

Qs & As:

to help us see where we might be psychologically out of balance:

What in your life are you doing that you keep telling yourself you have to stop doing?

What has a partner communicated to you — that you may have resisted acknowledging which is contributing to your being stuck?

Are you willing to dance with your own opposite? In other words can you own it? Describe your intention to make this a conscious part of yourself.

When was the last time you felt truly angry? Can you now acknowledge that expressing your anger is healthy for relationships, allowing your partner or friend to know your limits and respect your boundaries? Remember — anger can clean things up between you.

Richard's Daily Meditations

☐ FALLING UPWARD

☐

Invariably when something upsets you, and you have a strong emotional reaction out of proportion to the moment, your shadow self has just been exposed. Watch for any overreactions or over-denials. When you notice them, notice also that the cock has just crowed ([Mark 14:72](#))! The reason that a mature or saintly person can be so peaceful, so accepting of self and others, is that there is not much hidden shadow left. (There is always and forever a little more. No exceptions. Shadow work never stops.)

One of the great surprises of the two halves of life is that humans come to full consciousness precisely by shadowboxing, facing their own mistakes and failings. People who have had no inner struggles are invariably both superficial and uninteresting. We tend to endure them more than communicate with them, because they have little to communicate. Shadow work is almost another name for falling upward. Lady Julian of Norwich put it best of all: "First there is the fall, and then we recover from the fall. Both are the mercy of God!" I am celebrating that mercy on the 50th anniversary of my first vows today. I have surely fallen many times and my only real recovery has come from God's unconditional acceptance and forgiveness—and from like-hearted friends, like you!

Adapted from [Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life](#), p. 133

Prayer:

God's grace is sufficient for the journey!

"Recognition of the Shadow, on the other hand, leads to the modesty we need in order to acknowledge imperfection. And it is just this conscious recognition and consideration that are needed whenever a human relationship is to be established. A human relationship is not based on differentiation and perfection, for these only emphasize the differences or call forth the exact opposite; it is very ground and motive for dependence. The perfect have no need of others, but weakness has, for it seeks support and does not confront its partner with anything that might force him into an inferior position and even humiliate him. This humiliation may happen only too easily when high idealism plays too prominent a role."

— Carl Jung, CW 10: *Civilization in Transition*, par. 579

COMMUNICATION IS TO A RELATIONSHIP WHAT FOOD IS TO THE BODY

It nourishes, sustains, and strengthens our connection.

Ideas to Improve Communication

- Listen twice as much as you speak — true listening invites intimacy.
- Cultivate a healthy curiosity about others — ask questions with genuine interest.
- Encourage others to share — people love to talk about themselves when they feel safe and seen.
- Avoid one-word-answer questions — instead, ask open-ended questions that invite reflection and depth.
- Say “Tell me more” — it’s one of the simplest and most powerful ways to deepen a conversation.
- Mirror back what you hear — “So what you’re saying is...” — to show understanding and validation.
- Resist the urge to interrupt or correct — allow the other person to finish before you respond.
- Use “I feel” statements instead of “You always” or “You never” — it keeps communication non-defensive.
- Be aware of tone and body language — 93% of communication is nonverbal.
- Slow the pace — pause, breathe, and allow silence to do its healing work.
- Express appreciation often — name something you value about the other person every day.
- Admit when you don’t know what to say — honesty itself builds trust.
- Ask before offering advice — sometimes people only want to be heard, not fixed.
- Practice patience — understanding takes time and repetition.
- End conversations with warmth — a smile, a touch, or a word of gratitude leaves connection intact.

Casual Conversation Starters for Connecting with New People or Deepening Friendships

- When did you last take a vacation? How was it? What else is on your bucket list?
- Is this your favorite bar in Houston? How did you first discover it?
- What’s your favorite restaurant — and what do you love to eat there?
- Where did you grow up? Did you stay there or move away for school?
- Do you have siblings? What’s something you have in common with them?
- How often do you see your family? Where do you fall in the sibling order?
- Tell me about your friends — do you have close friends of different genders? How did you meet?
- What do you enjoy doing when you’re alone?
- Do you still stay in touch with anyone from high school or college?
- What’s your favorite way to move or exercise? When did you begin?
- Are you a cook? What’s something you love to make just for yourself?

Deeper Questions for Partners for Cultivating Intimacy, Truth, and Trust

- What do you feel would improve our relationship? What would you like more of from me?
- Are there any ongoing complaints or concerns? How can we meet each other halfway?
- Tell me about how you experienced your mother. Your father?
- What was their relationship like? Do you see us repeating any of their patterns?
- I can feel you’re upset. If talking is too hard, would you consider writing it down for me?
- I love you, and I want to understand. Help me see what you need — so I can grow with you.
- What is the best thing that ever happened to you? Did it change your life?
- What’s the kindest thing anyone has ever said to you? The most painful?
- What did you love to do most as a child?

- Would you be interested in learning something together — like dance, painting, or music?
- Have you ever experienced a meaningful synchronicity? What happened?
- Can you recall a moment you had a revealing slip-of-the-tongue?
- Who is your hero or heroine — now or in the past? Who do you most admire?

Final Thoughts

- **Many couples don't talk to each other enough.** We assume, we react, we drift. But love thrives on awareness. Stay curious about who your partner is today. We're all constantly changing and growing — share those changes with each other.
- **Every conversation is a bridge — built one mindful word at a time.** When we slow down, listen deeply, and speak with kindness, the space between us becomes sacred. Communication then becomes not just an exchange of words, but a way of loving.
- **When we communicate consciously, we make the unconscious conscious** — and what was hidden can now be seen, understood, and transformed. In choosing dialogue over defensiveness, we create a sacred space (*a temenos*) where growth begins for both souls.
- **Real intimacy is not found in perfection, but in presence.** The willingness to stay open — even when it's uncomfortable — allows love to evolve. Every honest conversation strengthens the foundation of trust, turning relationship into a vessel for awakening.
- **And above all — tell the truth, even when it's hard.** When we stop being honest, we begin to separate.

Questions to Ask Myself for Shadow Work: These questions are mirrors — each one invites you to see how projection, fear, or avoidance may be shaping your relationships.

- Can I be vulnerable with my partner? Am I communicating honestly about issues?
- Am I sharing and acknowledging my real feelings — both positive and negative?
- Do I assume positive intent if my partner lets me down, or do I believe they did it on purpose?
- Can we process arguments after they happen or do we pretend nothing happened — ghosting or avoiding the discomfort of repair?
- Do I allow myself to take a short break if I feel overwhelmed or flooded? Do I communicate this to my partner so they don't feel shut out when I need time to process — or do I punish them with my silence?
- Is my lack of trust based on my partner's actions, my own insecurities, or both?
- Have I been forthcoming about finances, my history, and my concerns with a family member, coworker, or with our — *or my* — children?
- Do I have confidence in my intuition and instincts — and pay attention to red flags?
- Do I recognize when I'm enabling my partner, children, or others — especially when doing so becomes detrimental to my own well-being?
- Can my partner count on my word?
- Can I admit mistakes, say I'm sorry, and make the effort not to repeat them?
- If two or more people say the same thing to me, can I listen to criticism and not take immediate offense? Do I strive to look at myself objectively when something is repeating?

Practices for Conscious Communication with Partners

Practice One — Speak the Truth with Compassion

Purpose: To create safety through honesty and emotional transparency.

Need: We often hold back our true thoughts or feelings to avoid conflict, rejection, or disapproval — yet this avoidance builds distance instead of intimacy.

Instructions: Choose one moment each day to share something honest with your partner that you might normally withhold. Begin gently — perhaps naming an unmet need, a subtle hurt, or an appreciation you've never voiced. Speak from the heart, using *"I feel"* statements instead of blame or criticism. Notice how authenticity strengthens trust and deepens connection.

Practice Two — Take Space, Don't Withdraw

Purpose: To regulate emotional overwhelm without breaking connection.

Need: When flooded or triggered, many of us retreat to avoid saying something we'll regret. But silence without explanation often feels like rejection to the other person.

Instructions: The next time you feel emotionally overloaded, communicate your need for space clearly: *"I'm feeling overwhelmed right now — I need a little time to settle, and I'll come back to talk when I'm calmer."* Then honor that promise. This teaches self-regulation while maintaining emotional safety for both partners.

Practice Three — Listen to Understand, Not to Win

Purpose: To replace defensiveness with empathy and curiosity.

Need: Most conflicts escalate because we listen to reply instead of listening to understand.

Instructions: During your next disagreement, focus on hearing your partner's feelings beneath their words. Mirror back what you understood — *"It sounds like you felt ignored when I didn't call"* — and pause before responding. Practice staying with their experience for a moment before adding your own. When both partners feel seen and heard, the illusion of opposition dissolves and genuine understanding begins to grow.

Practice Four — Repair After Conflict

Purpose: To rebuild connection and trust once emotions have cooled.

Need: Every relationship has ruptures. What matters most is not avoiding conflict, but how we come back together afterward. Avoiding repair leaves residue — small walls of resentment that grow over time.

Instructions: When both of you are calm, revisit the disagreement with openness. Begin by taking responsibility for your part — even something small — without defending or explaining. Ask, *"Is there anything still lingering for you?"* or *"Did I miss something you needed me to understand?"* Listen with empathy, not argument. Repair is less about resolution and more about reconnection — the willingness to turn toward one another again with humility and love.

"Communication is everything — and when we withhold our true feelings, we lose the opportunity to have what Carl Jung called an authentic psychological relationship." —Re

10 Meaningful Ways Couples Can Establish and Strengthen Trust

Each one is rooted in emotional honesty, relational integrity, and psychological awareness.

- 1. Tell the Truth, Even When It's Hard.** Trust is built on truth. Share your authentic thoughts and feelings, even when vulnerability feels risky. Avoid keeping secrets — except healthy surprises. Secrets create distance. Withholding important truths erodes trust, even if done to “protect” the other person. Aim for emotional transparency. Honesty fosters intimacy.
- 2. Keep Your Promises, Big and Small.** Follow through on what you say you'll do — from being on time to honoring emotional commitments. Reliability deepens security.
- 3. Communicate Transparently.** Be clear and direct rather than vague or avoidant. Share your needs, hopes, and fears openly. Let your partner know what's really going on.
- 4. Admit When You're Wrong and Apologize.** Owning your mistakes without defensiveness shows maturity. A heartfelt apology helps repair ruptures and rebuild connection.
- 5. Set and Respect Healthy Boundaries.** Trust grows when both partners feel respected and safe. Understand each other's limits — emotional, physical, and psychological — and honor them.
- 6. Practice Emotional Attunement.** Be present with your partner's feelings. Empathy — listening with your heart — is a bridge to trust. Assume positive intent and show that you truly understand them.
- 7. Support Each Other's Growth.** Celebrate your partner's evolution. Encourage their individuality and aspirations. Trust deepens when both people feel safe to become more of who they are.
- 8. Maintain Integrity When Apart.** Whether on a business trip or spending time with others, honor the relationship even when your partner isn't present. Trust is tested in absence. Don't share your private relationship issues with others unless it's with a trusted coach, astrologer, or therapist.
- 9. Repair After Conflict — Don't Just Move On.** After arguments, circle back. Ask: Are we okay? Did anything go unresolved? Repairing creates a felt sense of emotional safety and continuity.
- 10. Share Inner Worlds — Dreams, Memories, and Meaning.** Trust grows not only through problem-solving, but through storytelling. Share childhood memories, fears, spiritual insights, and synchronicities. Let your partner know the real you.

*In **Modern Man in Search of a Soul**, pg 34, **Carl Jung**, says,
“...nothing is more unbearable than a tepid harmony in personal
relationships brought about by withholding emotions.”*

*In the book, **Analytical Psychology, Its Theory and Practice, the Tavistock Lectures, The Problems of Modern Psychotherapy**, par. 158, pg 77, **Jung** explains,*

*“You see there is perfect harmony here; but do not make the mistake of thinking
that this harmony is a paradise, for these people will kick against each other
after awhile because they are just too harmonious.”*

Blame is one way that we discharge our negative experiences onto others, but blaming others can give us only a short reprieve.

We've all had challenging experiences with others that are purposeful and a part of our ongoing evolutionary unfoldment. Instead of blaming, try reflecting.

Write about three situations or events in which you found yourself feeling victimized. Perhaps you've thought, "Why did he or she do that to me?" or "Why does this always happen to me?" Does this help you remember?

Describe three scenarios and what you were feeling:

1.

2.

3.

From: Center for Action and Contemplation <Meditations@cac.org>
Date: December 5, 2016 at 1:00:19 AM CST
To: Rebeca Eigen <rebecaeigen@me.com>
Subject: Richard Rohr Meditation: The Weeds and the Wheat
Reply-To: Meditations@cac.org

Everything Belongs: Week 2 - The Weeds and the Wheat

Can true humility and compassion exist in our words and in our eyes unless we know we too are capable of any act? —St. Francis of Assisi [1]

Jesus uses a number of images that illustrate the tension between good and evil. They seem to say this world is a mixture of different things, and unless you learn how to see deeply, you don't know which is which, and you don't notice that God allows both good and bad to grow in the same field (Matthew 13:24-30). When a student asks Jesus if he should pull out the weeds, Jesus says to "let them both grow together until the harvest" (13:30). Then, at the end of time, God will decide what is wheat and what is a weed. In a certain way, he is saying it is none of our business to fully figure it out. This is really quite risky of God — and it takes tremendous courage on our part to trust God and ourselves here.

We are all a mixture of weeds and wheat and we always will be. As Martin Luther put it, we are simul justus et peccator. We are simultaneously saint and sinner. That's the mystery of holding weeds and wheat together in our one field of life. It takes a lot more patience, compassion, forgiveness, and love than aiming for some illusory perfection that is usually blind to its own faults. Acknowledging both the wheat and weeds in us keeps us from thinking too highly of ourselves and also from dismissing ourselves as terrible.

To avoid cynicism and negativity, you have to learn to accept and forgive this mixed bag of reality that you are — and everyone else is, too. If you don't, you'll likely become a very angry person. To accept the weeds doesn't mean that you say, "It's okay to be ignorant and evil." It means you have some real wisdom about yourself. You can see your weeds and acknowledge when you are not compassionate or caring. You have to name the weed as a weed. I'm not perfect; you're not perfect; the church is not perfect; America is not perfect.

If we must have perfection to be happy with ourselves, we have only two choices: We can blind ourselves to our own evil (and deny the weeds), or we can give up in discouragement (and deny the wheat). It takes uncommon humility to carry both the dark and the light side of things. The only true perfection available to humans is the honest acceptance of our imperfection. This is precisely what Divine Perfection can help us do; only God in us can love imperfect and broken things. By ourselves, we largely fail.

Learning how to love—which is our life's project — is quite simply learning to accept our messy reality. If you love anyone, then you have learned to accept them despite their faults. You see a few things you'd like to change in your partner, your children, yourself. By the Largeness of God within you, you are able to trust that the good is deeper than the bad, and usually well hidden. This is probably why so many of Jesus' parables are about hiddenness, seeking, and finding.

Gateway to Silence: All things work together for good. —Romans 8:28

References:

[1] Francis of Assisi paraphrased by Daniel Ladinsky, *Love Poems from God: Twelve Voices from the East and West* (Penguin Compass: 2002), 37.

Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer* (The Crossroad Publishing Company: 2003), 41; and Homily "The Weeds and the Wheat," July 20, 2014.