

# *Pathwork in Texas*

## A Spiritual Perspective on Parents And Their Ongoing Influences Upon Our Lives by Jan Rigsby

*A essay on context to supplement the Teleconference Tutorial on  
The Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts. pgl 73,*

When I first started doing Pathwork-based sessions and process work, I quickly became irritated by the constant focus upon my parents. It didn't help that my father had been a military officer, subject to easy clichéd interpretations, and that my mother and I didn't get along – an immediate 'gotcha' to explain my repressed anger (which I was not conscious of).

Over the years, I became more aware of the depth of human experience. I realized that being human was not an adjunct to spirituality. The earth plane is not a penalty box or a 'time out' corner; it is the Olympics of process work.

Lecture 73 offered me a fundamentally different perspective of human life. I began to understand how my parents represented a soul split in me. I saw how I alternated between the two aspects, and how my parents manifested elements of each. I would ask myself the question – who am I aligning with here, mom or pop? And I began to differentiate between strong feelings (which might be real and appropriate for the situation) and childhood reactions (based upon my relationships with my parents).

My intention in this essay is to illustrate how spiritual tasks and the human condition become inextricably entwined through the choice of parents.

That's a big step for some people – the idea that we choose our parents, instead of having been brought in by them. This process is briefly outlined in Preparation for Reincarnation, pgl 34. If you don't accept the premise, see if you can just play along for a while and consider what the consequences would be if it were true.

One way of thinking about this is to imagine life as a game cards<sup>1</sup>. Depending upon the rules of the game, you are limited by the cards you are dealt and the ones you may draw or receive from other players. Some aspects of the game are assured by the original cards, others by your skills and the skills of the other players. Another analogies could be where the first move strongly influences how the game unfolds, such as chess, pool or even tic-tac-toe. Malcolm Gladstone<sup>2</sup> suggests that those who accumulate 10,000 hours of practice may outperform their peers and more than compensate for having less talent. Economic or social status and overwhelming social influences (such as war or cultural renaissance) result from the parents we choose. Birth order

among siblings (and our horoscopes) follow their agreement to host us. By choosing them, all the circumstances of their lives become part of ours. It's a package deal. In addition, we accept their ability to exercise free will around their own spiritual task. To some extent, we can anticipate that a parent might not be able to stay committed to the family or to us, that they are vulnerable to addictions or illnesses, or that they are gripped by strong personality distortions which are bound to create pain and suffering. We are not responsible for their actions. Yet prior to the contracts being completed, we have made a decision that the affects of these circumstances will be for our highest good. This positive intent comes from our divine self and is supported by spiritual masters and teachers who will be present with us throughout our incarnation. Filled with courage, wisdom and love we come into the earth plane. Yet one of the key elements of this process is that we must forget the plan and who we really are. We are born, and are programmed by our senses, experiences, and minds to believe that WYSIWYG – what you see is what you get. The game begins without the manual. One of our tasks may be to remember, but life will flow forward based upon foundations dictated by our birth choices with or without consciousness about its purpose. The plan was designed to succeed regardless.

If we deliberately chose our parents, then we aren't 'imprinted' by our families because of simple proximity. That belongs to the 'I didn't ask to be born' version of creation. The power our parents have over us is the result of our having chosen them as perfect accelerators for the task we have chosen to accomplish in this lifetime. We searched high and low for the developmental influences which would load us up with 'stuff' so that we felt compelled to act out and explore life with certain attitudes, tools and emotional wounds.

We outfitted ourselves for our task with personality, talents, intelligence and an appropriate dose of self-will. We also 'wore' the DNA which would cause body development, facial appearance, and a constitution favorable to illness or health.

What would your like have been like if you had been radiantly attractive? A musical prodigy? The best sports player of the century? Many of us fantasize about fame and glory. The key element in fantasy is that we can control it – we can imagine only the positives, without any intrusion of reality. What deep experiences have you had that you would have missed out on if you'd been born with different gifts?

Perhaps the most critical pre-birth decisions were about what to leave behind. Would athletic ability lead us away from our task? Would the pain of being unattractive actually help us to focus? By removing options – not being able to function as a brain surgeon, ballerina, world leader, orator – we sharpened our chances to focus on our task like a laser beam. Short height might make you easy to overlook, but what did you learn that you would not have if you'd grown up looking down on others? Wearing glasses or being overweight may have caused children to tease you, but in your hurt and loneliness, was there an opportunity to develop empathy? Is it possible that your real self knew how hard empathy would be for you to develop, and felt that the only way you could understand the pain such cruelty caused was experientially. Knowing our adult ego could deflect childish talk and immature judgments, it would be imperative the experience occur when we are young and vulnerable.

Whoa – wasn't this supposed to be about parents? Yes. An integral part of being born is that we develop based upon the DNA we get from... our parents. Our parents contribution to our spiritual journey is carried in every cell of our body for every moment of our lives. We cannot separate ourselves from it. Our choice of parents includes all that they are, on a cellular level. Our bodies are programs which enact physical, psychological, and intellectual elements of our plan. Do you look just like one of your parents? How has that affecting your attitudes towards yourself? Do you like seeing your parent in the mirror? Is it harder to be different from them, or does it compel you to rebel and seek your uniqueness? Picking up some recessive genes and creating something novel from them can lead to lifelong feelings of being 'different'. Remember – we set this plan in motion when we were smarter and had more resources than our human form may have. We designed a plan that our distortions could not outwit.

Distortions? Where does that come in?

Actually, that's the whole point of the earth plane: to allow our distortions fertile ground to grow – er, manifest in. References to the Real Self are meant to distinguish between larger divine spirit we are in God from the portion of spirit that we condense into a soul which can then incarnates as a person. The larger purpose of our plan is to allow us to bring our distortions into a 'reality' that we cannot escape. Big or small, fast or slow, distortion (false beliefs) will inevitably create pain and suffering, as they are by definition not in alignment with Spiritual Law.

On the journey to finding the divine truth in our own distortions, we attract negativity. Negative influences, negative specialists, collusion by others who also want to believe in distortions – we magnetize them to us in order to augment the distortion. Experientially, we need to know on every level of our being that Spiritual Law is divine and unbreakable. We learn this by trying to bend, twist, outfox, outrun and hide from what is essentially true. Some of us work hard at this, running fast, trying hard. Others find themselves in lives of meditative-like circumstances. Our tasks are different, our gifts unique, our paths infinitely varied. Yet for all of us, our greatest enemy is ourselves, the part of us that holds distortion as truth even as the greater part of us sets a table for eventual transformation.

Back to parents.

There is the emotional imprinting that we receive during the formative years of our childhood. It is generally accepted that around 7 years of age, we begin to shift into developing ourselves as individuals. In the 'individuation' stage of child development, we are learning that we are not our parents; later, we are learning who we are as individuals in a larger context than family – school, playground, society. Few of us are conscious at 7 of how we have dealt with the inevitable contradictions and incongruities humans are prone to. Yet personality is well-established by 7, even if it's focus is not to be seen or noticed.

And how might it start? Barbara Brennan writes:

“If, for example, a baby's cries for attention are not immediately met, it may suffer a terrible sense of abandonment. That terror may be wired into tis young mind and body – and become

part of its consciousness that never grows up. This undeveloped consciousness is what people often mean when they talk about their inner child. But it is not really an inner child; it is the remnants of consciousness of the child you were that have not grown up. It is your child consciousness that still believes and acts like a child. So, unless the belief is addressed, the individual is likely to have issues around abandonment for the rest of its life.”

“The other major fears are of annihilation, fear of invasion and being lost within another, fear of betrayal and fear of inauthenticity. All of these have their origins in the erroneous belief that we must maintain separateness to maintain our individuality. And, of course, we are not restricted to one particular fear. Depending on our wounding, we may even have elements of them all within our psyche.”<sup>3</sup>

These are some of the underlying spiritual concepts which pgl 73, *The Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts*, works with.

1. Where to Go from Here, Discovering your own life's wisdom in the second half of your life by James E. Birren and Linda Feldman. Chapter: If life was a card game...
2. Outliers (2008) and The Tipping Point (1996) by Malcolm Gladstone
3. “Healing the Splits that Hold Us Back” by Barbara Brennan, printed in the Indigo Sun March 2008.
- 4.

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