

Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 235
1996 Edition
November 19, 1975

THE ANATOMY OF CONTRACTION

Greetings and blessings, my very dearest friends. Love and truth envelops all of you here in this room. May this lecture tonight, in spite of the human obstacles, help you to realize more and more of your innermost being and to actualize it.

The path is a spiral movement. You know this. You have heard this and experienced it. Each round of the spiral is a new layer, and at the entrance of each round a new and deeper commitment needs to be made. The rounds or circles are not closed, they have openings. As you discover a new opening, you need to make a new commitment, on a yet deeper level: to let go and to let God; to give all of yourself to the truth -- to the truth of being -- to no longer hide from your truth. This truth can have many different facets. It is up to you to find which particular inner condition you are called upon to face and to alter, if necessary. Each entrance to a circle represents such a phase of renewal of commitment on a deeper level.

Often you do not know which particular aspect of your personality your inner, organic path calls you to deal with. As long as you grope, perhaps without even knowing it, you will feel beclouded and your life will seem to contract into a crisis. This is a period of testing that gives you the opportunity to find what it is you need to know, see and change -- where a new commitment needs to be made. Without the momentary darkening you may never feel motivated to undertake the necessary search. The moment you find and understand the meaning of this period, this phase on your path, and experience it as a meaningful piece that fits into the whole picture, you will have passed the test; you will have the information available from your innermost being; you will be able to make the commitment specifically where and how it needs to be made, so as to shed old bad habits of thinking, feeling, reacting, willing and being. In that moment, you have entered a new round on your spiral and find yourself on a deeper circular motion, leading to the treasure of your inner universe.

On the outermost level of the spiral configuration, you experience life as disconnected. Occurrences seem to have no meaning. Everything seems arbitrary. You may feel occasional happiness and fulfillment, or gratification of your desires, yet this never relieves the inner anxiety that you are a helpless straw in the wind, living in a world without rhyme or reason. Fulfillment comes to you as haphazardly as tragedies and crises -- or so it seems to you.

At this stage in your consciousness you are so far removed in your consciousness, from inner causes that you experience the effects as chaotic coincidences. This is the reason why even if you do have your desires fulfilled, even if you live in health and material security, you feel much less secure and much more frightened than when you have reached deeper circles on the spiral of growing consciousness and go through a period of confusion, darkness, or crisis. Then you may already understand the meaning of this period and therefore feel a deep security in the meaningfulness of it

all. Happiness that appears to be random contains no security. In that state, you always fear to lose the happiness, and when you do lose it, the loss -- like the previous happy state -- has no meaning or connection with a deeper sense of life.

As you progress into deeper levels on the spiral and enter into new commitments to your God and to your truth, little by little you see that there is meaning in the daily occurrences. You find connections that give an intrinsic sense to your life. As you perceive this in the very practical matters in your life, cosmic reality opens up to you. Further, deeper layers of the spiral rounds then take on a light and an experience of bliss that cannot exist unless you make the forever renewed commitments about specific issues on the new levels. It is up to you to find them. When you arrive at a new entrance on the spiral it seems often difficult and fraught with tests. Yet the tests are necessary. Without them you cannot find the deeper meaning of everything that happens in your life, personally and generally. As you see the meaning, so does your security increase.

Tonight's lecture is about the anatomy of contraction. Many years ago -- in your earthly time dimension -- I gave a lecture about the principles of expansion, contraction, and what I called static principle. It will be important for you, my friends, to remember that lecture, or to reread it, so that tonight's lecture will have more meaning for you. I will specifically concentrate on the principle of contraction because there is so much misunderstanding, so many misconceptions, about this principle in your world of duality. You imagine that contraction is negative, bad, while expansion is positive and good. While this may be true on certain levels, it is not true in itself. There is a specific spiral configuration that applies to the development of your soul in this respect.

In the very early stages of the development of a human consciousness, the states of expansion and contraction are both equally painful and negative. As the soul begins to evolve and grow, it enters a new spiral phase or round. On that level, expansion may become positive and contraction negative. Gradually the movement changes again, and on a different level, or even simultaneously, this can be reversed. Expansion can then have a negative manifestation and contraction a positive one. In still further evolutionary states, both expansion and contraction become positive.

Let me show you how expansion and contraction can be both positive and negative. This is something that you do not understand yet. You do understand quite clearly that in the positive manifestation of expansion the outgoing movement is reaching, giving, making yourself available for further beautiful states of consciousness. It is highly volatile creative expression, it is active and aggressive in the best sense of the word. It means penetrating into new realms of being, giving forth from the inner riches, and eliminating walls of separation. It implies courage and strength. It is an active force that propels itself outward. On the universal level it is the force that penetrates and enlivens the void.

What would be the negative facets of expansion? When expansion manifests as negative aggression, as a hostile, conquering force that disregards others, it creates more separation rather than less, and thus contrasts with positive expansion.

Contraction is negative when there is a tight holding back, a cramp, a refusal to flow and give out. This form of it is very familiar to you. It is a seeking of safety through isolation and separateness. It is a movement reaching inward that is motivated by fear, distrust, ungenerosity, and false ideas about what is safe and what is not safe. It contains itself in one's own inner world, but

not for the purpose of bringing out the riches of the inner world so as to spread them out, as is the case with positive contraction, but rather in a refusal to move, reach, love, trust, and give out.

Contraction in its positive form has a beautiful, beautiful meaning. It is an in-gathering of all the forces; what has occurred in the expanded state is being gathered back into the self. It is being digested, assimilated. It means reaching into the depths of your infinite divine reality to bring out the treasures of the deepest aspects of the self. Expanding means letting this flow out into the world, but to be able to do so, positive contraction must occur first. Expansion means gathering the riches of divine creation in the inner universe and then bringing them into the outer universe. Contraction means gathering the riches of the outer universe and then bringing them into the inner.

So you see, my friends, two movements are involved here. The expanding outgoing movement brings out what has been collected and ripened in the positive contracted state. The positive contracted state means bringing to fruition what has been gathered in. It is a renewed delving into the deepest layers of divinity. In this state, that which was brought into the soul during the expansive period merges with what is ready to come out next. It is a meeting of two movements within the soul, simultaneously digesting and assimilating the former period and preparing the following one.

The in-gathering movement in its positive manifestation bears no resemblance to the negative contraction. There is no fear or distrust, no ungenerosity, there are no false safety measures. It contains much rather a love just as pure as does the positive expansion. It is a going into the self for the purpose of serving the universal creative process harmoniously and bringing it to fruition. Could this possibly be designated as negative?

In positive contraction you gather from without, like a wave that rolls back into itself, so as to reach in and bring out, only to move outward again. This is the ever-present pulsation of life, to be found in all creation, in every creative process. Nothing can be created without the threefold interaction of the expanding, contracting and static principles, be it a small object of the simplest form, or the creation of worlds and universes, material or spiritual realities.

Of course, it is all one universe -- without as within. But the movement must make the exchange. From the human vantage point the inner universe offers different kinds of riches and states than the outer. The inner universe offers the material that has to be utilized and brought out into the outer universe so that the outer universe can be given form. The outer universe only repeats what exists in the inner universe in an as yet undifferentiated form. Then the outer universe recreates itself, duplicates the inner forces and the manifestations of the inner universe, and brings back these forces to nourish the inner. Thus the inner and outer universe nourish each other, back and forth.

As you know, there must be a momentary pause between every alteration of expansion and contraction. We call it the static principle for lack of a better word. Static must not be thought of in the sense of stagnation. It is static rather in the sense of allowing to rest, allowing the process to ripen, so that after each contraction that restful ripening phase must set in.

This threefold principle exists in every phase of creation. Creation is unthinkable without all three aspects. Yet in your consciousness you associate the expanding principle with the creative

movement, while you perceive the contracting principle as destructive. You ignore the existence and importance of the static principle. This is a mistake. So your mind becomes fixed and closed to the truth. When the contracting principle expresses itself, you judge yourself according to your preconceived idea that contraction is something undesirable and bad and should not be allowed. Consequently you prevent yourself from going through the total creative movement in a state of loving comprehension, welcoming what unfolds, going with it, aiding it with your mind and will. Instead, you obstruct the process with your ideas and your attitude. For as you believe, so must you experience. If you believe contraction is bad, you will experience only its negative facets and will fail to see that these very manifestations you consider negative have a tremendous meaning and sense, most necessary and beneficial for you and, indeed, most positive.

Your false idea that contraction is negative makes you misjudge one aspect of the threefold creative principle. You focus only on what is negative, which is often a most superficial facet, disconnected from the whole. This limited focusing eliminates the possibility to experience anything other than what you already see and believe. You lose sight of its regenerative, benign nature and meaning. The same is true, in reverse, for the expanding principle: you seldom recognize in a negative aggression the negative manifestation of the expansive movement.

There are many overlapping, intermingling spiral movements within the manifestation of this principle. One level of your personality may need, in any given phase of your development, to expand. But for the expansion to be truly meaningful and cohesive with the overall plan, a simultaneous contraction on another level has to take place. This may seem complicated at the moment, but you will understand, you will see that this is extremely important. If you do not fully give yourself, in the most positive spirit, to the contraction of one aspect of your personality, the expanding on the other level cannot be wholesome. The expanding movement can manifest harmoniously and in a meaningful pattern on one level only when the other level gives in to the contraction and derives most benefit from it.

Until you have reached a certain state of self-awareness through the process of purification and transformation, you are totally unaware of this simultaneity of two levels, where on one level expansion, on the other contraction exists. You only connect with the level that is most on the surface and ignore any other ongoing movement and reality within you. But as your consciousness increases, you become aware of this double, and apparently contradictory, manifestation. When this happens, it is indeed a wonderful awakening that indicates a connection with more levels of reality. It also means that you can perceive and trust these other levels, which makes the level of manifestation so much easier to deal with. It sheds a new light on everything you experience. A true balance will be established in that way.

It is necessary therefore that you cease seeing your contractions as bad. You hinder yourself in that way, you blind yourself, and then really make it into a negative manifestation. In this blindness you contract about your contractions, as it were, and then it becomes a self-perpetuating contraction. And that of course is indeed undesirable and unwholesome. But when you derive the full meaning from your contracted state, it will no longer be a negative manifestation. It will be a harmonious in-gathering in which something new prepares to come out of you, in which the receptive principle alternates with the active principle.

Here is another idea for you: You think in terms of the active principle always being the active principle and the receptive principle always being the receptive principle. This is not so. What is on one level of manifestation the active principle must then reverse itself, if it is to be harmonious, and become the receptive principle, and vice versa. When you sense the flow and the meaning in the spiral movement of the contraction and the expansion harmoniously, you will see what was, in one moment and in one phase the outgoing, the active principle, become in the next moment the receptive one, and again, vice versa. This is then harmony, the harmony of life.

Contraction is as necessary as expansion. It is part of the pulsatory movement that infiltrates all of life. Without this, creation cannot exist. I invite you, my friends, to sense deeply into yourselves, where and when and how is your contraction part of your creative process, how can you encourage it, and how you can then utilize it for the next expanding movement. Sense in yourself how both create, and are necessary to unfold your innermost being. You want to bring out your innermost being, for it is the ultimate reality.

Many new levels of life experience will open themselves up to you as you proceed into this path, as you follow the harmony of expanding and contracting and letting it ripen in-between and reaching out and reaching in, nourishing the reaching out from within, and nourishing the reaching in from without. This is the dance of life. Feel the reality and the music of these words -- not so much in your intellect, but feel them in your deeper consciousness. As you train your positive will to no longer deny the courage to believe in the best in you and the best in life, so will you be carried by the larger force of that which is the ultimate you, that goes beyond the little intellect with which you are so used to govern your precarious safety. Much greater safety comes when you have the courage to believe in the best -- not with wishful thinking, not in fear of the bad, but in the strength that there is nothing in you that you cannot see and face and go through, that there is only light at the end of each such tunnel.

As you do this increasingly, you will see that what seems like a negative manifestation is the blessing of the next level that swims to the surface.

I will now give the force, and then I will answer some questions.

Before making your commitments, I say to all of you here, the force is particularly strong this time. This is a manifestation very much in keeping with the topic of this lecture. The outer physical manifestation is weak and contracted. The inner evolving life is stronger than ever.

* * *

Because this lecture was short, we print some of what followed.

PATHWORKER: I ask for the force tonight to help me uncover my inner feelings and discover my heart. For years I have been repressing them and now that I want them, I find it difficult to know them. I ask for the force and for God's help.

GUIDE: You need to believe in yourself, in the forces that are within you and let them melt into the forces given you now. You will need to know from your innermost being how much beauty and life and experience is waiting for you, and I give you the force. You are being blessed.

PATHWORKER: This lecture points very much to where I am in this ingathering contraction of rest. My defenses against my sexuality and my denial of the baby in me are slowly breaking apart on a very deep level since I have made the commitment to go deeper into my body, to accept it and to love it. I see now that I have taken the first step on the bridge I want to cross. My body is feeling the struggle between the old and the new. The old is stubborn and hard to move, and the new desperately wants to change. It is frightening and painful, but I know I will win and I pray for that. So I would like the force to strengthen the new and to weaken the old. I want that baby to grow up into a beautiful woman who can claim her full sexuality and experience the joy and the pleasure of it.

GUIDE: It will indeed be so if you wish it with all your heart. And I say to you it will be very helpful if you conduct a dialogue, again and again, between the old and the new and learn to love that part that you have hated and rejected and use its positive forces and unite with it. First the inner uniting must take place before the total flow and force of your sexuality can unite with another entity. Make peace within yourself, stop hating yourself, learn to love yourself.

You received the force. You are blessed. Go in peace.

Everything I say to these individuals can of course also be useful for many others and can be a force-giving and a force-bringing element in all of you.

PATHWORKER: The lecture tonight struck me very deeply and is also an indication of where I am. I ask for the force tonight because I feel apprehension about this new phase on this new spiral round. I come up for trial in two weeks. I ask for the force to be able to face the apprehension that I feel mounting and to be able to give in to my fear that has many aspects and that I'm just beginning to get in touch with. One of these is the violence and rage that you have told me about here before and that I'm just beginning to see and feel in myself. It's a place in me that I have denied for a long time. I feel it loosening now inside of me and surfacing. I ask for the strength to be able to confront this place in myself and find the strength to go into and through the fear of my violence. I know that I need to do physical work, and work on many levels. I ask for the strength and the help and the guidance to be able to do this.

GUIDE: As I give you the force, I say to you: Let out the strength that first, on the most superficial level, manifests as violence and rage. Courageously express it with your physical being, but express it with a joyous welcoming receptive attitude toward it, knowing that this is your true strength, only manifesting in a distorted way -- for a fraction of a second in cosmic time. And you can use this beautiful strength as the potential of power in the best sense of the word. It is the love power, the creative power with which you can shape and mould your life. You see, this is the attitude you need to cultivate. It is a step of courage: "Oh yes, here is my strength!" And perhaps it will only be a question of minutes in the form of rage, violence, cruelty. Very soon, in this attitude of welcoming, positive expectancy, you can express the same strength in the great hallelujah to your life, to yourself, to God, and to your beautiful unfoldment. For that I give you the force. The force has been given, you are blessed, go in peace.

PATHWORKER: I have felt ever since I joined the Pathwork, and more intensely the last few months, how I really don't want to know the truth about myself or about anything else. This

refusal to look at the truth manifests in confusion, in lying to myself and to others, to alienation from myself and from others, and in a very strong, intense resistance to meditation and prayer. I have been experiencing lately a lot of feelings of hopelessness and desolation which I know, at least intellectually, as states of unreality and distortion. And I feel very much that this refusal is an expression of the words "I won't" to life, to giving, to changing, to taking responsibility for myself as a woman. Along with all of this I'm also in touch with a part of me that does deeply want to know the truth about myself and that wants to acquaint myself with my lower self and my higher self without exaggerating or belittling either one. And I ask for the force to help me sustain my commitment, to look into myself for the truth, to going through whatever emotions and experiences I need, in truth, and to travel into the place where I can say, in truth, that I want to devote my life to living and working according to the will of God.

GUIDE: I give you the force and say to you, as a suggestion, learn to say the positive commitment you have just expressed: "I will face the truth. I am divine manifestation. I can completely unify with this. I can give my best to life and receive the best from life." The more you say this with affirmation and mean it the more this is going to be. The courage to mean it, that is the step to take. It will become your reality. As you say it and mean it and state it, strongly, joyfully, believably, so it will be. Only then can it be thus. I give you the force.

You have received the force, and it will take its effect. You are blessed.

My dearest friends, all of you on this beautiful path are also entering now into a new spiral round of beautiful unfoldment. Many, many more of you are ready to experience this deeper, more beautiful reality of life, where you are carried by a benign and meaningful force, reality, entity -- call it what you will. You are being carried by something so strong, so true, so connected with all of life, so meaningful and joyful, that you need courage to let yourself see what is already here and not slide back into focusing your gaze on all the negativities and hopelessness, seeing only what is life-denying, and not seeing where your life already expresses a much higher reality. This reality is not wishful thinking, this is not escapism, this is seeing and dealing with what is distorted and what needs to be acknowledged by your consciousness.

I say that when you have done this honestly, again and again, there comes a time when your manifestations have a different meaning, when you no longer have to wallow in the negative. Have the courage to see how beautiful your life already is and how more and more of it unfolds, rolling endlessly, like the waves of the sea.

Now, are there any questions?

QUESTION: I would like to ask a question that has to do with the Center. We are in the middle of a very complicated transactional situation in relation to acquiring the rest of the property in our Center. Would you like to comment primarily upon the complexity of this transaction, about the complexity that is preventing a clear and direct solution.

GUIDE: You see, my friends, the trouble is that I do not see it as so complex. (Laughter.) What seems to you humans so complicated and complex is often nothing but the necessary outpicturing of doubts, fears, negativities, negation and denial, in the personal and the collective.

But it is not so complicated. If you trust and do your best and just struggle a little bit with it, everything will flow, as it actually already does.

QUESTION: May I ask another question, in relationship to the lecture? Could you give any kind of an idea about the rhythmical state of the expansion, contraction and the static? In terms of our time, does it have many rhythms?

ANSWER: Yes, yes, each aspect has a different rhythm -- aspects of the individual, and aspects of the collective consciousness; aspects of the universal consciousness. In your own personal lives the development of one single quality has a different rhythm and timing than the development of another quality. And even the same quality may have different phases. This is the overlapping I mentioned before. So there is a constant interchange. When the development is harmonious, it makes a beautiful tune. There is a harmony, all these different spirals and pulsatory nuclei create a different note in the symphony of life.

All right, my dearest friends. Perhaps you can sense that through this manifestation on the physical level in this instrument, a new power, a new force is preparing itself. You could perhaps taste it and sense it in this meeting. You are all blessed, my loved ones.

* * *

This most poetic lecture was given in whispers, over the microphone. Eva decided to give it in spite of her severe laryngitis. The Guide referred to her condition during the lecture and indicated that this physical weakness was a new opening for her and that a new and more powerfully benign force will bless the Pathwork. The room was truly bathed with more powerful energy than ever.

At the end of the lecture Eva shared with us the anxiety she had felt prior to going into trance. She had hesitated before giving this lecture, fearing that her laryngitis would make it difficult if not impossible. But her inner voice urged her to go ahead; that it would be all right; that she shouldn't fear. She trusted and gave us this most beautiful gift. "I never felt happier in my life," she said, coming out of the trance. We all expressed our gratitude, and told her that throughout the lecture we sent her energy and love.

For information to find and participate in Pathwork activities world wide, please write:

The Pathwork® Foundation
PO Box 6010
Charlottesville, VA 22906-6010, USA
Call: 1-800-PATHWORK, or
Visit: www.pathwork.org

The following notices are for your guidance in the use of the Pathwork® name and this lecture material.

Trademark/Service Mark

Pathwork® is a registered service mark owned by The Pathwork Foundation, and may not be used without the express written permission of the Foundation. The Foundation may, in its sole discretion, authorize use of the Pathwork® mark by other organizations or persons, such as affiliate organizations and chapters.

Copyright

The copyright of the Pathwork Guide material is the sole property of The Pathwork Foundation. This lecture may be reproduced, in compliance with the Foundation Trademark, Service Mark and Copyright Policy, but the text may not be altered or abbreviated in any way, nor may the copyright, trademark, service mark, or any other notices be removed. Recipients may be charged the cost of reproduction and distribution only.

Any person or organization using The Pathwork Foundation service mark or copyrighted material is deemed to have agreed to comply with the Foundation Trademark, Service Mark and Copyright Policy. To obtain information or a copy of this policy, please contact the Foundation.