement may not be permanent. It is of equal importance to be aware of situational displacements, otherwise permanent denial of a need and substitution may come into existence.

Such temporary displacements may occur, particularly in the course of your pathwork, as an interim phase. Let us again take an example. Suppose you have a problem with partnership, a difficulty in relating to the opposite sex. Let us further suppose that before you started to progress on this path, your pseudo-solutions, your idealized self-image, your defense mechanisms have given you some measure of fulfillment in spite of the existence of the problem. Of course, such fulfillment was limited, problematic, fraught with tension and, in the end, disappointing. It cannot be otherwise if one attempts to solve a problem by false means. Nevertheless, there was some measure of fulfillment. Progress in this work begins to dissolve to a considerable extent the pseudo-

solutions, the idealized self-image, the defense mechanisms, but the original problem may not yet be fully worked through and understood to the deepest levels of your being. Nor are you quite conscious of your needs and their rightful place in your life. Hence, in the interim, you find yourself in a transitory stage which may confuse you. You know you have grown, yet you experience a greater emptiness than before in this specific area of your life. You do not know why this is so. Your needs are now less fulfilled than before, but since you do not concisely acknowledge this fact, the energy current shifts into another outlet.

Not being aware of this original need and its present unfulfillment is bound to cause it to attach itself to another situation. Perhaps it produces a tight overinvolvement with your work, causing too many intense reactions. Or perhaps it produces an overinvolvement with a specific friendship into which you shift all the feelings and needs.

It does not suffice to be generally aware of the unfulfilled need for a mutual relationship, for a mate. You have to specifically recognize that several needs are embedded in this expression. For instance, apart from the pleasure principle, there is the need for being needed and important; the need to give and receive; the need to be protective or protected -- or both; the need for ego-gratification. All these are legitimate needs, provided they are not overgrown and one is not disproportionate to another. For example, if the need for ego-gratification in a relationship is disproportionately stronger than the need to give and receive love, affection, pleasure, such an imbalance has to be recognized and the reason found. Even where all these various partnership needs interact in a healthy way, the entire nucleus of needs might be blindly shifted into another outlet, if they are ignored in a temporary phase. All these needs might be fulfilled to a certain degree in the new, transferred area -- in a different form, of course. Being fully aware of the substitution will make the shift harmless, even healthy and necessary. But ignoring the process must create untold and unnecessary hardship and confusion.

If a boss, an employee, a person you work for, a friend or a group of people, or an activity or interest are supposed to furnish you with all the unfulfilled needs of the missing mate, you must become overintense, anxious, hostile, insecure. Every little slight, or apparent slight, will hurt much more than if you were aware of what goes on in you. Such awareness will make you joyfully accept those fulfillments that can be substituted for, without making you expect what cannot possibly be expected. You will therefore avoid disappointment and frustration.

I do not mean to imply that the pleasure principle can be displaced into another outlet in its original form -- of course not. It transforms itself. A hankering after luxuries may be such a transformation, or a craving for food and drink. Full awareness of this shift will lessen the intensity and strain, even if the displaced need has to find another outlet until it can be fulfilled in its natural way.

Let us take one more example, assuming your main problem is a difficulty in making the best of yourself. In the course of this work you have found and dissolved the idealized self-image, the pseudo-solutions, etc. Hence, the small, precarious success you had before is temporarily lessened. You now find it harder to assert yourself because the defenses no longer work, while you have not yet found the clarity to acknowledge your real needs without imagining dire consequences and creating false guilt. You now understand that your previously limited accomplishments were not a satisfactory solution. These ventures, fraught with tension and anxiety, always failed without your

really seeing why. Now you know. But you are not yet in a position to express your abilities and talents without conflict and uncertainty. It takes a little more insight and understanding before you can do so. In this interim phase, in which you find yourself more frustrated than before, the respective needs are left without any outlet. Unconsciously, you seek a substitute channel.

Again, it is important to recognize various needs connected with this one issue of vocational self-expression. Apart from the need to earn a living, which is the most obvious and most readily recognized, there are others: the need for creative accomplishment, the need for ego-gratification and self-esteem, the need for the pleasure of accomplishment, the need for carrying responsibility and coping with challenge, the need for self-assertion, as well as the need for cooperation and interaction. Provided one need is not disproportionate to the others, all of them have their rightful place and should not cause guilt. By not acknowledging these needs you will displace them onto a relationship or side-activity. As in the former example, the displacement itself cannot harm, provided you are fully aware of it. This saves you from undue overreaction, tension, frustration, and the inner disorder and imbalance which is always the result of lack of self-awareness.

Look at your present activities and relationships in this light. Ascertain any possible overreaction, lingering or frequently recurring anxiety, and other negative emotions. Then examine and deeply ponder the needs which lie behind the activity or relationship. It will then become possible to find and clearly determine the displacement. It is particularly important to ascertain to what degree you feel you ought not to have these needs, and whether or not they are distorted due to denial.

It is also essential to verify the various layers of a superimposition and substitution. The more you experience these various layers emotionally and understand their true significance, the sooner can fulfillment occur. However, unfulfillment of needs does not hurt half as much as believing, consciously or unconsciously, that frustrated needs are necessarily painful. This is one of the predominant reasons for repressing needs -- believing that thereby they will cease to exist. By repressing needs, the imagined pain of frustration is supposed to be eliminated. In reality, the displacement and substitution results in much more severe and bitter suffering than would the relaxed admission of an unfulfillment.

Let us now consider the possibility of the various layers of substitution. Originally the need exists. This is one layer. But you may -- unconsciously or vaguely half-consciously -- feel that you, as a mature and good person, ought not to have it. You therefore deny its existence. This denial is the next layer. To make the denial successful, you produce its exaggerated opposite. You not only try to convince yourself that the need is nonexistent, but you "prove" it by emphasizing the opposite. This, then, becomes compulsive. This is the third layer. As a further result, there must come resentment, dissatisfaction -- the fourth layer. As a fifth comes guilt about the resentment. As a sixth, there is confusion because all these powerful emotions cannot be dealt with. They are merely a result of denying the original need or feeling.

Displacement, as discussed here, is horizontal, as it were. One layer covers the other. Vertical displacement substitutes one form of self-expression with another.

Compulsiveness is the result of both vertical and horizontal shifts. The intensity of preoccupation resulting from such displacements applies to both forms. If you are afraid to be

rejected in love and, subsequently, displace that particular energy current into the channel of vocational success, the slightest real or imagined rejection in your career hurts infinitely more than a real rejection in your relationship.

Discussing such a topic must, of necessity, be oversimplified. When it comes to the dynamics of the human psyche, many details must be taken into consideration. It is no longer a question of clear-cut denial or admission. Awareness is often somewhere in-between -- a half-measure which is no more satisfactory than a complete lack of awareness of these processes.

If you find yourself in an involved situation, examine yourself from the point of view under discussion. Acknowledging your needs -- even though you may not yet be able to distinguish between distorted and healthy needs and emotional attitudes -- but acknowledging them for better or for worse, is bound to relieve the involved situation of surplus intensity and painfully twisted, conflicting emotions. You may try with all your might to understand a painful and involved situation by analyzing yourself and the other person, but as long as you do not find peace, you may be sure that something has been displaced.

Seeing this over and over again, to a greater or lesser degree with all of you, my friends, makes this topic especially important. Regardless of how good your will is and how sincerely you try, you still often fail to look in the right direction. Much of what I constantly tell you is forgotten when it is most needed.

I recently discussed the topic of transference. Of course, transference is also a form of displacement or substitution. But the phenomenon of transferred emotions is often not recognized in its full significance and detail. Displaced needs are transferred just as one might displace, or transfer, the feelings one originally had for a parent onto another person. In the lecture dealing with transference I said that it is necessary to determine a negative feeling toward a person which is persistent and cannot be resolved by finding that you originally felt similarly toward a parent, but did not dare to acknowledge it. The moment you allow yourself to feel the original feeling toward the parent in connection with the new person, the negatively involved situation must clear up. Meanwhile, you have grown considerably in the process of facing the truth within yourself. The identical mechanism works with displaced feelings and needs.

Are there any questions now?

QUESTION: I have the feeling that, due to my childhood, I have in me a childish greed which manifests in a need for special consideration. Am I displacing, or superimposing, this original need?

ANSWER: Yes, you are very right. You so completely denied this childish greed until recently that you went way overboard by denying yourself every gratification and fulfillment. You feel extremely guilty, not only about this still undeveloped part of yourself in which the childish greed exists, but also about the legitimate, rightful desire to receive. You feel just as guilty about the one as the other.

The fact that you can now even ask this question indicates a tremendous step forward and a vast new opening of insight into yourself, of clarification. This will prove of more crucial importance than you even realize at this moment. It is indeed a threshold.

QUESTION: In an involvement with a new person, how can one be sure that one is not transferring from a parent?

ANSWER: One can be sure only by deeply examining one's feelings and ascertaining the parallels, the similarities of reactions. But a relationship need not be shied away from because it may also contain elements of transferred emotions. Not only can one grow in such a relationship, particularly when being alert to oneself, but usually spontaneous feelings for the new person also exist, which may still make the relationship rewarding for both. To the degree one recognizes oneself, to that degree will the relationship grow more real and less a repetition of old patterns.

I would also advise that you examine your unconscious motivations with respect to this question. You might have hoped to hear that involvement with someone is indeed merely a transference and therefore no good. Such an answer might have appeared to simplify certain disturbing questions.

Although not entirely new, this topic may open more doors for my friends than the introduction of a completely new topic at this time. It is essential for all of you to work through this material.

Let me leave you with loving, warm blessings for each of you in your own way -- also for those who read this lecture. May all of you receive and feel this love, even if some of you -- due to your current problems and your involvements which make you temporarily blind -- do not realize how much I am with you and for you! Be blessed, be in peace, be in God.

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