

Pathwork™ in Texas

Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts

Excerpts from Pathwork Guide Lecture #73

Full text of this lecture available at www.pathwork.org

You will remember that I frequently mentioned how the child desires to be loved exclusively and without limit. In other words, the child's desire to be loved is unrealistic. Yet, it is also true that the child would be very satisfied with real mature love. In fact, if it were given, the unrealistic demand for exclusive love would be diminished considerably.

Since the child so seldom receives sufficient mature love and warmth, he continues to hunger for it throughout life unless this lack and hurt is recognized and properly dealt with. If not, the person will go through life unconsciously crying out for that which he missed in childhood. This will cause an inability to love maturely.

The remedy cannot be sought by wishing it were different and that people would learn to practice mature love. The remedy lies solely in you. True, if you had received this love from your parents, you would be without this unconscious problem -- a problem of which you are not really and fully aware. But this lack need not trouble you nor your life if you see it, become aware of it, and rearrange your former unconscious wishes, regrets, thoughts, and concepts in that regard.

Very few people realize and personally experience (theoretical knowledge notwithstanding) the strong link between the child's longing and unfulfillment and their present difficulties and problems. It is very important to become aware of this link....There may be isolated, exceptional cases where one parent has a sufficient degree of mature love. Even if one parent has it to some degree, very likely the other does not. And since mature love on this earth is only a question of degree, the child will suffer from those manifestations wherein the loving parent is bound to fall short.

More often, however, both parents are emotionally immature and cannot give the love the child craves for -- or only in insufficient measure. During childhood, this need is rarely conscious. The child has no way of putting his need into thoughts. He cannot compare. He does not know that something else might exist. ... Thus the child grows up never quite realizing or understanding why he is unhappy nor even that he is unhappy. Many of you look back on childhood convinced that you had all the love you wanted just because you actually did have some love, but rarely all that you wanted.

There are a number of parents who give great demonstrations of love. They may spoil or pamper their children. This very act of spoiling and pampering may be an overcompensation and sort of an "apology" for a deeply suspected inability to love maturely. The child feels the truth very acutely. He may not think it, he may not consciously observe it, but inwardly the child keenly feels the difference between mature, genuine love and the immature overdemonstration offered instead of it.

In the case of the strict parent, the resentment and rebellion will be open and therefore more easily traced. In the other case, the rebellion is just as strong but hidden and therefore infinitely harder to trace. If you have a parent who smothered you with affection, or pseudoaffection, yet lacked in genuine warmth; or if you have a parent who conscientiously did everything right by you, but also was lacking in real warmth, unconsciously you knew it when you were a child and you resented it. Consciously, you may not be aware of it at all because when you were a child, you really could not put your finger on the lack. You were outwardly given everything you wanted and needed. How could you differentiate in your intellect the subtle, fine borderline distinction between real affection and pseudoaffection? The fact that something bothered you without your being able to explain it reasonably made you feel guilty and uncomfortable. You therefore pushed it out of sight as much as ever possible.

As long as this hurt, disappointment, and unfulfilled need from your early years is unconscious, you cannot come to terms with it. No matter how much you may love your parent, unconscious resentment exists, and you therefore cannot forgive for the hurt. You can only forgive and let go if you recognize this deeply hidden hurt and resentment.

As long as you are unaware of this conflict, of your longing for perfect love from your parents, you are bound to try remedying the situation in your later years. ... The most frequent way of attempting to remedy the situation is in your choice of love partners. Unconsciously, you will know how to choose in the partner aspects of the parent who

has particularly fallen short in affection and love that is real and genuine. But you also seek in your partner aspects of the other parent who has come closer to gratify your demands. Important as it is to find both parents represented in your partners, it is even more important and more difficult to find those aspects which represent the parent who has particularly disappointed and hurt you, the one more resented or despised, and for whom you had little or no love. So you seek the parents again -- in a subtle way that is not always easy to detect by outer similarities -- in your marital partners, in your friendships, or in other human relationships. In your subconscious, the following reactions take place. Since the child in you cannot let go of the past, cannot come to terms with it, cannot forgive, cannot understand and accept, this very child in you always creates a somewhat similar condition, thereby trying to win out in the end, trying to finally master the situation instead of succumbing, as it seems to the child in you. Losing out means being crushed, and this must be avoided at all costs. The costs are high indeed, for the entire process is unfeasible. It cannot ever come to realization what the child in you sets out to accomplish.

This entire procedure is utterly destructive. In the first place, it is an illusion that you were defeated. Therefore it is an illusion that you can be victorious. Moreover, it is an illusion that, sad as the lack of love may have been when you were a child, it represents the tragedy that your subconscious still feels it to be. The only tragedy lies in the fact that you obstruct your future happiness by continuing to reproduce and then to attempt to master the situation. It goes without saying, my friends, that this process is very unconscious. Of course, nothing is further from your mind in your conscious aims and wishes. It will take a great deal of digging to uncover the emotions that lead you, again and again, into situations in which you wish to remedy childhood woes.

In trying to reproduce the childhood situation, you unconsciously choose a partner with aspects similar to those of the parent. And these very aspects will make it as impossible to receive the mature love you rightfully long for now, as it was then. Blindly you believe that by willing it more strongly and more forcefully, the parent-partner will now yield, whereas, in reality, love cannot come that way. Free of this ever continuing repetition, you will no longer cry to be loved by the parent. Instead, you will look for a partner (or for other human relationships) with the aim of finding the maturity you really need and want.

If you already have a partner, the uncovering of this conflict may show you his similarities and immaturities. But since you know that there is hardly a really mature person, these existing immaturities will no longer be the tragedy they were while you constantly sought to find your parent or parents again, which of course could never come to pass.

You have no idea how preoccupied your subconscious is with the process of reenacting the play, so to speak, only hoping that "now it will be different." And it never is! As time goes on, each disappointment weighs heavier, and your soul becomes more discouraged.... If you learn to look at your problems and unfulfillment from this point of view and, by the usual process, allow your emotions to come to the fore, you will gain much further insight.

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

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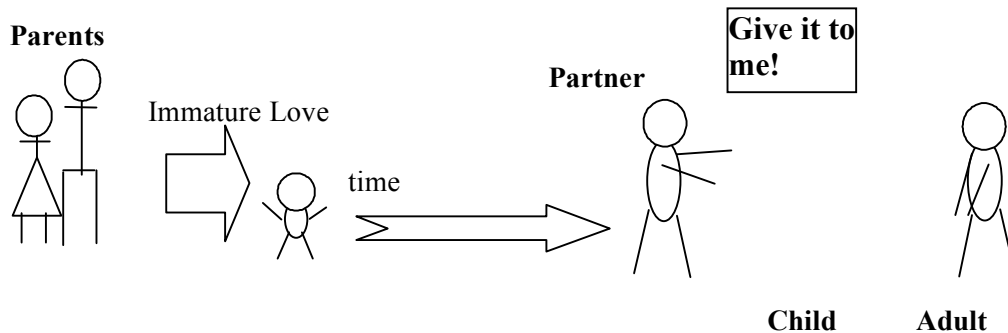
Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts

The Guide's suggestions for working with Pathwork Guide Lecture #73

1. 'Take a current problem. Strip it of all superimposed layers of your reactions. The first and most handy layer is that of rationalisation, that of "proving" that others or situations are at fault and not your innermost conflicts which make you adopt the wrong attitude to the actual problem that confronts you. The next layer might be anger, resentment, anxiety, frustration. Behind all these reactions, you will find the hurt of not being loved. ... When you experience the hurt of not being loved in your current problem, it will serve to reawaken the childhood hurt.'
2. 'With the present hurt, think back, try to re-evaluate the situation as to your parents -- what they gave you, how you really felt about them. You will become aware that in many ways you lacked something you never clearly saw before -- you did not want to see it. You will find that this must have hurt you when you were a child, but you may consciously have forgotten this hurt. Yet, it is not forgotten at all. The hurt of your current problem is the very same hurt.'
3. 'Now re-evaluate your present hurt, comparing it with the childhood hurt. Finally, you will clearly see how it is one and the same. No matter how true and understandable your present pain is, it is nevertheless the same childhood pain. A little later, you will see how you contributed in bringing about the present pain because of your desire to correct the childhood hurt. But at first, you only have to feel the similarity of the pain.'
4. Once you can synchronise these two pains and realise that they are one and the same, the next step will be much easier. Then, by overlooking the repetitious pattern in your various problems, you will learn to recognise where the similarities exist in your parents and in the people who have caused you hurt or are causing you pain now. When you experience these similarities emotionally, it will carry you further on the particular road of dissolving this basic problem. Mere intellectual evaluation will not yield any benefit. When you feel the similarities while at the same time experiencing the pain of now and the pain of then, you will slowly come to understand how you thought you had to choose the current situation because deep inside you could not possibly admit "defeat." '
5. 'Only after experiencing all these emotions and synchronising the "now" and the "then" will you become aware of how you tried to correct the situation. You will see further the folly of this unconscious desire, the frustrating uselessness of it. You will survey all your actions and reactions with this new understanding and insight -- whereupon, you will release your parents, you will leave your childhood truly behind and start a new inner behaviour pattern that will be infinitely more constructive and rewarding for yourself and for others. You will no longer seek to master the situation that you could not master as a child. You will go on from where you are, forgetting and forgiving, truly inside of you, without thinking that you have done so. You will no longer need to be loved as you needed to be loved when you were a child. First, you become aware that this is what you still wish, and then you no longer seek this type of love. Since you are no longer a child, you will seek love in a different way, by giving it, instead of by expecting it.
6. 'To be fruitful and bring real results, it must go beyond mere intellectual knowledge. You have to allow yourself to feel the pain of certain unfulfilments now and also the pain of the unfulfilment of your childhood. Then compare the two until, like two separate picture slides, they gradually move into focus and become one. Once this happens, the insight that you gain, the experience that you feel exactly as I say here, will enable you to take the further steps indicated.'

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Summary of Lecture #73,
“Overcoming the Compulsion to Recreate Childhood Hurts”



If there is something we didn't get from our parents and the lack of it caused us pain, we will try to get it from our partner.

We felt the lack acutely but it conflicted with our need for our parents to be perfect, so we buried it deep in our unconscious. A part of us is afraid of feeling those feelings, so we seek to find a way to “win” so we never have to. This is the part that recreates the old situation over and over again. If we can “win,” then we believe we will be safe and never have to feel those feelings.

The Guide says we must find that original pain and feel it now so that it no longer haunts us like some vague threat hanging over our relationships. How do we do this?

1. Take a current problem
2. Strip away your reactions
3. Let go of blaming the other, of proving yourself right
4. Release any anger, anxiety, frustration
5. Feel the hurt of not being loved in the current situation
6. Connect this current feeling with how you felt as a child
7. See how these feelings are similar or the same
8. Feel the pain as thoroughly as you can

Once you can connect the current pain with the one from the past, you will begin to see how this pain has occurred many times in different settings: with friends, partners, bosses, children. The circumstances may seem very different, but if the pain feels similar, they are related. This has to be a feeling exercise, not an intellectual one.

How do we recreate the childhood situation?

- We act in ways that will cause our partner to react in the required/expected manner.
- Energetically, we demand they act in those ways.
- We interpret things to fit the childhood picture.
- We tend to focus on the similarities and not notice the differences.

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The Pathwork

Lecture #73 - "Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts"

Worksheet

Homework Assignment: Pick a current or past love partner.

Which aspects of this person are like your mother? father?

How is this person like the unloving parent? loving parent?

How do (did) you recreate and attempt to overcome an old childhood hurt in this relationship?

Use the following process to do the above assignment:

- a) Observe and set aside your super-imposed reactions in the relationship (rationalization, blame, anger, resentment, anxiety, frustration).
- b) Behind these reactions, find the real hurt.
- c) Re-evaluate the present hurt, comparing it to the childhood hurt – see that they are the same – synchronize the pain.
- d) See how you brought about the present pain in order to “correct” the childhood hurt and not admit “defeat.”

Work with the following questions:

1. In what way(s) did your parents’ inability to love maturely cause you to feel *hurt* or *unfulfilled*?
2. How have you exaggerated and/or *minimized* your childhood hurts?
3. What are you still determined to get from your parents (or others)? How do you refuse to accept their imperfections now?
4. With a current problem, how do you rationalize to *prove* that others are at *fault* rather than face your own inner conflict and attitude?
5. In what ways do you provoke other people to *behave as your parents did* in your childhood?
6. Notice the emphasis you give to how you are BEING loved rather than on *how you* are GIVING love. This a tip-off that you are still trying to repair the original hurt instead of surrendering to the pain and accepting it

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