

September 2016
Annual / \$10

Sphere

ANTHROPOSOPHY NEW ZEALAND

SELF-MASTERY WORKING IN THE WORLD WITH INNOVATION RENEWAL COURAGE & INSPIRED LEADERSHIP

**ANTHROPOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
OF NEW ZEALAND**

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Sue Simpson

91 Simla Avenue, Havelock North 4130

06 877 6656 / 021 0396186

sue.simpson0@gmail.com

CHAIRMAN:

Noel Josephson

PO Box 291, Auckland 1140

09 574 3352 / 021 655509 / noel@ceres.co.nz

Trisha Glover

46 Hamlin Rd, Mt Wellington, Auckland 1060

09 570 9720 / tglover@ihug.co.nz

Santiago de Marco

37 Fryers Rd, RD 2, Napier 4182

06 845 0211 / santidemarco@xtra.co.nz

TREASURER:

Silke Carter

52 Atkinson Road, Titirangi, Auckland 0604

09 555 5051 / 027 268 4066

silke@auck.hohepa.org.nz

EDITOR:

Emily Fletcher

PO Box 9156, Marion Square 6141

Wellington, New Zealand

spherepublication@gmail.com

DESIGN & LAYOUT:

Emily Fletcher

Rose Cottage Design

contact@rosecottagedesign.co.nz

Sphere is published annually by the

Anthroposophical Society in New Zealand.

Sphere is circulated mid-year and the deadline

for content is the 1 March prior to publication.

Details of the editorial guidelines are available

to any contributor on request to the editor.

Responsibility for the content and accuracy

of all articles is taken by the individual

writers and is not necessarily the opinion of

any member of the editorial group or of the

Anthroposophical Society in New Zealand

SUBSCRIPTIONS: please contact:

paalspach@gmail.com

ISSN: 1175-2653 [Print]

ISSN: 2324-1144 [Email]

CONTENTS

- 03** Editorial
- 04** Self-mastery: Crises, Choice & Self Empowerment, *Nicanor Perlas*
- 14** Nicanor Perlas Interview with *Mark Geard*
- 16** Insight
- 18** Becoming Conscious Authors of Our Own Stories, *Charlotte Von Bülow*
- 25** Inspired Lives – Meeting the World with Creative Vision:
- 26** *Sue Hollingsworth*
- 34** *Skye Chadwick*
- 36** *Silvia Zuur*
- 40** The Challenge of Drugs: A Call to Awaken, *Ron Dunselman*
- 46** What is The First Class? *Lesley Waite*



EDITORIAL

EMILY FLETCHER

THE THEME OF THIS ISSUE – *Self-mastery: Working in the World with Innovation, Renewal, Courage and Inspired Leadership* – is a continuation in theme of our last issue and kicks off with Nicanor Perlas' second lecture, *Self-mastery: Crises, Choice and Self-empowerment*, which looks at the importance of the mastering of our self in these demanding and challenging times. Nicanor's first lecture (from the series *Shaping Citizenship: Spiritual Renewal and Service to the World*) entitled *The World is on Fire* is now available online at anthroposophy.org.nz. Mark Geard then interviews Nicanor with some questions specifically on meditation.

Charlotte Von Bülow from the Crossfields Institute in the UK writes about *Becoming Conscious Authors of Our Own Stories*, looking a little at her own biographical pathway, the nature of learning, leadership and the founding of the Crossfields Institute. Charlotte's article has contributions from her colleagues Dr Isis Brook, writing about a Crossfields course designed towards bringing positive change through social innovation, and Jonathan Code, writing on deepening and broadening the scope of undergraduate learning by offering a more transdisciplinary, liberal arts type pathway.

In our interview section *Inspired Lives*, we focus on three inspirational and empowered women of the world who are working innovatively and courageously transforming vision into deed. Storyteller Sue Hollingsworth speaks on the tasks and trials of the storyteller in the digital-information age. Skye Chadwick speaks about her life-changing experiences, which have led to the creation of several initiatives, especially The Hearth Trust, which works with people with intellectual disabilities, and Silvia Zuur discusses her social enterprises as a means

for significant social change harnessing people and technology as a positive symbiosis.

Ron Dunselman from the Netherlands, one of the keynote speakers at the upcoming conference *Meditation in Action: Finding the Will to Transform*, has updated an article that was originally published 20 years ago called *The Challenge of Drugs: A Call to Awaken*. Two decades later and the topic is as relevant as ever and looks at the nature and challenge of addiction, the forces that seek to disable the human will and the task of the human ego in healing those suffering under addiction. Lastly, we have an article by Lesley Waite entitled *What is the First Class?*

Self-mastery is a never-ending mission that we all undertake from the moment we are born. As a small child, we begin the task of mastering our physical body through constant effort to stand upright and 'take hold' of the world. In adolescence, we strive to manage and make sense of our emotional life, and as we mature into adulthood, we unfold the meaning and mystery of our individuality through our actions in the world. We meet the world through our deeds, and the world meets us through its needs. In this sense, our deeds and needs speak of our responsibility towards mastering ourselves so that we can not only transform ourselves but also meet the enormous needs of the world through individual initiative. This can be something every person can do, whether bringing an attitude of goodwill into a work environment or founding a global enterprise – self-mastery is intrinsic and integral to being a human being.

A special thanks to Alistair Munro, Mark Geard and Lesley Waite who contributed their time to this edition.

Please see www.anthroposophy.org.nz for more articles.



SELF MASTERY

CRISES, CHOICE
& SELF EMPOWERMENT

LECTURE TWO from *Shaping Citizenship:
Spiritual Renewal and Service in the
World*, 26 September 2014

NICANOR PERLAS

This is an edited transcript of the second lecture in a series of three given by Nicanor Perlas at the Wellington 2014 New Zealand Anthroposophical Conference.

THE TOPIC FOR THIS LECTURE is self-mastery as the foundation for true citizenship. If we are to engage the world in a true way, something first must happen *within* us. When we hear about Technological Singularity, the global economic crisis and so on, they seem to be external to us, and yet a fundamental process of cognition means that what we hear or perceive externally then activates our thinking life – what was *external* has now entered *internally*, and something starts to happen inside us. The question is, what do we do with something that has been internalised? There are two choices – we can either totally ignore it and continue to live the way we were as if nothing is happening to the world, thereby cutting ourselves off from the world, or we can make an inner response. This inner response is what I would like to focus on in this lecture, looking particularly at the ‘levels’ we respond from. Are we going to respond on the level of what I will be calling the *constructed self* or are we going to be responding at the level of our *essential self*?

Our two states of being

The *constructed self* and the *essential self* are dual aspects in ourselves. The *constructed self* is that within us, which has formed us since we were born – even before we were born – and in the anthroposophical context, even before we were conceived. This *constructed self* is shaped by forces outside us that we have internalised for better or for worse. There are studies showing that, in the western world, for example, there have been over 10,000 injunctions from parents to their children by the time a child enters adolescence. You often hear parents telling children, “Do this, otherwise that” or “Don’t do that”. This is a form of constructing the real-life thoughts and feelings of a child. And it is a continuous process, not only formed within the home but at school, with friends and teachers, religious groups and the media – which increasingly focuses on young children who are vulnerable because they cannot really process this information. All this forms a *constructed self* that we carry around with us and that has been called in psychology our *persona* or personality – from the Latin word for ‘mask’. And it is a mask this persona. It is not who we truly are, the true spark of ourselves – rather, it is constructed from the outside. Of course, it is important if we are born into a specific place to know the language of the place, the customs and the culture, or we would not be able

to function cohesively there, but on the other hand, if this becomes our unconscious automatic response to the world, it may not be an adequate response. You see the persona has been created in the past, it is oriented towards the past. Another name for this is our *programmed self*.

The programmed self, we could say, is unfree and automatic, which is not necessarily bad. The point is to become aware that this self is in us so that, when we meet an external challenge that we want to deal with and internalise, we can have an awareness of whether we are responding to the occasion from our *constructed self* or from our *essential self*.

The transforming essential self

Now what is this *essential self*? The *essential self* is that part of us that can change and create new beginnings, transforming what already exists – otherwise we could not create the future, we would remain stuck repeating what has been. The *essential self* is in touch with the future and therefore it is not bound to this world only but has access to other higher aspects of reality. This will be developed further, but here just consider that, if we want to respond creatively to the challenge of Technological Singularity or any other life challenge and if our *constructed self* has not been adequately prepared for the challenge, we will need to respond at another level – a level that we can access through self-mastery, a level that allows us contact with our true nature, which is our immortal self, our eternal self our *essential self*.

The phenomenon of ‘fluctuation’

So this is our situation, and I am sure even in the anthroposophical movement, we can feel this to be a reality. This is the real struggle we all experience through the fact that, although sometimes we can access our *essential self* – especially in moments of meditation – most of the time, we go directly back to acting from our *constructed self*. This presents a dilemma because people have a notion that the instant you have a moment of insight, a peak experience or a deeply spiritual encounter, your life has thereby changed permanently, but that is an illusion, because what happens is that there is this phenomenon of ‘fluctuation’, which means to say we fluctuate between our *essential self* and our *constructed self*. Most of the time, our default self is our *constructed self*. That is why, in anthroposophical language, the modern science of the Grail, which is Spiritual Science, is essentially concerned with how this *constructed self* can be thoroughly spiritualised so that the eternal or *essential self* is constantly acting and moving in the world without constant fluctuation.

If we respond to external challenges simply out of the persona, then we will not be able to do much about them, because we will keep on saying to ourselves, “That is an impossible challenge”, and it will be true. At the level of the persona that has never encountered a similar circumstance before, this easily becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you say something is impossible, it will be impossible, and you remain stuck there. And I think this is also where there can be a partial danger of reading too much Spiritual Science – reading too many of Steiner’s books – without transforming the knowledge into deeds. I say this because it happened to me. I read many of his writings, and then I began to realise that nothing had really fundamentally changed in me, and I then started becoming very discontented. But in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, there is a short profound statement pointing to the struggle I have mentioned above:

“Every idea that does not become your ideal kills a power in your soul; every idea that becomes an ideal engenders life-forces within you.”

It is a very radical statement, which means, in this context, if you don’t do anything with the spiritual scientific knowledge you take in and transform this knowledge into deeds in the world, you are actually becoming a weaker and weaker person. Even though in your mind you have a lot of knowledge, you are actually laming yourself. Spiritual Science is a map to change the world through your *essential self*, your eternal self, and so if you say to yourself, “I have all this wonderful knowledge but in the end I am really powerless”, you are really saying that spiritual scientific knowledge has no power to change the world, and therefore you are telling yourself you are worthless faced with these large challenges confronting humanity.

And this is a problem not only within the anthroposophical movement, it is true in respect to all knowledge. It is a human condition in general, because universally, we have a self that is inside a prison, a self that is constructed, for the most part, not by us. As part of our process of growing up, we have all of these default ideas and programmes inside us, and sometimes, perhaps very often, they are conflicting. And then on the other hand, we have our true nature, which is unbounded, unlimited, beyond space and time and capable of incredible powers of transformation. The key is, how do we bring together a coherence between our *constructed self* and our *essential self* so that our persona, our personality, becomes a true vessel of our highest intentions? This is what self-mastery is.

State to stage

Today, this fluctuation phenomenon between the *constructed self* and the *essential self* is being termed the ‘state to stage challenge’. The term recognises that there is first a state of consciousness that has to move into a stage of consciousness – where the stage offers a kind of permanence of this higher state of consciousness established in our persona. That is how this challenge is understood in the technical language of integral philosophy, integral psychology and integral science. In fact, there are over 5,000 courses in universities around the world that deal with consciousness science. It has become mainstream and includes the concept of the evolution of consciousness, which Steiner first introduced and which people didn’t at that time understand. There are many doctoral dissertations on this topic, and the question arises of how a temporary state of higher consciousness, a beginning experience of the *essential self*, can be prolonged and lengthened so that it becomes our default stage of consciousness.

Low transaction costs

Before referring to how this development is explained in modern neuroscience, I would just like to cite two movements that are explicitly dealing with this in a mainstream way. And some of these things are going to be really surprising – they certainly surprised me. The first one is the so-called ‘Innovation Ecosystem Movement’. It sounds like something that is very far removed from self-mastery, yet this Innovation Ecosystem Movement is basically an in-depth study of Silicon Valley. The book that summarises this and integrates it in a very powerful way is called *The Rain Forest: The Secret of Building the Next Silicon Valley* by Victor Hwang and Greg Horowitz. It has become a best seller. The interesting thing in this book is that it is espousing that at the core of the Silicon Valley phenomenon is a certain kind of self-mastery, which has to be there for something like Silicon Valley to function. Now I am not saying Silicon Valley is all good, I am just pointing to the phenomenon that to create this kind of massive wealth-creation hub, there has to be some key ingredient. Silicon Valley represents the eighth largest economy in the world, right there in an area smaller than New Zealand, and it produces wealth that is equivalent to that of the whole United Kingdom. So the Innovation Ecosystem Movement asked the question: “Why did something like a Silicon Valley develop in California and not in Chicago or in the east of the United States where there are schools like Harvard and MIT or in New York with billions of dollars of old wealth sitting in its financial centre?” The University of Chicago has 85 Nobel Prize winners concentrated there and is a world-class university,

which gave us the neoliberal economics paradigm that now drives the world economic system. They have billions of dollars in resources and so on but no real innovation such as found in Silicon Valley.

So the authors ask: “Why in Silicon Valley?” And it turns out that the key ingredient is that Silicon Valley has ‘low transaction costs’. A transaction cost is a technical term in economics – Ronald H Coase, who invented it, won the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1991 – but in plain language, low transaction costs refer to what helps people really synergise with each other. If in a specific place there is no trust and respect, innovation will not happen. So all the Nobel Prize winners in Chicago were in silos, in other words, they were doing their thing but they were not connecting with others. They did not connect with others, because in the University of Chicago and in the East Coast, they had high transaction costs. The book goes on to explain the phenomenon of the *constructed self* based on neuroscience and the way the brain has evolved, including how the *constructed self* often sabotages our best intentions. Essentially, we see concrete external effects in the world emanating from self-mastery, which, if undertaken collectively and in freedom, has tremendous impact.

The key is, how do we bring together a coherence between our constructed self and our essential self so that our persona, our personality, becomes a true vessel of our highest intentions? This is what self-mastery is.

Silicon Valley and Wisdom 2.0

So the notion that we need self-mastery to be real citizens of the world is not a fringe phenomenon. Rather, it is at the heart of innovation in the world. And now every year in Silicon Valley, the Global Innovation Summit is convened. I was invited to attend there in February 2014 so I was able to see how people from 50 countries were trying to implement this process, developing networks of low transaction costs, mutual respect, trust and the so-called ‘soft’ aspects. It was amazing to see that they took the inner work seriously

as an important part of external transformation processes.

The second example is even more surprising and explicit, and for better or worse, it is starting to permeate centres of world power – the global conference called Wisdom 2.0. It is named after the Silicon Valley language for software innovation, version 1.0, version 2.0 and so on. Wisdom 2.0 is saying that there is a certain wisdom in the world that produced the western world’s high-tech society, but now we need to move on to a different kind of wisdom if we are going to survive the impacts of technology. And the interesting, most bizarre thing is that this Wisdom 2.0 is promoted by high-level executives in the high-tech industries of Silicon Valley. It is basically a first practical response to the question: “How do you deal with all the stress experienced in the innovation centres of the world?” And the interesting thing is that they are now bringing some of the world’s top meditators into the picture from different meditation streams. You have the Sufi stream, the Buddhist, the Hindu and so on – including Arthur Zajonc, the physicist who was General-Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in North America. Arthur is the head of a network involving 800 universities that have mainstream meditation as part of higher education. He was the Scientific Director of the Mind and Life Institute until June 2015, which has associations with the Dalai Lama. And so, standing publicly in the stream of Spiritual Science, he is in the middle of orchestrating many of these developments that are a part of Wisdom 2.0.

I am very glad to hear that Arthur Zajonc was invited to partake in Wisdom 2.0 because it had Google as a major sponsor and many other major organisations involved with it – along with their executives, like Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook, LinkedIn CEO Jeff Weiner and Twitter co-founder Evan Williams. All these people have attended Wisdom 2.0. I am not saying this is for better or for worse, because on the one hand, some of these corporations are doing something, which from my point of view, is problematic in the area of private security – including allowing some of their data to be used by the intelligence agencies of the United States and changing our settings automatically without our permission – so there may be a disconnection between the meditative activity and the corporate activity in some cases. The question of this disconnection was brought up in Wisdom 2.0, and there was no direct answer. They found it a very difficult question, even though this inner work, this mainstreaming of meditation, is seen as a necessary part of existence in the 21st century.

Buddhism, science and meditation

Many of you have heard of the World Economic Forum, the yearly conference of over 1,000 CEOs of the world's largest corporations held in Davos, Switzerland, and also attended by heads of state, presidents, prime ministers and the elite of civil society, universities, researchers and so on. It is arguably more powerful than the United Nations. In fact, it has often, in the past, set the agenda of the UN. I had some friends who were insiders there, and they were describing the process to me. They found the level of global planning and control by the corporations astonishing. Corporation executives would say, "This is the next emerging trend, maybe we should do this in Latin America or we should do this in Africa." They use these meetings for planning, and they involve the Director-General of the World Trade Organisation and the Secretary-General of the UN as implementing agencies of this global agenda. But now the World Economic Forum has discovered meditation in Wisdom 2.0, and the interesting thing here is that the dominant meditative form is Buddhism, because Buddhism is not a religion. It is seen as the highest form of a science of consciousness from the past, and that is why many neuroscientists around the world are starting to do neuroscientific studies of the brain patterns of Buddhist meditators. All of a sudden, there is a huge interest in this area, because it is having an impact all over the place. Researchers are beginning to understand some of the higher brain functions that are being activated through meditation.

Just as a side note, in the lecture series called 'Background to the Gospel of St Mark' given in 1910–1911, (GA 124), Steiner makes the very interesting comment that the increasing materialism of the world will be deflected by Buddhism, just as Islam deflected the early hardening of humanity through materialistic science that was going to be introduced around 600 AD. And we can see Buddhism having this effect. Steiner said this over 100 years ago, and it is pretty amazing to observe the wisdom of that comment now.

Meditation as corporate practice

Wisdom 2.0 is happening today on a large scale not only in the World Economic Forum. It is even in the right-wing think-tank of Washington, DC – the Heritage Foundation – and the World Bank and many other such places. Wisdom 2.0 is even in the financial centres in New York, and there is now Wisdom 2.0 Europe. It has become pervasive – but why? Because it is based on science. This is what is attracting all of these institutions. They want scientific proof as to what will happen if you practise *mindfulness*, which is a major meditative form. Google has a university and

a guru teaching mindfulness to all its employees – full-time. Mindfulness has been informed by the work of Daniel Goleman, who wrote the book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. So real work is being done which is not only affecting the performance of major corporations but also world policy. There have been discussions of the foreign policy implication of mindfulness, and the people discussing this were people responsible for current US foreign policy.

In today's world, it is no longer 'soft' to speak about meditation. For better or for worse, it has now entered into the hard power structures of the world. Maybe some of these executives are just doing this for stress reduction, for better health – there are various reasons – but whatever the reasons, the topic is now mainstream. *Wired* magazine, the premier high-tech geek magazine of the world, featured an article in respect to this titled "In Silicon Valley, meditation is no fad. It could make your career". Meditation is now regularly mentioned in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and so on.

Spiritual materialism

Now before I go further, I want to mention that the importance of this topic of fluctuation was also highlighted by a certain phenomenon that emerged around the world in spiritual movements throughout several decades – in the 1960s, 70s, 80s and so on – when spiritual gurus started acting in disastrous and bizarre ways. This arose from the fact that, in such cases, the *constructed self* had not undergone permanent change to a higher level and so old or abusive patterns emerged because they did not understand the phenomenon of fluctuation. Although they were acting from the *constructed self*, they believed they were actually 'there'.

I will give a certain example that I can talk about because it is already cited and is public. How many of you are familiar with Chogyam Trungpa? Chogyam Trungpa was responsible for the rebirth of interest in Buddhism before the Dalai Lama became so prominent. He wrote the book *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*. When he wrote that book, it became a classic, because he was saying that many people turning to meditation for spirituality are actually spiritual egotists. And then 20 years later, he himself was a victim of spiritual materialism – he became the victim of his own weaknesses in contradiction to his teaching – which has happened to many guru figures. People who had high levels of spiritual insights all of a sudden on the other hand became ordinary people driven by their instincts.

Now there is a very powerful explanation regarding this behaviour both in existing neuroscience and in Steiner's lectures on the Grail. (See, for example, Lecture 4 of the lecture cycle, "The Mysteries of the East and of Christianity" given on 7 February 1913.) And it is incredible how these two pictures complement each other – one from the side of 21st century neuroscience and the other from a spiritual perspective in terms of the evolution of consciousness. There is also the example of Goethe, who often gets criticised for being "human, all too human" despite his amazing knowledge and high level of development, which is a foundation for Spiritual Science. There were certainly aspects of Goethe that one cannot emulate, but Steiner spoke of how Goethe's life reflects the condition of modern humanity and illustrates the importance of the struggle to stabilise the fluctuation between our *constructed self* and our *essential self*. No one escapes this condition of being and living in a self that is basically enslaved and programmed yet also having an eternal nature simultaneously. That is why there is this fluctuation, and for Goethe, it was after his struggle that he produced some of his most amazing work.

... if evolution had hardwired the prefrontal cortex, we would have a really hard time becoming free.

The fourfold brain

In conventional terms, the explanatory framework for this 'state to stage' paradigm comes from neuroscience and evolutionary psychology. Neuroscience aims to give an explanation of the struggle or challenge that we all face and that can also explain why somebody of high spirituality can fall suddenly overnight. From the early 1960s, it was explained in terms of the so-called 'split brain' – the two hemispheres of the brain. Then in the 1970s and 1980s, it was explained in terms of the 'triune brain' – the three-part brain. This so-called first or 'reptilian' brain is still with us, because in the evolutionary process, our brain was constructed gradually. We didn't get born and become human all of a sudden. The point is that the reptilian brain developed first, followed by the so-called 'mammalian brain' or emotional brain, which is in the centre as it were, and then the 'neo-mammalian' brain formed. The neo-mammalian brain, which is the cortex towards the back of the head, is also known as the 'monkey'

brain. The monkey brain makes its presence known when you start to meditate and you have many, often overwhelming, automatic thoughts that start to enter. More recently, we have the latest fourth level of brain development, which is in the prefrontal cortex. This prefrontal cortex emerged in evolution, according to conventional scientific understanding, about 50,000 years ago, whereas the reptilian brain was already there 600 million years ago, the mammalian brain emerged around 3 million years ago and the monkey brain around 1 million years ago.

So the basic conventional explanation using ideas of neuroscience and evolutionary biology is that the *constructed self* runs by default out of the three lower brain centres. Why is it that the media, for example, are so fond of negative news? Why does negative news sell? It is a frustrating global phenomenon. So many good things happen but are not covered. Why? Because the negative appeals to the reptilian brain, which, when fed news about murders, rape and violence, responds automatically. This function was useful for survival in the past, because without these brain functions, our physical body would not have survived. But the problem is that these three earlier brains are wired for negativity because the negative is always looking out to protect itself. These three brains – the reptilian brain, the mammalian brain and the neo-mammalian brain – are on autopilot, and they have been driving our behaviour for a long time. That is why it is so difficult to get beyond them, because if you are not conscious, they are there as the default. Only when our fourth brain – the prefrontal cortex – is active is there the power to manage the entire brain and its functions. The prefrontal cortex is connected to all of this systematically and has evolved only in the last 50,000 years or so. It is the latest brain, and the interesting thing is that, when a child is born, the prefrontal cortex is undeveloped, and therefore, it has to be nurtured.

It is very interesting to imagine that, if evolution had hardwired the prefrontal cortex, we would have a really hard time becoming free. By the way, we are making a distinction in this discussion between the brain as an instrument and consciousness, which uses the brain as an instrument. The prefrontal cortex is not active unless we are engaging in higher reflective and other cognitive processes. Nonetheless, the higher thinking processes that Steiner speaks about in the *Philosophy of Freedom* are not bound to the brain. Living thinking takes place independent of the brain and yet, subsequently, uses the prefrontal cortex so that finished products of spiritual thinking can be etched in the brain of our persona. In the absence of these higher processes, even Steiner himself would say our brain takes over.

Now the *constructed self* is driven by motives and drives that are hardwired and have been instinctive for millions of years. That is why it is not going to be overnight that you have a high-level consciousness experience and then achieve immediate and permanent change. You simply cannot do this. You now have to find a way to start transforming experience and engaging your prefrontal cortex consciously. It is not surprising, then, that much of the neuroplasticity in the brain takes place in the prefrontal cortex. In my previous lecture, I mentioned neuroplasticity, which refers to the fact that consciousness shapes the way neuronal networks are working in the brain. It is the opposite of being determined by our brain, so as you can see, we are both free and unfree simultaneously. A large part of us is unfree, and the task of self-mastery is to take hold of inner practices that would start incarnating our *essential self* more strongly into our physical structure. And that is why Wisdom 2.0 goes deeper than the Innovation Ecosystem. The Innovation Ecosystem acknowledges the problems of evolutionary psychology in developing trust in relationships which arise because we are hardwired not to trust other people. That is our basic habit, but on the other hand, if we have such a strong parallel sense of *essential self*, we can develop trust easily. So it all depends on where we are at in terms of our self-mastery.

Science of the Grail

That is the modern contemporary perspective from neuroscience on the problem of this struggle between our better self and our everyday automatic self. Now how does it look from the perspective of Spiritual Science? Spiritual Science actually paints a remarkable complementary picture, making it deeper and more profound by connecting the problem with the whole evolution of consciousness. At the same time, it recognises how the struggle is built right into the whole search for the Grail. As you know, Steiner describes anthroposophy as the modern science of the Grail. The book *An Outline of Occult Science* (1909), also known as *An Outline of Esoteric Science*, is basically the Grail mysteries in modern form. The Grail is the preparer for the mission of earth evolution, but to understand this from a larger context, we have to understand the evolution of consciousness. We can understand the evolution of consciousness by looking at it in three stages – from *unconscious participation* through to the modern *dual consciousness* of contemporary experience to fully *conscious participation*. These ideas now resonate with modern scholarship through the work of Owen Barfield, who is perhaps one of the strongest exponents of the evolution of consciousness and who came to these ideas independently of Steiner through the study of

the evolution of English words. It is interesting that, in both unconscious participation and conscious participation, there is none of the modern dual consciousness experience of today. With unconscious participation, the human experience was: “I am in the world and I am one with it” – but then we had no consciousness that was the case. We did not know that we were experiencing oneness with the world – it was unconscious. And then individuation took place, and we came to the point where our default consciousness is: “I am in here, and the world is out there” – so we call this dual consciousness.

The further stage that arises especially in meditative states and about which the *Philosophy of Freedom* is an amazing guide is conscious participation. Conscious participation is a conscious entry into the deeper spiritual processes of the world, which manifest themselves as actual laws of the world but also at the same time are a creative power that has constructed our physical body and our soul. That is why there are people who, when they have creative experiences, can go for days without really eating, because they are being fed directly from the forces that created the world. Steiner described this in a simple way. In your higher thinking, your living thinking, you get a hold of the world in one corner of the world, and after that, you can see how it connects with other aspects of the world. Put another way, the thought world is a living whole. You cognize an aspect of it from your vantage point. That vantage point can then connect to other vantage points because reality is a seamless unity. The point is that modern humanity has now started on the journey of achieving conscious participation. In Lecture 1 of this series, *The World is on Fire*, I spoke about evolutionary spirituality and how anthroposophy had actually articulated what it was. Today, it is being articulated in a different more detailed form whereby we know how those creative powers are directing the world, and we can consciously place our free self into the process and be in service to that. That is why, in my previous lecture when I talked about asking ourselves “What is my purpose?”, it cannot be a question that is being asked or answered by your persona because then it will be all about you and nothing about the world process. It will be about your programming, and therefore you are going to get stuck in the past. It is essential to recognise that, when the question is asked “What is my purpose?”, that question is being made or triggered in your persona by your *essential self*, and the answer should come from the *essential self*. Then you will not burn out in the process, because when you serve the world in that way, the world is actually in you – not abstractly, but in terms of its creative forces, which are starting to enter into your being.

Epochs of consciousness

A very powerful example of this fluctuation between the *constructed* and *essential self* is from early Egyptian times when humans were undergoing the development of the sentient soul body and they had, as an afterflow of the Persian civilisation, a direct participation of reality, albeit unconsciously, and therefore their sensations actually fed and gave them health. This is very important because it wasn't an abstract world view – it was the formative powers of the world bringing and forming vital, living health to the human being. Then in later Egyptian times, consciousness evolved so this sensation was no longer as direct, and what took its place were images, and these images were inwardly alive and full of content. There was no longer the direct sensation experience but vitalising inner images.

In Greek times, we had the birth of philosophy. This period of time is known in conventional world history as the Axial Age. During this time, around 600–300 BC, there was Confucius in China, Buddha in India, Zoroaster in Persia and Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in Greece. At this time, they experienced the living images in contracted form, which became ideas. That is why, for Plato, ideas were alive – not like today when ideas are dead. That is why the Greek word for theory, *theoria*, meant a kind of beholding. They beheld not a theory in themselves but an idea that was active in the world. And mathematics was understood then as the crystallisation of these ideas in their proportion, in their rhythm. Because it had art and precision, it could affect the world.

Then of course we know that, when the individual self was born, all of that faded away into greater and greater abstraction, symptomatically expressed in world history as the debate between nominalism and realism. Nominalists said, “Ideas are not real, they are just names that we give to patterns of things in this world,” and the realists responded, “No, no, no, ideas are real, they construct the world, we experience them as real,” until finally today, we reach a stage of almost complete abstraction.

The wound of Amfortas

Now for me, an interesting point that Steiner made is that, while this was going on and we were further distanced from a direct participation in the world, aspects of our soul and aspects of our physical body and our etheric life started to become dead. This dead aspect in ourselves Steiner called the wound of Amfortas, from the Grail story of *Parsifal*. In the story, Amfortas has a wound that was due to the fact that Amfortas, King of the Grail, had not managed to

fully overcome and transform his *constructed self*, and because the *constructed self* was so powerful, he was still liable to be under its control, and so he misused his power and was hit in the groin area with a poisoned lance. Basically, the Grail, the symbol of the highest manifestation of spiritualised matter, had been used by Amfortas for selfish reasons. And if you look, all of us have that wound as a direct by-product of becoming aware of ourselves. It is the necessary by-product of having an ‘I’ consciousness.

Now we needed to ‘die’ to a direct unconscious participatory experience of this world, otherwise, as we all know, we could not achieve freedom. The forces of the world would have lived too strongly within us for our own individualised consciousness to be born. Without this individualised consciousness buttressed by thinking, we could never be free. But that freedom came at the cost of now having a kind of inner resistance in us that we have to overcome and vitalise with such strength that our spiritual self is able to enter the Amfortas wound and transform it into a state of blessedness – the Parsifal state of consciousness. The picture of the Parsifal state of consciousness and the wound of Amfortas is deeply connected with what I mentioned in my first lecture. In the very beginning, Steiner was asking everyone in the Anthroposophical Society or Movement to find our karma, to perform our actions in the world out of the ‘cosmic world context’. That was what he was asking for, and now you begin to understand why, because in our previous incarnations, our context, our ‘stage’ of awareness at that time was a direct participation in the world process, a participation that was totally healing and vitalising of our soul and our body. But we have lost this context of our embeddedness in the world process, and we are now so contracted that we can only achieve a very limited sense of self, and we find it difficult to engage in the world. This is a normal human condition now in which we have also suffered a loss of innocence.

Finding a world context

As I have already mentioned, in the ancient days, people had access to a universal world wisdom, albeit through unconscious experience. In the east, they received the power to see that great context and act it out inwardly, and in the west, they were so full of life energy that they developed courage to be in the world. Their life forces were overflowing, and because of that, the west gained an actual reconnection to the very creative forces that made the world.

That is why that, if we today are unable to consciously connect to the widest world context, we will always experience this part of ourselves, the *constructed self*, as limiting, uncreative and unfulfilling. This is because

our higher nature, our *essential self*, which is universal and eternal, is seeking in our day-to-day experience the broadest possible context for the dignity and true nature of the human being. That is why it is so important today to develop ourselves. We need to be able to carry the largest conception that modern humanity can conceive and act out of that, even in the simplest of circumstances – only then will we begin to see what kind of impact we can have, no matter where we are, no matter where our karma places us. Whether on the world scene, the national scene, a city scene or a community scene, what matters for us as a true human being is to be able to act out of the largest context that we can understand today.

I was suggesting in my first lecture that the modern world has already arrived at this. There are tens of thousands of people around the world, even more, who are practising and advocating *evolutionary spirituality*, and their context is the whole evolution of the universe, which they understand physically, though not yet on the spiritual level, but enough for them to understand why we are here and why the future of this planet depends on us and how we will act. They are striving to act now in the world. A very interesting term that they are using is the *evolutionary self*, which can be connected with Spiritual Science. So we have the *constructed self* and we have *essential self*, or we may say our lower self and our higher self (whatever you want to call it), but in the middle between the two, people are now starting to identify what they are now calling the *evolutionary self*. I thought that was the perfect term, because often when we begin to experience this fluctuation in ourselves, the battle between the Parsifal and the Amfortas in us can create confusion, and we don't know what to do. The *evolutionary self*, once it understands this journey, begins to see this fluctuation as something good, something that is asking us to move to the next evolutionary stage. Therefore, we can even enjoy it, and not out of masochism but in recognition of it. When the *constructed self* is overcome through love and dies, that is a painful process because sacrifice is involved. We cannot really avoid sacrifice in the transcending of our egotism, because our higher senses are all constructed to promote sacrifice. Our higher senses, such as our sense of thought, our sense of word or our sense of the 'I' of another person, will not function unless we get rid of our own self in the process and be increasingly 'in the other'. So the *evolutionary self*, in spiritual scientific language, can be seen, from my perspective, as the overlap between the *spiritual self* and the consciousness soul – it refers to the increasing penetration of our *spiritual self* into our consciousness soul. And when that happens consciously, we begin to take on this evolutionary

challenge with a totally different perspective. We no longer fear it. It is not easy, but we don't run away from it, because we understand that we have to go through this if we are to be constructively engaged in the world.

Commitment and free choice

I would like to end by briefly reflecting on two famous verses by WH Murray and Goethe respectively.

Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, that providence moves too. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way.

WH Murray

Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it!

Goethe

Reflecting on the essence of these verses makes it clear that our failure to recognise an elementary truth can result in countless failures and disappointments, which is that the moment you are committed to take up initiative, in the context of the world process, providence moves too, and then things start to happen that would otherwise not happen if you did not make a move and begin – meetings with people, events and so on. Resources come because you dared to stay in the void, trusting. You can then see that what you are doing in this world is a spiritual partnership – a partnership with the creative powers of the world that made us and have made nature and the universe. So if you have an initiative, do it now!

From this perspective, the word 'commitment' is critical, and the best way to understand it is to actually understand Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom*, because you cannot really understand commitment fully if you don't fully comprehend what a true, free, moral act is in the world. Part 1 of the *Philosophy of Freedom* is really about knowledge and the wisdom that comes out of being able to go through all the different forms of your programming, even the most subtle ones, and being able to overcome them in the realm of pure thinking. So that's Part 1, briefly summarised! In Part 2, Steiner looks at how you act in freedom in the world and how love is a power that is behind our thinking, a power behind all the free deeds that formed the world. This is presented very clearly, especially in Chapter 9, and the overarching motif that is implicit in the

whole work is 'commitment'. Between the first part of the *Philosophy of Freedom* regarding how we arrive at authentic knowledge and the second part, which is about how we act that out in reality, there is a bridge that must be crossed. Acting consciously cannot be an automatic process, otherwise we go back in evolution. We have to have a free choice.

When I am committed, I have the freedom to say, "I am going to put the best of myself in service of the world in accordance with my highest ideal," and when that commitment is made and something is started, something else happens that now empowers you to realise that in the world. What happens is depicted by the statement of Christ in the New Testament, which says, "Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Matthew 7: 9-11. Revised Standard Version). In other words, what kind of providence is it if an individual, consciously knowing the world and putting his whole life in its service, is only given a stone by the spiritual world? In reality, it is not like that. In fact, the spiritual world is so near us, asking us to make those free deeds, because only in those free deeds can it then participate in the creation of the future of this world, but they will not interfere or violate the very freedom that took thousands, even millions of years, to develop. So if we are making a mess out of ourselves here on this planet, they are not going to interfere, because it is a useless kind of freedom if in the end they intervene and stop the whole thing. We created this problem, we have to solve it, and that can only be solved if we act in true freedom, and then the spiritual powers that are with us will also come in and become our spiritual partners. This is what they are waiting for.

And it actually works! In my own life, I have experienced this so many times. It is not a theory for me. But there has to be this conscious relationship that you are freely in service to what the spiritual world asks, and you can only do that if you have dealt with your fear and your doubts, especially your fear of an unknown future. Because the future cannot be predicted, no one really knows what the future will be because of this question of freedom. So you don't know how things will turn out, but if you find an understanding of the world process that you can really support and serve with love, then amazing things will start to happen. Begin it now!

MEDITATION IN ACTION

FINDING THE WILL TO TRANSFORM



21-24 OCTOBER 2016
ANTHROPOSOPHICAL SOCIETY NEW ZEALAND
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

TAIKURA RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL
505 NELSON STREET, HASTINGS NORTH

Our intention for this year's conference is to explore and discuss the power of Meditation, fostering a discussion between the tension of inner and outer work. How do we find the right balance to live in the 21st century and to respond to the needs of the world and of our time? Meditation as a deed or as an inner soothing need? How can Meditation empower change, transformation & social justice.

For more information and registration details
check the website: www.anthroposophy.org.nz

NICANOR PERLAS INTERVIEW

With Mark Geard of *Alamandria: The Art of Meditation and Mindfulness*

MG: Why is meditation important in today's world?

NP: For me, the foundations of meditation are the attention exercises that one uses to strengthen one's thinking, emotional balance and action. You cannot do meditation without attention. I think you need to allow the modern world to move back a little so you can concentrate on developing attention. Then you can approach meditation. It's absolutely imperative for people, especially in the 21st century, to develop their power of attention. The mind is so scattered with all of the fast-moving media that surrounds us – the TV shows, the internet etc – all of this can lead to a mind that is disrupted and disturbed. If you don't strengthen attention forces, you cannot really fully engage in so many things that are essential in the world.

If you intensify that attention so that it leads to meditation, which is another level of awareness, you start accessing other aspects of reality that you don't normally access. These aspects don't have to be deep realities about seeing the invisible – rather, they can increase your power to see patterns in reality such as in conversation or patterns in large group processes. It intensifies this power of engagement because you are totally focused, you are 'listening', and then with your meditative power, you are able to perceive things that are not apparent to our outer sensory experiences.

This can apply to all facets of life, because eventually, everything depends on whether you have free attention or not as opposed to a pre-programme that's running and interpreting all the sense perceptions that you're not paying attention to anyway. So this approach to meditation, via the development of attention, makes for a very solid presence in the world.

MG: Mindfulness has become globally popular. Is it the main staging platform today for transforming what you have referred to as the constructed self – that responsive part of us that has been programmed through our biological, societal and environmental conditioning?

NP: Yes, I think so, for a number of reasons. First of all, mindfulness trains attention. There are many mindfulness techniques you can use, such as focusing your breath or focusing on a sound, as long as your attention is engaged. The reason why it is a major platform is because, in this scientific age, researchers

have discovered the neural correlates to mindfulness. There are thousands of studies by both mainstream scientists and some of the world's cutting-edge neuroscientific researchers who are engaging with people who have practised mindfulness and meditation for a long time. I believe it is on the basis of this scientific research that you have mainstream institutions like Google, Facebook and the Wisdom 2.0 conference playing a large part in the mindfulness revolution. And it has been called a revolution. It is entering into established frameworks such as the World Economic Forum, the World Bank and many universities and is becoming far reaching.

So it is definitely a major platform, and that is because it is no longer seen as a soft and fuzzy concept and neither is it anecdotal. You begin to really understand what you are doing when you are practising mindfulness. You become aware of what is happening in your brain and what that actually means. It is this awareness that can hasten the impact and the improvements within mindfulness and meditation practices.

MG: Where does the impulse for change and transformation come from? What makes us want to change?

NP: It's basically our innate sense of freedom. If that sense really lives strongly in us, we want to transform something that has become dead in us or dead in society. So if you feel or sense yourself to be a free person, you can change something that no longer works and create something that can work in a new context – a context that is always evolving. What might have worked in the past may no longer work in a new context, and that is the impulse – it is freedom.

MG: I work with some inmates in a prison therapy unit, and I try and engage them in experiencing something other than habitual ways of being, which are embedded in their constructed self and their criminal past. I sometimes ask them what is the impulse that makes them want to change.

NP: Aside from freedom, it's the liberation to experience your true nature. If you are just really basically following orders – and by orders, I am referring to the inner dictator, the 'constructed self' dictator, and there are many different kinds of dictators there inside you, telling you what to do – then you can become a puppet for that

dictator, but if you realise that you're not really free and you cannot really experience your true nature or your true self, then you would really want to change.

MG: What defines an anthroposophical approach to meditation from other methods of meditation?

NP: I think the most important aspect, especially in comparison to mindfulness, is it's a scientific approach to meditation. I am not saying that mindfulness is not scientific, so perhaps the better term is a cognitive approach to meditation. Mindfulness is more on the perceptual side. You are mindful with the breath, being in the present moment and developing your attention. Mindfulness can include realms that are more cognitive, for example, not judging, so when you see emotions rising up, you try and cultivate the non-judgemental attitude. But in the anthroposophical path of meditation, you're actually trying to enter into the thoughts of the creation of the world. In my experience, I combine both. I use the mindfulness as a kind of warming up that helps develop my attention forces, and then I am ready for the more difficult work of doing the anthroposophical meditation of which there are many themes. Sometimes I construct my own, because after all, it's not what you meditate on but the impact that it creates in you that's important. It gives you a solid grounding in the world, because you are really dealing with the order that created the world, so you enter into that realm, wakefully, consciously, coherently and integrally.

MG: Why does the path of self-mastery become more difficult the further we progress and evolve as humans?

NP: Because there is so much to focus on in modern civilisation, such as the titillating of our ego and our powers of consumption. It does not require self-mastery for your ego to get titillated. That's a term, by the way, that's used in foreign policy. In fact, Brzezinski, a very famous US National Security Advisor at one point, was saying that he was predicting the time will come when there's so much automation in the world that, to satisfy people, you will have to fall back on superficial 'titilltainment'. Much of the world is like that, like Facebook – sorry Facebook believers – and Twitter and all of those forms of distraction.

MG: We often hear the term 'dead thinking' and the term 'living thinking'. What do they mean?

NP: Modern psychology has a lot of names for thinking, such as the story that keeps on running by itself automatically in your brain or the mental model that just operates and gets triggered without your control. This huge aspect of yourself can trigger itself automatically and 'drive you out' to wherever it wants to take you,

whereas living thinking is actually a very different kind of thinking because it will not happen unless you are engaged in it as the key agent and creator. That's why, in my own practice, when these automatic thoughts and feelings start to come up, I will take a look at them and reflect on them and begin to understand that they are just given, they arrive without my will. But the moment you start taking control consciously of something, you are starting to engage your living thinking in the process. It cannot happen without your free activation, whereas dead thinking happens all the time, even though you don't want it to happen. In neuroscience, it's called the monkey brain. It's very noisy! – especially when you're trying to practise mindfulness or trying to focus. These automatic thoughts, they keep coming. That is dead thinking, they are not really alive.

MG: A machine almost.

NP: Yes, and when you start to see them and to analyse the structure of that dead thinking and its possible origins in the world and contemplate commencing a thought that is no longer a given, then you see it cannot take place without your free will activity, which is living thinking.

MG: We hear so much about the place of science and technology being at the defining edge of our future development as human society. Are the arts part of this defining process, and what is their task in relation to the unfolding of a subnature?

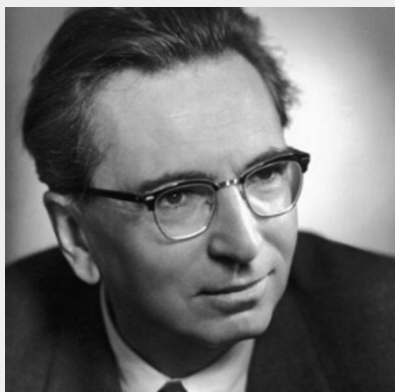
NP: Very interesting question, because I've now begun to realise, through a meditative path, that the world is actually created artistically. In other words, you cannot see the forms of the world, the patterns, the interconnectedness if you don't have living thinking as a segue from that conversation. And art is a very important part in two directions. The first direction is that it allows you to see the living connections – you see the form, the form of the cognitive world – and secondly, you have a free decision on what to do with that form that you're seeing and how you're going to express that into the world. That is why in Greek, art and technology have the same word – *techne*. *Techne* means both art and technology.

Environmentalist and civil society leader Nicanor Perlas recently spoke at the Moral Technologies Conference in Australia. His lectures can be found on YouTube: '[Moral Technology Conference 2016: Day 1 Lecture](#)' and more about the conference can be found at:

www.moraltechnologies.com.au

INSIGHT

VIKTOR FRANKL
1905–1997



WE WHO LIVED IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS CAN REMEMBER THE MEN WHO WALKED THROUGH THE HUTS COMFORTING OTHERS, GIVING AWAY THEIR LAST PIECE OF BREAD. THEY MAY HAVE BEEN FEW IN NUMBER, BUT THEY OFFER SUFFICIENT PROOF THAT EVERYTHING CAN BE TAKEN FROM A MAN BUT ONE THING: THE LAST OF THE HUMAN FREEDOMS – TO CHOOSE ONE'S ATTITUDE IN ANY GIVEN SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES, TO CHOOSE ONE'S OWN WAY.

Every situation is distinguished by its uniqueness, and there is always only one right answer to the problem posed by the situation at hand. When a man finds that it is his destiny to suffer, he will have to accept his suffering as his task; his single and unique task. He will have to acknowledge the fact that even in suffering he is unique and alone in the universe. No one can relieve him of his suffering or suffer in his place. His unique opportunity lies in the way in which he bears his burden.

From: *'Man's Search for Meaning'.*

OTTO SCHARMER
1961



BUT MAYBE THE BIGGEST FAILURE OF ELITES IN EUROPE AND ELSEWHERE CONCERNS THE SPIRITUAL VOID. Terrorism is the negative side of expressing human creativity (or the lack thereof). Every act of terrorism is an expression of a creative potential that has gone astray, that was unable to manifest in the context of true creativity that generates positive impact. Where does that problem start? It starts in schools that fail our kids by teaching for testing instead of nurturing their deeper sources of creativity and learning.

The spiritual void cannot be filled with just another ideology or another straitjacket of traditional ethical norms. That would mean moving backward. Moving forward means updating the educational system in a way that allows every human being to genuinely connect to their own sources of humanity and creativity, which happen to be the source for all social renewal.

From: *Huffington Post article, 'One Earth, Two Social Fields, 20 July 2016'. Can be found on-line at www.thehuffingtonpost.com*

AUNG SAN SUU KYI
1945



"I WOULD THINK, WHY CAN'T WE JUST GET ON AND DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE...". THE IMPATIENCE, SHE SAID, "DIDN'T LAST, BECAUSE I HAD THE BENEFITS OF MEDITATION. EVEN WHEN I WAS VERY ANNOYED, I WOULD KNOW THAT WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS THIS WOULD HAVE SUBSIDED".

It wasn't until her first period of house arrest, between 1989 and 1995, she said, that "I gained control of my thoughts" and became an avid practitioner. Meditation helped confer the clarity to make key decisions. "It heightens your awareness," she told me. "If you're aware of what you are doing, you become aware of the pros and cons of each act. That helps you to control not just what you do, but what you think and what you say."

From: 1. Article by Joshua Hammer *'A Free Woman: Can Aung San Suu Kyi Unite a Badly Weakened Opposition?'* *New Yorker*, January 2011.
2. *Joshua Hammer, Smithsonian magazine, September 2012*
Full interviews can be found online.

PABLO NERUDA
1904–1973



OUR ORIGINAL GUIDING STARS ARE STRUGGLE AND HOPE. BUT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A LONE STRUGGLE, NO SUCH THING AS A LONE HOPE. IN EVERY HUMAN BEING ARE COMBINED THE MOST DISTANT EPOCHS, PASSIVITY, MISTAKES, SUFFERINGS, THE PRESSING URGENCIES OF OUR OWN TIME, THE PACE OF HISTORY.

There is no insurmountable solitude. All paths lead to the same goal: to convey to others what we are. And we must pass through solitude and difficulty, isolation and silence in order to reach forth to the enchanted place where we can dance our clumsy dance and sing our sorrowful song - but in this dance or in this song there are fulfilled the most ancient rites of our conscience in the awareness of being human and of believing in a common destiny.

From: Nobel Lecture 'Towards the Splendid City'. [Full lecture can be found online.](#)

MALALA YOUSAFZAI
1997



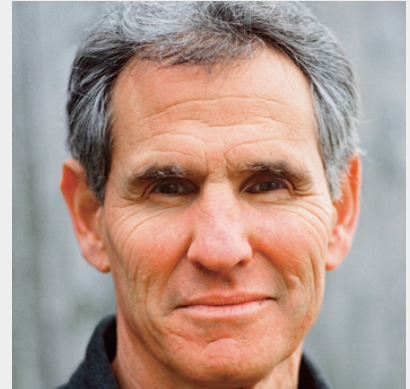
I TRULY BELIEVE THE ONLY WAY WE CAN CREATE GLOBAL PEACE IS THROUGH NOT ONLY EDUCATING OUR MINDS, BUT OUR HEARTS AND OUR SOULS.

Outside his office my father had a framed copy of a letter written by Abraham Lincoln to his son's teacher, translated into Pashto. It is a very beautiful letter, full of good advice. "Teach him, if you can, the wonder of books ... But also give him quiet time to ponder the eternal mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun, and the flowers on a green hillside," it says. "Teach him it is far more honorable to fail than to cheat."

Once I had asked God for one or two extra inches in height, but instead, he made me as tall as the sky, so high that I could not measure myself ... By giving me this height to reach people, he has also given me great responsibilities.

From: 1. A speech Malala gave at the official opening of Europe's largest library in Birmingham – [full speech can be found online.](#)
2 & 3. Exerpts from the book 'I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban'.

JON KABAT-ZINN
1944



WE MUST BE WILLING TO ENCOUNTER DARKNESS AND DESPAIR WHEN THEY COME UP AND FACE THEM, OVER AND OVER AGAIN IF NEED BE, WITHOUT RUNNING AWAY OR NUMBING OURSELVES IN THE THOUSANDS OF WAYS WE CONJURE UP TO AVOID THE UNAVOIDABLE.

Look at other people and ask yourself if you are really seeing them or just your thoughts about them. Sometimes our thoughts act like dream glasses. When we have them on, we see dream children, dream husband, dream wife, dream job, dream colleagues, dream partners, dream friends. We can live in a dream present for a dream future. Without knowing it, we are coloring everything, putting our spin on it all. While things in the dream may change and give the illusion of being vivid and real, it is still a dream we are caught in. But if we take the glasses off, maybe, just maybe, we might see a little more accurately what is actually here.

From: Books: 1. *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*
2. *Arriving at Your Own Door: 108 Lessons in Mindfulness*

BECOMING CONSCIOUS AUTHORS OF OUR OWN STORIES

SELF-MASTERY, LEADERSHIP
AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

CHARLOTTE VON BÜLOW

with contributors Dr Isis Brook and Jonathan Code



WE CANNOT FORCE CHANGE UPON OTHERS, but we can co-create the experiences and stories within which we can each change ourselves in our own time and in our own way. Our individual stories and our co-created reality inform each other. If we dare to be truly present and take responsibility for our own transformation, we can become conscious authors of our stories and active participants in the co-creation of society.

In this article, I will share some seed thoughts, observations and findings on the subject of self-mastery, leadership and social innovation in the context of following a vision. I have invited two colleagues from within our organisation to contribute with examples of how we, in our way, embed social innovation concretely in our work. Firstly, however, I want to share with you a glimpse of my own story of coming out as an aspiring social entrepreneur.

Growing up, I was never really sure about my place in this world. A family of artists brought me up to be a classical musician. Very early on in my career, I understood that I was not willing to make the particular sacrifices required to survive the competitive and cut-throat environment of the freelance artist. More importantly, perhaps, I experienced that my skills and passion were about initiative, communication and facilitation, not about being centre stage. At 16, I abandoned the known path of the classical musician and ventured into the unknown.

Twelve years, 10 very different jobs and three short, sharp career moves in three different countries later, I finally put a flag in the ground and decided that I wanted to respond to at least one of the many societal questions that my path thus far had yielded. The question that inspired me at the time was how can we create transformative educational opportunities that serve both the individual story and the collective co-creation of a better society? Over the years, I had experienced some excellent examples of good practice, for example, in the education inspired by the work of Rudolf Steiner and other contexts. Often, however, the most inspiring providers of holistic and integrative education were unrecognised by the system, struggling with student numbers, small and with little resource to innovate. My inquiry emerged from a desire to provide support and find new ways of providing validation.

At that time, I had myself been through a number of different workplaces, both as an employee and a consultant. I had seen many colleagues suffer disillusionment, dismay and disengagement at work. Crucially, I had come to understand that most people do not in fact pursue their vision or feel that they can fulfil their full potential – and certainly not at work.

After countless conversations and interviews, I had to conclude that the critical mass of people abandoning their own vision and dreams was overwhelming. When I contemplated these findings and tried to draw conclusions about why many people suffer this disillusionment, I initially found that there were individual and often biographical reasons for this. Now, when I take a step back and look at reoccurring themes, I see something much more complex (and here, I need to point out that my ‘sample size’ and the demographic then was rather too specific to talk with confidence about a universal or global phenomenon, so let us keep that in mind). Many people who are now at the height of their careers were raised to always equate time with money. This way of thinking has coloured the structure of most modern societies, and we have been almost programmed to make this connection in our lives in order to assess whether something is worthwhile doing – and often, the idea of ‘worthwhile’ has again been coloured by what is valued in a world that is dominated by a materialist, if not reductive, perspective. So for many people, the idea of taking the leap into the unknown and sacrificing job security and possibly also social status or capital to engage with something that carries equal chance of failure and success is counter-intuitive. There is also another aspect of the human condition that I have often contemplated and wondered about. Most of the people I have met in my career to date are incredibly gifted and talented in different ways, but most of them also battle with deep insecurity issues (and I don’t claim to be any different, by the way) that express themselves not in the behaviours, skills or attitudes of the individuals but in the levels of courage to abandon the so-called ‘known’ for the unknown, and it has inspired me to conclude that the most important thing we can do for innovation now is to educate ourselves to work creatively and confidently with the unknown above all. I will address this and introduce the notion of negative capability later in this article.

Upon digesting the findings of my research, I resolutely started a project called the Vision Archives in which I gathered people’s stories of visions and hopes. I set out to work, with those who were willing, on how to bring vision into action. Whilst we managed to realise a few exciting projects, I had to conclude also that I needed to take this work to a different level. I had to personally create a good example by realising my own vision.

In the spring of 2007, I thus commenced the process of setting up an organisation that would express a vision about integrative and holistic education for anyone seeking a valid alternative to the more traditional pathways. In October of that year, I had pulled a team of people and supportive organisations together with

whom I founded an education and research institute that would specialise in the design, delivery and certification of integrative and holistic approaches to the fields of leadership and management, agriculture, health and adult education. During 2008, the organisation, Crossfields Institute, became a registered company and charity, and today, the Institute is a state-recognised Awarding Organisation and Higher Education Institute, serving hundreds of learners all over the world.

Before colleagues share some examples of our work below, I will briefly reflect on my journey so far and what this path of discovery and learning has taught me so far about self-mastery, leadership and social innovation.

Achieving any level of self-mastery, in my experience, involves complete and utter dedication to the pursuit of self-knowledge, self-understanding, self-acceptance, introspection, reflection and forgiveness. This again relates to the point I made in the preamble above, which speaks of the need for each person to take responsibility for his/her/their own transformation.

One key finding I can offer so far is this. In my role as founder and leader, it has been my experience that a high level of transparency about my own journey of change would be met by colleagues with the same level of commitment to their path of transformation and to our common purpose. Over the years, I have taken some leadership risks in this regard, such as sharing with colleagues the moments of vulnerability, failure, regret and – equally difficult and risky – the moments of sheer joy or contentment. An increased level of courage and transparency from colleagues has always matched these risks. Open, honest conversations about our individual and collective progress have become a hallmark feature of our organisation.

Self-mastery, in one or other area of one's life, is never achieved swiftly, nor is it achieved in isolation. In an organisational context, my wish for any founder and initiative taker would be that they find the courage to role model appropriate transparent self-leadership and speak openly and honestly about the path to self-mastery. This may inspire others to become conscious authors of their own stories.

The other prominent learning experience I have had so far pertains to the ongoing inquiry that I call the why, the what and the how of the vision and its realisation in the world.

The *why* is a question about intention. It is of the utmost importance to reflect upon and thoroughly investigate what agenda or what source of inspiration drives the

vision. The motivation that fuels the will must be known. The driving forces that dominate the project or task must be consciously administered. Failure to constantly engage with and scrutinise one's intention can be the cause of major issues.

The *what* is a question about content of our ideas and about the conscious administration of our attention. What is the substance of the idea? What will the world be offered here? Who is this idea in service of – do others need or want what you wish to bring? When we offer something to the world and dare to bring about a new vision, we capture the attention of others. This comes with a responsibility. As social innovators in particular, we need to ensure that we understand the nature of this responsibility so that we can take right action (Steiner, 1999) and respectfully engage with whatever level of attention that our vision may get.

When we offer something to the world and dare to bring about a new vision, we capture the attention of others. This comes with a responsibility.

The *how* is a question about method. Here, it is important to take the context into account and evaluate how the implementation of the idea or vision will impact on its environment, be that social, physical or spiritual. No two contexts require exactly the same method. There is no space for a 'copy and paste' culture when working with the realisation of a vision. And it is here that we as leaders and initiative takers need to develop what the poet Keats called negative capability.

The notion of negative capability represents the ability to engage with that which is not known. It is, in my experience, immensely important in leadership practice to develop the ability to hold the tension between certainty and uncertainty in a space of creative engagement. Scholars of this subject, French and Simpson (1999), say:

At the edge between knowing and not-knowing, one is always confronted by uncertainty about what is going on but one can also have a sense that, tantalisingly, the desired insight may be only just out of reach. It is at this place, a place of faith (Bion, 1984b, p.40; Eigen, 1981, 1985; Simpson, 1997), that the unknown may indeed be approached and new

forms of knowing constructed. This is learning. (French & Simpson, 1999)

Our personal stories are created as we live them. We engage with uncertainty and with that which is not known every moment of every day – whether we realise it or not. In social innovation, in leadership and on our path to self-mastery, it is the approach we take, the attitude we develop towards our own transformation, that determines whether we are conscious authors of our own stories and whether we can find the courage to actively participate in the co-creation of society.

My journey into leadership and social innovation so far has been nothing like I imagined it when I started, but interestingly, it has included the realisation of the vision I had, and I hope this has served a much greater purpose than I can imagine.

Below, colleagues bring two examples of our collective work that hopefully provide an idea of how we attempt to realise the vision for education that we hold. It will be evident from the accounts provided below by colleagues that we never work in isolation. Our key partners, schools and the centres of our Awarding Organisation in the UK and beyond inform our work and inspire us to become better at what we do. Collaboration and dialogue are key to our vision and underpinning values – listening and learning from what already exists is the basis for the way we approach social innovation. These are examples of how we view and contribute to social innovation in postgraduate and undergraduate education.

Dr Isis Brook, Head of Faculty for Environment and Transdisciplinary Studies on innovating postgraduate education

The way that Crossfields Institute approaches integrative education is particularly evident in the Master of Arts Philosophy of Social Innovation, a course developed within our partnership with Alanus University in Germany. The Higher Education wing of our organisation, Crossfields International, contributes to this Alanus University master's programme with the particular Workademia model of blended and transdisciplinary learning that we have developed over the years. More information on the Alanus master's programme can be found here: www.alanus.edu/eng/studying/study-programmes/philosophy-and-aesthetics/ma-philosophy-of-social-innovation.html

The course is particularly designed for those who want to bring about positive change through social innovation and for people who are often working full-time while they

study. The course currently has two different pathways.

The Reflective Social Practice pathway is particularly designed for those who already work as practitioners in social/ecological settings – working in and with communities on social initiatives to bring about positive change. The purpose of this pathway is to enhance the capacity for effective reflective social practice amongst practitioners and their organisations/communities. The course enables participants to develop a critical appraisal of dominant models of social change and development (what we may call the technical rational managerialist model). However, its approach is positive in helping participants to develop a deep discipline of learning how to create meaning from situation and self in the midst of ongoing change. Using a Goethean approach, the participants develop an understanding of and an appropriate response to the situation and the moment. This pathway focuses on developing the qualities of attention, awareness and openness in one's practice. This pathway draws on the work of the Proteus Initiative, now also represented in the Proteus School of Crossfields International. (More information can be found here: <http://proteusschool.org.uk>)

Another pathway is Organisational Analysis and Leadership. The pathway is designed for participants in executive and senior organisational roles with significant accountability. It is particularly suitable for managers and leaders in organisations that have a strong values base such as non-governmental organisations and charities. The programme illuminates the political, spiritual, social and economic dimensions of organisations. It works at the critical need to integrate these in order for the organisation to both create productive working environments and at the same time have a positive impact on the broader society. The broad aims of the pathway are to develop, in its participants, a range of personal characteristics, practical capabilities and knowledge in order to create effective leaders for times of turbulent change. Organisational Analysis and Leadership draws on a range of frameworks for understanding the reality of the internal and external forces and factors that influence organisations and institutions in serving their purpose effectively in the wider social and public interest. Systemic, psycho-dynamic, behavioural, theological and spiritual frameworks are integrated in a distinctive approach that enables effective action to be taken. The work on this pathway is informed by the ideas and practices, such as the Transforming Experience Framework, developed by the Grubb Institute over the last 40 years. This is now active through the Grubb School of Crossfields International. For more information about the Transforming Experience Framework, see the recent

book edited by Susan Long, *Transforming Experience in Organisations* (London: Karnac).

A short sketch of a previous participant reawakening purpose and using the kind of transformative capacities engendered on this course will help to explain this approach in action.

... far from the organisation being immersed in a situation of grinding scarcity – mutual reflection could be mobilised across the organisation to release abundant existing resources that were not being accessed before the project.

The participant was the National Officer of one of the largest NGOs in Ireland. This Christian organisation is devoted to mobilising volunteers to support families faced with significant issues including poverty, long-term illness, unemployment, bereavement and homelessness. Those whom the organisation set out to help were experiencing grief, sadness, loneliness and depression. The volunteers found the experience of working with those allocated to them challenging as well as rewarding. The project began at the height of the downturn in the nation's economy, so the question of finding any increase in conventional resources would not be possible, despite the major increase in pressure on the organisation in terms of people falling into all the circumstances the organisation was founded to tackle. The National Officer needed to find new resources from somewhere or live with the consequences of feeling that the organisation was failing in the duty it was founded to carry out. He decided to explore a route of revealing resources that might actually be already available but unrecognised. His initial hypothesis was that enabling the volunteers to search for the deeper meaning of their experience would enable the impact of their engagements with clients to be more powerful and effective. It might also result in an upturn in the recruitment of new volunteers. In his project, the National Officer introduced processes of the officers and volunteers reflecting together on the deeper, more spiritual nature of their work. This showed the potential of imaginative new ways of supporting the volunteers that drew on an understanding of social justice and its part in

the lives of a nation's citizens as well as those involved in the organisation. The reflective work on their experience enabled that understanding to become a potent resource in the ways they could use their imagination in furthering their work with their disadvantaged and deprived clients.

The concept of connectedness was key to this reflective work, not simply giving meaning to the face-to-face work with clients, and could be shared across the whole organisation. This included deeper awareness of the organisation's own connectedness with Irish society. The volunteers who took part discovered that they were active participants in a wider network of meaning across Irish society than had been understood before. When that fuller meaning was surfaced, it became a source of energy, resilience and courage in the work they felt called to do. This indicated more clearly the purpose of the work to which the organisation was called at those difficult times. A clear sense of shared purpose could lead to greater effectiveness in all its parts.

The National Officer's discovery from the project was that, far from the organisation being immersed in a situation of grinding scarcity, mutual reflection could be mobilised across the organisation to release abundant existing resources that were not being accessed before the project. His understanding of his approach to his own leadership was transformed as the organisation as a whole discovered a new potency and effectiveness in engaging with the issues it was called to address. *(This participant case study has been edited from material gathered and created by John Bazalgette, Honorary Fellow of the Grubb School of Organisational Analysis and Leadership of Crossfields International. More information can be obtained here: www.grubbschool.org.uk/programmes/action-research/)*

In both of these pathways, the work undertaken by the participant, is based on the situations and undertakings of the working environments in which they are engaged as practitioners. The course meets them in their daily situations and struggles and helps them to transform both themselves and the organisations or communities in which they play a part. Thus, our integrative model is not just about organising a course in such a way that it can be managed alongside a busy life; it is about taking that life and using it as the substance that is explored and transformed through a process of action research. The embeddedness of the student in their organisation/community and society means that the outcomes of the work also transform the wider situation and those with whom they are co-creating a better future.

Jonathan Code, Lecturer and Associate Lead Faculty on innovating undergraduate education

In order to foster self-mastery and social initiative, education and educators must play a key role. This applies to education at all levels – from early childhood education to doctorate level research and collaboration. At Crossfields Institute, in one way or another, we are involved with education at all of these levels, either through our Awarding Organisation, course development and delivery or through our own study and research.

Crossfields International is currently focused on developing innovative offers for both undergraduate and postgraduate education. Whereas the tendency in many parts of the world is to develop specialisations at bachelor's degree level (and for many professions, there is justification for this), there is also a growing interest in and renaissance for the liberal arts degree. A liberal arts degree offers a broad, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approach to undergraduate studies and encourages students who study at this level to both deepen and broaden their understanding of a range of subjects. Now, we might ask, why offer a breadth of subjects instead of a clear focus in specialised fields geared towards dedicated employment or career pathways?

Let's consider the following poignant statement made by the psychologist V Frankl:

The present danger does not really lie in the loss of universality on the part of the scientist, but in his pretence and claim of totality ... What we have to deplore therefore is not so much that scientists are specializing, but rather the fact that specialists are generalizing. (Schumacher, 1995)

This terse statement could be understood as a critique of any approach to addressing the complexity of social and global issues that we face today if those approaches are too narrowly rooted in single, specialist perspectives or 'lenses'. Dialogue and exchange is needed between specialist points of view as they are needed between different disciplines. An example of such an approach would be to engage students in project-based studies that invite an engagement with a range of perspectives – history, philosophy, sociology and art, for instance. Through this interdisciplinary approach, insights gleaned through specific disciplines about a focused project topic become contextualised in a broad context.

It is just this kind of approach to undergraduate education that we are developing in partnership with Alanus University, who, in 2015, launched a BA in Philosophy, Arts and Social Entrepreneurship. Alanus University is

offering an English version of this same degree to which we at Crossfields International faculty will contribute. This degree is a unique opportunity for high school graduates to undertake a project-based, transdisciplinary and highly engaging process of learning where the faculties of innovation, renewal, courage and inspired leadership are not only studied but are fostered through the educational approach itself.

Undergraduate education is not, of course, only something that a high school graduate will undertake. We are aware that there are individuals who started undergraduate studies and, for one reason or another, didn't receive their degree. Lifelong learning has become something of a buzzword of late, and it is something that is clearly a worthy aspiration. Returning to study can be daunting, however, particularly if the struggle that many students encountered when they first undertook their undergraduate studies was a style of education or approach to teaching and learning that did not meet them as an innovative and creative individual. At Crossfields Institute, we are researching and developing approaches to education that can meet the mature student who wants to return to education and achieve a qualification that will further their work in the world but that will, at the same time, be transformative, challenge habitual ways of thinking and acting and give skills and knowledge to meet the increasingly complex situations they encounter.

Lifelong learning has become something of a buzzword of late, and it is something that is clearly a worthy aspiration.

Imagine that you have completed a portion of your undergraduate degree and have come to a point in your life where you would really like to complete that degree, engage in a richly social learning space with colleagues of various ages and backgrounds and take a personal question, interest or subject as the central thread of your education, or perhaps you have been working for many years and want to return to study. Such is the case, for example, of a dairy farmer from upstate New York who came back to undertake a postgraduate course with us after 30 years of managing a farm. This learner has found it very enriching to take up studies again with the Crossfields Institute:

As I was considering joining the course the main attractors for me were the transdisciplinary approach and the

biographical thread. Both aspects have proven to be very valuable for me; for one, offering an expanded horizon and context for my work in biodynamics; and also allowing – actually encouraging – me to reflect back on my individual path, honing in on a central theme and setting the stage to really deepen this aspect of my biography through research. These specifics also confirmed for me what I consider critical characteristics of our age. A collaborative, transdisciplinary approach to all main challenges plus the support and encouragement for each of us to bring our individual questions and experiences to the table.

Combining research and study – while also maintaining a working and family life – is what we envisage as a valuable opportunity for today's educational environment. It has often been said that education is about lighting fires, not filling pails, and at Crossfields, we take this as no mere metaphor but as a principle that informs our educational philosophy, practice and purpose.

Crossfields Institute is located in the UK and serves centres and learners in more than 10 countries. If you are looking for educational or organisational development, designing a new programme or training, UK state accreditation, higher education validation or a quality mark, we can help. Our main focus is on education that is integrative and holistic and recognises the whole human being in context. If you want to get in touch, feel invited to email me directly on: charlotte@crossfieldsinstitute.com



Charlotte von Bülow M.Ed

Charlotte is founder and Chief Executive of Crossfields Institute. She has a Masters of Education (RSUC, grad. 2012), she studied Leadership and Management (EPOC, grad. 2008), Philosophy of Mind (OU, grad. 2004) as well as Foundation Studies in Counselling and Psychotherapy (BCPC, grad. 2001). She is currently working towards a PhD in Educational Leadership in the Department for Business and Law at University of the West of England.



Dr Isis Brook M.Ed, FHEA

Isis Brook is Head of Faculty at Crossfields Institute International. She held philosophy lectureships at Lancaster University, where she also served as a Faculty Teaching Dean, and the University of Central Lancashire. Isis completed a PhD on Goethean science in 1994 and has a Masters in Education and pursues an active interest in education of the whole person and a specialism in assessment.



Jonathan Code M.Ed

Jonathan is a member of the Crossfields International team and focuses on developing, teaching and supervising on our HE courses. Jonathan is co-lead on our MSc in Researching Holistic Approaches to Agroecology. Jonathan has a Bachelor's degree (Integral Studies, CIIS, California), and an M. Ed (Social and Environmental Education, RSUC Oslo). Jonathan's book *Muck and Mind; Encountering Biodynamic Agriculture* is distributed by Lindisfarne/Floris books.

Works cited

- French, R. & Simpson, P. (1999). *Our Best Work Happens When We Don't Know What We're Doing*. Socio-Analysis, 216–30.
- Keats, J. (1970). *The Letters of John Keats: A Selection*. R. Gittings (Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schumacher, E. F. (1995). *Guide For the Perplexed*. London: Vintage Books.
- Steiner, R. (1999). *The Philosophy of Freedom*. Translated by M. Wilson. London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Links

- www.crossfieldsinstitute.com/higher-education-research/
- www.crossfieldsinstitute.com/awarding-organisation/
- www.crossfieldsinstitute.com/an-image-of-true-social-innovation-the-longest-picnic-table-in-the-world/
- www.alanus.edu/eng/alanus-university/profile.html
- www.touchstonecollaborations.com/soil-culture-create/

Welcome

Silvia Zuur

INSPIRED LIVES

MEETING THE WORLD
WITH CREATIVE VISION

INTERVIEWS WITH SUE HOLLINGSWORTH,
SKYE CHADWICK AND SILVIA ZUUR





SUE HOLLINGSWORTH

Co-founder of the International School of Storytelling,
Founding member of Centre for Narrative Leadership,
Co-Author of *The Storyteller's Way: Source Book for
Inspired Storytelling* and Founding Director of the Centre
for Biographical Storytelling

UNITED KINGDOM

THOSE WHO HAVE HAD THE FORTUNE to be in the presence of Sue Hollingsworth will have felt the palpable vitality, enthusiasm and warmth that imbues her prodigious style of storytelling, coaching and performance.

A modern-day raconteuse with a particular skill for forming and performing biographical stories, she leads the audience into realms of imaginative personal landscapes – non-fictional reflections embodying archetypal themes of what it means to be truly human. Some New Zealanders experienced this firsthand when she performed her Camino stories at St Peter's Hall in Paekakariki a few years ago.

In this interview, we discover that Sue is sharing stories and working as a coach, leader, storyteller and author with a talent for the imaginative and an aptitude for truth finding. Based in Sussex, UK, Sue has run workshops all over the world, including here in New Zealand, and with a special connection to her work in South Africa, every year involves an itinerant schedule full of fruitful encounters.

In her consultancy work, she has taken narrative storytelling into global organisations such as BP, Shell and UK banks as well as charities, and runs courses for social activists and entrepreneurs. Sue has just wrapped up a tenure of 22 years for the International School of Storytelling based at Emerson College, and is ready to launch her new initiative, the Centre for Biographical Storytelling, in October. As she stands on this cusp of change, *Sphere* was lucky enough to talk to her about themes of leadership, self-transformation and the crucial role of storytelling in the world today. We set the scene with three of the Facebook entries Sue posted whilst running a course in Turkey during the recent coup.

Read more about Sue at www.suehollingsworth.com
www.centreforbiographicalstorytelling.com
(this website will be launched end of October 2016)
www.schoolofstorytelling.com

PHOTOS (TOP TO BOTTOM):
Sue at Emerson College in the UK
On Pukerua Bay beach, Kapiti Coast, NZ
Walking in Namibia

FACEBOOK POST – July 18

Today I started a biographical storytelling workshop called *This Being Human* here in Turkey. Last night, not long after I flew out of Istanbul airport down south to the workshop venue, there was a military coup. All the people on the workshop have family and friends in the big cities of Istanbul and Ankara that they are afraid for and this morning at breakfast, everyone was watching the news on their I-Pads, speaking on their phones and discussing the latest pictures on the net.

Suddenly one of the storytellers said, "Look at this!" As we peered over her shoulder at her screen, we saw a photograph of a man lying face down on a road. The picture was taken at night and had the headline "Bodies lie on the streets of Ankara".

"That's not Ankara," she said, "I've seen that same photo last week and it said it came from Nice!" As we watched, she quickly scrolled back through her news feed until she found the photo she wanted. We looked. Same street, same body, different location in the headline. There was a long silence. Then another storyteller exclaimed, "and how could it be Ankara anyway? Nowhere in Turkey has double yellow lines on the roads like there are in that photo." And it's true, nowhere in Turkey has double yellow lines on the roads.

The image of some unknown human being's death, perhaps in Nice, perhaps anywhere in the world, but certainly not in Turkey, had been recycled, misrepresented and dishonoured in service of a story. I felt the presence then of the ever growing danger of the shadow side of storytelling – the ability to manipulate, to speak propaganda, to create illusion.

I was reminded of the poem from David Whyte called *Loaves and Fishes*, which says:

*This is not the age of information,
This is NOT the age of information.
Forget the news and the radio and the blurred screen.
This is the time of loaves and fishes.
People are hungry and one good word is bread
For a thousand.*

May we all spread our good storytelling words into a world which is hungry for them.

FACEBOOK POST – July 21

Today we heard that all public gatherings have been made illegal for 3 months. This means that the storytelling festival here in Datca that was planned for the weekend has had to be cancelled – the stories cannot

be told. The ban particularly specifies gatherings of an artistic nature and this reminded me of a story that is included in *The Storyteller's Way*. On page 176 the story is told of how Stalin, in the early days of his power, "invited all the traditional storytellers in the Ukraine – the Kobzars – to gather for a conference. They came, young and old, bearing with them the wisdom of the ages, the sagas that had been passed down to them, the wonder tales, the folktales, the fables, the staff of life that had given people hope for centuries. They came because they had been invited to a feast, they came because they thought they were to be honoured. They were all slaughtered."

It is not only Stalin who understands the power of storytelling and all other forms of art, to nourish people's souls, to give them hope to endure, to make suffering bearable and to keep communities alive. It is a strange and wonderful thing to be a storyteller in a country where storytelling festivals have been banned, for now I know more than ever the power we storytellers still have in this technological age. Let no-one doubt it, stories can still be a threat.

So, meanwhile, we carry on doing our story work, sitting under the huge spreading tree in the heat of the day. Please spare a thought for all these fine people in this uncertain future.

FACEBOOK POST – July 28

Flying back from Turkey I was thinking about the workshop I had run there, all the political and personal upheavals we had experienced and the beautiful people I had met. I was reflecting that the title of the workshop, *This Being Human* couldn't have been better to describe working on personal stories in those circumstances. The title comes from the poem by Rumi called *The Guesthouse*:

*This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
Some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweep your house
Empty of its furniture,
Still, treat each guest honourably.
He may be clearing you out for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
Meet them at the door laughing
And invite them in.*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,
Because each has been sent
As a guide from beyond.*

So, even though the flight was very late (thanks Easyjet!), some people around me were drunk and children were crying with tiredness, still I felt the inner glow that comes from feeling like you are in the right place at the right time.

I tumbled into my taxi at peace with the world and, catching up on happenings in the UK with my taxi driver as we sped off into the night, she began to talk about the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. Casually she said, "He seems a good man, pity he's a coloured." I was shocked. After a week in the marvellous company of my Turkish friends, sharing deeply the stories of what this being human is all about, these casual words, spoken with the assumption that it was absolutely OK to do so and that I would probably agree with her, took my breath away. For a moment I sat silently, trying to practise welcoming her words into the guesthouse of my heart, practising being grateful for whatever comes as the poem says and then, out of the peace that followed, I quietly started telling her about where I'd come from, what the people in Turkey are experiencing right now and how much hospitality and love I had been shown. At the end I said, "I don't think the colour of your skin makes a difference to having a good heart you know and having a good heart is the most important thing in life." I'd love to say that a great light filled the taxi, that she turned to me with tears in her eyes saying "thank you, thank you!" but it didn't. However, there was a thoughtful silence which is perhaps the best that can be expected. I do so hope that in the wake of Brexit and the reported rise of racist attacks in this country, that through my storytelling work I can find a way to help myself, and those who meet me, remember that we are all human and that this being human business is messy, complicated and never black and white.

Sue, you recently returned from running a storytelling workshop called *This Being Human* in Turkey. You left Istanbul and arrived at the venue in Datca at the same time the military coup kicked off and posted some updates on Facebook during your time there. We have included some of your posts with this interview – is there anything else you can add about the reactions and responses of the people you came into contact with whilst you were there?

Yes, all the people I worked with were Turkish, and their families lived in Istanbul or Ankara, caught up in the

coup, so every one was very anxious about them. Each morning when we started, there was a long process of checking in with each other, seeing where we each were and sharing the stories we had all heard about the situation. Every morning, it took at least 45 minutes to help the group into a place where they could be really present for what we were going to do. Then we would work together for 45 minutes, there would be a break, and in the break, they would, of course, phone their families and go online so that, when they came back, they would once more be off-centre, and the process would start all over again. What I could feel was that, in that process, what I was really doing was helping them build their centre each time – helping them come to a more upright place in themselves.

Throughout each day, the texts would be coming through on people's phones, and one particular text from the government – who had control over the phone network – said something like there will be a spontaneous riot in support of the government, in a particular square at a particular time, and we will know if you don't come. So here we were in this workshop called *This Being Human*, and there was modern technology enabling messages to come straight in and attack the ego forces, attack the centre of all these people.

The reflections I received at the end of the course were extraordinary, the participants expressing how grateful they were to me for holding that space for them. I realised that all the work I was doing holding the space was, in a certain sense, a silent, invisible, leadership role. It was managing the 'guesthouse' that Rumi refers to, with all these unexpected guests flooding in – not just through the door this time, but the windows, the chimney, everywhere! – and I was having to welcome these unexpected guests hourly and deal with the most incredible extremes.

I saw something in that process that I have been interested in for a long time in respect to leadership. Normally when we think of leadership, we almost always think of a masculine role model that involves charismatic speaking, dynamic decision making and a sort of gung-ho attitude involving a lot of certainty. I am interested in a more integrated form of leadership that involves more of the feminine, and during this week in Turkey, I was able to actualise this. My role did not depend on any of those qualities that I have just mentioned – rather, it depended on holding a strong space for people through my own words and actions. I did not need to say or do very much, I just had to be there with a whole lot of presence and awakens to enable the group to be centred. At the end of the week, some of them gathered around and said, "We

don't know what you have been doing this week, Sue, but we want to learn, because we don't want to be pulled left and right and be tossed around all the time." And it led to the most amazing conversations. These are people who have no formal understanding of anthroposophy but who are deeply connected to the spiritual world and have a longing and thirst for what that can bring.

Whilst you were in Turkey, you visited an artist who gave you a special gift?

Yes, her name was Guler Yucel, a painter in her 80s who is also the wife of a famous Turkish poet, Can Yucel. She gave me a print of one of her paintings of a broom, which I love. As part of the painting, the words "They think I am sweeping the floor but really I am writing poetry" are inscribed. It spoke to me of the secret life of women in societies where they don't enjoy as much freedom as others – societies where they can appear to be wholly engaged in some domestic task whilst their minds and thoughts are free to create art, to think unthinkable thoughts, to contemplate radical actions. It helped me remember that, in any repressive political situation, we all have the individual freedom of our thoughts and the ability to have a creative response to ANY situation.

When we try and help people to become more truly human, we become more truly human ourselves.

How to do you step into that leadership role and keep your own centre?

To answer that, I really need to talk about what happens before I step into that role. Prior to running a workshop or doing a piece of storytelling consultancy, I find I need a huge amount of silence and aloneness – I need to eat and sleep well and spend the alone time focusing on the people I will be working with whilst holding the question, "What is it I need to bring to the group?" No matter what the theme, it is the same approach. Some people are able to do this quite easily and quickly, but I must say, for me, the silence, aloneness and focusing in is not an easy or quick time. And I also really need silence and aloneness during the work itself, so I try and organise my schedule so I have real time to centre myself and connect in and review the conversations and experiences each day. These processes help keep me grounded.

The other thing that is very important is that I sing, dance and play games with people (even in business!), and what

I find is that these three things help a group to breathe healthily. A lot of people these days breathe in but often don't breathe out fully, and in a stressful situation, the tendency is to just breathe in – short in-breaths – with just a slight letting out of breath. But what is actually needed is a full out-breath, and so I tend in those situations to work more energetically and bring in a lot of silly things where people can laugh. Laughter helps to flood the body with endorphins, and it really helps people to cope better. I try to work as wholesomely as possible with thinking, feeling, willing – keeping people active and giving them time to reflect – all things that really help us connect all our bodies together again.

Can you tell us a little of the essential themes in your workshop *This Being Human* – for example, how can we keep in contact with our true 'humanness' today?

When we try and help people to become more truly human, we become more truly human ourselves. From a storytelling perspective, the major thing I am trying to do is to create a safe environment for people to be able to be vulnerable and then combine it with the incredibly potent force of biographical storytelling – the telling of true life stories. When people feel safe and they allow themselves to be vulnerable, deep stories come out and a sacred space is created. People can hear themselves speak about things that really matter, and the highest possible listening can take place. When people have shared their stories, the blossoming of compassion can be huge. So when you ask the core question, "How can we keep in contact with our true humanness?", I think the true quality I am most looking to awaken in myself and others is compassion and empathy. I feel that the core work I do is very aligned with what Steiner is speaking about in the lecture *The Work of the Angels in Man's Astral Body*, where he speaks about true brotherhood and the development of empathy – this is something I am trying to align with as best I can.

You are a founding member of the Centre for Narrative Leadership – an organisation that focuses on organisational storytelling. Why is it important for global and local corporations to take up the mantle of storytelling?

I have a business background, and until the age of 36, I was working for a global IT company. I think it became clear to me then that a key leadership competency is the ability to tell a compelling story. A very old definition of leadership by Dale Carnegie is "a leader is someone who has earned the right to have followers". The question is, how do you earn the right to have followers? One of the answers to that question is to be clear about your own story and to cultivate the ability to express it in a way that

is compelling, that is human and that also has what is called in the industry 'reach'. If you are speaking to 50 people in a room, you need to tell a story in such a way that it is easy to remember, it is inspiring and that it will move them enough that they go away and tell other people – the number of people who ultimately hear the story is the reach. Receiving such a story secondhand from a colleague, cast in their own words and telling of the effect it had on them, is worth its weight in gold to an organisation.

The theme of our issue is working in the world with renewal, innovation, courage and inspired leadership – do you have a story that can speak to the essential qualities of leadership?

There are many, many stories that speak to different kinds of leadership and different situations. I tend to avoid this kind of question about whether there is a particular story because each situation is so unique. Sometimes it can look on the outside that everything is the same in an organisation, but it is actually not – the culture, the atmosphere, the language varies enormously. When I walk into an organisation, usually I am immediately aware of it when I arrive at the reception, when I see people talking to one another, even the way in which the receptionist phones up the person to let them know I have arrived. Sometimes, I just have to see the architecture of the place, and I know that whatever is going on there is a Greek tragedy, and there is going to be back stabbing and blood on the floor like Clytemnestra stabbing Agamemnon! But then you walk into another organisation and something about the set-up at reception and how people speak to one another gives a feeling of something that is deeply lunar, that comes out of a true receptivity for one another, and in this situation, I tend to head towards an Asian story – I always find those stories are very round like the full moon, I get a picture of them like that – or you may find an organisation that has lots of jokes, goodwill and a very masculine engagement and needs a very robust story, so in that instance, I may choose a story from the African continent. So as you can see, I try to match the organisation not just to the elements of the story and the plotline but to the culture the story comes from.

However, there are two short Zen stories that I find I use in the business world more than any other stories. The first one is about a master archer who was walking from village to village. Walking along the road one day with his beautiful ancient bow and quiver of arrows, he saw up ahead a house with a barn, and on the side of the barn were many bullseyes, and in the exact centre of each was an arrow. The master knew that he himself could

not have achieved such accuracy, even after 60 years of practice, so he left the path and walked up to the house and knocked on the door to enquire of the master that lived there. The door was opened by a small boy. "I am looking for the one that shot the arrows," the archery master said. The boy replied, "It was me, it was me!" The master bowed and said, "I would be honoured if you would show me." "Of course!", and picking up his cheap bow and arrow, the boy skipped out to the barn and said, "Watch this!" He drew back his arrow and let fly. The arrow went right into the side of the barn but nowhere near a target. He then ran up to the wall, picked up a paint brush that was lying there and painted the target around the arrow. Organisations can be so target driven and sometimes it is important to take a step back and look at what is really going on. Something like this story can free the conversation up incredibly.

It's not to do with the technology, it is to do with the consciousness of those of us who use it.

The other story I often find myself telling is about the high-flying business executive who was running a global organisation. He was busy, busy, busy. He had three secretaries working for him. He was constantly adding to his schedule, he knew what he was doing a year ahead and he flew all around the world doing all kinds of deals. But just lately, he was feeling something wasn't quite right, that things were not gelling as they used to. His gut feeling was that he needed advice, and at that particular point in time, he heard about a Zen master in Tokyo who apparently gave extraordinary answers to questions. And so without hesitation, he got his secretaries to book an appointment, get him on a first-class flight to Tokyo, and off he went with his briefcase. When he arrived at the Zen master's home, he was shown into a beautiful Japanese garden. He walked straight through the garden to a tea house and was told to wait for the master there. There were no chairs, only a low table, and so he had to kneel down and wait. Minutes were ticking by and the master did not appear, and he looked at his watch thinking, "I only have a few hours before I have to be back at the airport to fly home!". The master then appeared and called for tea. The businessman said, "What I really want to ask you is ..." The master held up a hand, "Please, it is my custom to pour tea before we talk", and the businessman thought, "Fine, if this is what I have to do to get my question answered, then I will" and he sat there, twitching with impatience. Soon, two beautiful cups were

given to them, made of the most exquisite translucent porcelain, with a teapot to match. The master started to pour tea for his guest first – and he kept pouring and pouring until the cup filled and then overflowed all over the table, dripping off onto the floor. “What’s going on?!” said the businessman, “Stop pouring the tea!” The Zen master said, “You are like this cup, full to overflowing. Until you have emptied yourself, I cannot teach you anything.”

Sue, you are very active on Facebook now, and you seem to have the knack for sharing moving and heartfelt stories and messages from all over the world on your page. Why did you decide to become ‘Facebook active’ now, and how do you decide what is important to share and what is important not to share? What is the difference?

I have always been very dismissive of Facebook in the past, and I have really not wanted to engage with it – it has always felt like communication of the lowest common denominator. I used to read articles and talk to people who would speak of the abusive nature of posts, bad language, lack of depth, and I thought this is not for me, this is the antithesis of storytelling! Then a couple of months ago, I found myself in a conversation where someone was complaining about Facebook and blaming the technology. I found myself saying what I usually say, which is “It’s not to do with the technology, it is to do with the consciousness of those of us who use it.” I have said this so many times, but at that moment, I woke up and actually heard myself say it and thought, “Well, it is all very well to say that, Sue, but you have to live it!” I then thought I need to shine a light and engage thoughtfully, respectfully, consciously, spiritually, without bad language and with a rounded perspective where I can bring something artistic like a poem, a story, something that is reflective that can help nourish people. I saw this as a challenge.

Then when I went to Turkey, I knew I had something to say that was important, and so that first post, which you have included here from 18 July, that was really my first post of substance. I felt absolutely aligned with what I wrote, and I felt I communicated what was going on in an artistic and rounded way. Much to my surprise, that post was shared 59 times. At that moment, I did not really realise what that meant because I didn’t know that if you got 9 or 10 shares you are doing really well! When I realised how many people had read what I had written, it proved to me once and for all it is down to how you engage. So generally, that is my criteria for my own posts – does it enlarge the picture of what it means to be human?

I also share things that others have posted, which I have personally found useful to give me a bigger picture. When I do that, I often write something at the beginning – a little sentence that lets people know why I am offering this up to them in order that they spend their valuable life energy on it. I want to create a place of trust – this is the primary bedrock of my work, and this is what I am trying to do here too. And unashamedly, I post anything by Michael Leunig because he makes me laugh, cry, think and hope – I cannot praise his work enough!

We are bombarded with stories every day – news media stories, stories in our advertising to sell products and personal stories through social media forums. What are your thoughts regarding what seems to be a desensitising of our feeling for the truth that may lie within a message or story?

On a very basic level, with respect to Facebook, it is very important to check things out – to not take things at face value. A good example that happened last week was a friend of mine posted something about fracking. It was a photograph, and it had a sign that was saying something like “this used to be the site of a village that was destroyed by fracking”, and my friend who had posted it had written the comment “Frack off”. I looked at this sign, and I saw that at the bottom of it was the date 2020, and I thought, “This is a future date – where is this place?” So then I went onto Google, keyed in the name of the village that was written on the sign, and I saw that it was actually part of an art installation by an artist who was commenting and opening up our ideas and thoughts on fracking. So though this was a true piece of art, this village did not actually exist and the context in which my friend posted this, in order to gain support for the anti-fracking movement, was in another sense totally untrue. I wrote back to my friend and said, “I am totally in agreement with you, but I am afraid this image is part of an art installation.”

On a very basic level, it is important to ensure, when you are dealing with technology, that you have read it, thought about it and confirmed it is what you think it is. There was a wonderful test on Facebook last week. There was a headline “Giant asteroid on collision course with the Earth”. It was an inflammatory headline, a panicky kind of story, and when I looked at it, I thought, “What, don’t be daft, what’s this all about?” But I clicked on it because a friend of mine, someone I trusted, had posted it to me, and the comment they had written was, “This looks like it’s come right out of the blue.” The opening paragraph, which was about three lines long, spoke about the giant asteroid and how it was going to hit the Earth next week, but in the following paragraph, it went on to say that there

was no giant asteroid about to hit the Earth, that that was not what the post was about but please carry on reading. When I read on further, the post was about whether people read things before they post it, and this post was a test. At the very end, it said, "If you have read to this point, please repost and put a colour in the comment of the title so that we can see that you've read it" and so I reposted it saying, "This made me see red." What happened was that many people posted comments, saying things like, "For goodness sake, Sue, this could never happen!" or "I can't believe it, how could they not tell us!" – all this kind of very reactionary stuff – and I very patiently went through each one and wrote, "I can tell you haven't read the article, you may want to go back and look." And out of all the people who reacted, only two people went back and read the article. I thought, OK, again this thing about truth and lie comes down to consciousness and what kind of consciousness you are using when you are with technology. Are you awake or does the very technology itself send you to sleep? Of course, Ahriman is embedded in all this technology, but I think technology is a challenge that is calling us to be really awake because you can use it in a way that combats those Ahrimanic forces. This requires using our power of thinking, because often, when people are using Facebook, they are in the willing area – posting this and that and clearing their notifications – or they are in the feeling realm where they are reacting emotionally and sometimes spreading a lot of distress and hatred. If you can be awake in your thinking and think discriminately and check things out, it is an enormous training in discernment. Can you discern what is going on here, can you work with this in a spiritually awake way? That is what I am experimenting with at the moment. I don't know how well I will do, but I am looking on this as a training.

Where in the world do you see story is missing today, and how could it offer transformation to that place, people or movement?

I think the best way I can answer that is to say the place is anywhere there are fundamentalist opinions or points of view, religions or parties. In these places, there is not the diversity, the subtlety or the complexity of what I call 'Story'. There is only one story, and you either go with it or you don't. I personally find those situations quite frightening, because if you try and speak to people who have fundamentalist beliefs, you will never get past their belief in the one story they think it is their duty or task to infect everyone with and their belief that the world will not be a better place until everyone believes it. That is where I find 'Story', as I understand it, almost completely absent.

How can story inspire and facilitate the transformation of our 'I' and illumine our higher self?

When I first started working with biographical storytelling back in 2003, I was learning what was actually a brand new art form, because people weren't really telling them except for family histories. They were not telling personal stories on a wide platform for entertainment or at big gatherings. So I had to experiment a lot, and for a while, I was happy with what I was doing. I managed to understand that, for a successful story, I needed to shape and structure it in order for the story to 'land' and be able to do the work. But after a few years, I became increasingly disappointed and frustrated with my storytelling, and I felt there was something really missing, that there was opportunity in the story that I wasn't seeing or grasping, and after quite a long time, I realised that, for me, a personal story needed to be purposeful, it had to have a meaning in it, just like a traditional story, otherwise why would I be wasting other people's time? I would just be egotistical or boring. Questions arose in me such as, "What gives me the right to inflict that on somebody else?", and I became increasingly frustrated until I realised that I had been missing out an essential ingredient. This is what I now work with when I am teaching, and it's that last bit that I call 'the reflection'. It is an opportunity for the teller to look back on the story and their life to see where they are now and to reflect on the past from this present moment. You look at your life story, you look at what happened and you pass on to the audience in a very simple way, in a few words, why are you telling this story and what it has meant to you. What I discovered when I did this was I had to do a lot of reflection myself before I could create or form a reflection for others. I had to work deeply with my life story, and this process takes time, it does not come easily. You sink down through the levels of understanding as to why you are telling this story, but when you get to that final essence, then an extraordinary thing starts to happen. People start to understand themselves more, they uncover their highest sense of themselves. It seems to reinforce the value of the life they have lived, and sometimes, in this way, they can come into their first contact with their higher self. The finding of the reflection is always a very profound moment in my work. It's a sacred moment where the mystery of what it is to be human is at its most ineffable.

In other ways, when I am working with a true life story, I am also seeking the archetypes, the images that resonate beyond the simple words to strike a chord in our psyches. They are embedded in traditional stories anyway, so the telling of these can open us up to a wide imaginative inner landscape. The question for me is, "How can we



live our lives in a more mythic and meaningful way, even more connected to our higher self and purpose? And how, as a storyteller, can I convey those experiences through my voice, my body, my imagination and my words?"

What is your personal approach to a contemplative practice? Do you meditate?

Yes, I do meditate, but for me, it is not the most powerful practice that I have. My most powerful contemplative practice is walking alone in nature. I try to find time to do that on a very regular basis, and sometimes I do this for weeks on my own during the year. It engages my whole rhythmic body. My breathing and my heart become more rhythmic, my whole body is moving with the pace, and I am completely attuned to the ground I am walking on. I can feel the slightest change to the texture of earth and to the inclination of it. For me, the earth is like one big story, and I am respectfully walking on that story and listening as deeply as I can. When I am walking in that space, often new ideas are given to me and many new things are possible. I lead walking and storytelling courses in the UK and South Africa to help give people this wonderful experience and, in fact, Judy Frost-Evans of the In

the Belly of the Whale School of Storytelling, based in Pukerua Bay, walked with me along the Ridgeway in the UK one year!

ABOVE: Sue walking The Ridgeway, UK.

In the Belly of the Whale School of Storytelling, based on the Kapiti Coast, organise storytelling workshops, events and performances. They employ local teachers and also bring teachers from other parts of NZ and from overseas to teach here. Offering regular opportunities to engage in storytelling workshops and events you can see their website www.inthebellyofthewhale.org and visit their Facebook page for more information.

The Kapiti Storytelling Circle is on the first Thursday monthly (except January) in St James Hall, Ocean Road, Paekakariki. Contact: Judith Frost-Evans: judytravelling@hotmail.com / 04 239 8346 / Mobile 021 112 1244

The Waitakere Storytelling Circle is on the last Tuesday monthly (except December) in the Titirangi Community Centre, Titirangi. Contact Deborah Sim: debsim@wyndhamchambers.co.nz / 027 563 8652



SKYE CHADWICK

Co-founder of: Hearth Trust, Orientation Aotearoa and Homecooking Plus

WELLINGTON

SKYE CHADWICK is currently based in Wellington and giving her devoted attention to the new initiative Hearth Trust whilst co-creating with Doris Zuur their small catering enterprise Homecooking Plus. Last year, she was part of the founding team of Orientation Aotearoa (OA), co-ordinating and running an alternative education programme for 18-25-year-olds adapted from the Swedish model YIP. The course offered a live-in 8-month programme for 10 lucky participants with a curriculum focused on leadership, sustainability and social entrepreneurship.

Skye said, "It was intended for young people who were interested in exploring how they could contribute to their communities and develop their leadership potentials. Looking back at the experience, we all – participants and co-ordinators – went through powerful initiation journeys." Later that year, Skye and OA co-founder Lucy Carver won the 2015 Wellingtonian of the Year Youth Award.

www.hearthtrust.co.nz

www.oa.org.nz

PHOTOS (TOP TO BOTTOM):

Skye giving a speech at the Orientation Aotearoa opening ceremony.

With Lucy Carver at the OA Fundraising Ceilidh.

Skye with Doris Zuur catering for a women's retreat in Shelly Bay.

What did winning that award mean for you?

One week prior to the award ceremony, the OA participants had organised a hui/festival, giving our wider community a taste of the OA experience. The event felt like deep recognition of our work. People were able to experience for themselves the essence and value of what we were doing. The Welly Awards ceremony, held a week later, was an acknowledgement from quite a different audience. The event itself at Te Papa was very fancy, and I remember feeling a little out of place and wobbly in my high heels! Shortly before the ceremony, Lucy realised that, if we received the award, we might be expected to make a speech, which we hadn't prepared for. So we rushed off to the bathroom, and Lucy quickly rehearsed a few lines, and I remember feeling so moved by what she said that I told her, "Gosh Lu, I hope we win, just so you can get up and speak from your heart like that in front of this audience!" In that moment, I realised that to get up and share our work stood for so much and that we were simply there representing the work and generosity of a whole courageous community.

What was the impulse behind the creation of OA?

Oh, this is asking me to describe the ineffable! The first word that pops to mind is connection! I feel as though OA came out of the will from each one of us to create opportunities for deep, authentic connections to people, ourselves, purpose and place. The Youth Initiative Programme also deserves a mention here, as the experiences that I and other members of our team had in Sweden definitely inspired OA's work.

To embark on such an initiative must have taken courage – were there any fears holding you back?

Yes, certainly! I remember right when I was stepping into Orientation Aotearoa, I took the Courage Workshop with Nicanor Perlas, and he said, "Sometimes you have to get out of your own way to just let the work flow through you." These were just the words I needed to hear. I think my biggest gifts are also my vulnerabilities, and a fear I faced was trusting that I could show up with my 'whole' self to the work and be authentic even when that meant showing the less 'beautiful' sides of myself.

How did the first year go? What were the successes?

I'm still left breathless thinking of the amazing year we had in Shelly Bay, richer and more challenging than I could have ever imagined! One of the big successes for me was witnessing the shifts that took place within participants and our team during the year – seeing individuals build confidence, step up and act from a place of authenticity. Another big success was creating an extended intergenerational community of wonderful humans inspiring and supporting one another.

What next for OA?

We made the call not to go ahead with the second year based on a few things – participant numbers not adding up, the high cost of the facilities in Shelly Bay and the need for the coordinating team to breathe out and reflect. This in turn led to the collective decision to bring OA fully to completion and dissolve the Trust. The clarity of this decision came out of a process of deep listening and sensing how to best support the impulse going forwards. So, honouring our work, we are composting (so to speak!) OA so that it provides fertile soil for future initiatives and projects from our network.

Since this decision was made where have you been and what have you been up to?

Babs, Lucy and I (three of the five co-founders of OA) all went over to Sweden and attended a conference at YIP. It was inspiring to see how strong and vibrant the network has become over the years, with alumni creating exciting initiatives across the globe. For example, two friends have been involved in setting up a three-fold café called Elderberries in LA. Another friend has just set up an anthroposophical playcentre in Belgium.

Since OA finished, our team has taken time to digest and reflect on our experiences, each working on various projects. My main focus has been developing Hearth Trust, an unexpected and miraculous offshoot of OA. Whilst fundraising for our programme, I met a generous philanthropist who was passionate about supporting people with special needs. Our meeting led to the establishment of Hearth Trust – a charitable trust set up to provide homes and care for people with intellectual disabilities. Through extraordinary generosity, we were able to purchase a beautiful lifestyle property in Kelson, Lower Hutt. The ethos of Hearth Trust incorporates many anthroposophical values and takes great inspiration from Camphill and Hohepa.

What inspired you to develop Hearth Trust?

My oldest brother, Timothy, has autism. For many years, my family and I have dreamed of creating a place for Timothy similar to Hohepa but in our local region. We are just at the beginning of the journey, starting the community small with a few individuals. We have a wonderful family who has recently moved onto the property to be live-in managers, bringing a real sense of warmth and homeliness to the place. One of the exciting aspects of the project is the 2 hectares of land, which creates wonderful opportunities for work and development in the years to come. Last week, we had our first music evening, with members of the wider community all cramming into the living room for songs and dessert.

A key part of your work for OA was fundraising – was this your particular portfolio of responsibility?

Yes, although I think we were often having to be Jacks/Jills of all trades during the year. I did, however, do a lot of fundraising work. I think I have always had quite an unconventional relationship with money – relating it to generosity and abundance. As a young girl, I used to go busking with my violin and was always amazed by people's gifting. With OA, I was excited to channel people's generosity towards a shared vision, something bigger than myself. Fundraising involved a lot of storytelling, which I love. It was another way of creating community around us and involving more people in what we were doing. So many individuals supported OA, and my fundraising role constantly filled me with humility and gratitude.

Do you hold up any individuals as archetypes for what you see as an inspirational leader?

Very many people. I feel like everywhere I have gone in the world I have met people who are deeply inspiring to me, including my own backyard. When you asked that question, the first person that came to my mind was my mother. Seeing action borne out of love, [the way she operates] is incredibly inspiring. When she puts her mind/heart to something, she is unstoppable. She has an amazing ability to overcome challenges and bring visions to life.

You seem to have a gift for turning vision into action – has this always been the case?

That's funny, following my answer to the last question. Maybe I have inherited something from my mother after all! I feel my education at the Steiner School helped hugely to develop my creative imagination and capacity to take initiative. It was an environment that encouraged us all to pursue our passions and interests. I think it has always filled me with such life energy to be creating, especially together with others.

Do you have an ongoing practice for personal renewal?

It has changed over the course of my life and is often dependent on what opportunities are around me at the time. For example, when a dancer lived with us for a while, the practice became dancing. At other times, it has been yoga, meditation or music. I think I also do a lot of rebalancing through 'healthy' sickness. It seems common today for people to view sickness as 'bad', yet I find I experience great renewal through periods of sickness. It seems to be an important part of my journey and biography.

Do you set personal goals in terms of self-mastery and self-development?

To be an awesome elder one day! I attended a conference some time ago on the topic of 'eldership'. It got me thinking of how I would like to be as an elder in service of future generations. I think more about what kind of qualities I am cultivating rather than set goals or achievements.

How do you think we need to instil the qualities of leadership and courage in others?

I think this has to do with becoming more and more who we really are as individuals. We need diversity – individuals discovering their unique strengths, bringing them to the fore and working together. I would love to see us celebrating the leadership we see in our daily lives, our families and communities more – to acknowledge leadership as a capacity and responsibility we all share rather than it being the role of a few charismatic individuals within our society.

What does success mean to you?

When I was finishing school, I initially followed quite a mainstream picture of success – going to law school in the pursuit of a successful career, money, a house and family. During my studies, I had a wake-up call when a close friend passed away. It catalysed me to reconsider what was important in my life and subsequently redefine my visions of success, and I am still on that journey. It has been challenging at times to walk an unconventional path that some friends and family might find hard to understand. I think initially when I presented the notion of OA to my parents, it must have sounded crazy. I do think it is important that we consciously create new visions of success for the future – visions that support people to live meaningful fulfilling lives as well as taking care of our Earth as a whole.

Looking ahead 10 years, what do you see as the main challenges that face our society?

I find it really hard to answer that question. Many things I witness happening in the world bring up pain and grief, particularly environmental destruction and conflict. I think the challenges we are facing now and in the future are deeply complex. Rather than waiting for answers and solutions to come from 'experts', I believe it is so important that we all have the courage to question more – question how we are living, what impact our actions are having and how we can contribute to a more loving, life-sustaining way of being, and there are infinite different ways of leading that change. Our capacity as human beings to love and create out of love gives me great hope for the future.



SILVIA ZUUR

Enspiral, Enspiral Dev Academy, Chalkle and EXP.
WELLINGTON

WHEN SILVIA ZUUR was asked in an interview if she had a motto in life, she replied with a Howard Thurman quote: “Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” And Silvia has done exactly that – her positive attitude, relentless quest for learning new things and innate perspicacity for organisation and people-connecting have her forging initiative in the world through her many activities. Silvia lives and breathes her ideas, which reveal a focused dedication for societal change. This has seen her hosting retreats and conferences and developing educational programmes as well as supporting many social entrepreneurs to set up their own initiatives. She launched her own social enterprise, Chalkle, in 2012, has been on the Board of the Enspiral Foundation since 2014 and co-launched the Social Enterprise Week in 2014 and the first Open Source//Open Society conference in 2015, which held its second successful event in Wellington this year. Through Chalkle, she has developed an online community platform that connects learners and teachers from all walks of life. Silvia is also insightfully clear about the healthy role technology can play in connecting people – face-to-face. A skilled facilitator, keynote speaker, event organiser and social entrepreneur, she was a finalist for the New Zealand Women of Influence Award a few years ago, as well as a finalist for Wellingtonian of the Year in 2012, marking only the beginning of her remarkable quest.

www.enspiral.com

www.chalkle.com

www.exp.agency

www.devacademy.co.nz

www.opensourceopensociety.com

PHOTOS (TOP TO BOTTOM):

Silvia Zuur speaking at the Festival for the Future.

With Alanna Krause at the Enspiral Retreat Summer Fest 2016.

With Megan Salole at the OS//OS after party 2015.

You have been described as ‘a Wellington woman in leadership’ – what does leadership mean to you?

I’m a doer so I tend to lead by doing. I try where possible to lead ‘next to others’ and so not in some hierarchy that sits ‘above’ other people directing them. Within Enspiral I’m someone who is just as happy making the coffee, organising the lunch or sending out the emails after the meeting – as well as the person empowering others to act, standing on a stage or negotiating as needed.

It is one thing to have big ideals and theoretical ideologies about how the world needs to be but the impact of change comes in the implementation of ideals. Ideas are cheap. It’s implementing them that’s the hard work.

Tell us about your work and what you are trying to achieve.

I’ve spent the last five years working out of Wellington within the Enspiral ecosystem. My work has mainly been about supporting people to connect in creating a more positive impact on the world. This has manifested in organising conferences, creating businesses, running educational programmes and supporting teams.

A key focus I have had is to try and bring my ‘work’ and my ‘Work’ together. I like to describe one’s work (with a little w) as the work that pays the bills, while the Work (with the big W) is the work that makes us come alive. So often, I see people in a 9–5 job that does not inspire them, and then around that, they try and fit the things they actually want to do. A key challenge I think we all need to step into is exploring how both forms of work can become the same.

I love to question things – to ask why and not take things as a given. I’ve definitely found this quote to be helpful: We grow in the direction of the questions we ask.

You could call me a social entrepreneur – but I’m not sure. I tend to just make stuff up and try and leave things in a better way than I found them. I love to question things – to ask why and not take things as a given. I’ve definitely found this quote to be helpful: We grow in the direction of the questions we ask.

Previously, I worked for the Youth Section based out of the Goetheanum in Switzerland. This time gave me

a real opportunity to stretch my wings and work right across Europe and North America but also time to explore some of the bigger questions and gain a deeper knowledge and appreciation of society and what our role is in shaping it.

What does a typical day look like for you?

My days do tend to be very full – but I try not to be ‘busy’. I can have up to eight meetings in one day. But I love it. Each meeting is about connecting with an individual or team and exploring ways to empower them. A day can jump between reconciling accounts in Xero, coaching a younger social entrepreneur, exploring new markets for a start-up, finding a value exchange for a partner to sponsor a conference and much more!

Working on new initiatives can often mean slow growth in respect to financial profit. How has this been for you personally?

It’s been tough. The first couple of years, I earned very little. But I figure I am now in a time of my life (30s) when I can afford to take risks. If not now, when? I think you just need to relook at your relationship with money – exploring what it enables rather than what it hinders.

Can you tell us a little about the organisations you work with and why their work is so important?

Enspiral

Enspiral is a network, a collective of social entrepreneurs that have come together to try and make a bigger impact in this world. This might manifest in the food space, in democracy, in services such as accounting or legal or in the education space. We now have about 250 people and 17 different businesses involved.

This is one of our core missions: How can we enable more people to work on stuff that matters? As I mentioned, a lot of people spend 40 hours a week – some of us a whole lot more – in their professional capacity/role, so how can we make certain that people in their professional work can make a positive social impact and gain personal satisfaction?

With Enspiral, we are building a community of like-minded people, trading experiences, knowledge and skills to build this collective wisdom, and we find that, as one business grows, the other one thrives. We look at how we can create business communities and networks that can build off mutual benefit and increasing resources rather than extraction.

Chalkle

I started Chalkle four years ago on the simple idea of

how to connect people who have things to teach with people who want to learn. Initially, I built a community in Wellington teaching and learning from each other. We then developed that out into a technology platform with a focus on trying to help community education providers run more effective classes. Often when people hear of education and technology, people automatically assume it is 'online learning', but Chalkle uses technology to facilitate face-to-face learning.

EXP

EXP is a simple event management company that we launched at the beginning of this year. I and my co-directors (Billy and Ants) run all forms of events, educational programmes, retreats and conferences. I've loved setting up EXP, which has such a clear purpose and a really simple mandate. It is a business in service of us. We try and keep the admin as simple as possible, which means it is really easy to set up and run events through it.

Dev Academy

Dev Academy trains people to become technology developers. After 10 weeks online and 10 weeks in a face-to-face boot camp, we have trained our students to be job ready as junior web developers. Additionally, we work alongside industry to ensure that our graduates are learning relevant and real-world industry-needed skills.

New Zealand needs to change its focus from heavyweight exports (such as milk powder and timber) to lightweight exports (such as technology and IP). It does not make sense for such an isolated country to physically export products miles over the ocean. Thus, it is one of Dev Academy's goals to help grow Wellington into the tech capital of the South Pacific.

The rate in which technology is changing means that it is no longer relevant to do a three-year computer science degree. Dev Academy, for example, has had to change the tech language it teaches three times in its three years of existence to keep up with developments.

And finally, technology is changing and shaping society, so how can we ensure that the culture and people who are building that technology bring a holistic real-world view to their work? We teach our students 'engineering empathy' and offer yoga twice a week. Additionally, there is a big focus on teaching them how to learn and work in teams.

Open Source//Open Society Conference

We just ran the second OS//OS conference last month. It explores how being 'open' is better for business,

technology and democracy.

Open source technology is really leading the world in new ways of innovative collaboration, radical transparency and open accessible participation. Imagine if our businesses and public institutions were like this. Imagine if you could take a piece of policy, work on it, improve it and submit it back to the master system for approval.

For OS//OS, we defined 'open' by four principles (taken from the open source world): freedom to innovate, transparency, collaboration and participation. We then took these principles and applied them beyond technology to our business and public institutions.

This meant we attracted an incredibly diverse audience – tech entrepreneurs, policy analysts, researchers on privacy and surveillance and activists focusing on transparent democratic systems. It was a great event, and we have just released the videos of the keynotes, which can be found at www.osos.nz.

You must be very busy with all your various projects. How do you find balance in your work, and who inspires you?

Yes, I am. My weeks are mainly filled with meetings and emails, which can be interesting because many people ask when do I actually do the work! Well, meetings and emails just tend to be my work. Supporting people and communicating with people enables people.

But then I also love systems and processes. Creating the financial systems for Lifehack or managing the \$200k budget for OS//OS or the HR employment systems for Dev Academy sit right along side finding a market for Chalkle, restructuring/refactoring Enspiral and standing on the stage as the MC of OS//OS.

I think I bring balance to my work in terms of loving the big and the little picture as well as loving working with people and systems – loving what I do is key. I would say I am inspired by all my work colleagues, the people that I have worked with along the way – everyone from the people I toiled the soil with in Switzerland when I worked on an organic farm through to the people in youth work and running conferences and events through to the people at Enspiral. I love finding people that I thrive with because I am hopeless at work-life balance. I gave up on that a long time ago!



THE CHALLENGE OF DRUGS

A CALL TO AWAKEN

RON DUNSELMAN

How can we find a right, fruitful and creative relationship to the problem of drugs? And what tasks, what questions and maybe what possibilities do drugs bring?

To answer these questions, we first have to get a view of what drugs actually are and what they stand for within the development of man. The following points of view can be mentioned.

What are drugs? Drugs are poisonous substances used purposely because they effect a change in consciousness.

And what are poisonous substances? Rudolf Steiner says, "That which flows as poison in the realms of minerals, plants and animals today ... was the normal substance on the Moon [incarnation of our planet]."¹ In other words, it is earthly substance that has remained behind in the stage of the Moon.

It is thus not so surprising that a number of these poisons have the power of bringing us back into something akin to former Moon consciousness. This Moon consciousness, described by Rudolf Steiner in his book *Occult Science*,

is a dreamlike picture consciousness in which – as with a diffused impulse – we act somewhat instinctively. We feel ourselves as if part of a large group of human beings led by one superior being – an angel. This angel is experienced as our common group ego, and we feel "in me and through me the angel lives and sees the world; in me he thinks about the objects and beings in this world".²

People were – to say it in present terms – like fish in a shoal, or like birds in a flock, led by the fish or bird Ego-Being. Comparing this to the experiences brought about by modern drugs, we find striking resemblances: hallucinogens (opium, hashish, LSD and others) cause a dreamlike picture consciousness; the stimulants (cocaine, speed and alcohol as well) cause people to act impulsively; while *all* drugs – more or less – cause their users to lose their boundaries and make them less present with their own waking ego consciousness.

It is important to point out that the Moon stage was the third of the seven incarnations of our planet (after the Saturn and the Sun incarnations). When we look at the fourth stage, which is our planet's present incarnation

(the Earth stage per se) and then at the third major time period of this stage, the Lemurian epoch, the resemblance between drug consciousness and the consciousness of that time is even more striking. The women of Lemurian times cultivated a dreamy, rich life of fantasy (compare with hallucinogens), while the men strove for a strong, powerful, magic will and incredible feats of physical strength (compare with stimulants). Their union with nature, their unification with their surroundings – mostly through rhythmic dances – was a state of consciousness that reminds us of the blurring of the Ego identity caused by many drugs and particularly by XTC (parties, festivals), hashish and LSD.³

When we follow the evolution of mankind one step further, making our way to the third sub-period of our present post-Atlantean epoch (the Egyptian-Babylonian-Assyrian epoch, 2907–747 BC), we encounter drugs as a medium for directly changing consciousness. In his lecture cycle *Old and New Methods of Initiation*, Rudolf Steiner describes how, during the initiation process, the person was given a “drink of oblivion” in a ritualistic way. This drink – in combination with a shock-like experience of fright, which ‘kicked’ one out of the body – made the person forget his early life (since birth), and his brain became transparent with regard to his own immortal soul-spirit being. This gave him or her access to the spiritual world. In my book *In Place of the Self: How Drugs Work*, I paid attention in detail to this process of initiation and also to how inappropriate the method is in our time.

Very interesting here is that, through this kind of initiation – which occurred in the mysteries and lasted into the Middle Ages – one could become a Christian in pre-Christian times. Rudolf Steiner says, “Whenever people were given the drink of oblivion in this way in the mysteries and were able to perceive their soul-spirit being with the help of the shock effect, then they were Christians.”⁴ (They perceived the Christ as the great extra-terrestrial Sun Being on its way to the earth.) So drugs actually led to Christ at that time!

Now, it is important to consider Rudolf Steiner’s repeated reminder that the fifth stage of a developmental sequence mirrors the third. So we might expect the above described interweaving of drugs and states of consciousness to be especially prominent in our time. And it surely is!

Since the period of the consciousness soul has really gotten under way (it began in 1413), the world has been overwhelmed by all sorts of drugs, which particularly and lately have come more and more within reach of everyone. Most of them, being illegal, have become a source of incredible wealth and power for criminal organisations like the Mafia and other worldwide drug

syndicates. A few facts. Worldwide, there are about 210 million drug addicts. In 2014, there were 240 million alcohol addicts (5% of the adult world population). 8% of the world trade is earned by criminal organisations from drugs – the amount of money going around in the trade of drugs is as much as in the trade of oil and gas. The price of the war on drugs for the USA from 1980–2000 was €545 billion (NZ\$900 billion).

The opposing forces of Lucifer and Ahriman

All in all, a real drug epidemic has broken out that has far-reaching consequences not only for the users or the addicts themselves but for world evolution as a whole. And not only because our democracies are threatening to become ‘Mafiocracies’ but also in a spiritual sense. In the autumn of 1916, Rudolf Steiner described the following image: For a long time since the beginning of earth evolution, Lucifer has attempted to guide mankind away from the earth and onto a luciferic planet. The earth and earthly human bodies would be left to their own fate. Lucifer tried to do this before the Mystery of Golgotha especially. He was prevented by the introduction of the so-called eighth sphere, a process in which earth beings received a stronger interest in their lower physical nature. Had mankind not received this stronger interest in the “flesh”, it would have followed Lucifer.⁵ (Later on, via the Christ impulse, this lower nature can be transformed and spiritualised.)

In Greek times the luciferic powers made a new attempt through the cultivated, poetic, artistic, imaginative fantasy life of the Greeks. Rudolf Steiner says:

“If the Greek had developed nothing else in their soul but these refined fantasy imaginations ... the luciferic powers would have been able to lift the Greek human being (and later on most of mankind) out of earthly evolution and into a luciferic world. That was the aim of the luciferic powers ... They wanted nothing less than to create for themselves an exquisite world, in which human beings would live without the earth’s heaviness – with complete transcendental lightness – totally given over to it in a life of fantasy. The luciferic beings hoped to create a planetary body with human beings who had arrived at the highest development of their fantasy. They tried very hard to lead the souls of the Greeks away from the earth. Their souls would have gradually left; the bodies which still were born would have decayed. Ego-less individuals would have arisen. The earth would have fallen into decadence and a separate luciferic world would have been created. This did not happen. Why not? Because the ingenious greatness of Greek philosophy and wisdom was mixed into the god-like insanity of the Greek poets (to use platonic terminology). Their philosophers: Heraclitus,

Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Parmenides, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle – they rescued the Greeks from the complete spiritualisation of their fantasy. They kept the Greeks on the earth".⁶

The luciferic beings could not have achieved anything in regard to this task, if they had not been supported by the ahrimanic beings. The luciferic beings were counting on the support of the ahrimanic beings in fulfilling this plan, this hope of theirs. Two forces are always necessary in achieving such effects.⁷

In Roman times, they tried again, whereby now the ahrimanic beings were in the lead. They strove to bring about a centralist state mechanism to which the people and the nations would have had to submit in blind obedience so that there would be no place for human individuals with any personally tinged soul life. This was prevented by a strengthening of human egotism, emotionality and passions and by the great migrations of the nations, which brought the Roman Empire into confusion. These two impulses liberated the rigid mechanisation of the cultures and conformity of the religious and artistic life.

In the intelligent technical mechanisms of virtual reality, cyberspace, online gaming, gambling and so on, we meet this united force of Lucifer and Ahriman.

In Mexico, on the American continent, the same dramatic struggle was going on: Vitzliputzli managed to crucify one of the strongest – maybe even the strongest – black magician of all times, so that Vitzliputzli was able to win again for earthly life all those souls who already had taken up the impulse to leave the earth and follow Lucifer. He imbued them again with a desire for earthly existence and successive incarnations.⁸

Speaking of this, Rudolf Steiner concluded on 17 September 1916, "In this way Ahriman and Lucifer were disappointed. Thus they want to apply themselves all the more to their task during the fifth post-Atlantean epoch. That epoch is the present!"⁹

It seems to me that the drugs epidemic is an excellent expedient for luring human souls away from the earth

to a luciferic world, while the bodies of the drug users remain behind on earth, enslaved to drugs, and decay more and more. Our use of language expresses this too: "I cannot reach you any more, you are so far away, you are gone, you are on another planet." Drug users on the other hand often say, "I am going out of my mind, I'm going out of this world. I'm getting high, I'm spaced out."

In the intelligent technical mechanisms of virtual reality, cyberspace, online gaming, gambling and so on, we meet this united force of Lucifer and Ahriman. The users/addicts operating such ahrimanic-intelligent machines can go "out of this world"; they can come into a luciferic-illusory world and temporarily forget all their earthly troubles and problems. In short, as addicts, they can gradually lose their development on earth.

Pedagogical law

What can we do? With regard to the problem of drug addiction, different approaches can be seen. One leads to increasingly severe punishment and finally the death penalty for using and trading drugs. That was Mao Tse-tung's method in the 50s, when he rooted out opium addiction in China. But as repression by the authorities grows today (partly because of international pressure), criminal violence will grow as well. There are addicted people and dealers who say, "If I am threatened with 1 or 2 years of imprisonment, then I won't shoot, but if I could get 10 years, I will." The killing of police, security officials and other 'opponents' will cause society to call for still heavier penalties – resulting in an increasing spiral of repression and violence as can be seen in Mexico and some other countries.

A softer way to penalise drug (ab)use can be found in technocratic solutions. One is electronic imprisonment where a non-removable electronic band is placed around the ankle so that all moves are monitored. There is also research under way to find an anti-addiction pill that blocks the effects of drugs and addictive behavior. For alcoholics, there are already products that exist that cause symptoms of illness when taken in combination with alcohol. The problem, however, is that most alcoholics don't like it and would rather drink alcohol!

And then there is the possibility to take up the challenge that drugs present on another level.

A key to meeting this challenge may be the basic pedagogical law described by Rudolf Steiner that the higher part of the being of the teacher acts upon the next lower member of the being of the pupil. Thus the quality of the etheric body of the nursery teacher and parents is significant for the development of the physical body of 0–7-year-olds in the same sense that the astral body of

teachers affects the development of the etheric body of 7–14-year-olds, while the ego of teachers, parents and others is of interest in the development of the astral body of high school students and young adults. The latter, for that matter, are always very interested in who someone really is, what he or she is really able to do.

The spirit-self

An individual's ego – according to this basic law – is affected by the quality of the spirit-self of the person or group of people that this individual is in touch with. This point of view is of interest in drug addiction, for what is dependency? Dependency means that the ego is not able to say no to a desire of the soul. If someone repeatedly cannot resist such a desire so that the desire has grown stronger than the strength of the ego, he or she is addicted. Thus it can be that the quality of the spirit-self of teachers, parents, therapists and other people important in the life of an addict can stimulate ego development. In other words, in this way, we can stimulate often dormant qualities like initiative, courage, responsibility and perseverance in someone who is struggling with addiction.

What then is the spirit-self? What do we mean by it? How should we picture it?

According to Rudolf Steiner's description of it in his book *Theosophy*, the objective truth and morality that an ego has absorbed and embraced appear in an individualised form in the spirit-self. In the consciousness soul, this is not yet the case. Here, objective truth and morality are perceived. We experience, for instance, what he or she is saying is true, what he or she is doing is good, but we cannot say it or do it ourselves yet. In the spirit-self we 'can'; truth and morality appear in an individualised form, in our form, we are it, we live it.

Rudolf Steiner says in *Theosophy*, "The difference between the spirit-self and the consciousness soul can be made clear in the following way. The consciousness soul is in touch with the self-existent truth that is independent of all antipathy and sympathy. The spirit-self bears within it the same truth, but taken up into and enclosed by the ego, individualised by it, and absorbed into the independent being of the individual. It is through the eternal truth becoming thus individualised and bound up into one being with the ego that the ego itself attains to the eternal."¹⁰

The spirit-self appears within the astral body. "One can call the spirit-self the transformed astral body. If the ego permeates itself with the spirit-self, then the soul radiates the strength of the spirit-self into the astral body. The result is that the passions and desires undergo

an enlightenment through what the ego has received from the spirit. Thanks to its participation in the world of spirit, the ego is now master of the world of desires and passions."¹¹

An individual's ego ... is affected by the quality of the spirit-self of the person or group of people that this individual is in touch with.

This is a very important realisation for the drug patient in his struggle to conquer dependency. The closeness and inspiration of people who – like himself – are striving to develop qualities of the spirit-self can be an enormous support, for the drug patient knows all too well that every lie, every immoral act is an obstacle on his path towards independence. The conquest of dependency requires absolute self-honesty and a sincere striving for morality. In this sense, drug addicts require fellow people who can offer an environment where the ego of the struggling person is able to take up as much strength as is needed to conquer the strong desire of the soul – an environment where people are striving after truth, beauty, morality and their own self-mastery – where they are willing to look honestly at what hinders them.

Whilst working at ARTA, I learned that, every time we co-workers became slack in this striving or we ceased to take ourselves or each other seriously enough, we became less interesting to the residents, and we could see that more of them had relapses.

A call to awaken

The problem of individual drug addiction thus demands the development of a spirit-self culture or at least the seeds of a spirit-self culture! This is part of the consciousness soul epoch, for during it, the next cultural epoch has to be prepared (the spirit-self culture). "Three characteristic qualities stand out especially ... that we have to carry in our hearts as ideals for the sixth post-Atlantean cultural epoch."¹²

What are these qualities? Rudolf Steiner describes them in his lecture of 15 June 1915 in Dusseldorf. One of the qualities is the moral power of being able to experience the grief, hunger, misery and poverty of our fellow man (but also his joy, wealth and happiness), just as if it were our own. "Just as the well-being of part of the human body depends on the health of the whole body ... likewise

in the sixth cultural epoch a common social impulse will take possession of civilised, cultivated mankind (in contrast to the undeveloped part of mankind, R. Dunselman). The individual – as part of the whole – will sympathise with the suffering, the needs, the poverty or the wealth of others to a much greater extent.”¹³

But this will be with full possession of his ego, which has become independent during the time of the consciousness soul! In no way will there be a return to the sentiments of group mentality without boundaries, such as in Lemuria – no dissolving of the ego into a wholeness, as some of the above-described drugs can cause – rather an inward quality, obtained by sincere effort and an interest in the other, which needs to be established in our current time. Therefore, Rudolf Steiner plainly states that the epoch of the spirit-self “... will not come about in the way that illusionists like to believe, but through one person really knowing the other, really being interested in the other ... so that every individual human being will look with full interest at his fellow man”.¹⁴

Each of us today can practise this already – teachers, parents, therapists, friends – everyone can contribute to the development of the coming spirit-self culture, which means a tremendous amount for the development of mankind in a positive sense.

A second characteristic quality that Rudolf Steiner mentioned consists of a strong longing for freedom of thought and religion for oneself and for others. Great tolerance will rule among the developed part of mankind.

Finally, a third characteristic quality is formed by the insight that the only real knowledge is knowledge concerning the spirituality that has been poured out into the world.

In summary, fellowship towards one another, freedom of thought and spiritual science are the elements of a future spirit-self culture.

So the epidemic of drug addiction presents a clear challenge: it is a demand – together with the addict – to do all that is now possible to develop the spirit-self in ourselves and our culture – a culture of fellowship, freedom of thought and spirituality. A call to awaken!

If we express it even more pointedly, it may even be seen as a sacrifice that millions of people in the world have brought through their drug dependency in order to rouse mankind out of its materialistic, egoistic slumber and beg it to strive with full force for the development of the individual, for self-mastery and spirit-self qualities and for a future mutual spirit-self culture.

As I see it, we do not do justice to the essential question that drug addiction raises when we only penalise and isolate the victims from society. We will need another gesture, one going from society towards the (possible) users and addicts.

In the complexity of today's life, people will have to be well informed so that they can make responsible choices about whether they want to dull their consciousness with the help of drugs or not, and if they do, with what kind of drugs and how much and with what risks.. That is why I wrote my book *In Place of the Self: How Drugs Work*.¹⁵

Rudolf Steiner spoke in this sense about the dangerous and addictive qualities of alcohol. We need to remember that he did this in 1923, when alcohol had already been prohibited for 3 years in the United States and practically all European countries were vehemently discussing whether to follow this model or not. Steiner said this at the time:

“... laws are far less important – of course, they too are needed – but they are not as important as good education. Education is needed. Only then will we really make progress in the right direction ... Just as with alcohol, this principle can be applied everywhere ... People come and ask me: is it better to drink alcohol or not? Is it better to be a vegetarian or to eat meat? I never say to anyone he should abstain from alcohol, or that he should drink it, or that he should only eat plants or should eat meat. But I say to people: alcohol works in such and such a way. I simply tell them what alcohol does, then they decide for themselves whether to drink or not. And I do the same for eating plants and eating meat. I say: meat affects you in this way, plants affect you in that way. The result is that people can then decide for themselves ... This is what science should have: respect for human freedom. So that one does not at all have the feeling that one wants to instruct someone to do something or forbid them, but just tell them the facts. If they know what alcohol does, then they will be able to figure out for themselves how to act. This way we will achieve the most. Then we shall have free people who choose their own direction. And for this we should strive. Only then shall we reform society in the right way.”¹⁶

To conclude, I would like to tell you how inspiring it has been for me that it was in a cigarette factory, of all places, that Rudolf Steiner gave the impulse for Waldorf Education. It was the Waldorf Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, the heart of an industry manufacturing an enslaving substance. The school was founded in a place where one of the nowadays most addicting and deadly drugs (in terms of quantity) are produced.

Herbert Hahn gave a beautiful description of it:

"I still hear the breathless silence caused by the concentrated listening of those present. The lecture was held in the room for sorting tobacco, which was actually not big enough for so many people. We sat on chairs and benches, squatted everywhere, and some had climbed on top of the full tobacco bags which were piled up against the back wall. This disorderly pell-mell sitting arrangement, together with the sense of community and warmth of all these people, gave this whole meeting an unforgettable intimacy. Rudolf Steiner explained to the hundreds of workers how necessary it was to strive for new ways for man to develop, and to found a school in which all ranks of people would be represented.

The next day some of the workers came to me and said: "The courses given to us are good and we are grateful for them. The only thing is, we are a bit too old. Could not our children be taught this way from early on?"¹⁷

Four months later, the first Independent Waldorf School was a reality – the school whose name and whose movement still bears the name of the cigarette brand Waldorf Astoria and that wants to raise the children into able-bodied, free, responsible and creative people in a world where there are also drugs and drug addiction calling for our response.

Ron is a co-founder of the Goetheanum Meditation Initiative Worldwide and wrote the book In Place of the Self: How Drugs Work. He is a psychologist specialising in health care, and an art therapist. He has worked for nearly 30 years in ARTA, the National Anthroposophical Centre for treatment of drug and alcohol addicts in the Netherlands and was one of its founders. This article was originally published 20 years ago and has been updated in parts to reflect current statistics and data. Overall, two decades later, the message is as pertinent as ever.

Image: Ahriman and Lucifer by Arild Rosenkrantz

[i] Ahriman and Lucifer: Ahriman is the name of a super-sensible being of great power, recognised in early Assyrian culture, who wishes to prevent the intended spiritual evolution of humankind through hardening, ossifying and contracting processes that can be found especially in the thinking life of humans – notably in materialistic intellectual thought. Rudolf Steiner figuratively sculptured Ahriman, including another spiritual being, Lucifer, depicting them both being overcome by a central Christ figure, also called the Representative of Man. Lucifer has opposite intentions to Ahriman in respect to human evolution. He wishes to detach humankind from earthly material concerns so that a purely egotistical spiritual existence evolves for humanity. Fanaticism and pseudo-mysticism arise through the working of this being in the souls of humans. For an in-depth description of the working of these beings, see Steiner, R. (1976). *The Influences of Lucifer and Ahriman: Man's Responsibility for the Earth*. Steiner Books Incorporated.

[ii] According to Rudolf Steiner, **Vitzliputzli** was a supersensible being born into a human body who battled demonic forces in early Mexican culture. He lived at the time in the Eastern hemisphere when the Mystery of Golgotha was taking place.

Works Cited

- [1] Steiner, R. (1979). *Occult Science*. London: Rudolf Steiner Press.
- [2] Ibid.
- [3] Steiner, R. (1981). *Cosmic Memory: Atlantis and Lemuria*. Harpercollins.
- [4] Steiner, R. (1991). *Old and New Methods of Initiation*. See lectures Feb. 11 and 12, 1922, Rudolf Steiner Press.
- [5] Steiner, R. (1984). *The Karma of Vocation*. Nov. 27, 1916. Anthroposophic Press.
- [6] Steiner, R. (1984). *Inner Impulses of Evolution*. Lecture 2, Sept. 17, 1916. Steiner Books.
- [7] Steiner, R. (1984). *The Karma of Vocation*. Nov. 27, 1916. Anthroposophic Press.
- [8] Steiner, R. (1984). *Inner Impulses of Evolution*. Lecture 2, Sept. 17, 1916. Steiner Books.
- [9] Steiner, R. (1984). *The Karma of Vocation*. Nov. 27, 1916. Anthroposophic Press.
- [10] Steiner, R. (1994). *Theosophy*. Anthroposophic Press.
- [11] Ibid.
- [12] Steiner, R. (1980). , *Gemeinsamkeit über uns Christus in uns*. June 15, 1915 (Sonderdruck aus GA 159.160). Rudolf Steiner Gesamtausgabe, Dornach.
- [13] Ibid.
- [14] Steiner, R. (2000). *Die Sociale Grundforderung unserer Zeit*. Dec. 8, 1918, Rudolf Steiner Verlag.
- [15] Dunselman, R. (1995). *In Place of the Self: How Drugs Work* (2nd ed.). Hawthorn Press.
- [16] Steiner, R. (1983). *Health and Illness: Nine lectures to the workmen at the Goetheanum*. Dornach, Switzerland, Jan. 8, 1923. Steiner Books.
- [17] Article by Max van der Made in *Vrije Opvoedkunst*, year 1955, Nr. 6.

WHAT IS THE FIRST CLASS?

LESLEY WAITE

AT THE HEART OF the Anthroposophical Society is the School of Spiritual Science, often referred to as the 'First Class', where applied meditative research takes place in respect to spiritual endeavour.

The phrase 'First Class' actually relates to the mantric verses and texts of the 19 Lessons (and some 11 other associated recapitulated and single Lessons) that Rudolf Steiner gave between 15 February and 20 September, 1924. These 19 Lessons were to be the first of three levels or 'Classes' within the School of Spiritual Science, but Steiner's illness and subsequent death in March 1925 prevented him from inaugurating the second and third 'Classes'.

The School of Spiritual Science could be considered like a 'university' or 'school of higher (deeper) learning' associated with the Anthroposophical Society, and may be seen as the representative 'soul' of the Society (body), with the mantric verses of the 19 Lessons as the 'spirit' of the School.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, increasing numbers of people have consciously experienced both the realms of the physical natural world and a non-physical 'other' world, with poets, artists and philosophers often the first to record such experiences. During the twentieth century more and more people have written of their experiences, many related to trauma, or drug-induced, or 'near-death' situations. Steiner referred to this capacity to experience these two 'worlds' as a 'crossing of the threshold between the physical and spiritual realms'. Twentieth century European philosophers, such as Buber and Levinas, refer to this threshold as a 'space'; Steiner often spoke of an 'abyss'. Many of the experiences may incorporate horrific or fearful visions, as the 'crossing of the threshold' is often unprepared for by our spirit-thinking capacity, although perceived in 'awake'-consciousness.

The 19 Lessons of the 'First Class' brought by Steiner, provide a sequential and progressive approach towards increasing one's understanding of this 'crossing of the threshold'. Steiner presented these Lessons as a preparation or 'inner schooling' for a conscious 'crossing' (without the trauma, 'near-death' or drug-induced situations). Using applied meditative effort with the mantric verses, the Lessons offer a guide for a person's conscious experiential movement between our physical world and the non-physical spiritual realm.

The capacity for humanity to consciously experience

this threshold space/abyss coincides with a spiritual interest and watchfulness by the archangel Michael (pronounced Mīk'hā'el). Each of us has our own personal angel ('Guardian Angel') that watches over but does not influence us, and there are many references in art and story of angel helpers and guides. As well as angelic beings having a relationship to a particular person, such beings may also have a relationship to a particular time period. Steiner spoke of Michael (recognised as an archangel by Judaism, Christianity and Islam), having a responsibility to all humanity over a period of about 350 years from the late 1870s. Steiner referred to the mantric verses and Lessons of the 'First Class' as 'Michael words', and the School of Spiritual Science as an earthly representation of a spiritual 'Michael School'.

The School of Spiritual Science was spoken of by Rudolf Steiner during the Christmas Conference of 1923-24, when the anthroposophical movement and activity were linked by Statutes to the Anthroposophical Society, with Steiner himself, for the first time, as President of the Society. Steiner had earlier given indications of and preparation for the relationship persons may develop to and with spiritual activity through his books *Theosophy* and *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, first published in 1904. Smaller groups of people had worked with Dr Steiner since those early days (see the three volumes of 'Esoteric Lessons' from the esoteric school; CW 266/1-3), but these activities were often personalised with specific mantric verses for particular people and situations. Once the movement and Society were linked from Christmas 1923, Steiner's approach became more public.

Applicants for Class membership needed to have experiential knowledge of anthroposophy (or spiritual science, as it is also known) to help understand the concepts presented in the Lessons, and a minimum 2-year membership of the Society was, and generally still is, a prerequisite, along with personal experience of meditative practice. Those who have an interest in knowing more about the School of Spiritual Science and its Lessons, may contact a Class Holder – one who carries the responsibility for the regularity and maintenance of the Lessons in a particular geographical area. In New Zealand, there are 20 such 'Holders', from Dunedin to Kerikeri, who may be reached via local Anthroposophical branch/group representatives. Contact details for local groups are available on:

www.anthroposophy.org.nz

**SELF-MASTERY: WORKING IN THE WORLD
WITH INNOVATION, RENEWAL, COURAGE
AND INSPIRED LEADERSHIP**

Sphere Magazine
The Anthroposophical Society New Zealand
www.anthroposophy.org.nz

**SELF-MASTERY: WORKING IN THE WORLD
WITH INNOVATION, RENEWAL, COURAGE
AND INSPIRED LEADERSHIP**

Sphere Magazine
The Anthroposophical Society New Zealand
www.anthroposophy.org.nz

**SELF-MASTERY: WORKING IN THE WORLD
WITH INNOVATION, RENEWAL, COURAGE
AND INSPIRED LEADERSHIP**

Sphere Magazine
The Anthroposophical Society New Zealand
www.anthroposophy.org.nz

**SELF-MASTERY: WORKING IN THE WORLD
WITH INNOVATION, RENEWAL, COURAGE
AND INSPIRED LEADERSHIP**

Sphere Magazine
The Anthroposophical Society New Zealand
www.anthroposophy.org.nz

I would love to see us celebrating the leadership we see in our daily lives – to acknowledge leadership as a capacity and responsibility we all share rather than it being the role of a few charismatic individuals within our society.

SKYE CHADWICK

A large part of us is unfree, and the task of self-mastery is to take hold of inner practices that would start incarnating our essential self more strongly into our physical structure.

NICANOR PERLAS

I love to question things – to ask why and not take things as a given. I've definitely found this quote to be helpful: 'We grow in the direction of the questions we ask.'

SILVIA ZUUR

When we try and help people to become more truly human, we become more truly human ourselves.

SUE HOLLINGSWORTH