

# Pathwork™ in Texas

## EVOLUTION'S FOUR STAGES: AUTOMATIC REFLEXES, AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING, KNOWING

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The best way to begin is by discussing certain general phases of evolution in the human consciousness. There are four distinct phases. They interact and overlap, with each of course having many subdivisions, degrees of intensity, and variations. At this point, we need not go into those details, for they have been amply treated as we were concerned with each respective phase on which we had previously concentrated. And we shall do so again when we enter into the next phase of development. At the moment, we seek to gain a certain overall view.

The lowest phase of human consciousness is automation. Man responds according to automatic reflexes -- emotional reactions which are based on deeply imprinted wrong conclusions and generalizations. In other words, everything we have discussed and worked on concerning the images shows how man responds in blind, automatic fashion. ... The more he is liberated in some areas of his personality, the more does he try to rationalize and explain such blind reactions in order to make himself believe that they are based on freedom of choice rather than on compulsion, on reason rather than emotionalism. When the overall development is more primitive, such self-deception is less necessary.

Blind automatism is always the result of material that man is unwilling to face. This applies to all people. Some have it to a much stronger degree than others and need much more time to evolve to a state in which they become inherently capable of facing such hidden material and thereby change into a higher state of consciousness. ... On any real path of development, regardless what approach is pursued, the areas wherein man is unfree and automatic must be uncovered and made known. This automatism is the most primitive stage, existing to some degree in everyone.

The next phase on this scale of evolution is awareness. The curve of development proceeds from automatism to awareness. But awareness is by no means the highest stage. There are two that are further advanced. But let us first look into the meaning and significance of awareness. Awareness must be, in this context, concerned with uncovering the areas of blind automatism, of blind reflexes. All subterfuges, rationalizations, explanations, justifications, self-deceptions serving to deny the blind automatism must be ruthlessly exposed, investigated, and given up until man is face to face with the blind reflex mechanism. When this takes place, he is aware of the automatism -- hence the automatism no longer exists. Needless to say, man succeeds first in specific areas to pass from automatism to awareness, while he retains blind automatism in others until much later phases of his personal development. It can never be said that an individual passes from one state into the next in every respect of his being.

The transition from automatism to awareness is one of the most difficult that man passes through. It is so difficult to admit that he is driven by unreasonable fears, superstitions, generalizations, obsolete situations that have no bearing on the present. It goes against his vanity, for he likes to see himself more evolved and freed than he is. The longer he denies what is, the more does he suffer. Often it is this needless suffering that finally brings him to self-honesty. It could have been avoided if his vanity were not so strong.

Awareness means acknowledgment of one's limitations, facing wrong conclusions, destructive emotions, self-defeating devices, lack of integrity in the widest possible sense. This is only difficult because man coddles his resistances and fears and because he is so disinclined to give up appearing as more than he thinks he is. The stage of awareness essentially means becoming conscious of error, of deviation from truth. The moment he knows he is driven by false ideas, man is no longer in blind automatism. This requires courage and the cultivation of the inner will.

After a certain degree of awareness has been gained and, proportionately, blind reflexes have ceased, the next stage is understanding. Offhand, you may wonder what the difference may be. But there is a great deal of difference. Let us take the example of hostility. First, in the stage of blind automatism, it rages in the person's soul. According to character formation, the type of his images, and various other factors, he will either impulsively express such

hostility and let it out onto others -- often without even knowing that he does so or by finding "good reasons" to do so. Or he will suppress and repress it, turn in onto himself, with its various results. In both alternatives, he is unaware of the hostility because he does not wish to admit to it. Therefore he is driven by it into blind automatism that he chooses to explain away. The moment he faces the hostility fully, he is aware of it. Hence, automatism must stop. But this stage does not yet mean that he understands it. He now knows that he has it. He even sees what it makes him do, how he reacts on account of it. ... Understanding the hostility means understanding why it exists, what first brought it on in a person's life, what conditions existed that created it, and what conditions exist now whenever a new flare of hostility is generated. What is the apparent and real similarity between the original and the present situation? How are they related in the person's psyche? How, if at all, are they related in reality? Why is the hostility based on a false assumption? In what respect? Understanding what one has become aware of previously means deeply experiencing the answers to all these questions. However, these answers must not be given in an intellectual way, like learning a lesson by heart. It must be a deeply felt reality. Then the stage of understanding has been reached, and the individual is ready to approach the next phase.

It is of great importance that all of you gain a view in what respect you are in one of the phases discussed here. Are you aware where you are still governed by automatism despite your having discovered the image that causes it? For it is indeed possible to do so and go on reacting blindly without knowing it. The momentary insight at the time the image was found has faded away and lingers only as a memory of the image found. In other words, it has become theoretical knowledge. It is no longer alive. It will become alive again only when it is observed, acknowledged, admitted that automatism still exists. ... When awareness has been gained, it must not remain at that point. Is understanding of what one has become aware of cultivated? The more this is the case, the less does compulsion exist to blindly react, the less likely are there relapses.

The highest phase of this particular scale is knowing. There is a great difference between understanding and knowing. Understanding means ascertaining cause and effect of negative patterns, the destructive emotions, the false ideas. It means understanding that these elements are damaging and that this is so because one is somehow immersed in illusion and misconception. But it is not yet knowing. And I advisedly say knowing rather than knowledge. For, knowledge is something much more vague, general, and dry. It is not knowledge I am talking about. I am talking about knowing the truth. When you know the truth, you more than understand cause and effect of images and misconceptions. You know what the right conclusions are behind the wrong ones. And it is always and exclusively the misconceptions which create havoc, disharmony, unhappiness. Nothing else can ever do that.

When you deeply know the truthful concept, the particular truth behind the particular error that you begin to understand, something begins to happen within and around the sphere of your being. Knowing is not theoretical understanding. It is experiencing the truth. Knowing the truth behind the untruth must connect the knower with a great spiritual principle, or several such laws and principles. Knowing them opens up the world. ... The only way that knowing divine principles can come about is through a highly personal experience of the untruth that blurred the way, so far, to that particular truth. By studying theories, by reading even the greatest literature on earth -- even spiritual literature -- you cannot possibly know the truth. Knowing the truth means following through these stages of evolution I have just discussed.

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The Path to the Real Self is an unpublished manuscript by Eva Pierrakos