

Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 146
1996 Edition
October 7, 1966

THE POSITIVE CONCEPT OF LIFE -- FEARLESSNESS TO LOVE -- THE BALANCE BETWEEN ACTIVITY AND PASSIVITY

Greetings, my dearest friends. Be blessed, every one of you. Blessed be this hour.

I want to talk about three topics: a positive concept of life and the universe that holds a benign fate for humanity, the freedom and fearlessness to love, and a healthy balance between activity and passivity. All these form a comprehensive whole which is the basis of harmony with oneself and with life, and thus self-fulfillment. All three depend on awakening and activating your innermost center, the core that we call the real self.

As long as the ego is the sole motivator of an individual's life it is impossible to have confidence in life's benign nature; it is impossible to be fearless about loving; and it is impossible to establish a healthy balance between activity and passivity. Let us look at this more closely.

A healthy concept of life means a truthful concept of life. And a truthful concept of life means the knowledge, the experience of life as utterly benign. Whenever you stray from truth, you must experience life as a hostile force, as something to defend yourself against. When on your path you reach the deeper regions of your innermost being, somehow you always find that negative concept of life.

There is direct interaction between your faults and a negative concept of life. This interaction always works both ways. Because you are driven and controlled by the destructive force set in motion by your negative concept of life, your negative beliefs expand even if you are hardly aware of them. And because of your negative beliefs, you take a defensive position toward life, perpetuating the destructive trend.

In the last lecture I discussed the necessity of transforming faults of character. The first step toward this transformation is always awareness of the faults. This is not easy, but not difficult either, if approached with the proper attitude. Once you are aware of your specific faults, the next step is to understand the reason for their existence, and why you cling to them. When you look objectively and deeply you will find that in each instance the fault is supposed to ward off something that you assume will happen to you. In other words, you take a negative assumption for granted.

Once you see this, you are ready to take the third step, which is to question the validity of this assumption. Is your assumption true? What would actually happen if you didn't have this fault? These questions must be precisely posed. The possibility that your assumption might be false must be seriously considered. At the same time, expand your view of the significance of the fault in question and its effect on others, whether it is expressed only in thinking and feeling or also in actual behavior. In order to truly and sincerely want to shed a fault it is essential to comprehend its effect

on others, as well as question its protective value. When you are no longer sure that the fault protects you, and possibly even see that you are harmed rather than benefited by it, when you also see the harm it inflicts on others, then, and only then, will you want to put the energy invested in the fault into a new, constructive attitude that will replace the old, destructive one.

This is how transformation must occur; rarely, if ever, does it occur any other way. It is impossible to transform something that you do not even know exists. It is impossible to transform an attitude when you do not know why you hold onto it, when you ignore its significance and its effects. As long as such ignorance, such glossing over, such vagueness exists, transformation cannot happen.

This work is impossible to accomplish without the help of the real self, which must be directly contacted and activated by the ego faculties. Without this help, the necessary energy and stamina are missing. The ego faculties must always establish a connection with the real self for the necessary vision and enlightenment.

Let us now look at fearlessness as a precondition to love. Any one of you on this path has seen at one point or another that fear of loving underlies most human predicaments and conflicts. This may take different forms with different people; even in the same person it may appear under different guises in various situations.

The whole world has generally been aware of the importance of love since time immemorial. All truth teachings postulate that love means freedom, peace, life. Lack of love means enslavement, conflict, death. It creates restlessness, anxiety, and unhappiness. Even though all important spiritual teachings, including modern science in the form of psychology and psychiatry, agree on this, people nevertheless find it so hard to give themselves wholeheartedly and fearlessly to the stream that comes from deep within. Why? The natural mode of existence is a state of love, but people manage to cover it up and contort it into many unnatural and laborious forms. These twists and turns alienate you from your center, where love is a natural, effortless stream that flows as gracefully as any natural phenomenon.

When you hinder this flow it is only because you fear it. There are many definitions of love, and you grope for these definitions on the assumption that you have to define and understand love intellectually in order to make it come into your soul from the outside. This again is a twisted and erroneous approach, for you do not need an intellectual concept or definition, and you certainly cannot produce love from the outside. Love exists in perfect form within yourself.

The only useful definition is that whatever furthers unity, inclusion, expansion, union, and manifests the benign nature of the universe, is love and perpetuates love. Whatever ignores the divine and benign nature of the universe and of life and therefore moves toward exclusion and separateness is the opposite of love.

The opposite of love is nonlife: it is various degrees of death, for there are many degrees of death, just as there are many degrees of life. Yet you fear the life, the peace, and the freedom of love and cling to the separating forces of nonlove as a protective device.

It has become increasingly urgent to comprehend this point, for the majority of my friends who find themselves successfully working on their path of self-realization have recently encountered, or will soon encounter, something they may have totally ignored until now. They have deluded themselves that they have love, or they may have vaguely experienced an inner refusal to love but never quite faced or really understood this fact about themselves. This hardly ever applies to the total personality, except for the insane. Most people have many areas where they do love and are unafraid to do so. But where problems exist in the inner and outer life, they are due to the refusal to love in certain respects connected specifically with those problems.

When you recognize this, it is often useful to compare your refusal to love with those areas where you do love. The analysis and comparison of both attitudes with their results in your outer life as well will reveal how false the fear of loving is, and how safe, secure, and beneficial it is to love. Closer inspection of the areas where you discover a determination not to love will also disclose that coupled with -- or rather causing -- the resistance is a fear to love. This realization is crucial and must not, under any circumstances, be glossed over or neglected in your self-confrontation. It is necessary that you put precisely into words, "Here, in this or that respect, I do not love, and I refrain from wanting to love because I am afraid of it."

At this point you still do not know why. You may feel consternation, you may be puzzled, you may ask yourself, "What do I fear?" Some answers may come that are partly valid but also partly glib theories that may strike you as cliched. Perhaps the answer presents itself that you are more vulnerable to hurt when you love. And yet, when you say this, it is not really convincing. When you think deeply and honestly you will have to admit that this is not true at all. Or you might come across the answer that you indulge in vindictiveness, in striking out at others and at life as a whole. This is, perhaps, a little closer to the point you need to find, which also needs to be fully recognized, accepted, and understood. But it is still not the whole story.

You cannot come to the full understanding of this discussion without the third topic. Before turning to it, however, I want to remind you that just as it is impossible to transform from a negative to a positive attitude, concept, or characteristic by the exclusive use of the ego, without help from the real self, so it is with loving. For love is not a quality that resides in the ego. The ego has other functions. It has functions of will, discrimination, and action, but it does not possess the faculty of love. Love is a feeling that comes totally from the inner being. This is why love cannot be intellectualized, conceptualized, or understood in terms of intellectual processes, as many people attempt to do. It is a feeling that must be permitted. To give the self full permission to love includes not only the realization of the inner being, but also a positive concept of life and the universe. For if it were true that life is hostile and depriving, then love would indeed be dangerous. If it is true, however, that life is benign, liberating and giving; if it is for rather than against you, love is not only safe but it is the only possible way to exist in peace and harmony with the universe.

So it is absolutely necessary, my friends, that you connect your fear of loving with your negative concept of life on the one hand, and the freedom from fear of loving with a positive, benign concept and expectation of life on the other. Even when you are in total harmony with reality and thus have abiding trust in certain areas of life, resulting in a well-developed ability to love, the impulse rarely arises to examine these areas and compare them with your unhappy life experiences, where the exact opposite holds true. This direct interaction and causal connection must be brought into awareness and should be observed as much as possible.

Only by testing can you convince yourself of the positive nature of life. Then you will abandon seclusion, separateness, hate and fear. Open yourself up, tentatively at least; give yourself the chance to experience the benign nature of life, and therefore of humanity, for both are the same.

The third member of this triad is the healthy balance between activity and passivity. Many of my friends have encountered in the course of their self-search a strange and inexplicable distaste for activity and an equally strange and inexplicable hankering for non-action. These tendencies are stronger in some people than others, but in whatever form, or to whatever degree they appear, it is necessary to understand them. This hankering for passivity means that the person feels passivity to be a desirable state. It seems to promise the state of peace many unconsciously confuse with the state of being, while the state of activity represents a chore, a difficulty you fear you cannot live up to and therefore wish to avoid. Why is this so, my friends?

First of all, it is important to understand that this is a distortion arising from duality. The error consists in confusing fragmentary aspects of the unitive state and separating them from their complementary fragments. In the dualistic mode of experiencing life, activity and passivity appear as opposites. But in the reality of the highest state of consciousness, the state of being, activity and passivity intermingle. It is equally true to say that the healthy state of activity is also passive, and that the healthy state of passivity is also active. Only on the dualistic level does this appear to be a contradiction.

This point can best be demonstrated in your immediate everyday life by reminding you that every healthy activity you undertake is relaxed, easy, and effortless, which seem to be passive qualities. In healthy relaxation the outgoing movement of action is unstrained and has the rhythm of peace, so to speak. This rhythm of peace, if it is fragmented and experienced as a particle and not as a whole, may seem like passivity.

We can also approach this concept from the other end. When you feel yourself in a healthy passive state, it is never static or motionless. In healthy passivity -- or in the state of being -- the action of movement exists in the rhythm of the universe, the same unstrained motion of peace.

The principle of active-passive balance must reign in every creative process. A creative process without the active and passive forces harmonizing, complementing, and furthering one another is unthinkable. This applies to every healthy and purposeful activity in your life on the plane of existence where you function. Even the crasser manifestations, such as the balance between work and leisure, are regulated by this principle, each of these seeming opposites containing both active and passive elements. Work coming forth from a healthy organism flows effortlessly, while leisure cannot possibly be invigorating and revitalizing if it is static. If it were totally static, it would be death, and death does not invigorate; only life does. Life must be movement, as I have said so many times.

In distortion and duality, activity appears as movement, passivity as nonmovement. Activity appears to exert strain; passivity promises relief from strain. In other words, we return to the basic duality of good versus bad. One facet seems good, desirable; the other bad, undesirable.

Activity is often experienced as undesirable because it requires a goal direction, a sense of responsibility. It requires the selfhood of a mature personality which copes with personal limitations and the difficulties of life in such a way that these limitations gradually eliminate themselves. If you are totally identified with your ego, action must be frightening because the ego is not equipped to undertake purposeful action without being motivated, carried, and guided by the real self. It simply does not have the requirements at its disposal. So when people are not in contact with the real self, no matter how much lip service they may pay it, they must fear all the demands activity makes on them. The passive, static state then seems desirable because it does not make any demands; it does not hold any fearsome expectations or obligations.

It is also true that when you identify exclusively with your ego and avoid or neglect the existence of a more universal part in yourself, you are often equally afraid of passivity. For the passive state then implies helplessness. The passive state must imply helplessness when activity is rejected, feared, and avoided, for then helplessness is a natural sequence, a direct result. If you do not act purposefully, in the best interest of the universal laws within yourself, you do become helpless; you do become a prey to circumstances beyond your control. Consequently, on one level, you often find yourself in the position of avoiding activity out of the fear that you may not be capable of fulfilling the requirements for action, while on another level you fear the passive state, too, even healthy passivity. Because you cannot distinguish between healthy and stagnant passivity, you become overactive and alienated from your real self.

With these ideas, my friends, you may see a very important connection between the negative concept of life, which also implies your innermost self, since the two are identical. If you suspect and fear your innermost self, how can you want to establish contact with it? The only solution then seems to be to concentrate all energies and forces in your outer ego-self, so that you become more and more disconnected from your innermost being and its life-giving powers. You then proceed to force yourself into a loving state, not only because you have learned that this is expected by society, but also to comply with the requirements of your innermost conscience, which can never be completely squelched. Last but not least, you do it to succeed in gaining affection, love, approval, respect, and acceptance, without which it is not possible to live.

So you force yourself to love with your ego-self, which attempt, of course, is doomed to fail. As I have said before, the ego cannot possibly give you these powers. It cannot give what it does not possess. Wherever you have genuine love currents, they come from your innermost being, whether or not you admit its existence on a conscious level. Hence these currents come into your personality almost by the back door, as it were. But when this is impossible because the door is too tightly locked, you cut yourself off from the invigoration of the life stream of love, resulting in increasing feelings of emptiness, helplessness, despair, and isolation. You then try to counteract these feelings with the laborious effort of trying to love with your ego. These efforts exhaust you, and the more exhausted you are, the more you shrink from activity, which seems an added strain to the exhausted ego. You then flee into passivity, which seems like relief and consequently becomes the desirable state. But passivity never fulfills you; it always leaves you empty, dissatisfied, and increasingly frightened, as all false solutions do. The farther you flee, the more apathetic you become, for, naturally, at this point healthy passivity has converted into its distorted form of apathy. By this time you have little invigorating life movement and action left. Anyone who has tasted such a state knows that the static lifelessness of apathy contains a much greater terror than any live hurt, pain, or unhappiness ever could.

You see, my friends, you must contact the real self and allow it to act, regardless of how doubtful, resistant or frightened you may be. This is the central point you must work on to consolidate all difficulties into one simple unifying inner movement. Without your real self it is not possible to find the abundance and wide open expansion of life that is originally and essentially available to you, where you can move and grow without threat, finding your own real being. Without activating the real self, love cannot come into you, so you not only become isolated and distrustful, but your conscience cannot ever give you rest. Even if nonlove is only a minute part of you, compared with the vast areas of your personality where you do love, your conscience will still not let you rest. This may take all sorts of forms, destroying your best interests.

When you do identify and establish contact with the inner real self, activity can be peaceful and passivity can be regenerating. When the real self is in charge, activity and passivity can meld as one unit, so that your reactions become meaningful and relaxed, and action becomes something desirable in itself. By the same token, passivity will hold no threat of helplessness, since you trust yourself and life. All this rests upon the deliberate, precise and direct activation of your innermost being.

I often hear my friends say, "Oh yes, if only I could, but I am not yet capable of wanting to contact my real self." They then proceed to wait for a miracle to happen, either from within or without, so that they will suddenly want to act constructively -- in this case activate the universal center within. They wait as though something other than their own immediately available conscious self would intervene to propel them. But this can never be. You could wait forever for the moment when you could say, "I will do it, I want to, I will try to," regardless of resistance, doubt, or fear. Explore the possibility of finding this nucleus of power, intelligence, feeling, and harmony by giving it every chance. You must commit yourself to this possibility, even if at this moment it is only a possibility. How else can it become an experienced reality? Not by theory or by anything that happens from outside or inside. You must make it happen. With this approach you will make contact possible, even if only tentatively to begin with, so your real self will gradually reveal its reality to you. This action must be the commitment on your part.

Are there any questions about this topic?

QUESTION: Is the life center one commits oneself to located in the subtle bodies or is it in the physical organs or structure? Or where is it?

ANSWER: It is in all of them. It is life itself, which transcends everything wherever it can find an opening. It cannot be, by its own nature, more in one place and less in another, for it is actually not a fixed spot. In your illusory vision of time, space, and movement, the life center seems to be located deep within the solar plexus. This is not a complete illusion in the sense that this is actually where it manifests most noticeably, but only because this is where you are most receptive, most vulnerable, and most open. It actually flows through every layer of your organism, through everything that constitutes your total entity, provided, of course, it is both activated and not obstructed by the organism. To the extent it is not activated, it cannot reach the outer layers of your personality. In physical sickness, the body remains inactive for some time in the places affected by illness, due to corresponding mental and emotional blocks, distortions and misconceptions.

When you are sick in your outlook, in your attitudes, and therefore in your life, the real self is blocked off and its emanations cannot penetrate those psychic areas. One can then say that it does not reach the outer personality levels and it is then found only in the depth of the spiritual subtle body. This is why, years ago, when my friends started on this path, I said that you must first penetrate the mask self that hides your destructive attitudes. You are so afraid to do so because you think this destructive self is your ultimate reality, and the only good exists in your facade. Only when this first battle is won can the destructive currents be let out so they can reconvert into their original form, the hidden real self, which then begins to manifest.

This is the only way the real self can become a reality. It can then surge through the outer personality levels and heal the distortions. A totally self-realized person will be enlivened by the real self on all levels, physical as well as emotional and mental.

QUESTION: I have reached the point where I meditate to activate the real self in order to get love to come through, having found my misconception about spirituality and the physical body. But it is still dead. I have not been able to activate it.

ANSWER: This is quite natural, my friend. Do not forget how deeply indoctrinated this fear is in you. How many years already in this lifetime, not to speak of any others, have you conditioned yourself to a pattern of reaction, to an orientation and a way to operate, which cannot be broken suddenly? This goes even deeper than you are aware of. You have just recently reached the first inklings of this fact, which is a tremendous victory on your path. Little by little you will begin to realize how much deeper this fear is ingrained in you. You will become aware of more specific reasons for this fear, in addition to the reasons that you already know which you will experience on a deeper level. As you do so, little by little, the heavy wall, the thick fog, the mazes of confusion that covered the real self with its strong, wonderful feelings, will dissolve. You have already gained some preliminary insight into this fear, and this insight will increase as you observe your reactions when you utter the wish to feel love in your whole person, also in your physical body.

QUESTION: You relate death to a lack of love. How can you then explain physical death?

ANSWER: The manifestation of physical death in this sphere of human existence is precisely the result of duality. Duality is a result of erroneous concepts. Error means, in the last analysis, a misunderstanding of life and of the universe. Therefore the individual believes life to be dangerous, hostile, a force against which one needs to defend. This defense must exclude all attitudes of openness, inclusion, movement toward the other -- that is, love. When this movement is lacking, stagnation, stasis and nonlife ensue -- that is, death.

Error equates with nonlove. Nonlove is directly opposed to life as it really is, in its potential, in its waiting readiness to unfold whenever it is allowed to, wherever appropriate and truthful concepts do not block the way. This life is a continuum, an eternally moving process, that can be sensed only when the personal psyche follows its own life-movement. This is a mathematical equation.

QUESTION: I can see that, but I know that I am destined to die, even if I am able to love.

ANSWER: No, this is a matter of degree. Humans are an interim stage of evolution. The entity does not come from a state of total nonlove where there is a very small amount of life. Inorganic life would be closest to that state of life with no love. Total love, on the other hand, where there is no longer any split, any division, any false concept, is where the universal consciousness is completely realized. Where there is no duality, there is no life versus death. To get there the human entity has to go through very slow stages of evolution.

QUESTION: In my work on the path I found out that I never loved anything or anyone; my only way of loving is neurotic. Listening to your lecture, I am interested to find my real self in this respect. Can you give me some help?

ANSWER: I would advise you to ask yourself specifically to what extent you believe that life is against you, so that you do not dare to love. Put down the very specific ideas you have. In what particular respects do you assume that life is against you.

QUESTION: In all ways.

ANSWER: Nevertheless, it does not suffice to admit this so generally, for that is not quite accurate either. It has to be made specific. After this is done, look at the written statements, then begin to wonder. Tell yourself, "Maybe I am mistaken, maybe it is not that way." You have to make allowances for the possibility that you may be mistaken. So often people remain in a bottleneck on their path because they do not move away from the wrong conclusion. They have found it, they know in principle that it is wrong, but they remain with it, telling themselves, "This is the way I feel," waiting to feel differently without any effort on their part. But resolution can come only when you seriously question your conclusions and admit that things could be different. You must challenge an assumption, once it is put into precise words, such as "I expect life to be this or that way, at least as far as I am concerned." Then you make room for truth that could never enter into the closed chambers of your dark, dismal misconceptions about life and your own innermost nature.

QUESTION: We have all lost a friend recently who was very close to this work. I wonder whether we could be in touch with him, somehow?

ANSWER: The important thing is not being in touch with any specific individual in the nonphysical world, but that all beings, wherever they are, are in touch with that center of the innermost self that is universal. Everything else falls into place and unifies those who reach out in love. To establish contact that way is not necessary, nor really helpful for anyone concerned. It shifts the emphasis from what is important to something that is really unimportant. I know that some people may be disappointed with such an answer and may erroneously believe that this is a rebuff or a lack of concern. My response seems denying because the concept they still have about life and the self is not geared to a universal understanding as yet. Eventually they will see that there is really more truth and more love in putting the emphasis on all that furthers the contact with the one and only thing that matters: self-realization. Then love between individuals happens healthily and naturally, in the best possible way. Contact with people who are no longer in the body cannot be a really fulfilling venture, ever. It must lead in some fashion to escape from the very emphasis that is so important. It is often sought to alleviate doubt and pain, but it never really does so in a genuine and lasting way.

QUESTION: But wouldn't contact give strength to the deceased person?

ANSWER: No, no. People who are oriented toward striving and growth will have all the contact necessary in their own world. The same laws exist there as here. When you do not want to reach out beyond your limitations and erroneous concepts, no one in the world can help you. You know this perfectly well. But the moment you do, help comes from all sides. Why should this be different in another dimension of consciousness? Love gives strength, and this can be extended and expanded no matter where individuals are. For that a manifest contact is not necessary.

May the love and the strength and the truth expand in you, in your own innermost being. To the degree that you let this happen you will be susceptible to the love and the strength and the truth that comes from others to you, that is in the air around you, in the air you breathe. Your gaze will change. Your realizations and perceptions will change to the degree that the love and the strength and the truth from your innermost being unite with those of others. Be in peace. Be in truth. Be in yourself!

Edited by Judith and John Saly

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