

Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 68  
An Unedited Lecture  
June 24, 1960

## SUPPRESSION OF POSITIVE AND CREATIVE TENDENCIES; THOUGHT PROCESSES

Greetings, my dearest friends. I bring you divine blessings. Blessed is this hour.

I promised that tonight's discussion would approach the human personality from a slightly different angle, and this is only fitting for the last lecture of the season. Let us consider tonight's talk not only as the end of the past term, but also as a preface to the work to be done in the new working season.

In the past, first I discussed certain general factors in the universe, the creation, and the part played in it by the human entity. This brought out the importance of personal development and purification. The second phase of my lectures dealt with the obstructions in the human soul due to conscious or unconscious misconceptions, wrong conclusions, deviations -- in short, the images which cause conflict and unhappiness. In other words, we dealt with the healing of the sick part of the human soul. Such healing occurs when the personality learns to face his errors, faults, and selfishness, which are for the most part suppressed. When these suppressions come to the surface and are understood in their significance as to why they are based on erroneous assumptions, the realistic and true concept can gradually be built into the psyche. Thus the former phase of our work dealt mainly with facing the suppressed negative aspects of the human personality.

But this phase is by no means all that is necessary to unfold and develop the personality to its maximum capacity. Man does suppress not only negative aspects, but positive and creative tendencies as well. Our aim is not only to cure or heal the sick part of the soul, but it is of equal importance to encourage growth and unfoldment of that in you which is striving for fulfillment, which ought to be but was not allowed to express. Needless to say, that suppression of the negative inevitably also causes suppression of the positive. It is evident that the presence of destructive tendencies based on wrong conclusions in the unconscious causes the prohibition of the constructive and creative in you. Therefore we shall certainly go on treating the deviations in you as we have done so far. The introduction of a new approach does not mean that the past approach will now be discarded. Quite the contrary, it will often be necessary to continue searching and finding these destructive images in all their aspects and variations. I do not think any of you believe that this part of the work is concluded.

But at the same time, we will add this new approach in which we shall search for the suppressions of positive and creative tendencies as they clamor for expression in your own individuality in a manner not necessarily corresponding to ideas of your environment. You may wonder why positive aspects should be suppressed. You may think this makes no sense, that only the negative is unpleasant to face and therefore needs to be suppressed. But this is not so. Just as frequently as you suppress the more unpleasant, you also suppress the most creative, the most

constructive aspects in you, those that would lead you to personal growth as befits your own personality. For, upon closer analysis, you have surely noticed that all misconceptions and images contain your faults since the faults in themselves are wrong conclusions.

You will come to see how often you discourage the best in you, not only due to wrong motivations but also because it is or seems to be discouraged by your environment. The last lecture about shame of the higher self is a very general and universal part of this subject. We gradually prepared you for the phase to come with this lecture. But apart from such universal conditions, there are many very personal, individual suppressions that have nothing to do with good or bad, right or wrong. What may be wrong for another person may be the very thing for you. But you do not know it. You think you have to do, think, feel, act, and express in a way generally prescribed by your environment. One of the most common diseases of mankind is its tendency to generalize and standardize. This has more far-reaching effects than you realize. It also affects your own psyche by suppressing your personal unfoldment, creativity, and expression. This may manifest in a particular way of life not of your choice because your environment seems to disapprove of your own way. In reality, there is not only nothing wrong with your way. It may even be that this particular way of life is what your soul needs most in order to attain its maximum growth. This way of life may apply to many things. It may mean that you suppress a talent, an activity that affords your soul the maximum development. It may apply to a seemingly unimportant detail of the way you would want to live, but this apparent insignificant detail may be more important for you than you realize. For the whole of your personality is influenced by many seemingly unimportant details. By now, you may no longer be aware of what it is that you do not dare to want or to do. By freeing yourself of your deviations with all their negative motives, you will be able to bring the positive suppressions to the surface and view them in the proper light, as you have learned to do with the negative suppressions.

Apart from these individual and very personal suppressions of your most creative forces, there are some universal, general ones such as outlined in the lecture about the shame of the higher self. Another of these general suppressions to be found in every soul is the suppression of spiritual unfoldment. This may no longer apply to you outwardly, but you may still find aspects of it within the depths of your being. If man denies himself the expression of his spiritual nature, he damages himself just as much as when he suppresses any other manifestation of the life force. Although you may now give yourself the right to express your spiritual nature, you may certainly not have done so in the past. And it will be important to learn why. It will also be important to find how much defiance was required to do so; how much rebellion caused you to do that for which you should not need either defiance or rebellion; how much fear and shame still lingers regarding this facet of your personality, especially towards certain people. All this is important to recognize. You may already surmise that the interaction between suppression of the negative and the positive aspects is often quite strong. Your dependency on public opinion and approval applies therefore not only to your faults, your selfishness, and your destructiveness which causes you to form images in your unconscious mind, but it also causes you to forfeit the best part of your nature. And the latter makes you suffer just as much as the former.

When I speak of the urge for the expression of your spiritual nature, organized religion is seldom the answer, especially not in your time. But even in former times, organized religion could accomplish but little. Like most human institutions, it was affected by the human tendency to generalize and standardize, to make rules and dogmas supposed to hold true for all beings. Although this holds true for certain crass modes of conduct relating to crime and the upholding of

social laws for the good of the community, man's personal spirituality is an eminently private affair. The maximum growth of one human being may be based on entirely different spiritual factors and ways of life and expression than the maximum growth of another person. Organized religion does not take this into account. Nor do the various modern substitutes for religion. The only way man can learn to express this important side of his nature is by such work as we are doing -- by recognizing the factors that cause you to suppress your own individuality with all its manifestations.

The expression of your own divine nature cannot be fitted into standard rules, regulations, and dogmas, no matter how ethical they may be. They can only show right outer conduct and never right inner conduct. In former times, man's spiritual nature was often hindered by the general rules of his creed. In modern times, man's spiritual nature is hindered by new dogmas, such as the materialistic philosophy of life. Whenever man bends to the rules of his society at the expense of suppressing his own individual spiritual unfoldment, his soul begins to suffer and lose direction.

When you are born into this life, you carry within yourself your own individual life plan. In order to fulfill it, your psyche clamors demandingly that you proceed in a certain direction. When you deny this inner call, be it for the reason of deviations, images, wrong conclusions, or be it because you believe the right thing to do is what is proclaimed by your environment, the consequences are that the maximum growth of your personality is gravely thwarted.

Just as man often ignores the difference between love and sentimental weakness or masochistic dependency -- thereby withdrawing from love -- so does he ignore the difference between true, individual spirituality and the escape into a pseudoreligion out of weak motivations. This lack of discrimination has serious consequences for the human personality.

The lack of awareness as to where your innermost self wants to lead you, and as to why your outer self does not listen to this voice is just as much cause for personality disturbances as the suppression of the negative aspects. It will be our aim in the work ahead to approach this facet of your personality. It will be an additional consideration in connection with the work we have been doing so far. This is of supreme importance. It will also have a more joyful character for you. For it is not always pleasant to face your faults, your childish selfishness, and your various misconceptions. It becomes a liberation after full understanding, but until such time, your unconscious resistance and struggle against such recognition often impairs your joy in the work. It is true that you may also experience a certain sadness when discovering that you did not heed the inner voice that would have brought you the fulfillment you did not consider as right. It is also true that despite your wanting the right goal and having the pure motive of soul, your negative tendencies played a role in your not listening to the voice of the innermost self. A certain amount of such resistance might also persist in this phase of the work. But on the whole, it will certainly be easier to search for suppressions which you now know have a full right of expression. What you vaguely felt was wrong and had to be concealed, you will find is now part of the best in you, or it will bring you to your best -- your individual fulfillment in the highest spiritual and emotional sense. Even what you may have felt guilty about, you shall be able to embrace in joyful recognition. It will lead you a step closer to being the person you are meant to be.

In order to unfold the human personality in its entirety, it is also necessary to approach this development from still another angle. For a long time, we were preoccupied with the emotional side of your nature. Again I say, any new approach does not mean the lessening of efforts in that

direction. You are all fully aware by now of the importance of the unconscious emotions, and we shall use any new approach as additional help yielding other benefits in the unfoldment of the personality. In addition to working on your psyche and your unconscious, your emotions and feelings, we shall also pay attention to the thought process in man. There really is not a strict and clear-cut borderline between these two personality aspects, they often interplay. But roughly speaking, there actually is a difference.

The importance of understanding the thought process will lead you to mastery over your self, just as the psychological work is doing this from another side. If you are governed by your emotions, conscious or unconscious, you lose control over your self and over your life. The same applies to your thought process. If you become master over your thoughts, you become master over your mind, and therefore you have mastery of your life. When I say "master," I certainly do not mean any discipline that suppresses anything negative or positive in you. This is, unfortunately, often misunderstood and mispracticed. Hence we will have to be careful not to fall into the same error. Thought control can be mastered without rigidity and suppression. Quite to the contrary, properly done, it will bring into awareness what needs to be on the surface. Many current movements teach thought control, but by way of suppression; and this, as I have often said, is not necessary and is actually very damaging. Thought control must never lead you to disallow your emotions to come to the fore so that you can observe and evaluate them.

The understanding and control of the thought process is one more very important aspect of personality growth. Without it, full expression of the maximum you can be is impossible. We shall attempt to learn this and go into details in our sessions next season. However, in the meantime, I will give you something to think about regarding this subject and, in some measure perhaps, prepare yourself during the summer.

The first step, as always, is the recognition of what is amiss. Recognize your uncontrolled thoughts, their power over you, their significance, as well as their lack of significance. Thought process also occurs on different levels or layers. Broadly speaking, we can distinguish between foreground thoughts and background thoughts. Both have many subdivisions and many layers. By proper observation and concentration in this direction, you will gradually learn to become aware of these various layers, and this will be very beneficial for you in more ways than one.

Foreground thought is voluntary, background thought is involuntary. Whatever I say to you, you will experience as true if you learn proper observation. Foreground and voluntary thought is always clear-cut and concise as long as it remains foreground and does not slide unnoticed into background thought. If you want to think something, whether constructive or unconstructive, as long as you follow it through, it is foreground thought. When you become calm and observe your thought process, you will soon begin to notice the importance of background thoughts. Background thought comes unbidden; it is disorganized and mainly unconstructive. You will also notice that the majority of background thought material is one of three kinds. The first consists of symptoms of disturbed emotions, of inner conflicts that never express the conflict itself. They might bring the nucleus of the conflict to the fore if the symptoms are analyzed and properly understood. In order to do that, the vague, unvolitional background thoughts have to be made into foreground thoughts. The second kind is you reexperience events of conversations or impressions in snatches and fragments. If these do not belong in the first category, they are completely without significance. Your mind has registered certain impressions, and it repeats them automatically like the

rolling of wheels. As long as these thoughts remain in the background, as long as you harbor them without full awareness, you cannot distinguish in them what is important and what is utter waste. Repetition of impressions may not only be important because it is indicative of a symptom of conflict; it may also be important because a constructive impression may add something to your life, to your person, to your inner self. Only when these impressions and thoughts are consciously observed can you derive such benefit. In other words, you must make foreground thoughts out of background thoughts. But the stereotypical repetition that goes on in man's thoughts so much of the time is really waste matter to be eliminated. The third kind of background material is wishful thinking. There are a few subdivisions in this category. You may reexperience a conversation; you go over how it might have been, how it should have been, what you should have said instead of what you did say. Or you build up a daydream of what you wish to happen in the future; but it is so vague, so unrealistic, so illusive, so unconnected with your real desires, or so inconsiderate of what the obstacles within your soul are. Such thoughts are entirely wasteful, if they are not made into foreground thoughts and analyzed as to their reality value.

Such wishful thinking, as well as fragments of impressions and automatic repetitions make up, in the main, the material of background thoughts. These thoughts come unbidden. They come and go, they are not consecutive. They interrupt your voluntary thoughts, and they are unconstructive as long as they overpower your volition and keep you from taking the reins into your hands through learning to control your thought world. Increasing awareness and raised consciousness is also brought about by such thought control. But instead of forbidding yourself to think, do the opposite. Transfer background thought material into conscious foreground thought; and first learn to discriminate as to the meaning of these vague background thoughts; and if when you find that they are insignificant, learn to discard them. This process will bring forth additional material about your unconscious conflicts and teach you to control your mind in a healthy and constructive way.

Moreover, it will release a great deal of strength in you which was formerly taken up by such background thoughts. You have no idea how much mental and emotional strength they consume. If enough mental and emotional strength is consumed, naturally it also has a physical effect.

Some exercise and concentration is necessary to first learn the observation and later the control of your thought process. But these exercises need not be strenuous, nor will they have to take up much time in your life. But some regular effort is necessary. To become master over your thought process by learning to make foreground thoughts from background thoughts, by discriminating as to their importance, you will not only release a great inner strength, but you will raise your consciousness, increase your awareness in a general way. You will become more and more aware of yourself, of your inner situation as well as of your entire person and life. And you will become more aware and observant of others around you, of life, of nature, of things. Thus will you increase your understanding. You will be capable of concentrating on those thoughts and occupations that you elect to, undisturbed by the wasteful, fluctuating thought material that has no importance but serves only to decrease your awareness of self and frustrate the occupation at hand.

Unvolitional background thoughts make you the governed instead of the governor. Not only your emotional and psychic disturbances cause this lack of control, but you are prey to your unvolitional background thoughts. There is of course a connection between these two factors, which we shall go into later.

Unvolitional background thoughts constantly disturb and interrupt you. Even if they have significance, you derive no benefit from them as long as you do not learn to transform them into foreground thoughts, as long as you are not actually aware of them. They overpower you whenever you are not deeply interested in an activity or occupation. And as I have said many times, they have no significance whatever. Thus, in both cases, waste occurs. They are weak insofar as your awareness of them is concerned. But they are strong in that they often are much more powerful than the apparently stronger foreground thoughts. By learning to observe this process, you will discover how often these "weaker" background thoughts take hold of you "on the sly," so to speak. At first you are utterly unaware that you were drawn from thinking what you wanted to think about. All of a sudden you find yourself involved in background thought material that you can only now begin to evaluate. When it is said that the mind is wandering, how little is realized of the significance of this statement and of the effect such wanderings have.

These background thoughts make concentration so difficult; they are responsible for your difficulty in focusing your attention on one particular thing. It is due to them that so much time and strength, and effort is wasted. If your time, strength, and effort is not constantly utilized in constructive thoughts or occupation, your mind should be allowed to relax during the unused time. The best form of relaxation is attained by giving the mind a chance to be quite calm. Background thought material makes this impossible. Background thought material disperses the mind in many directions and therefore exhausts it without your knowing it.

This disorder and disorganization is universal, and there are but few exceptions. And, unfortunately, many of these exceptions have learned to control the thought process at the expense of emotional awareness so that the benefit is canceled out. It will be our aim to combine the two factors so that one is helped by the other rather than hindered.

The aim of this work in our group is not only concerned with the sick part of human nature to make it strong, free, and healthy, but we are equally interested in the unfoldment and development of the entire personality. Thus in the coming season, we will be concerned with three major approaches: (1) continuation of finding and dissolving your images, wrong conclusions, and deviations; (2) finding your suppressed creative forces, directions, and activities, and unfolding your nature as it was meant to function in certain particular aspects; (3) understanding of and gradual learning control of the thought process.

In many respects these three will interact and overlap. To find these links and connections is part of the work and is of utmost importance. I should like to suggest an exercise for you to start with this summer to give you some preparation for our later work together. Sit down twice a day for five minutes, not more, any time you wish. Choose a time and a place when you know you will be undisturbed, when you do not have to fear interruptions. Sit down comfortably, do not lie down. Then become very calm. Relax completely, without trying to exert any force, strain, or pressure. Begin to follow the abdominal movements of your breath when you breathe very quietly: up and down, up and down. Or if you prefer, imagine a point between your eyes, whichever is easier for you. Be prepared for your mind soon to be disturbed by unvolitional background thoughts. Expect them, observe them quietly. If they are not of pressing importance for you now (because of a disturbance in your psyche), discard them again quietly, without getting impatient with yourself. Resume the task of following the abdominal movements of your breath or of concentrating on the imaginary point between your eyes, all the time aware of what these background thoughts really are

when they do come. It suffices to observe them as they appear, in order to become conscious of the mechanism of your thought process, to become aware of your being a victim of it. This awareness will bring you nearer to the goal. At the beginning, it will seem impossible to think of nothing but your breath movements. Uninvited thought fragments will constantly rush in. Most of the time, they will be so powerful as to make you unaware that you do indulge in them. You will notice it only after a while. Whenever you do, try to recollect what your thoughts made you think of. Say to yourself, "I was thinking of this or that," whatever it may have been. This in itself is a means to become more aware of yourself. You may then either go on with your concentration and defer analysis of these thought materials until afterwards, or you may do so right away if you feel the urge, and resume the concentration exercise another time.

If you faithfully persevere, you will eventually get to the point when you will become a watcher of your thoughts. You will stand guard, so to speak, at the threshold of your thinking process. You will begin to sense what calmness really means. Your thoughts and emotions will stand still, be it only for a moment. As you go on, you will learn to extend this moment. The longer you can do it, the more will you feel rested after such periods, and many other benefits will befall you. You will also get accustomed to watch your background thoughts during the day, during certain activities which do not demand your entire attention. Thus more and more self-awareness will come to you on all levels.

When you do this exercise, approach it in a very relaxed frame of mind, and at the same time trying to use your calm inner will. Most important of all, do not feel frustrated when you do not succeed, when you find yourself involved in unbidden background thoughts. Use this experience rather as a means to understand what I am trying to explain here. Such an approach will be most beneficial. It will open vistas to you and will get you eventually to what we are after. If at one time or another, you find it impossible to concentrate in this manner because your thoughts always come back to something, that is a sign that this something ought to be investigated, that it bears a seed of one of your conflicts. If such is the case, you will not be able to become calm until you have found some clarification. Remember that calmness is indispensable for this exercise.

Even minor success in this direction will bring a marked improvement in many ways. In addition to the benefits I outlined before, in addition to the power of discrimination of your own thought material, you will derive further benefits such as a general power of discrimination; increased inner and outer vitality; better memory; clearer and stronger thoughts; and last but not least, the increased ability to make your inner will function. Your inner will is necessary to follow through and learn what we are discussing here. In turn, your inner will is bound to function better in the measure you learn concentration. You will learn the ability to direct your thought process and attain calmness of the mind due to the decrease of background thoughts.

Control and awareness of background thoughts, the understanding of the whole thinking procedure with its various levels, is much more important than you now realize. It is a mistake to separate this approach from the conflicts of man's psyche. They are intimately connected; this becomes apparent when both approaches are followed through properly.

Background thought material appears to us in a very certain form. It is of fluid substance, but fluid in a negative sense. It is a kind of thick, hazy, stubborn mass, very difficult to dissolve. It is

sometimes easier to dissolve an outright rigidity. A rigidity can be grasped. A negative fluidity is evasive, such as in the nature of a gelatinous substance or of mercury.

When you progress a little in this exercise and succeed to be a watcher, visualize a compass needle. This compass needle represents your thought movements. Watch the needle sway back and forth. The more background thoughts -- dispersing you in all directions because of the very fact that you do not control them -- the more the needle will sway from one direction to the other. The more you succeed in becoming calm inwardly and focusing your thoughts on what you desire, the more this needle will remain still, poised, restful, and controlled -- not controlled by any strenuous discipline and your outer will power, but controlled by relaxing and summoning your calm inner will. The more detachedly you observe the involuntary thought process, the more will you succeed to be above it.

It would be very beneficial my friends if, during the summer months, you try to prepare yourselves a little for the coming phases in our work together. Try to follow my advice with regard to this exercise. And also try to think about your past desires from the point of view I introduced tonight, whether it was something important or an apparently insignificant detail as to your way of life. Think whether you desisted at the time from following through because, you are now seriously convinced, it was wrong for you. If it was not, did you desist out of fear, out of dependency for approval? Or was the wish based on unhealthy motives in the first place? Was underneath the unhealthy motives a very healthy one which you could not see because of your vague awareness and guilt over the existence of the unhealthy motives? Would you have had the courage to follow through with your desire if the unhealthy motives were absent? Would you then have stood your ground and have been true to your personality? Or can you discover that the original desire disappears or weakens with the absence of the unhealthy motives? You can try to formulate and answer these and similar questions. As always, the most difficult part is the beginning. What exactly might apply to this subject is what you have to find first. It need not be an apparent, important part of your life, such as choice of profession or main activity. It may be something small and subtle, not easily discovered because of its apparent insignificance. But it is just as important to find because it is invariably a part of a whole. It must lead to something more vital in your inner and outer life.

By doing this and by trying to feel the difference between volitional and unvolitional thought process, you can very well prepare for our work in the fall.

Now, are there any questions?

**QUESTION:** In my work so far, I discovered that one of my wishes was not followed through due to fear. I have resigned myself to this. But if I now approach this question with this new viewpoint, I cannot imagine this as a joyous experience. It will be painful all over again.

**ANSWER:** Not necessarily. As I said before, often these inner motives overlap and interplay. As in this case, it will have to be established first whether you desired this goal because of unhealthy motives or whether the unhealthy motives merely covered this form of self-expression best fitted for your individual personality. In either case, it need not be painful if the approach is right. Even if you should find that the fulfillment of this goal would have been right for you, it is still the negative aspect of your soul that stood in the way. Hence, in this respect, nothing changes from the approach we used so far. It will be no more or less painful. On the other hand, a discovery of

suppression of healthy outlets (which is always based on fear and dependency anyway) may show you a new road which might be extremely satisfactory and fulfilling.

In many instances, what one wants is not what one really wants but what one thinks one wants. When this is the case, it is always due to unhealthy tendencies and reactions.

When you face your lower nature, your deviations and phantom world so that you can change it all into true concepts, it is certainly more painful than facing something you have suppressed because you thought erroneously that you have to be guilty and ashamed of it. The fact that you did suppress it is of course due to negative motivations. However, you will experience a great joy and liberation now to give vent to something vitally creative in you, leading you to the fulfillment of your individual personality.

My dearest friends, let me give you very special blessings tonight. A very wonderful divine strength is around you. Open your heart and your soul and your inner will so that you receive it. Let it envelop you, let it penetrate you, let it work for you and with you so that this strength helps you to unfold the best, the most creative that you, as an individual, can be, so that you will make the best of your personality -- that which still lies covered, dormant, but which is waiting to be let out. Let this divine strength help you to remove the obstacles existing in you so that your divine spirit may truly unfold and manifest. With this, my dearest friends, I withdraw, but I will always be near you. Go on your way in divine peace, in the joy that all of you are divine creatures and contain within yourselves so much that is truly wonderful and which is clamoring for manifestation. Be in peace, my dearest ones, be in God!

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](http://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.