

As you can imagine, I went to a very good school ... however, here is a story.....

1. We're looking at opening pathways – I mean us deciding on and then developing some. One thing we usually do is to think that there is a path already there ahead of us and we should be following **that** path – a spiritual path, the true way, one we've been told. When we wander off it, we might realise we have and try to come back on to it. Joshua 1.7 Do all the law I command you, do not turn from it to the left hand or the right hand, that you may have success in all you do.

That's one way of thinking about our path – it's there, I must stay on it. It's ... okay. Today I want to go further and think about pathways we create for ourselves.

2. Here's an intriguing thing – the most frequent Biblical word for a way is **DEREKH** It has a specific meaning – it is a path or a way that exists only because we have made it – it doesn't pre-exist by itself. We create it by walking it. One of the ways 'derekh' gets translated is a 'course' – helpful when we say we set our course. So that is where I'm heading with this – about opening up our own pathways where none was before. Of course (excuse the pun) that puts a lot more on us, more than the pre-set path to follow

3. Support for it

'as if' – intensely Sw. – these (good actions) are to be done by a person as if from himself, but it should be believed that they are from the Lord working in man and by him. (TCR 3) It is a law of DP that man should not perceive and feel anything of the operation of DP but still should know and acknowledge it. (DP 117)

The Lord, for the sake of his reception by a person, makes it appear that life is as if it is his. (DLW 394)

Who wants to know or understand anything unless he has some pleasure from the affection for it? Every delight and pleasure, and therefore everything that belongs to the will, comes from affection which comes from love. Who can have this pleasure of affection unless what he is affected by appears to be his own? If anyone from his own affection suggested something to the mind of someone else who had no affection for knowing things as if from himself, would he receive it, in fact, could he receive it? (DP 76)

Do it yourself and believe that it is from the Lord, thus you do it as from yourself. (AR 224) And add everything SW says about us having freedom and reason.

So the picture we begin to get is that we are intended to be decision-makers, operators. Here's a powerful Sw. heading on that

"The more closely a person is conjoined to the Lord, the more distinctly does he appear to himself to be master of himself, and yet the more evidently does he recognise that he is the Lord's. (DP 42)

4. Likely reactions

I don't like that – I might get it wrong – what about my proprium? – I like being told..... We need to learn to work through reactions, even accept them initially. Being actively spiritual is not about swapping but about everything we are being changed.

5. Opening (New) Pathways – I have suggestions for 12 (but I can't create yours otherwise I'm going against it all...)

Each one will be in the form of a task, something you do.

\*\*\*have 1-12 each on a square and get someone to pick one, to de-order the run

1. Encourage your mind to contemplate something about God (develop this)
2. Put your finger on what it is that tends to preoccupy you (develop this)
3. Take anything and explore its spiritual meaning or its correspondence (develop this)
4. Think, say or do some thing quite differently, different to your usual (develop this)
5. Long-think a short spiritual phrase or affirmation for about 20 minutes (develop this)
6. Do the same action deliberately each day for a whole month (develop this)
7. Learn a whole Biblical segment off by heart, by extension (develop this)
8. Friend: agree to meet up together regularly and be completely honest (develop this)
9. Consciously feel loving to, admiring of, appreciative about several people (develop this)
10. Research in depth the biographical details of a selected person (develop this)
11. Do a number of acts of random kindness just for their own sake (develop this)
12. Take on learning something that will involve sustained commitment (develop this)

## 6. Developments

This is the interesting and surprising part of it – of opening up pathways

Things actually start to happen!

What happens is best described as noticing a number of changes that begin to happen in yourself.

In order for this to happen, you need to go beyond dabbling and giving it a go.

It requires your commitment to it, time, priority, repetition and seriousness.

This is a commitment to a pathway. You do not know what it will bring on... but it will.

One definite and often-surprising twist will be that while you started working with it, after a while it starts working with you.

## **IT'S BASICALLY WITH US TO DO IT OURSELVES**

(Support from Swedenborg)

**The idea of 'as if'** – intensely Sw. –

Here is the 5<sup>th</sup> part of Swedenborg's summary statement of "the Faith of the New Church"  
These (good actions) are to be done by a person as if from himself, but it should be believed that they are from the Lord working in man and by him. (True Christianity 3)  
(There are many other general statements in the Writings to this same effect).

### **Divine Providence**

It is a law of Divine Providence that people should not perceive and feel anything of the operation of DP but still should know and acknowledge it. (Divine Providence 117)

### **One important reason**

The Lord, for the sake of his reception by a person, makes it appear that life is as if it is the person's own. (Divine Love and Wisdom 394)

### **Another important reason**

Who wants to know or understand anything unless he has some pleasure from the affection for it? Every delight and pleasure, and therefore everything that belongs to the will, comes from affection which comes from love. Who can have this pleasure of affection unless what he is affected by appears to be his own? If anyone from his own affection suggested something to the mind of someone else who had no affection for knowing things as if from himself, would he receive it, in fact, could he receive it?

(Divine Providence 76)

### **Putting it bluntly**

Do it yourself and believe that it is from the Lord, thus you do it as from yourself. (AR 224)

### **The crux of the matter and the effect it brings to us**

"The more closely a person is conjoined to the Lord, the more distinctly does he appear to himself to be master of himself, and yet the more evidently does he recognise that he is the Lord's. (Divine Providence 42)

### **In addition ...**

Swedenborg emphasises repeatedly that 'man' (mankind) is endowed with 2 qualities which are in him to make him truly human.

These 2 qualities are **Freedom** and **Reason**

Both of these exist with us so that we are able to choose, decide, act or not act, and do this in personal freedom.

At the same time we have the faculty of **reason** which enables us to make reference to things, see what they are saying, weigh them up, see likely effects and outcomes etc. and go through all this by ourselves.

### **Enthusiastic Spirits**

Swedenborg occasionally warns against the harm and disorder of the 'take-over' of us by enthusiastic spirits who lead us to think and believe that we can be led directly by the spirit rather than by ourselves, while acknowledging the Lord.

## Biblical (Old Testament) verses substituting DEREKH for WAY

The following verses and many others use 'derekh' in the Biblical text.

1. Show me your **dereks**, O Lord, and teach me your paths ('**orachs**' see bottom of sheet)  
(Psalm 5.4)
2. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, If God will be with me and will keep me in this **derekh** that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God.  
(Genesis 28.20)
3. Behold I send my angel before you to guard you on the **derekh** and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Pay careful attention to him and hear his voice. (Exodus 23.20)
4. This is God, his **derekh** is perfect and the word of the Lord proves true.  
(2 Samuel 22.31)
5. And your ears shall hear a word behind you saying, 'This is the **derekh**, walk in it when you turn to the left or you turn to the right. Then you will say to your carved idols, 'Be gone!'  
(Isaiah 30.21)
6. Obey my voice, and I will be your God and you shall be my people. And walk in all the **derekh** that I command you, that it may be well with you.  
(Jeremiah 7.23)
7. Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the **derekh** before me. And the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come into his temple.  
(Malachi 3.1)
8. And now, Israel, what does the Lord require of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his **derekh**, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments which I am commanding you this day for your good.  
(Deuteronomy 10.12)
9. Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey, but I will not go up among you lest I consume you on the **derekh**, for you are a stiff-necked people.  
(Exodus 33.3)
10. As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his evil **derekh** and live: turn back, turn back from your evil **derekh**, for why will you die, O house of Israel?  
(Ezekiel 33.11)

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### Note

The other frequent word for 'way' is **ORACH** (guttural sound). This, by contrast, means a customary or ordinary way. This stands in contrast to **derekh** which is a self-trodden way. Even so, the two words often appear to be saying the same thing on the surface.

### Orach

Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your **orach**, yet you have broken us in the place of jackals and covered us with the shadow of death. (Psalm 44.18)