

Integrating the Five Pathways

Brought up as a woman in India, the concept of my own needs seemed alien. I had learned to be a pleaser; the role and identity of being a caregiver came with ease. At one point I felt completely drained. Parts of myself suddenly needed care and called out for my attention.

The pathway of *Exploring Needs and Values* came to life as I reached inward for empathy and uncovered my hidden needs. Slowing down, spending time listening to the core needs of conflicting parts, my energy shifted. I felt more spacious within. Different parts weren't at war, and the possibility of them coexisting emerged. I became more present to myself and better equipped for self-care.

Strengthening and empowering my heart, the practice of pausing and *Experiencing the Moment* helped me take in my complete experience. My emotions, body sensations and energetic experiences became a place of anchoring.

Working on aligning these in-the-moment experiences led me to disentangle from many limiting beliefs. As I reflected on the beliefs I held about myself and others, I saw them as stories I was holding, refraining from seeing them as absolute truths. Sometimes I saw the world from the perspective of a 5-year-old, where love was overwhelmed by the complexity of power relationships.

I re-discovered the pathway of *Expanding the View* by embodying new perspectives that felt more joyful and in alignment with my core values. I came to experience the wisdom of Martin Luther King Jr.'s words, "Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic." Walking through this path, the possibility of embodying love and power together emerged.

Oscillating between thinking of myself as brilliant and capable, or useless and unworthy, led me to explore the nuances of *Embracing the Shadow*, integrating and healing hidden parts of myself. Discovering the Inner Patriarch that looked down on me for being a woman was extremely overwhelming. Having spent significant time with this part, I began to notice an energy working with this part, that of the Wounded Woman. They seemed to work in tandem. The Inner Patriarch would initially define the rules and the Wounded Woman would obey. After a time, the Wounded Woman would get overwhelmed and move into a tantrum or invite in the Rebellious Woman.

Seeing and understanding these parts and power dynamics gave me a new lens to see my external reality, society and world I lived in. Healing these parts within helped me experience a new inner and outer reality—the security and strength of my inner masculine and vibrant powerful creative energy of my inner feminine. I began to claim my sensuality, power and beauty.

With this also came re-parenting—discovering many young parts of me that needed love, care and attention. Previously I believed that only our inner children need re-parenting so it was a significant learning to realize the amount of care the Inner Mother and Inner Father required. Healing and teaching them a new language, relevant to my reality today, became crucial.

During this unfolding, my interests shifted. I was a new person, truly transformed. Aspects of what called me at the beginning of this journey no longer made sense. From feeling restless and unclear about my path, I began to notice that each No (or loss of interest) had a Yes behind it. When I could truly tune in to the Yes behind the No it became a powerful tool that provided clarity and helped me *Envision the Future* of the life I desired.

As the pathways of transformation became a lived experience, I discovered a new me. Lost for years, the twinkle in my eye was back.