

LILIPOH

the spirit in life

WINTER 2024

THE HEALING ART
OF PUPPETRY

RECOGNIZING CHILDREN
AS UNIQUE BEINGS

HOW CAN I HELP?
OFFERING WARMTH IN A
COLD WORLD

OPPOSITION IN BIODYNAMIC
AGRICULTURE

\$7.00



ISSUE 114 VOL. 32



HOMEOSTASIS FOR WELLBEING

EDEN Hemp Flower Extract – Local hemp from long-term organic soil.

Cryogenic extraction isolates CBD and CBG which are dissolved in premium organic hemp seed oil. Acting as an adaptogen, the 0% THC extract promotes homeostasis. Laboratory tests for purity and potency.



Scan

Non-GMO

Clinton, Michigan 49236 • cs@edenfoods.com • 888.424.3336

© 2023 Eden Foods 12968

from a
Non-Pharmaceutical
Company

edenfoods.com



dear readers



It always feels strange putting together a “winter issue” in the middle of summer. Yet here I am in the Southern Hemisphere, a few days before the summer solstice, sweating and reflecting on this edition of LILIPOH, which most of you will be reading during the cold days of February. Seasons are often viewed as an unchanging backdrop of life, and I’m always surprised by the number of people who forget that they’re different between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

The pervasive Northern Hemisphere bias in discussing seasons is seemingly innocuous, but it underscores a fundamental challenge—our inherent struggle to empathize with lives different from our own. The assumption that we all endure winter or summer simultaneously negates the lived experiences of many. It is a reminder of just how much we take for granted and of our limited ability to grasp the intricacies of others’ lives.

Luckily, you have a new issue of LILIPOH in your hands, evidence of our collective effort to bridge these gaps in our understanding. Reading has always been my favorite way to connect with others from around the world and understand the kaleidoscope of human experiences. In this edition, you will find several articles about exploring our differences, particularly in the context of education. Mohsina Mandil writes about the importance of diverse literature for Waldorf students, for example, and Sven Saar questions how Waldorf curricula might change based on a school’s location. You’ll also find pieces on connecting in a broader sense, like Christine Huston’s discussion of the universal healing capacity of human warmth.

I hope you will enjoy this issue no matter what season you find yourself in!

Best wishes for 2024,

LILIPOH stands for Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.

Life can mean the quality of life, inner life, consciousness – in other words, living a life enhanced through understanding. Liberty may mean the freedom to choose how one lives. Pursuit of happiness is a high term which has often been used superficially. It can mean the joy of helping each other along the road of inner and outer health, and toward a better world.



A fulfilling
&
engaging
elder community
for you or a loved one.

Learn more at
fellowshipcommunity.org
or call (845) 356-8494 ext. 2

Chestnut Ridge, NY



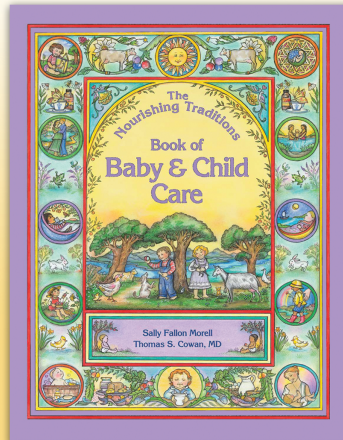
PAPER SCISSORS STONE
SERVING WALDORF SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND
FAMILIES SINCE 1996



LESSON BOOKS • PAPER • WATERCOLORS •
CRAYONS • BEESWAX • BOOKS • PENCILS •
BLACKBOARDS • YARN • WOOL ROVING • FELT •
RECORDERS • CANDLES
AND MUCH MORE!

WWW.WALDORFSUPPLIES.COM
608-637-7686

Move Over Dr. Sears...



The
Nourishing
Traditions
Book of Baby
& Child Care

nourishingtraditionsbaby.com

Steiner Health

Ann Arbor, MI

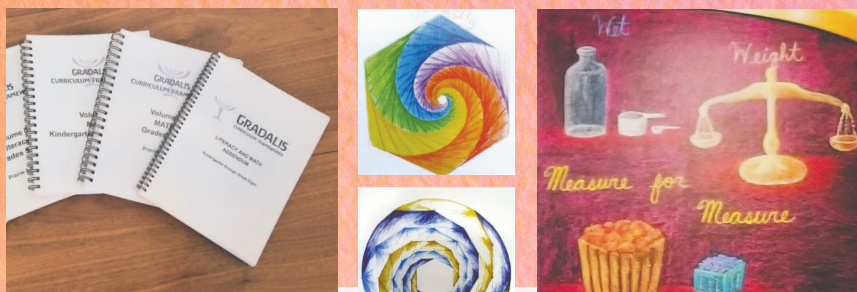
Life Force Intensive Session

Regain your health with two weeks of anthroposophic medical care and therapies designed for patients with chronic illness and cancer, suitable for anyone wishing to improve their health.

Next Sessions: March, May, July, October
Location: Ann Arbor, MI



Learn more at
steinerhealth.org
or call 734-222-1491



GRADALIS Curriculum Frameworks

Math & Literacy Standards & Benchmarks created for Waldorf schools, public & private

The Frameworks are a five-volume, detailed-scope sequence with scaffolded benchmarks in Math and Language Arts for Kindergarten through Grade eight. They have been designed by Prairie Adams, a Waldorf teacher, eurythmist, and co-founder of the Gradalis Teacher Training. These volumes developed over a twelve year period with the support and guidance of educators and consultants who are experts in their fields. Includes both electronic and hard copy volumes.

Among their many uses, the Frameworks serve as a resource for researching content and designing lessons. They serve as a basis for discussion and consideration when a school reviews educational goals or desires to further develop rigorous academic standards while maintaining the integrity and genius of the curriculum as given to us by Rudolf Steiner. Common Core standards are designated clearly where they are met, and a matrix is provided for those who need to quickly access particular standards within the Waldorf Curriculum.



Designed for working teachers.

LEARN MORE: gradalis.edu
720-464-4557 | info@gradalis.edu



Transforming Culture

Rudolf Steiner spoke about
“a future worthy of the human being.”

How do we get there?

anthroposophy.org
Rudolf Steiner's Vision in Action



brandyourlight.com

**Brand &
Web Design**
for busy entrepreneurs

IMAGINE... having a professional graphic designer all to yourself for an entire day!

Hi, I'm Angelica, Waldorf graduate, opera singer, and designer of LILIPOH for 18 years. When you work with me, I'm 100% yours during our time together—laser-focused on your business, pinging you proofs as I work, and then quickly incorporating your feedback.

During your DesignDay, I even shut down my email and silence notifications! And because we make a plan in advance, you know exactly what you can expect to be completed. So you can cross that project right off your list... by dinnertime. Phew!

Angelica Hesse | 518.253.6935

BRAND YOUR LIGHT

LILIPOH

LILIPOH is a quarterly publication featuring an anthroposophic approach to health; encompassing holistic therapies, preservation of childhood, education, the arts, community, agriculture, nutrition and social.

ISSUE 114, VOL. 32

LILIPOH PUBLISHING

CLAUS SPROLL, PRESIDENT

ACQUISITIONS EDITOR
CHRISTY KORROW EDITOR@LILIPOH.COM

MANAGING EDITOR
KAYSHA KORROW

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR
STEPHANIE FAWCETT

CREATIVE DIRECTOR / DESIGNER
ANGELICA G. HESSE

COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF
JANENE PING AND THE **HAWTHORNE VALLEY**
WALDORF SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT
SOPHIA CHRISTINE MURPHY (DINGLE,
IRELAND)

COVER ART
ANGELICA G. HESSE

BUSINESS OFFICE

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
SANDRA VOLGGER-BALAZINSKI
ADS@LILIPOH.COM
PHONE: 610-917-0792

SUBSCRIPTIONS /
SALES & MARKETING MANAGER
STEPHANIE O'NEILL INFO@LILIPOH.COM

CORPORATE COUNSEL
LEE SMITH, JD, LL.M.

Direct inquiries to:
LILIPOH, 317 Church Street
Phoenixville, PA 19460
Phone: (610) 917-0792; Fax: (610) 917-9101
e-mail LILIPOH: subscribe@lilipoh.com
www.lilipoh.com

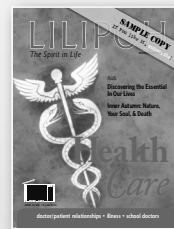
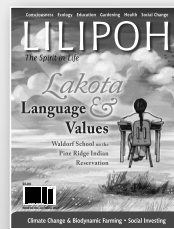
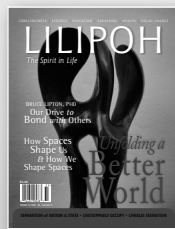
The articles printed in LILIPOH represent the viewpoints of the authors, have been collected for their interest to a wide readership and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the publisher. None of the material herein is intended to replace the professional services of a physician. Articles do not represent any one political or ideological view. LILIPOH magazine is under no obligation to accept any advertisement and retains the sole, discretionary right to reject advertisements.

All Rights Reserved. No article or part of this publication may be reproduced or copied in any form without prior written permission of the publisher. Copyright ©2024 LILIPOH Publishing Inc., Phoenixville, PA 19460

PRINTED BY **ENGLE PRINTERS, MT. JOY, PA**

LILIPOH BACK ISSUES

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Summer/Fall 1997 | #67 Food Rights |
| Nutrition and the Land | #68 Relationship |
| Fall/Winter 1997 | #69 Brain. Body. Soul. |
| Women's Health | #70 Redemption of Labor |
| #14 Special Issue: | #82 Encountering Others |
| Guide to Self-Care | #83 The Healing Arts |
| #15 Allergies and Asthma | #84 Summer 2016 |
| #19 Mysteries of the Heart | #85 Fall 2016 |
| #22 The Soul's Health | #86 Winter 2017 |
| #23 Death & Rebirth | #87 Spring 2017 |
| #26 Tension and Relaxation | #88 Summer 2017 |
| #27 A Rich Offering of Therapies | #89 Wellness Guide |
| #28 Spiritual Science Reflections | #90 Winter 2018 |
| #31 Stress | #91 Trauma |
| #34 Bone Health & Osteoporosis | #92 Dementia |
| #36 Biography | #93 Approaching the Threshold |
| #37 Sexuality | #94 Women's Health |
| #38 Health in the Workplace | #95 Palliative Care |
| #39 Cleanse and Detoxify | #96 Sleep |
| #41 Restoring our Relationship | #97 Disease, Fever, and Vaccines |
| with Food | #98 Cancer |
| #43 Spirit and Economics in | #99 Reducing Stress |
| Health Care | #100 Facing the Pandemic |
| #44 The Enchanted Earth | #101 Equity in the Workplace |
| #45 The Teenage Years | #102 Here+Now |
| #47 Older & Wiser: Honoring Our | #103 Representation Matters |
| Elders | #104 Farming for Health |
| #53 Social Health | #105 Children of the Pandemic |
| #54 Cognition | #106 Finding Our Center |
| #55 Education | #107 Spring 2022 |
| #57 New Society | #108 Summer 2022 |
| #58 Fear and the Flu | #109 Fall 2022 |
| #59 Flower Essences | #110 Winter 2023 |
| #60 Inner Ear and Balance | #111 25-Year Anniversary Issue |
| #61 Economy | #112 Summer 2023 |
| #63 Living Without | #113 Fall 2023 |
| #64 When Disaster Strikes | |



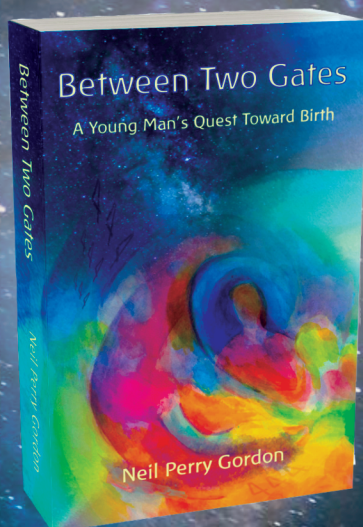
- **Individuals Issues.** \$5 each (\$6 each for issues after #88)
- **Collector's Package:** a selection of 20 individual issues. \$60, plus \$13 handling.
- Many back issues are available for **instant download** as PDF files!

ORDER FROM

LILIPOH Publishing Inc., 317 Church Street, Phoenixville, PA 19460
Phone: (610) 917-0792 • Fax: (610) 917-9101
info@lilipoh.com • www.lilipoh.com

"An enthralling and thought-provoking exploration of life, death, and the boundless realms of the spirit."

neilperrygordon.com



IF YOU LIKE
LILIPOH

LIKE US
ON FACEBOOK!



Waldorf PUBLICATIONS

NOT FOR PROFIT • INDEPENDENT • SUPPORTED BY WALDORF SCHOOLS

FIND THE BEST IN YOU
FOR YOUR CHILD



BLOGS, BOOKS, IDEAS + HOPE
WWW.WALDORFPUBLICATIONS.ORG



Contents

CHILDHOOD + EDUCATION

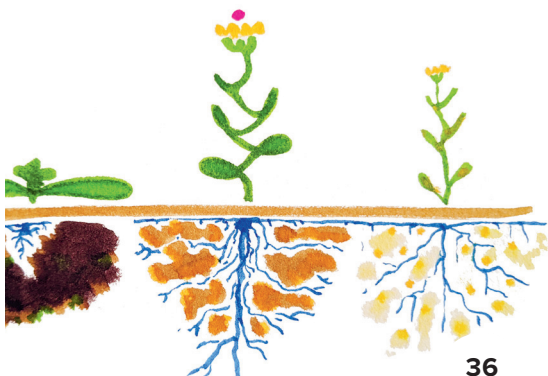
- 9** The Healing Art of Puppetry: Supporting the Child's Path Toward Wholeness, NANCY BLANNING,
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY JANENE PING
- 18** Recognizing Children as Unique Beings: Caring for the Young Child from Birth to Three, RAHIMA BALDWIN DANCY
- 25** Waldorf Worldwide: Where Is the Center?, SVEN SAAR
- 31** Bringing the World to Your Learner: The Gift of a Diverse Library in Waldorf Education, MOHSINA (MOSI) MANDIL

FARMING + GARDENING

- 36** Your Darkness Shall Be Turned into Light: Opposition in Biodynamic Agriculture, STEWART LUNDY

HEALTH + WELLNESS

- 46** How Can I Help?: Offering Warmth in a Cold World, CHRISTINE HUSTON
- 48** Meditation and Phenomenology: A Philosophical Approach, MATTHEW B. MCDONALD



ARTS + CULTURE

53 Book Review: *Between Two Gates: A Young Man's Quest Toward Birth*
(Novel by Neil Perry Gordon), DIANE DONOVAN

54 The Monsters Among Us, MARY LOU SANELLI

IN EVERY ISSUE

1 Editor's Note

60 Classifieds



“The Snow Maiden” — a Russian folktale



“The Story of John Brown”



The Healing Art of Puppetry: Supporting the Child's Path Toward Wholeness

NANCY BLANNING

with an introduction by JANENE PING

In the summer of 2023, a group of puppet enthusiasts, educators, and artists working within the Waldorf cultural stream gathered in Niwot, Colorado, at the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The essential focus of this gathering was to share the inspiration and delight of the moving art of the puppet. Hosted by the World Association of Puppetry and Storytelling Arts (WAPASA), the days that unfolded were rich and inspiring. A fledgling organization that was born during the isolated times of the pandemic, WAPASA's mission is to support and unite a growing community of storytellers and puppeteers who have experienced the profound nourishment that children (and adults!) receive from the living pictures of these art forms. Rudolf Steiner had taken up puppetry in fairytale theater during the First World War and reflected that such artistic engagement had the potential to heal the ills of civilization. Educator, author, and therapist Nancy Blanning explores Steiner's indications in post-pandemic life in the article below, which was edited from her keynote address at the conference this past summer. For more information about the associative arts of puppetry and storytelling, visit puppetryandstorytelling.org

— J. PING

Keynote Thoughts from The Moving Art of the Puppet

Everyone attending this conference shares two things. We are interested in—dedicated to, even passionate about—the art of puppetry. The other commonality is that we are all educators, whether we are puppeteers-educators out in the world or teachers-puppeteers in a classroom who care deeply about our children's future. The world is emerging from the extraordinary experience of the pandemic, and we are now seeing its consequences. No one has come through the pandemic without being changed to some degree. We see anxiety, uncertainty, and shaken trust toward the future. Many children are disoriented, dis-regulated, socially awkward, and inexperienced. This is true for adults, too. In order to feel whole and confident again, the world is calling for healing.

What does “healing” mean? The phrase “to heal” comes into English from Anglo-Saxon, derived from Greek origin. Webster's Dictionary says it means “to make sound, healthy again.” We

“NO ONE HAS
COME THROUGH
THE PANDEMIC
WITHOUT BEING
CHANGED TO
SOME DEGREE.

can rephrase that to say, “to make whole again.” The word “whole” comes from the same origin, meaning “healthy, hale; not diseased or injured; not broken, damaged, defective.” It means “entire, complete.”

Healing is mentioned in a verse given by Rudolf Steiner to young doctors in March 1924:

*In olden times
There lived in the souls of initiates
Powerfully the thought
That by nature
Every person is ill [incomplete]
And education was seen
As a healing process
Which gave the child, as [the child]
matured,
The health to be a true human being.¹*



Hawthorne Valley Students perform “The Bee Man of Orn”



“Little Twig” — a Ukrainian folktale

We can say “A true human being” also means “a whole, complete human being.”

There are many ways to support this healing, this coming to wholeness. Puppetry is one of these ways. Puppetry is healing and offers the children a pathway toward developing their wholeness. We know this from how we feel ourselves when we have seen lovely, engaging puppetry. Our breathing changes, and we feel calmed by the sensory experiences of what we see in the color and movement of the puppets. The words of the story reassure us that, in the midst of challenges, there is a way forward. We are encouraged by the balancing resolution the end of the tale brings. We have experienced this in how our inner state and sense of well-being are nourished. We experience this, but how can we understand and substantiate that this is true for the rest of the world? When we look at puppetry

from the perspective of child development, we can assert that puppetry is a subtle but powerful, sensitive, intuitive, artistic, non-intrusive healing gift for all, children and adults alike.

A brief look at child development will give context to understand how this can be true. Rudolf Steiner described young children as totally open to all sensory experiences with their whole body and being. He writes, “Up until the change of teeth, the child is one big sense organ. This is what makes children receptive to everything that comes from their surroundings. But it also causes them to recreate inwardly everything that is going on in their environment. . . The child takes in what is thus coming from the environment with a specific, characteristic form of inner experience.”²

Children recreate inwardly everything they see, hear, touch, taste, and smell around them. They also inwardly recreate experiences of



Kindergarten Students present “Over in the Meadow”
at Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School

movement and balance. They take in impressions through gesture and speech. They collect all these experiences together to make meaning of what is happening before them and reflect this through imitation. Young children constantly imitate physically; everything that comes to them is reflected back out through movement, vocalizing, and speech. As the child grows older, the outer imitation lessens as the ability to inwardly synthesize our sensory experiences into whole pictures and concepts grows. The inner sensory stimulation still occurs but becomes an inner resonating that does not necessarily show externally. But no matter our age, this inner resonating continues through our whole lives. One confirmed physical example is that when one person speaks, the larynxes of everyone

From the beginning of earthly life, children intend to become true human beings. They want to grow a physical body to house the spiritual greater-I that they have known of themselves before birth. They trust that what they absorb through their senses will help them unfold this promise. Puppetry supports this intention. It can help to heal, to fill up what is incomplete. Puppetry, in all of its aspects, nourishes the senses, nourishes the soul, and affirms the spirit's existence in each one of us. Puppetry can model what it is like to be a truly upright human being of noble purpose. And in our post-pandemic times, puppetry reaches to heal and restore healthy growth toward wholeness.

The use of color in puppetry is one of the richest and most varied aspects of this art. Colors

“ PUPPETRY IS HEALING AND OFFERS THE CHILDREN A PATHWAY TOWARD DEVELOPING THEIR WHOLENESS.

within hearing distance imitate the speaker's voice in sympathetic resonance, matching the movements producing the tones. We do not consciously feel our larynx responding, but there is always inner activity happening. Adults watching an athletic event may find themselves subtly moving in imitation of the athlete. We shift posture, twist, and turn both inwardly and outwardly. Subtle imitating is going on within each of us throughout our lives.

inform the eye and speak to the soul without words or explanation. Colors can be earthy and grounding, airy and radiating, energetic and expansive, quiet and introspective, as well as calming, comforting, and reassuring. Color choice intentionally matches the character and virtues the puppet represents. The plant colors often used in our puppetry feed the soul as described above. The careful use of color is also an antidote to the excessively bright, unnatural fluorescent

“ YOUNG CHILDREN CONSTANTLY IMITATE PHYSICALLY; EVERYTHING THAT COMES TO THEM IS REFLECTED BACK OUT THROUGH MOVEMENT, VOCALIZING, AND SPEECH.

colors that confront—even assault—our eyes in popular clothing, footwear, and advertising. Seeing subtle tones relaxes the eye and often helps to regulate our breathing.

The visual impression of silk marionettes is particularly healing. The light bathes the eyes in a healing encounter as it shimmers on the colored silk. The viewer does not have to guard oneself against the sharp, jarring images we usually see in our daily lives. Considering all of this, it is justified to say that puppetry can be viewed as a type of color therapy in a subtle way. The use of different skin tones with the puppets, representing all races, offers an opportunity to offer healing to social life. Every color and tone of all humanity can be represented and honored as they intermingle and work together.

Puppetry also offers healing sounds. Quiet music introduces the play, often beginning with simple singing, single-note lyre, or glockenspiel music. The simplicity of these melodies or pentatonic sequences is gentle to the ear. Our sense of hearing is given a healing respite from loud, artificially produced sounds. A drum or other rhythm instrument may be just the right accompaniment



Jennifer Aguirre from Sonora, CA, performs an apron puppetry show for little folk



**Steiner School of
Speech Arts**

Renewing the Spoken Word

Unlock, strengthen, and deepen
your artistic capacities
through the spoken word. The next in-person,
four-year training course starts in September
2024, and shorter workshops are available
throughout the year in Chestnut Ridge, NY.

Apply now!

www.steinerspeecharts.org

Barbara Renold, Jennifer Kleinbach, & Helen Lubin



Are you a doctor or medical student
struggling with burnout?
You are not alone.

Join us for an 8-week online course.

First cohort starts March 3, 2024

BEYOND BURNOUT

helpthehealers.org

Next cohort forming Fall 2024

**Encountering Nature
and the Nature of Things**
2024-2025

*A 15-month Foundation
Course in Goethean Science*

Applications open September 1, 2023

- Non-residential guided group study
begins March 2024
- Residential summer intensives
June 24 - July 6, 2024
June 23 - July 5, 2025



More information at
natureinstitute.org

The Nature Institute
20 May Hill Rd, Ghent, NY



**Toward a Kinder, More Compassionate Society:
Working Together Toward Change**

This collection of keynote presentations by
Meggan Gill, Keelah Helwig, and Joaquin Muñoz,
as well as a wide variety of workshops from the
February 2022 online WECAN Conference, is a
timely and stimulating resource for working on
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access in Waldorf
early childhood programs and schools.

Toward a Kinder,
More Compassionate Society:
Working Together Toward Change
From the 2022 WECAN
Early Childhood Educators Conference
Contributions by
Meggan Gill, Keelah Helwig, Joaquin Muñoz, and Others
Edited by Susan Howard

Shop online at
store.waldorfearychildhood.org
Discounts for WECAN members
(join or renew online!)

For wholesale orders, contact:
845.352-1690
info@waldorfearychildhood.org
www.waldorfearychildhood.org




The Early Childhood Teacher Education Center at Sophia's Hearth

Birth-to-Seven Certificate Birth-to-Three Certificate **new!**

Online Workshops

sophiashearthteachers.org 700 Court St., Keene, NH 03431 603.357.3755



to other tales. Consistent rhythm and repetition of a predictable sound is reassuring.

Live human speech is another sound gift with a puppet play. As described above, the larynx of each listener resonates with the words of the speaker. When the speech is carefully and lovingly articulated with warmth, our sense of hearing has a chance to recover from the strains of daily sensory input. Well-articulated consonants help form and tone the body. Clearly paced speech—rather than rapid-fire talking that runs all the words together—helps the listener to experience the importance of each word as a distinct entity contributing to meaning. Warmth of tone and interesting dynamics—not dramatics—invite listening. Puppetry makes full use of all these speech and voice qualities.

Then there is the story itself. Each story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The story progresses with the recognition that events in life take time. The individual's destiny unfolds through related encounters. Adversarial forces bring challenges that require creativity and sometimes bravery to surmount—and dedication to reach a

resolution. Such a clear relationship between action and consequence is under-acknowledged in our fast, instantly gratifying technological world. It is strengthening and healing for the viewers to be taken on an imaginative journey through time and witness the effort, patience, and perseverance it takes to complete a task.

Characters in the stories artistically represent capacities and virtues known in the spiritual world that will foster becoming a full, whole human being here on Earth. For example, stereotypes aside, if we imagine the purest idea of a king or queen, we can think of nobility, guardianship, generosity, and wise rulership. The innocent and inexperienced child sets off on a journey. They may experience adversity but are resourceful. They do not turn back but keep going until the prize is won and resolution is achieved. The characters' attitudes and dedication to their tasks in working for the good are copied inwardly and do their work in the soul realm.

Everything about puppetry engages movement. The marionettes and tabletop puppets

“WHEN THE SPEECH IS CAREFULLY AND LOVINGLY ARTICULATED WITH WARMTH, OUR SENSE OF HEARING HAS A CHANCE TO RECOVER FROM THE STRAINS OF DAILY SENSORY INPUT.”

move through the agency of human beings. The puppets are moved with intention and attention to posture and gesture. The marionettes move in the three planes of space—forward/back, up/down, side/to/side—the same as the upright human being. This modeling of posture is also imitated inwardly and reinforces the

both outer movement and an inner soul mood of beauty and purposefulness to imitate.

To this point, we have considered that puppetry offers nourishment and healing toward completeness in body and soul. Puppetry provides us with spiritual pictures as well. In the first year or so of life, a child gains uprightness



Happy puppet enthusiasts from WAPASA's 2023 conference bring fairy folk to life!

striving to be upright physically and soulfully. Puppets can move in lively and energetic ways or slowly as the story requires. The quick, spritely movement brings delight and humor. The slower movements of the silk marionettes allow the children to dwell a bit in the movement, seeing how the limbs gesture and bend. The slower pace can be taken in deeply and can create a slower inner pace of activity to counterbalance the haste of the outside world. Regularity and rhythm in the movements can heal and nourish the foundational senses of self-movement and balance. Puppets present

and begins to walk. In the early stages of walking, children's arms are slightly elevated to the side with elbows bent. It looks as though invisible strings are attached to their wrists, so the arms are like little wings. The legs take steps, bending from the knees as if an invisible string is pulling the leg up as the child advances. We can think that the little child is like a marionette, and the puppeteers above are in the angelic realm. When children see marionettes guided by benevolent grownups, this can remind us that our lives have unseen spiritual helpers guiding our life's steps of destiny.

“EVERYTHING ABOUT PUPPETRY ENGAGES MOVEMENT.

The tabletop puppets are moved and guided by visible human hands. The puppets are treated with respect, care, and gentleness. We see only the hand of the puppeteer, but this offers the picture of a companion who assists and accompanies each human being in earthly life. This image calls up the old story of Tobias, a youth who had to go on a difficult journey to obtain healing medicine for his ailing father. A benevolent companion offers to accompany him, offering advice but not interference. This companion turns out to be the Archangel Raphael, whose domain is healing. What a reassuring image this is. There are always human helpers to accompany us in our earthly journeys.

Puppetry offers healing gifts in all of these subtle ways. The power of this medium lies in its subtlety. The artistic simplicity, color, speech and tone, and movement are offered purely. As conference presenter Brian Hull stated, puppets are pure; they are what they are and are not pretending to be anything else. Whatever the puppets offer flows inward through the senses to form, balance, and complete what we have come to Earth to do. We take things in through our senses and are moved inwardly. The colors, forms, and movements of the puppets come to live within us. These impressions work quietly and softly with no intrusion or expectation. Puppetry leaves the human being free to accept its gifts as it offers healing balm.

This closing verse by Adam Bittleston sums up our wishes for the child in seven lines—and our

hope to give them what they need to step well on their destiny path. [pronouns modernized from the original “thy”]

In Thought for a Child

In your breath the light of the sun
In your bread the salt of earth
In your ears true words of love
Sustain your growing, changing life
That your spirit's will may work
That your soul be warmed by joy
That your body's world be built.

NOTES

1 Rudolf Steiner, *Course for Young Doctors*, Appendix, 1924.

2 Rudolf Steiner, *Child's Changing Consciousness*, Lecture 3, 1923.

Nancy Blanning is an early childhood educator with a special interest in movement to support healthy development. She recently retired from four decades at the Denver Waldorf School, where she was first a kindergarten teacher and then a therapeutic support provider. Her dedicated focus now is adult teacher development and professional deepening. She is co-director of early childhood teacher training at Sunbridge Institute in Spring Valley, NY, and serves as guest faculty at other teacher training programs. Additionally, she is co-director with Dr. Adam Blanning and colleague Laurie Clark for “Nurturing the Roots,” an advanced course for experienced teachers to develop observational and support skills to assist young children. She writes columns for LILIPOH on behalf of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN) and is the editor of the WECAN journal *Gateways*. She has edited several books for WECAN and is the author of *Walking with Our Children: Parents as Companions and Guides*. She and Laurie Clark have authored *Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures, Vol. 1 and 2*. She is currently creating a puppetry story apron so she can be an itinerant grandmother story-telling visitor to Waldorf early childhood classrooms.

Janene Ping is the president of The World Association of Puppetry and Storytelling Arts. A Waldorf Early Childhood Educator for over 30 years at the Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School in upstate N.Y., she is the founder and artistic director of the Magical Puppet Tree Theater (since 1992), a performance troupe seeking to enrich community festival life through the presentation of world cultural tales. Janene is a core faculty member of Sophia's Hearth Waldorf Teacher Education Center in Keene, New Hampshire.

caring for the young child
from birth to three

Recognizing Children as Unique Beings

RAHIMA BALDWIN DANCY

I wrote *You Are Your Child's First Teacher* in the late 1980s in response to a task I had been given to make a bridge between Steiner's insights and the ideas of parents of young children who might have been called cultural creatives for their interest in more natural alternatives in birth, parenting, and education. At the time, everyone I encountered in the Waldorf movement had the strong conviction that "the young child belonged at home with the mother." In the book, I used the observations of noted child psychologist and researcher Burton White to support the increasingly unpopular idea of staying home with an infant and toddler.

Even at that time, a parent's ability to stay home with children during the first three years was already being eaten away by economic factors, women's increasing involvement in the workforce and careers, and parents' desire to give their children a leg up through early learning programs. As these trends continued, by the late 1990s, even

Waldorf leaders were recognizing the value in asking what kind of care outside the home would be best for the young child.

Fast forward to 2010, when I co-founded the Rainbow Bridge LifeWays Program for children ages one to five, offering half-day and full-time care for twelve children in my daughter Faith Collins' home in Boulder, Colorado. During those years, I truly came to appreciate some of the principles that had just been hinted at in my Waldorf early childhood training so many years before. For example, while they mentioned in the training that the Waldorf kindergarten/early-childhood approach took home as the model, at that time, I didn't know what a Waldorf home might look like, and I didn't see much that was home-like besides baking together once a week. It wasn't until I experienced how this concept of creating a home-away-from-home was developed by LifeWays North America that I understood how healthy this could be for young



“PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS WHO ARE GUIDED BY THE INSIGHTS OF RUDOLF STEINER SHARE A WEALTH OF PRACTICES IN COMMON, REGARDLESS OF THE SETTING.

“HURRYING DEVELOPMENT OR SKIPPING STAGES DOES NOT LEAD TO HEALTHY, BALANCED DEVELOPMENT.”

doing change as the child grows, we adapt our approach to the age and abilities of the individual child.

- We recognize that **relationships are the most important** part of each child's environment—more important than any kind of equipment. Relationship-based care forms the heart of all our programs from birth to three and throughout early childhood. Time is allowed for deep relationships to form between caregivers and children and among the children themselves, just as in a family. Caring for mixed-age groups of children is especially valuable for those reasons. Because connections are valued above tasks, activities of bodily care are used as times to connect with each child.
- Because relationships are so important, we recognize that **the qualities and character of the adults matter**. We do our best to model gratitude, reverence, and joy around the children and to bring our best selves to them. We recognize that being a parent or childcare provider gives us countless opportunities for inner development, and we cultivate practices that help us on this path. When we fall off the tightrope on one side or the other, we strive to do better while trying to have the same patience with ourselves that we want to have with the children.
- Because we know how deeply the physical environment affects the young child, we realize that **beauty matters and is not just an add-on!** Creating a beautiful home-like environment rather than an institutionalized one is especially important for children who may be in childcare for more hours than they are at home and awake. As caregivers, it can be valuable to ask ourselves, “Is this something I would want to have in my own home?”
- Because the activities of a healthy home life provide a naturally nurturing context for young children's development, we emphasize **taking life as the curriculum**. This can be at home with parents, grandparents, or a nanny or in a childcare setting. LifeWays especially supports parents to cultivate and value the activities involved in creating a home and encourages providers to create a home away from home for young children, based on the recommendation from Rudolf Steiner:

The task of the kindergarten [early childhood] teacher is to adapt the practical activities of daily life so that they are suitable for the child's imitation through play....The activities of children in kindergarten [early childhood] must be derived directly from life

itself rather than being 'thought out' by the intellectualized culture of adults. In the kindergarten, the most important thing is to give the children the opportunity to directly imitate life itself.'

While freedom of movement is important for the development of large motor skills, spending most of the day on colored mats with plastic bottles and similar toys is time the infant or toddler is not experiencing real-life activities, which can easily include ample opportunities for movement.

- The **rhythmical experience of these life activities** provides a health-giving foundation in which young children learn how life unfolds. Repetition, reverence, and ritual enable children to know what to expect and will allow them to relax about what comes next. They learn naturally and develop competency through repetition and the rhythmical unfolding of the day's activities, not through the teacher providing verbal commentary on each event.






**BAY AREA CENTER
FOR WALDORF
TEACHER
TRAINING**

Embark on a journey of self development and discovery
Study with us to become a Waldorf Teacher

Early Childhood, Grades and High School Tracks

www.bacwtt.org
tiffany@bacwtt.org
415 479 4400



TURTLE TREE BIODYNAMIC SEED

100% OPEN POLLINATED, BIODYNAMIC, ORGANIC AND HEIRLOOM
VEGETABLE, HERB, FARM AND FLOWER SEEDS

AT CAMPHILL VILLAGE
COPAKE, NY

A pioneer of seed source transparency, Turtle Tree Seed grows, breeds and sells 100% Biodynamic, organic, heirloom, open-pollinated vegetable, herb, flower and farm seeds. We grow the majority of our seeds here in Copake, NY, and also source some seeds from other biodynamic growers across the country. We are committed to stewarding the highest quality seeds for home, CSA and commercial growers, while contributing to the health of the Earth. Our team includes people of diverse abilities and backgrounds. Our mission includes helping people to learn about seed saving and to become seed stewards. Our home since 1998 is Camphill Village, in Copake, NY, where people with developmental differences live with dignity, equality and purpose, caring for each other and the Earth. Camphill Village, in conjunction with the Camphill Academy, also offers a four year accredited course in Social Agriculture & Biodynamics, focusing on practical and wholistic academic learning in biodynamics and working with people of many abilities & backgrounds. For those living in a Camphill Village, the cost for this course is carried by Camphill. Contact us to inquire: **Email: turtle@turtletreeseed.org**
Web: <https://turtletreeseed.org/> Phone: 518-329-3038
Learn how to get involved at Camphill Village: **volunteer@camphillvillage.org**
or visit <https://camphillvillage.org/>



“WE USE
SIMPLE TOYS,
INVITING
THE CHILD
TO FINISH
THEM WITH
IMAGINATION.

large-motor and imaginative play. Because actually being in nature is even more beneficial, we include this aspect as often as possible.

- **Our programs involve no screen time** because young children learn primarily through movement and need direct experiences of the world, not virtual ones. In addition to



taking time away from movement and self-directed play, screens with their pixilated and rapidly changing images are not good for young children's developing brains or sense organs. We encourage parents to forgo apps, videos, or recorded music with their children and to sing or play with them

instead--recommendations supported by studies showing that only speech from a living person makes any difference in language development.

- Studies show that **orality provides a strong basis for many skills**, including language development, listening, following directions, forming imaginative pictures, and reading. Therefore, we provide a rich language program based in the spoken word, including nursery rhymes, singing, circle games, finger plays, and stories. Formal instruction and calling on the child's memory are reserved for first grade, the time when brain imaging shows a neural flowering.



“ REPETITION, REVERENCE, AND RITUAL
ENABLE CHILDREN TO KNOW WHAT TO
EXPECT AND WILL ALLOW THEM TO
RELAX ABOUT WHAT COMES NEXT.

Parents reading this can use these points in evaluating programs for young children or in creating a home life that supports the young child's needs. Parents, childcare providers, and early childhood teachers can all benefit from the many in-person and online courses offered by LifeWays North America. My three-week online course on “Birth to Three” will be offered again in March 2024, followed by “Using Home as the Model in Your Early Childhood Program” in the summer and “Inspired

Homemaking” in the fall. Sign up to be notified at lifewaysnorthamerica.org

¹ Steiner, Rudolf. *The Child's Changing Consciousness: As the Basis of Pedagogical Practice*. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1996.

Rahima Baldwin Dancy is internationally known as an early childhood and parenting educator. Her book, *You Are Your Child's First Teacher*, has been translated into nine languages. She worked as a midwife, Waldorf kindergarten teacher, founding board member of LifeWays North America, and co-director of the Rainbow Bridge LifeWays program. She and her husband, Agaf, live in Boulder, Colorado, have raised four adult children, and enjoy having five grandchildren.

New Classes begin September 2023!

DISCOVER
yourself through
ARTISTIC
movement

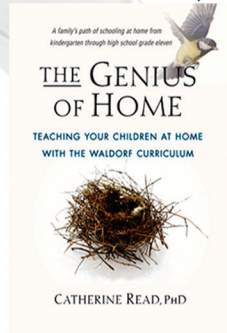
Pacific
Eurythmy

Register @ PacificEurythmy.com

Waldorf Homeschooling
creative, adventurous

The Genius of Home

by Catherine Read, PhD



SteinerBooks
thegeniusofhome.org

Connect to the Spiritual Rhythms of the Year...

A sacred service.

An open esoteric secret:

The Consecration of the Human Being

Celebration of the Festivals

Renewal of the Sacraments

Services for Children

Religious Education

Summer Camps

Study Groups

Lectures

The Christian Community is a movement for the renewal of religion, founded in 1922 with the help of Rudolf Steiner. It is centered around the seven sacraments in their renewed form and seeks to open the path to the living, healing presence of Christ in the age of the free individual.

THE CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITY
MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

Learn more at
www.thechristiancommunity.org

Early Childhood Teacher Training

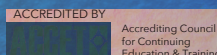
Designed for working teachers.

Pre-K – Kindergarten. For schools inspired by Waldorf principles

- 26-month program structured for the busy full-time teacher.
- Includes anthroposophical foundations, child observation, arts, movement, etc.
- Hybrid teaching model includes: summer intensives, practicum weekends, monthly online curriculum sessions, mentor visits.



NEW COHORT BEGINS SUMMER 2024
DENVER, COLORADO | June 20-July 12



LEARN MORE: gradalis.edu

720-464-4557 | info@gradalis.edu

Waldorf Worldwide

Where Is the Center?

SVEN SAAR

Should curricula in other countries be based on a European ideal? Does that even exist? And what can European Waldorf schools learn from other cultures? Sven Saar, who is internationally active in teacher education, offers suggestions.

Does it make sense for children in Indonesia to knit socks (which no one would wear in that country) with wool imported from Europe, just because that is on the Waldorf curriculum for fifth graders?

Should the Oberufer Christmas plays be performed in Japanese Waldorf schools?

How do mentors respond when Thai colleagues ask, “Besides Norse Mythology, what stories can I tell in fourth grade?” This is about more than finding the right answer: the fact that the question is even asked reveals a status problem that is worth investigating.

In the first phase of the worldwide spread of Waldorf education, experienced and wise colleagues carried their proven practice with a lot of persuasive power to countries where they met open ears, hearts, and a hands-on pioneering spirit among parents and initiators. Waldorf schools grew rapidly in capital cities, with an enthusiastic clientele of native, educated middle-class and emigrant Europeans who found

here familiar values and an internationally tested, child-centered curriculum. Today, many of these schools successfully lead young people to enter universities, perform impressive artistic work, and be financially and socially stable and established. And yet one often comes across questions like the ones cited above, which indicate that people working here can experience themselves as part of an imported culture, having more or less accepted that what lives locally as wisdom and tradition is somehow inferior to the European Waldorf style.

This is aggravated by the problem that even after decades, most of these countries are unable to finance thorough teacher education due to a lack of state support. This is why – and this is happening more and more often in Europe as well – teachers find themselves in positions of responsibility in schools right after their first acquaintance with the Waldorf world and are more interested in classroom strategies than in the foundations. In order to create a stable daily routine, one needs maps and signposts. A list of traditions, even one that appears foreign and old-fashioned, comes in very handy.

The Waldorf Decolonization Impulse deals with the question of what is authentically Waldorf: even in the nineteenth-century phase of political

“DESPITE OUR HIGH REGARD FOR ALL THE ADMIRABLE PIONEERING ACHIEVEMENTS, WHICH ASPECTS WOULD WE AND DO WE HAVE TO APPROACH DIFFERENTLY TODAY?”

and cultural colonialism, not all Europeans were high-handed exploiters: some of them went to non-European countries with a sincere ethical sense of mission (at least from their point of view) and yet created and left behind much suffering because they failed to listen to the locals. It is high time to come to terms with this damage and also to ask ourselves questions: Despite our high regard for all the admirable pioneering achievements, which aspects would we and do we have to approach differently today?

I work as a mentor, conducting almost daily seminars and courses with people in Asia and Africa who want to give fresh, authentic impulses to their communities. Their ideals are often social: they have encountered Waldorf education in expensive middle-class schools and now want to make it accessible to children whose parents cannot afford prohibitive school fees. Some want to establish Waldorf schools in rural areas, in the local language and dialect, and have to explain their impulses without using English or French. Usually, a few friends find each other, rent some rooms, and off they go – this is reminiscent of the first English Waldorf school, which started in London in 1925 with seven children and five

teachers. There is often no time or money for training – should that mean the impulse of a people-oriented reform education will have to wait? These pioneers are often very serious about Waldorf education, seeking to understand it from the inside and not just adopt traditional values and practices. They are developing curricula and processes that fit their culture and the twenty-first century rather than taking the roundabout route still followed in many places in Europe: “What did Caroline von Heydebrand have to say about this? What did Steiner suggest? What did our mentor bring thirty years ago from Stuttgart?”

It is certainly helpful to be informed by established good practice – but that is not automatically suitable for orientation, especially if one is moving in a completely different context of time and space.

Instead, the new pioneers go directly to the sources: They ask what Steiner said, what he meant, and how that might be translated into local contexts. For example, it makes sense all over the world for ten-year-old children to learn about house-building and farming practices because the acquisition of these skills gives them stability in a necessary developmental crisis. This

does, however, not have to be clothed in Hebrew mythology or involve imagery connected to the Middle Ages, as is customary in Europe, and it certainly should not assume the four seasons of the northern hemisphere. At the equator, agriculture follows quite different rhythms, and local curricula must be designed accordingly.

Incidentally, considering decolonization also makes sense in a European context: Is it really still appropriate to talk about “Voyages of Discovery” in seventh grade? It does not detract from the undoubted courage of Columbus if his journeys are also viewed from the perspective of local people: America, Africa, Asia, or Australia did not have to be “discovered.” People already lived there, and they had it no worse than Europeans. Every misguided, adventurous, charismatic Columbus was followed by an unscrupulous Pizarro, bent only on

of slaves, and that long overdue narrative needs to find its way into our classrooms.

We are also on the way to finally overcoming well-intentioned yet fatal clichés: “African culture” does not exist, nor do “African” music, language, or politics. There are over 1500 languages on the continent, 250 of them in Nigeria alone. Simplifications and superficialities (sentences like “African houses are built of mud and straw” can still be found in many a third-grade book) are the result of a Eurocentric culture clinging on to the belief that it has discovered Africa and wrongly regarding and presenting itself as superior.

The idea often conveyed in fifth grade that human civilization developed westward from India has always been too linear to be even remotely true, and yet it is still taught, often sup-

“ AT THE EQUATOR, AGRICULTURE
FOLLOWS QUITE DIFFERENT RHYTHMS,
AND LOCAL CURRICULA MUST BE
DESIGNED ACCORDINGLY.

submission and exploitation. The Indian subcontinent, for example, had the highest GDP on earth in the 16th century, before the Portuguese went on their “voyages of discovery” and put an end to prosperity. From the European point of view, highly developed cultures increasingly became passive trading partners or, even worse, suppliers

ported by decades-old Waldorf resource books (for instance, the “Kovacz” books) that seek to preserve the Eurocentric myth that the Ancient Greeks were the crown of civilization and that we Central Europeans are their successors. If one tells fifth graders that the ancient Indians lived as mystical-spiritual children of nature,

“INSTEAD, WE CONVERSE WITH EACH OTHER AND LEARN HOW WE CAN DEVELOP IN SUCH A WAY THAT NO ONE HAS TO FEEL EXCLUDED OR PATRONIZED BY OUR CURRICULA.

that the Persians discovered agriculture and the Mesopotamians architecture, one ignores, for example, the Indus Valley Civilization, not to mention Chinese achievements in urban development and agriculture. China does not appear at all in the traditional Waldorf history of lower and middle school; apparently, there is no room for it between India and Greece. Göbekli Tepe, what is now southern Turkey, existed millennia before the brick buildings of the Babylonians, but it undermines the myth of the East–West narrative and so does not appear in most Waldorf curricula until tenth grade. Such stereotypical narratives, reinforcing outdated power structures, are not only inappropriate for children in Japan, Peru, or Tanzania; they are also – perhaps even more so – inappropriate for children in Europe.

Should we, therefore, abolish the recognizable worldwide curriculum and throw the baby out with the bathwater? Some activists in the USA demand that Columbus not be mentioned at all because he made the slave trade possible in the first place. The Waldorf world rightly prides itself on existing in a contemporary, flexible, and sensitive cultural landscape. Here, the question

is not of prohibitions or permissions, nor of being right or condemning wrong thinking. Instead, we converse with each other and learn how we can develop in such a way that no one has to feel excluded or patronized by our curricula. New, non-European Waldorf initiatives are making an outstanding contribution here precisely because they have either never seen the old ways or bravely ignored them as irrelevant. A good resource to follow up on is the initiative by Alanus University to bring together leading thinkers on the subject from around the world in regular online lectures. These can be followed live and for free and accessed as recordings on the website international-campus-waldorf.com

My colleague at the Waldorf MTE, Alan Swindell, shows our British students a simple and impressive way that they will be “curriculum creators.” When they are asked to demonstrate for the first time in an assignment their ability to plan a whole subject block according to rhythmic and salutogenetic principles, he sets the condition that this block must not yet exist! Students must invent it, assign it to a subject area and age group, and justify why it is important and meaningful to the children in their care. They experience through



The call to adventure.

A hero's journey begins...

Northern Lights for girls, ages 11 to 14 | Langskib for boys, ages 10 to 12

Cultivating community, creativity, confidence, and adventure in boys and girls crossing the bridge from childhood to adolescence our 2 week programs celebrate the unique gifts we bring to this world and connects each child to their authentic self. Steeped in storytelling, skill building and play, Langskib and Northern Lights celebrate the need to take risks, test one's mettle, seek adventure, and find the hero within!



Northwaters & Langskib Wilderness Programs | northwaters.com | 866.458.9974

their own creative actions that being a Waldorf teacher is not about maintaining the status quo but bringing something new and relevant into the world out of personal and professional initiative. Afterward, when they get to know the established subjects and main lesson blocks in more detail, they bring critical alertness to this encounter.

German, French, or Polish second graders benefit from biographical stories about heroic individuals from all over the world, not only from the Catholic tradition of saints. In third grade, children in Arab and Asian countries also learn about the Hebrew Old Testament as a treasure of anthropological world literature in which the developmental path from hunter-gatherer to settled life is shown in an imaginative way. Fifth graders learn botany through observing plants that grow in their area, and the laws of leverage explored in seventh grade are the same all over the earth. There really is no need to tell sixth graders in Beijing about the Crusader knights

because chivalry and courtly values were at least as well established in Chinese tradition as in the European Middle Ages. The challenge in our fast-moving, connective, and diverse world is to develop a local consciousness without thinking parochially and to feel globally without losing one's moral-ethical compass.

With the help of their education, children should be able to put down roots, feel a sense of belonging, and develop self-confidence so that they can imagine and inhabit a world without internal or external boundaries. The center of Waldorf education is not in Europe nor on another continent: it is in the periphery, living and developing daily in all 40,000 Waldorf teachers around the globe.

***First published in Das Goetheanum, the weekly online journal for anthroposophy, at dasgoetheanum.com/en/waldorf-worldwide-where-is-the-center/

Sven Saar was a Waldorf teacher for thirty years, working as both a class teacher and high school teacher specializing in history and drama. He now works in teacher education, giving lectures and seminars worldwide. He is the co-founder and one of the directors of Waldorf Modern Teacher Education in the UK.

“THE CHALLENGE IN OUR FAST-MOVING, CONNECTIVE, AND DIVERSE WORLD IS TO DEVELOP A LOCAL CONSCIOUSNESS WITHOUT THINKING PAROCHIALY AND TO FEEL GLOBALLY WITHOUT LOSING ONE'S MORAL-ETHICAL COMPASS.

Bringing the World to Your Learner

The Gift of a Diverse Library in Waldorf Education

MOHSINA (MOSI) MANDIL

Waldorf schools and homeschooling communities are made up of families and individuals like you, reader, who have chosen a form of alternative schooling for reasons often related to diverse student needs that aren't being met in traditional public and state schools. Cultural heritage, geographic location, native language, age and ability, neurodiversity, and even temperament—for any number of these unique reasons and more, you have chosen to approach your student's education in a broader and more holistic way.¹ Representation in education and literature is deeply relevant not only on the academic side but in the journey of life. I know this was the case for both of my younger siblings and me in our educational experiences.

Before the movement to include diverse educational materials in learning, I was a teenage girl of mixed race attending a typical American mid-western public high school. I noticed the absence of different cultural connection opportunities immediately after transferring from an international school, particularly in my most creative subjects/

blocks: music and language. My contrasting experiences in these classes demonstrate how a diverse library can either create a lifetime love of learning and reading or prompt disinterest.

I joined the choir with a passion for song. When the director presented us with our sheet music, I was bewildered—most of the pieces were historical Christian church songs. I skimmed the melodies and the Latin. They were beautiful, of course, and significant and influential compositions, but why was I holding an entire stack of the same genre of music? As this continued semester after semester, I simply became bored with the class and unhappily quit singing in school before graduation. This caused a stir even then, with one of the instructors overtly offended and unkind about my choice to leave choir because “I didn't want to sing Christian songs.” *No*, I wanted to explain again; *I just want to sing more than one kind of song.*

My literature and composition classes were entirely the reverse. Coursework included classic novels and writings, to be sure, but they were part of an array of valuable works. We read texts

Nothing Added...
Nothing Missing

Frey Biodynamic Zinfandel vineyard, Redwood Valley, California

Biodynamic® Wine

Gluten Free, No Sulfites Added, Vegan Friendly!

Share a glass of real biodynamic wine from
America's first certified biodynamic winery.

FREY VINEYARDS

800.760.3739 – FreyWine.com/near-you



Listen.

FOR MANY CHILDREN, IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.

Some don't always hear you speaking, while others mishear what was said. Or maybe their attention is utterly captivated by a sound outside the window! If your student is struggling in school or frequently getting in trouble, they may be having difficulty processing sound in a healthy and harmonious way, which is making their learning so much more difficult.

But it doesn't have to be like this!

The Tomatis® Method is a revolutionary technique which helps to re-educate the ear so that it can adapt to the environment. Employed as a complement to the work of therapist and teacher, Tomatis Method multiplies the effects of their work.

Helpful for: Overcoming learning distractions; improving motor, emotional, and academic skills; refining the singing and speaking voice.

LISTEN. LEARN. LIVE ... WITHOUT LIMITS.



Susan Hiertz
EURYTHMIST, WALDORF EDUCATOR,
LEVEL 4 TOMATIS® CONSULTANT

Book a Consultation

**A SOUND
APPROACH**

asoundapproach.com

[a_sound_approach](https://www.instagram.com/a_sound_approach)

sue@asoundapproach.com

by people different from me and sometimes different from anyone else in class, including the teacher! This brought ideas and concepts from outside all of our worlds and made a space where genuine learning could occur.²

The learning could sometimes be uncomfortable, something I now compare to growing pains. Sometimes, I entered my “brave space” facing the unknown, and sometimes, I needed to stay comfortably in my “safe space.”³ Nevertheless, these lessons held my interest. Instead of repeating the same lesson far beyond comprehension, we were building off various sources, finding themes, and comparing and contrasting different pieces. I came away with an even stronger lifetime love of reading and went on to continue as an educator myself with Earthschooling, Waldorf Books, and, most recently, my local community college.

While public and state education institutions have been navigating this lack of diversity more in recent years, Steiner-Waldorf education has recognized the significance of diverse voices and materials since its conception. Indeed, diversity is already built into the Steiner curriculum for us based on Waldorf philosophy! Originating in the Western esotericism of the early 20th

century, Steiner-Waldorf education has become the “fastest growing, independent school movement in the world.”⁴ Soul, spirit, the whole person, experiential learning, and freedom in education toward seeking truth and knowledge are emphasized heavily. Author and Waldorf teacher Colin Price addresses our shared humanity thus:

*The striving that is characteristic of our present age involves a search for the universally human, that which – in spite of all the differences of race, skin color, creeds, customs and traditions – defines us as human beings. It is exactly in that sense that the spiritual element in a Waldorf school is active. It lives in order to embrace all diversities of belief, rather than to serve one particular direction.*⁵

Rudolf Steiner likewise addresses what we are striving for in school and life beyond, writing, “Truth is not for idle minds, but for those willing to seek it with an open heart and a keen intellect,” suggesting that “we gain knowledge and clarity through our own experience and personal exploration.”⁶ He asserts that discovering truth and knowledge requires intentional effort and action. Reading is the most accessible and, in my opinion, enjoyable and magical form of exploration for this seeking. This wonderful and uniquely human ability offers innumerable and well-documented benefits and is especially important in Waldorf education, where stories, verse, and literature are major vehicles in learning and growing.

Self-Discovery and Independence

The idea of freedom is central to Steiner’s philosophy and is a principle that may be nurtured beginning in childhood and throughout adulthood. He defined being free as “to be capable of thinking one’s own thoughts— not the thoughts merely of

the body, or of society, but thoughts generated by one’s deepest, most original, most essential and spiritual self, one’s individuality.”⁷

To have exposure to, or better yet, experience with, the strange and mysterious is a sure course to realizing one’s individuality. At set points of development, children are given stories that are familiar and close to their home environment, then gradually move further from the local and established, incorporating more of the world into their schema of the recognizable and known. Both kinds of narratives — representative of the student and outside the limits of their experiences — are vital to the evolution of the self.

Alan Whitehead writes in *The People Pool* (2020) that the fairy tales, so pervasive in early childhood and into the lower grades, are intended to be *folk* tales (a mistranslation of the German “märchen”). A folk tale is distinct from a fairy tale in that it is “the story of one’s own people and place— the children’s own story.”⁸ The nature of the folk tale, then, is to undergo constant renewal and reclamation as the condition and situation of the *folk* change. In the words of Rudolf Steiner, these stories “serve a particular time and place of a given people or folk.”

In fact, consider that your folk tales may differ from classic European fairy tales. Furthermore, consider what excellent resources the tales of other folks are! This is but one example you may use to examine what we can offer our students that will allow them to reflect on both the diversity within themselves⁹ and in the broader world. I offer further reading below and invite your additional recommendations!

Empathy and Morality

Another tenet of Waldorf education is love, which Steiner said “starts when we push aside our ego and make room for someone else.”¹⁰ This someone can even be fictional because of the strong

connection between reading (especially literary fiction) and empathy. With practice at being aware of other people's thoughts and beliefs that are different from their own, readers strengthen their innate awareness of others' feelings and perspectives, increasing emotional intelligence and social acumen applicable to their own stories.¹¹ Readers practice cognitive empathy by simulating the experiences and feelings of the characters in their own minds. This makes it possible to vicariously experience another's reality— from the protagonist of a novel to the classmate beside you.¹² Waldorf education takes this a step further by incorporating artistic imagery, which has been shown to increase positive social behavior by three times!¹³

I will leave you with some final words from Steiner: "receive the children in reverence, educate them in love, and send them forth in freedom."¹⁴

WaldorfBooks.com Top Diversity Picks

Our image of the human being, freedom in teaching, the holistic process, and relationships are pillars of Waldorf education that diversity in your library will support and advance.¹⁵ I have thoughtfully and carefully picked each of these books, drawing from my graduate education in social work, international perspective, and personal experience. I know my top picks will be different than yours— so share them with us!

- ***Louis Braille: A Blind Boy Invents Braille*** by Jakob Streit (Waldorf Publications, 2023)

Who was Louis Braille? Blinded as a child, he went on to invent the Braille writing system at just sixteen years old. In this book for children, Jakob Streit has formed an image of the life of a boy who, through his warmth, zest for life, and firm resolve, became a gift to all those around him and who, through persistent study and research, was finally able to produce the greatest gift to the blind people of the world: a writing system they could read with their hands.

- ***Fee Fi Fo Fum*** by Arthur M Pittis (Waldorf Publications, 2005)

Fee Fi Fo Fum! is part of a five-book series that include more than 125 multicultural stories and poems to complement the pedagogical intentions of the language arts curriculum. The language is progressively controlled and increasingly rich in sight and phonetic vocabulary development from story to story and from book to book. Sentence structures also progress from story to story. The stories are designed for forty-five minute periods, including instruction and discussion time.

- ***The Table Where Rich People Sit*** by Byrd Baylor (Aladdin Picture Books, 1998)

Mountain Girl can see that her family is poor – and she can see that her parents aren't

“EXPOSURE TO THE STRANGE AND MYSTERIOUS IS A SURE COURSE TO REALIZING ONE'S INDIVIDUALITY.

even sensible enough to notice. So, she calls a family meeting to discuss the problem. As her family sits around their homemade (from discarded lumber) kitchen table, her parents say they are rich. They begin to count up the value of the things they have.

- ***For the Children of the World: Stories from the International Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education***, edited by Louise deForest (WECAN Publications, 2012)

Have you heard about the little possum who wanted a peach? Why did a princess wish for speaking grapes, smiling apples and ringing peaches? Do you know how the robin got his red breast, or what happened when Tajjin went to live with the Seven Thunders? This little book gathers 24 delightful stories from all corners of the globe, along with 10 delicious recipes. They were sent by representatives of the 29 Member Associations that are part of IASWECE, the International Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education, and all proceeds from the sale of this book will support IASWECE's work on behalf of Waldorf early childhood education around the world."

For my complete list of diversity picks, visit: earthschooling.info/thebearthinstitute/the-gift-of-a-diverse-library-in-waldorf-education/

Bonus! Anthroposophy in Well-Known Literature Resources

As a bonus, I would also like to recommend a few titles that discuss how anthroposophy appears in well-known literary works. These include:

- *Tolkien's Hidden Pictures: Anthroposophy and the Enchantment in Middle-earth* by Mark McGivern (Lindisfarne Books, 2022)
- *Who is Harry Potter?* by Frans Lutters (Waldorf Publications, 2015)

- *Fairy Tales and Art Mirrored in Modern Consciousness* by Monica Gold (Waldorf Publications, 2012)
- *Freud, Jung, and Spiritual Psychology* by Rudolf Steiner (SteinerBooks, 2001)

NOTES

- 1 Burns, K. (2011). *The Temperaments and the Adult-Child Relationship*. BEarth Publishing.
- 2 Sloan, D. (2015). *Life Lessons: Reaching Teenagers through Literature*. Waldorf Publications.
- 3 Brazill, S. Ruff, W. (2022). "Using transformational leadership to create brave space in teaching multicultural education." *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 24(2), 114-131. 10.18251/ijme.v24i2.2847
- 4 Price, C. (2005). *Twelve Common Misunderstandings Concerning Waldorf Education: A Guide for Parents*. Songbird Press.
- 5 Price, C. (2005). *Twelve Common Misunderstandings Concerning Waldorf Education: A Guide for Parents*. Pg. 18. Songbird Press.
- 6 Steiner, R. (1916). *The Philosophy of Freedom* (R.F.A. Hoernlé & W. Hoernlé, Trans). The Rudolf Steiner Archive. https://rsarchive.org/Books/GA004/English/GPP1916/GA004_index.html (Original work published 1894) & Steiner, R. (1908). *What is Self Knowledge?* (Hanna con Maltiz, Trans). The Rudolf Steiner Archive. <https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA108/English/Singles/19081123p01.html>
- 7 Steiner, R. (1916). *The Philosophy of Freedom* (R.F.A. Hoernlé & W. Hoernlé, Trans). The Rudolf Steiner Archive. https://rsarchive.org/Books/GA004/English/GPP1916/GA004_index.html (Original work published 1894)
- 8 Whitehead, A. (2020). *The People Pool*. Golden Beetle Books.
- 9 TED. (2018, August 14). *The power of diversity within yourself* | Rebecca Hwang [Video]. Youtube. <https://youtu.be/ovKqmRyOGcg?si=bFTSBxeVWDHqMG5Y>
- 10 Steiner, R. (2016). *The Way of Initiation* (Max Gysi, Trans). Createspace Independent Publishing Platform. (Original work published 1988)
- 11 Schmidt, M. (2020, September 2). "How reading fiction increases empathy and encourages understanding." *Discover Magazine*. <https://www.discovermagazine.com/mind/how-reading-fiction-increases-empathy-and-encourages-understanding>
- 12 Roza, S.A., Guimarães, S.R.K. (2022). "The relationship between reading and empathy: An integrative literature review." *Psychology and Education*, 24(2). <https://doi.org/10.5935/1980-6906/ePTPPE14051.en>
- 13 Johnson, D. R., Cushman, G. K., Borden, L. A., & McCune, M. S. (2013). "Potentiating empathic growth: Generating imagery while reading fiction increases empathy and prosocial behavior." *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 7(3), 306–312. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033261>
- 14 Steiner, R. (1922). *Spiritual Ground of Education*. The Rudolf Steiner Archive. <https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA305/English/APC1947/19220819p01.html>
- 15 The Pedagogical Section Council (2017). *The Seven Core Principles of Waldorf Education*. Waldorf Publications.

Mohsina (Mosi) Mandil is president and owner of Waldorf Books, partner at Earthschooling, and instructor and development consultant at Des Moines Area Community College. She earned her Master of Social Work at the University of Iowa with a focus in integrated practice. Mosi has decades of educational experience in Waldorf, Montessori, and public schooling as both a student and teacher.

opposition in biodynamic agriculture

Your Darkness Shall Be Turned into Light

STEWART LUNDY

"Observation is an old man's memory." - JONATHAN SWIFT

In biodynamics, we must begin where the plant begins: with the root. In the development of a plant, the first thing to emerge is its root, followed by its green cotyledons, and finally by its flower with its fruit. In this trichotomy, we see one aspect growing downward and two others growing upward. There is nothing revolutionary about suggesting that the root is light-hating, whereas the green growth and blossom are light-loving. What initially emerges in the plant is its reaching down towards the past, almost as if the root expresses a recollection of its past for the plant. The seed germinates by beginning with the grasping and reaching for the past, as an infant reaches for its mother. The seed can be seen as belonging to the continuity of the past into the future, the root aspect reaching the top of the plant. As Steiner says, the "dynamics taken from the soil can be traced as far as the

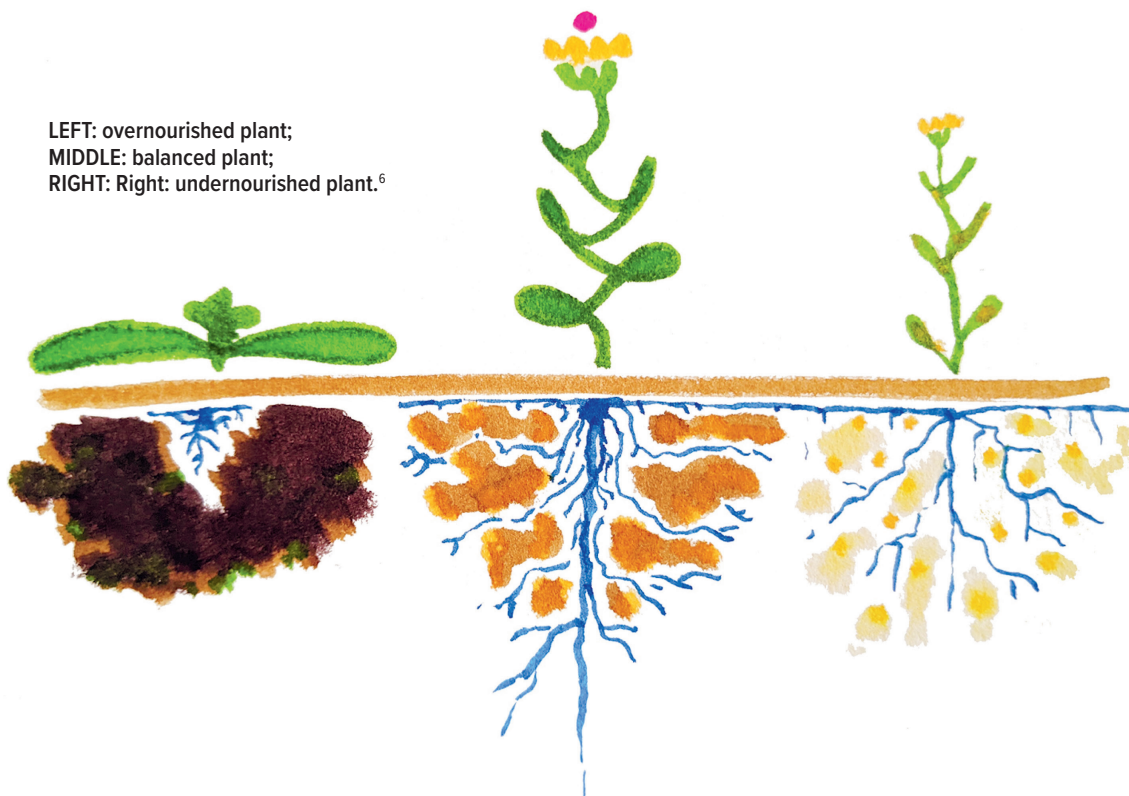
ovary, as far as seed development."¹ The seed is almost like a pinched-off piece coil of cambium, able to take root as a new incarnation of the plant because it maintains an inner kinship to the mother plant's root, reaching back in time.

This living power to grow, adapt, and proliferate is goodness itself. By contrast, what we call "evil" thwarts harmonious proliferation by preventing flowering altogether or starving the seeds of their connection to the past. But real seeds, *life* itself, unfolds endlessly. You can eradicate all the life in a field, and in the very same season, it will burst forth with green vegetation. You can spray biocides and life adapts. Consider the humble dandelion capable of breaking through asphalt. Our morally worthless deeds are like pavement, but our good deeds are like dandelion seeds. Pavement must be maintained

by effort. Left by itself, vegetation wins over dead asphalt. One dandelion seed does not create just one more plant; rather, it reproduces exponentially. Even though the power to act at all comes from elsewhere, the value of our good deeds outweighs the bad because what is good is alive and proliferates. A true gift of kindness is not merely a karmic benefit to ourselves but an unfolding fractal of goodness. As Lewis Hyde observes in *The Gift*, to remain alive, a gift must keep being given.² By contrast, erosion and parasitism depend on what is built up by life that follows, but they are reactive, devoid of initiative. The growth of inorganic evil follows on the heels of life's unfolding exponential growth.

Inside each germinating seed is a “dark” hunger inherited from the past, redeemed through the production of yet more life and newness. The source of existence is “dark” because it is so bright he is blinding, rather like staring into the

Sun. As it says in the *Zohar*, “The first impulse of emanation is described as *botsina de-qardinuta*, ‘a spark of impenetrable darkness,’ so intensely bright that it cannot be seen.”³ Thus, the Father is only accessible through the Son, who dials down the presence of divinity so that we can retain our individuality in the presence of God. For, as the Father says, “no one can see me and live.”⁴ T.S. Eliot harmonizes with this, saying, “Humankind cannot bear very much reality.”⁵ When Krishna reveals his overwhelming “formless form” in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Arjuna begs to have the more palatable image of his beautiful blue cowherd returned. While in the complete absence of light, we are blind, when a light source is too bright for our organs of perception, the light is blinding. We can only assimilate what we are prepared to receive. In biodynamics, it is our task to prepare the soil and plants to be receptive to what the cosmos has to say.



Candle with the dark source of light at the heart of its flame.



Going further, an unknown author suggests that “[e]xperience teaches us that there are two kinds of darkness in the domain of consciousness. One is that of ignorance, passivity and laziness, which is ‘infra-light’ darkness. The other, in contrast, is the darkness of higher knowledge, intense activity and endeavour still to be made—this is ‘ultralight’. It is a question of this latter ‘darkness’ in instances where it is a matter of resolving an antinomy or finding a synthesis.”⁷ This conciliatory movement towards reconciling what is separate belongs to our effort. As a candle has an imperceptible light at the source of its illumination, a plant emerges out of the dark, radiating almost etheric flames back to the cosmos. But like a candle, we don’t want the plant to expend itself too quickly, nor do we want it to smolder too dimly.

To experience the candle’s flame, an analogous process must arise within us: the dark brightness of empty consciousness must be kindled and *meet* the external image. Without

the inner light of consciousness to encounter the outer phenomenon, the mechanism of the eye can see nothing. In Steiner’s explanation of cognition in *Spiritual Thinking as a Spiritual Path*, this is the process whereby a concept grasped by intuition is united with a sense-perceptible object (a “percept”). The marriage of unifying ideas with external perception is *cognition*.

Similarly, a plant grows out of darkness and spreads its leaves to *encounter* the external light. Receptivity to that light, however, belongs not merely to a dead mechanism but to the inner *life* of the plant. If a plant is overnourished, it is not receptive to the subtleties of light, but if a plant is starved, it cannot do anything fruitful with the light it enjoys. So, a soul addicted to sensual pleasure is not receptive to the spiritual meaning that belongs to the sense-perceptible world because the soul cannot meet it. As St. Thomas Aquinas says, “The reality of things is their light.”⁸ If I only notice the outer *effects* of a candle—that it is hot or that the room is illuminated, but fail to recognize the candle for what it is, that is what it is like to live in a world of superficial appearances, the world of Mephistopheles, the attachment to which is called *maya*. Misunderstanding a candle can mean things end in flames. Appearances themselves are not the problem, but rather our fixation on them as if surfaces are where meaning begins and ends.

To be receptive to the life streaming in from the cosmos, the soil itself must have life. As Empedocles suggests, *like perceives like*. If we wish the soil to be receptive to life, we must ensure it is not dead. Thus, the first step in biodynamics is enlivening the soil from which the plant will emerge so the plant’s root does not enter a soil devoid of the memory of *life*.

We must supply the blush of vitality from formerly living things to deadened soil, particularly in the form of manure and compost. The vitality

available in compost to enliven soil belongs to the recent past, for which the root, in particular, is hungry. As part of re-enlivening the soil, we use horn manure, which restores a dark ember of liveliness to the soil. This is followed by horn silica, which fans the etheric flames of the plant to rise out of concealment. Goethe speaks to the heart of fertilizing in *The Metamorphosis of Plants*:

“It has been found that frequent nourishment hampers the flowering of a plant, whereas scant nourishment accelerates it. This is an even clearer indication of the effect of the stem leaves discussed above. As long as it remains necessary to draw off coarser juices, the potential organs of the plant must continue to develop as instruments for this need. With excessive nourishment this process must be repeated over and over; flowering is rendered impossible, as it were. When the plant is deprived of nourishment, nature can affect it more quickly and easily: the organs of the nodes are refined, the uncontaminated juices work with greater purity and strength, the transformation of the parts becomes possible, and the process takes place unhindered.”⁹

If a plant is supplied with too much nourishment, the root grows lazy, and the plant languishes, producing only leaf after leaf. As Steiner says, “Were only the etheric body to work, then the plant would unfold endlessly leaf by leaf; this is brought to a conclusion by the astral body. The etheric body is muted by the astral.”¹⁰ In winter, we see cabbage attracted more by the reflected warmth from the soil than the direct sunlight—its leaves grow horizontally. In the human being, if we only pursue conditions that feel comfortable, we will never be challenged, and we will, so to speak, vegetate like a dish of mold. Suppose we transplant after the summer solstice when the Sun is at its zenith in the sky. In that case, we are not likely to see good root development or succulent leaves: plants tend to rush to flower

under the excessive influence of the summer sun because they are not mature enough to receive and *contain* those astral forces in lush leaves or sweet fruits. Similarly, plants that grow up in a greenhouse in spoiled conditions without healthy challenges grow deceptively large but are inwardly weak because they are inexperienced. If transplanted too abruptly, tender plants suffer from shock when encountering unfiltered reality for the first time.

The astral influences of summer stimulate the discharge of etheric life potential accumulated in the soil. As the Sun’s warming rays make the fog rising from a field dance in various forms, the etheric *and* the astral, performing together, give rise to the physical expression of “etheric formative forces.” Astrality uses up (or discharges) ethericity. As such, we do not begin by supplying the soil with more astrality but rather by replenishing the soil with *ethericity* from above.¹¹ One does not plug a refrigerator into the socket of a house without electricity and expect it to work. Likewise, one should never transplant into dead soil. Since it does little good to fan a fireplace with no flame, we must start by supplying fuel for warmth and life. If a plant is not mature enough when these forces reach their full force, the plant cannot contain them as nourishment. Instead, the plant gives up and rushes to flower. As children should be pampered in their earliest stage (but not ruined by sustained overindulgence), we begin initially by indulging young plants. We give them more than they need so they can develop the proper “will forces”—the accumulation of which offers a significant portion of nourishment.

As a child cannot simply be born and then abandoned but must be nursed until it is weaned, a plant also should not simply be dropped into soil devoid of life. Steiner says in the *Agriculture Course*, “manuring consists in a vivifying of the soil so that the plant may not be planted in dead

soil. A plant will more easily develop from its own vitality what is necessary for fruit formation if it is planted in something already alive.”¹² This is why we begin with enlivening the soil. As an infant must be nursed with milk, we must supply the soil with the kind of nourishment tender toothless nascent roots can assimilate. A mother bird must grind up food for her offspring. This is the kind of food we must introduce to tender young plants who have not, so to speak, developed “teeth” to chew tougher foods. Plants must be delivered nourishment in a suitable form so they can absorb it and discharge it as kinetic energy as they grow into their specific forms.

If it produces fruit at all, a plant emerging from excessively decadent darkness will tend toward “fire” diseases, where the leaves serve as a suitable substrate for infections. It is often better for an organism to have slightly too little earthly nutrition rather than too much. Steiner wrote, “For most people are thoroughly convinced that the more they eat, the better they are nourished. Of course it is not true. One is often much better nourished if one eats less, because then one does

Want to learn more about biodynamic agriculture?

Want to learn more about biodynamic agriculture? Join the Josephine Porter Institute for our Spring Biodynamic Workshop. Located in Floyd, VA, the workshop is a hands-on practical experience learning some of the subtle aspects of making biodynamic preparations. Join us June 14, 15, and 16 for food, fellowship, and inspiration! For registration and more information, visit jpibiodynamics.org



The heart of a living being is off-center.

not poison oneself.”¹³ By contrast, if nourishment is deficient, a plant will run out of energy and rush to flower, but its fruits will tend to be minuscule, and its seeds may even be hollow.

In extreme asceticism, practitioners attempt to starve out the lower bodily impulses, often aspiring to eradicate all animal desires. It is as if they wish a lotus could blossom out of something other than mud! But as they say in the film *I Heart Huckabees*, “No mud, no magic.” As karma from before is the basis of our conditional freedom now, the residue of the past is the fertile soil of today. No miser wishes to benefit anyone, but his money is nonetheless distributed after his death, and society benefits despite his intentions. Our task is to benefit others willingly while we are alive with our sweet fruits and hold the door open to new life, not merely supplying unconscious compost, though we necessarily contribute to that as well.

Severe asceticism forces open the inner blossoms of the human being. This feeds the honeybees of the invisible, but there are more mouths to feed with fruit. The spiritual ideal that anthroposophy offers is neither vegetating as an overnourished plant nor bolting as a starved plant. As Steiner says, “Anthroposophy is never fanatical.”¹⁴

A sensible farmer always seeks balance and, instinctively, is not a hot-headed revolutionary. He can't afford it! His profit margins are too narrow to risk them on anything uncertain. As such, "only those things should be opposed," Steiner says, "which rest on completely false assumptions and are the outcome of the modern materialistic conception of the world."¹⁵ This is why, in biodynamic agriculture, we reject nothing that has shown itself to work and be compatible over time with openness to ever-new life. One might even go so far as to say that *all* agriculture is already "biodynamic" to a degree since *all* farming necessarily conforms to the laws of life if it can produce nourishing food.

As the human heart is not quite in the middle of the chest, the Aristotlean "golden mean" between extremes is always slightly off-center. **Excellence is not the lukewarm dead center of stale compromise.** We may have cold-bloodedness on the one hand and hotheadedness on the other, but the balance between these extremes is not lukewarmness but rather heart warmth—not so cold it freezes, not so hot that it burns, but certainly also not tepid.

A prematurely flowering plant with its delicate fragrance is closer to ripened sweet fruit than it is to an overnourished plant only capable of producing leaves, but one error must be overcome while the other must be tempered and thus redeemed. If making tea, we take cold water, bring it to a boil, and let it cool to the perfect temperature. The weight of the dead facts of the past must be raised up while the infatuation with the imagined future must be tempered.

If we work with dark, heavy soil, that soil must be lightened with careful cultivation. If we are working with light, airy soil, it must be darkened with the right amendments to become receptive to the instreaming influence of the cosmos. The soil is like the eye: it can only perceive light because of its inner darkness. As Meister

Eckhart says, "It is in the darkness that one finds the light."¹⁶ Similarly, if soil has too little air, the metabolism of organic matter is restricted. If soil has too much air, the metabolic fire burns too quickly. Fundamentally, any soil that has lost its vitality must have it replenished from elsewhere. We must borrow vitality from the surrounding living environment to restore deadened soils and introduce it to any deadened soil.

There are two poles of a plant: the light-shunning and the light-loving. In scientific terms, these are called phototropic and photophilic, respectively. When we use cover crops, we kill back the cover so that its root system dies into the soil. These roots are light-hating and, considered in themselves, hunger for the dark world of fallen water, condensed mineral salts, and decomposing humus. As Steiner says, humus is a "lightless"¹⁷ activity. If considered by themselves, the roots hungering for the dark earth do not "intend" to benefit the rest of the plant. The benefits for the rest of the plant are something that is wrested from them by a rival impulse to return to oneness. As Steiner says, "Whereas the Luciferic tendency is always towards unification, the fundamental tendency of the Ahrimanic principle is differentiation."¹⁸ In the branching of the root, we see ramification in all directions, whereas above, we see more sculpted forms and a tendency towards devitalization.

The roots of legumes do not exist to be generous to us but rather to store up what they need for themselves. A legume crop, if allowed to go to seed, can result in a net loss of nitrogen available in the soil because it uses it up for its own fruiting process.¹⁹ These roots are concerned with drawing things into themselves for their own purposes. This sheds some light on why Alan Chadwick recommends killing back a cover crop when twenty percent of it has begun to blossom but before any of it has gone to seed. If we kill back a green cover crop when about twenty

percent has begun to blossom, we retain what the plant has accumulated for itself. As Steiner says, “the intention of Lucifer and Ahriman is to prolong this budding and growth indefinitely.”²⁰ Namely, the two work without reproduction or openness to evolution. Mephistopheles is content with ever-assimilating growth forces, Lucifer with ever budding and discharging, neither particularly troubled with providing nourishment for others in the present. The “luciferic” impulse is the discharge of potential energy back to the cosmos without fostering another generation of life. The “Ahrimanic” impulse is the pure accumulation within itself in a miserly fashion. The “christic” impulse allows the return to the cosmos by way of sweet fruit and viable seed production, which holds the door open for adaptation and unfoldment of ever-new life.

If we want to increase the potential energy reserve of the soil, we enhance the dark aspects first. If humus were left to itself and had nothing sandy, it would tend to become anaerobic like a peat bog. But with the addition of sandy materials (and the oxygen it allows into the soil), accumulated humus can begin to decompose, releasing its stored energy. Steiner describes humus as “substances in course of decomposition, bear[ing] etheric life within it.”²¹ When light-bearing siliceous materials like sand are present, pockets of air are maintained through the soil, accelerating the decomposition (and therefore radiation of etheric vitality). For example, light sandy soil quickly burns through organic matter, whereas heavy clay soil does not. Why does a fire burn faster in open air? Because of the presence of oxygen. Why does humus burn off faster in sandy soil? Because of the presence of oxygen.

As a plant matures, the cotyledons wither and fall off as an umbilical cord withers and falls off an infant. It is as if these cotyledons are an etheric tether connecting the new plant back to its

mother. At a certain point, the plant must become more independent. The cotyledons fall off, and the soil suckles the plant.

For the first six days or so, the plant grows primarily from what the mother plant gives it within the seed. It also, obviously, needs water and warmth, but its direct dependency on light is not initially fully established. Initially, sprouts can grow healthily in the dark. By the seventh day, it is as if the generative impulse pauses, and the plant hungers not only for what it has already received from the mother in the seed but now directly desires the earthy element itself.

When we make compost, it is as if we have placed our hand on the wheel of time and sought to retain more power in one spot than would normally accumulate. Compost is a pile of all sorts of living materials in various states of decomposition. This potential for ongoing decomposition gives *vitality* to the compost pile. But this ongoing decomposition also makes manure an especially Mephistophelean aspect of farm life. Nonetheless, Mephistopheles still serves the greater good. Steiner shares, “For love to reach its highest goal, the love of all, it must pass through the love of self. In *Faust*, Goethe rightly causes Mephistopheles to say: ‘I am an aspect of the power that always intends evil, and always creates good.’”²² Noxious weeds may grow big in our gardens, but when they are harvested and made into excellent compost, their value is recycled to feed our crops. Whatever residual value of our less fruitful deeds becomes compost to feed other souls in the creative hands of others.

In this world, baser selfish love always precedes noble, selfless love. In a way, one must first develop a self to become selfless. As Hans Urs von Balthasar says, “Do what you will, you remain a captive of love.”²³ Even what we do out of pure egocentric egotism will nonetheless be redeemed by the redemptive creativity of others, for forgiveness is always creative. Those who

“ WHEN WE USE COVER CROPS OR BUILD COMPOST, BOTH AIM TO BRING HUMUS INTO THE SOIL, WHICH *FEEDS* THAT MILDLY “PARASITIC” ASPECT OF PLANT GROWTH.

recognize this truth in a Luciferic manner will tend to imagine that everything we do is always already forgiven, neglecting the real burden our actions put on others. The proper response is the recognition that everything we do has unintended consequences and that the unseen grace of others constantly supports us. Nonetheless, one must have something in the first place to be generous with it.

There's something selfish about making a compost pile. We take what would normally cycle through nature much more quickly, put our hand on the wheel of life, and ask it to linger a little longer with us for our own purposes. As Ehrenfried Pfeiffer notes in *The Face of the Earth*, harvest festivals used to be times of mourning and fear of having “stolen” from the gods what we stored up in our granaries. A compost pile is vitality we have taken from elsewhere and accumulated in one place. The life of a compost pile is somewhat plantlike, feeding off the life potential of the ingredients we add to it. Everything about humus made in a compost pile is incredibly transient. If you leave humus out in the Sun, it quickly turns to dust, and most of its vitality is gone. The compost pile itself embodies Mephistophelean disintegration,

whose impulse is to separate out a purely material life on earth without even a hint of Luciferic aspiration towards the light. As Steiner says, “Mephistopheles is a stranger to the realm of the Eternal.”²⁴ This is because, with the philosopher Avicenna, we recall that the first emanation from God is the world of ideas. Mephistopheles, clinging entirely to the realm of the transient, refuses to see that “Everything transient is but a symbol”²⁵ of something eternal.

Everything about compost is a process of transience, of one thing turning into another without a unifying cosmic formative principle. Composted manure is chaoticized material shorn of its cosmic organizing principle: what remains is life potential minus a directing impulse. In compost, the original plant ingredients are no longer a plant, but the unmoored *qualities* of those plants remain. This unorganized nature of composted manure gives it plasticity for the Spirit to perform its creative expression. Creativity can operate on this primordial formlessness: “Now the manure mingles with the soil; it is a return of beings into Chaos. Chaos is working in manure, in all that is cast out; and unless, at some time or other, you

mingle Chaos with the Cosmos, further evolution is never possible.”²⁶

Whereas Mephistopheles represents an impulse towards fragmented separateness, Lucifer represents the impulse towards a generalized unity erasing difference, but real *life* arises in the impulse between these two. Whereas the dark element in the soil wants to assimilate too much, the light element wants to return the light com-

aim to bring humus into the soil, which *feeds* that mildly “parasitic” aspect of plant growth. In Alan Chadwick’s terms, there is a moment when a plant becomes more—it becomes a *conservatoire*, providing more than it takes to the soil.

Who is this moment? It is not Lucifer because Lucifer is the discharge of energies from the soil back to the cosmos. It is not Mephistopheles because this is the pure accumulation of potential

“THERE’S SOMETHING SELFISH ABOUT MAKING A COMPOST PILE.

pletely unchanged. As Sir Albert Howard says, “The wheel of life is made up of two processes—growth and decay.”²⁷ But wherever there are two, there is a third balancing and directing these tendencies.²⁸ It is not our task to be absorbed into the darkness or dissolved into the light but to strive in service of renewed *life*.

Steiner says in the *Agriculture Course* that “Fundamentally all plant growth is slightly parasitic in character; it grows like a parasite on the living earth.”²⁹ This so-called parasitic quality of plants means that they depend on the kind of formless vitality accumulated out of the past within the soil. Anywhere you see the word “parasitic,” you may read Ahrimanic or Mephistophelean. As such, Steiner refers to bacteria as “Ahrimanic” because they feed off life they did not create. As a rule, in biodynamics, we do not say that a compost pile is alive because it has bacteria but rather say that a compost pile has bacteria *because it is alive*. When we use cover crops or build compost, both

energy. The influx of new light and life is the Christ impulse. As an esoteric maxim goes, *Christus Verus Luciferus*. Christ is the true light-bringer.

The carnivorous root craves darkness and shuns light, and the twilight of the leaf draws on both light and darkness. The flower itself surrenders to the light, offering the possibility of a new incarnation to future life. As Steiner indicates in one of his medical lectures, roots hunger after the sunlight of “the year before” in the form of humus and salts, whereas the leaves are of a mixed quality:

“The plant in growing from the soil in its year is at first really growing with the powers which the Sun has given to the earth the year before if not earlier, for the plant takes its dynamics from the soil. These dynamics taken from the soil can be traced as far as the ovary, as far as seed development. We therefore only have a genuine botany that is in accord with the whole physiology if we take account not only the dynamics of warmth and

light and of light conditions in the year when the plant is growing, but starting from the root base ourselves on the dynamics of light and warmth at least in the year before. We can trace this as far as the ovary, so that we have something in the ovary which happened the year before still active from the year before. If on the other hand you study the foliage, and even more the sepals and petals, you will in the leaves find a compromise, I'd say, between the dynamics of the year before and the dynamics of the current year. The leaves have in them the element pushing up from the soil and the influences of the environment. In petals the current year finally shows itself in its purest form. The colours and so on in the petals are not something old—they are of this year.”³⁰

One might even call humus the *sunlight of yesteryear*, as it is more than half carbohydrates, which are a form of stored sunlight from previous seasons. But it is in the flower that “the current year finally shows itself in its purest form.”³¹ One could almost say that Lucifer discharges back to cosmic unity without concern with fostering new life for others. Mephistopheles tries to accumulate for himself, but the viable flower's arrival is the Christ impulse within the plant. As Steiner puts it, “In the development of the plant from below upwards, in the production of the leaves and blossoms, we have, fundamentally speaking, a process of devitalization.”³² As the plant grows under the Sun's influence, it discharges the vitality in the soil and becomes progressively “devitalized.” On the one hand, the flower is the full surrender of the plant to the oneness of the cosmos, but the flower is also the most refined expression of desire for differentiation as a new seed. The chthonic root wishes to grasp every vestige of the past with its tendrils, the green leaf to discharge what it has wrested from the root in its abstract love for the light, but in the flower and its seed, we see the particularized openness to the next generation of life even at the expense of the mother plant's own

life. It is not enough to love wisdom in abstraction, nor to love oneself, but rather to propagate love. Steiner says, “To disseminate love over the earth in the greatest measure possible, to promote love on the earth — that and that alone is wisdom.”³³

As it is written, “Your darkness shall be changed into clear light.”³⁴

NOTES

- 1 Rudolf Steiner, *Physiology and Healing*, pp. 85-86 CW314.
- 2 Lewis Hyde, *The Gift*
- 3 *The Zohar*, Pritzker Edition, Vol 1, Translator's Introduction
- 4 Exodus 33:20
- 5 T.S. Eliot, “Burnt Norton,” *Four Quartets*
- 6 As Rabbi Tzvi Freeman says, quoting *The Zohar*: one is short, one is long, and one is intermediary (even though it is longest). In the tree of sephiroth, these are the three pillars. This is to say: one is contractive (“short”) and one is expansive (“long”), and one that reconciles the two (“intermediary”) which emerges superior to either extreme, though. The plant that richest its fullest potential denies neither extreme, but is also not tepid compromise.
- 7 Anonymous, *Meditations on the Tarot: Journeys into Christian Hermeticism*, pg. 239
- 8 Commentary to *Liber de causis* 1, 6
- 9 Goethe, *Metamorphosis of Plants*
- 10 Steiner, Rudolf, Stuttgart, February 8, 1909, GA98
- 11 Steiner speaks of “etheric oils” in his notes to the *Agriculture Course*. See: Creeger-Gardner translation.
- 12 R. Steiner, *Agriculture Course*, (June 12, 1924, Koberwitz)
- 13 R. Steiner, *Nutrition and Health*, Lecture I (GA354 July 31, 1924, Dornach)
- 14 R. Steiner, *Man as Symphony of the Creative Word*, Lecture XI (GA230 November 10, 1923, Dornach)
- 15 R. Steiner, *Agriculture*, Lecture V (GA327 13 June 1924, Koberwitz)
- 16 *The Complete Works of Meister Eckhart*, Sermon Eighty-Three, pg. 450
- 17 R. Steiner, *Agriculture*, Lecture II (GA327 June 10, 1924, Koberwitz)
- 18 R. Steiner, *Lucifer and Ahriman* (GA191 November 15, 1919, Dornach)
- 19 See: Steve Solomon, *The Intelligent Gardener*
- 20 R. Steiner, *Gospel of St. John*, Lecture XIV (GA112 July 1909, Cassel)
- 21 R. Steiner, *Agriculture Course*, Lecture IV (GA327 June 12, 1924, Koberwitz)
- 22 R. Steiner, *Supersensible Knowledge* (GA55, November 22, 1906, Berlin)
- 23 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Heart of the World*
- 24 R. Steiner, *Goethe's Standard of the Soul* (GA22)
- 25 Goethe, *Faust*
- 26 R. Steiner, *On Chaos and Cosmos*, (GA284, October 19, 1907, Berlin)
- 27 Sir Albert Howard, *An Agricultural Testament*, Chapter 2
- 28 “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:20
- 29 R. Steiner, *Agriculture Course*, (GA327, June 12, 1924, Koberwitz)
- 30 Rudolf Steiner, *Physiology and Healing*, pp. 85-86 CW314
- 31 R. Steiner, *Physiology and Healing*, GA314, 89
- 32 R. Steiner, *The Anthroposophical Approach to Medicine*, Lecture IV (GA314 Stuttgart, October 28, 1922)
- 33 R. Steiner, *Love and Its Meaning in the World* (GA143 December 17, 1912, Zurich)
- 34 Isaiah 58:10

Stewart Lundy has been a biodynamic farmer in Virginia since 2010 with his wife Natalie. Stewart is an amateur alchemist, avid reader, and consultant. He also works with the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Biodynamics (JPI) advancing the work of biodynamic agriculture.

How Can I Help?

Offering Warmth in a Cold World

CHRISTINE HUSTON

These may be the first words spoken when a client enters a counselor's room. It's a variation of the words spoken to the king in the Parzival legend: "What ails thee?" We all hope to hear these words when we are in distress or confused or in pain, the words of one human being caring for another.

When we are suffering, what are we seeking? Understanding, kindness, warmth. As a teenager, in the immediate aftermath of a car accident, I was terrified. Decades later, what I remember most clearly of the incident was the warmth and kindness of the ER physician who, while stitching up my facial wounds, reassured me that I would come through the ordeal without a scratch. "You'll be Miss America," he said, the kindest words a sixteen-year-old girl could hope to hear. It cost him nothing to say this; it meant the world to me.

How do you help another in distress? How do we offer genuine care? Sometimes, that may simply be to offer a kind word, to be genuinely concerned, maybe just to be there: in short, to provide warmth.

Warmth. What is this quality between human beings that is so easy to recognize, both when it's

there and when it is not? We know what physical warmth feels like: The stove is hot! Don't touch! The pond ice is finally cold enough to skate upon – let's go! In winter, my bare feet touch the bathroom tile floor, and I retrace my steps to the bedroom to get my slippers. As we interact with the things of the world, we constantly experience gradations of warmth.

From a different angle regarding warmth, we humans have a relatively narrow range of comfort regarding warmth compared to animals. We heat our houses; we install air conditioners. Is it too hot, too cold, or just right? We bundle up in winter; we wear shorts in summer. We also have our own individual "thermostat" --- what feels warm enough to me might feel chilly to you. Related to this is our individual temperature regulation that provides fevers to fight infections and produces hot flashes when the balance of hormones changes.

Then, there's soul warmth: that which we can immediately experience between ourselves and others. Did someone just give me the "cold shoulder"? Did they approach me with civility or, better yet, even warm interest? The warmth

of the soul can also be experienced as our own “temperature” between ourselves and the world: how does life feel to us today? Do we awaken with warm enthusiasm for life or feel that life is cold and we’d prefer to pull the covers over our heads? We humans are sensitive to warmth – and lack of warmth.

Right now, the world can feel particularly scary, even cold & dangerous. We’ve just come through a pandemic, we get constant warnings from media about this or that danger that might befall, we are watching wars that engage our country, if not our personal selves, and we live in a culture of “us vs. them” which pervades so much of the

who might very much appreciate a kindly check-in? Can I offer to be of service to my neighbor, slow down long enough to say a kind word to whomever I meet, or take a genuine interest in another? Can I openly listen - without the need to fix the situation for another? Quite simply, can we notice that people around us are human beings of the same species as ourselves, and for that reason alone, deserving of kindness, of warmth – just as we, too, deserve it? The miracle is that when we extend warmth, we are warmed.

The miracle of warmth. When given or received, it makes us feel less alone, less at the mercy of forces we may feel unable to change or

“ RIGHT NOW, THE WORLD CAN FEEL PARTICULARLY SCARY, EVEN COLD AND DANGEROUS.

communication that comes our way. Bullying has become a huge problem, not only in schools but in politics. What happened to civility? Or even giving another the benefit of the doubt?

Right now, what can we do that can make a difference? Perhaps the very best thing we can do is to declare inwardly that we will not be overtaken by fear and to offer our warmth to one another. But how? Likely, we all already know how – we might just need to be reminded how incredibly important it is, especially right now when it is so easy to feel overwhelmed by what’s wrong in the world. Can I reach out to another

even withstand. Let’s think about the tremendous power contained in the warmth of heart – and share it with others. We have nothing to lose by recognizing the warmth in our shared humanity and radiating it out into the world. It will certainly make a difference. Who knows? - it might even have a global effect.

Christine Huston provides anthroposophic soul care to individuals and couples in their quests for healing, wholeness, and enthusiasm for life. Along with trainings in Gestalt Therapy, life coaching, and trauma pedagogy, she carries a teaching degree and earned three different certifications in Anthroposophic Psychology conferred by the Association for Anthroposophic Psychology, for which she serves as adjunct faculty, board member, and COO. She resides and gardens in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania.

a philosophical approach

Meditation and Phenomenology

MATTHEW B. MCDONALD

Let's begin with some definitions. Meditation is an act of contemplation, though not just any old contemplative action. It involves focused attention on an object; this is the most important detail to remember: meditation consists of focusing on a particular thing. Phenomenology, meanwhile, is a philosophical idea that explains the nature of reality. Phenomenology is contrasted with Logical Positivism and involves a plurality of ideas that explain the world instead of just one factual, empirical reality. As a current of ideas, phenomenology is convincing because it allows for multiple explanations of phenomena.

Meditation is a complex discipline. A conjunction of practices is involved in meditation, a bit like riding a bike. One must first learn how to balance and then pedal. Knowing how to pedal, does one know how to ride a bike? Meditation is similar. Like riding a bike, if one only knows how to pedal but does not know the other skills involved in the whole action, one cannot ride the bike. Likewise, if one knows certain skills, such as breathing deeply or observing thoughts, one still may not know how to meditate. It suffices to say



that meditation is made up of multiple separate skills that are honed by practice.

The meditative act is similar to the phenomenological approach. In phenomenology, we have observational powers. Phenomenological thinkers believe we have the power to observe

and describe phenomena from an objective viewpoint. The objective point of view permits us to proverbially “take a step back” and observe phenomena as they are.

Meditation involves a “detached” observer looking at their thoughts, feelings, and sensations. In meditation, one observes awareness itself. Instead of being an irresolvable paradox, awareness of one’s awareness is a benefit. This is because being aware that one is aware is the first step to mindfulness, a concept that basically means we are aware that we are aware. It does not matter what we are aware of; all that is really important in this approach is that we are aware of the awareness itself.

Both approaches, that is, meditation and phenomenology, involve a “stepping back” or a detached observation of phenomena, whether internal or external. In both phenomenology and meditation, these internal or external phenomena could be almost anything, though, in meditation, the phenomena are more commonly restricted to the occurrences of the mind. Meditation is an act of cognitive science and can be separated from simply doing nothing by this study of the mind. In contrast, doing nothing is technically not an action.

There is a distinction between meditation and doing nothing because doing nothing implies not doing anything. I argue that meditation is actually very similar to doing nothing. There are many parallels; however, meditation differs in several principal ways from doing nothing. The principal differences between meditation and doing nothing are that doing nothing implies no effort from the subject; it implies a sense of laziness or non-alertness, whereas meditation motivates a sense of alertness and vigilance of the mental processes (thought and emotion). Meditation is a process, not a state, suggesting that one is actively watching the thoughts and emotions in

the mind, whereas doing nothing implies nothing of the sort. In a sense, meditation entails doing nothing, but doing nothing does not entail meditation. That is, meditation involves doing nothing and something more. Doing nothing is merely doing nothing.

In philosophy, there are many theories of action and what an action consists of. From a phenomenological perspective, meditation is a causative act that enables observation. The meditator acts as a semi-external observer of thoughts and emotions. This enables them to be more objective about thoughts and feelings, creating a greater sense of equanimity.

Say that a meditator has an undercurrent of depressive thoughts. These depressive thoughts keep surfacing at various times. Perhaps the meditator feels they are depressed. Meditation does not discount these thoughts but allows the meditator to permit thoughts to come to the surface and dissipate. As such, while I do not profess that it cures illnesses, meditation can permit meditators to experience greater vitality.

From a philosophical point of view, the current of Existentialism supports meditation as a phenomenological practice. The origins of meditation are in the East, and modern investigations of meditation continue to show that the practice has many benefits.

“Bad faith,” as referred to by Jean-Paul Sartre in the work *Being and Nothingness*, is a state that requires some explanation. One concept central to the notion of bad faith is “facticity.” As defined by Sartre, facticity is the concept that indicates that all subjects have a set of facts or notions about them that cannot be changed or are indelible. This implies the facticity is as it is. An example of a characteristic of my facticity, for example, is my biological origin or some other fact about me that is unchangeable.



Artisan Candles

Experience an Angel in your home
Angel Candles - hand dipped, rolled flat and twisted. 100% beeswax

www.artisancandles.net

SPECIAL THANKS

to our

advertisers!

You make LILIPOH possible.

Digital Marketing Webinar

Admin Institute

People, Stories and Insight:

3 Keys to Mission-Driven Marketing Success

Friday, April 5th, 2024
10:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Eastern (GMT-5)
(30-minute break included at halfway point)

Presenters:

Theo Groh
Founding Partner
Wheelhouse Web Solutions

Patrick Gillam
messagegui.de

Digital marketing is new to many non-profits. But digital marketing—and especially social media—can effectively engage the people your organization serves. That's why AdminInstitute has invited specialists to simplify digital marketing and make it easy to get started.

We'll cover:

- Thinking in terms of the customer journey
- The three components of compelling stories
- How to plan outreach and analyze results for maximum impact

\$75 per person
\$150 per Organization, unlimited attendees. Please email info@admininstitute.net for organization registration.

Register Now!
<https://admininstitute.net>



HAWTHORNE VALLEY *alkion center*

WALDORF GRADES TEACHING OR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

OUR 2-YEAR, PART TIME CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS INCLUDE: core curriculums, artistic immersions, child development, and foundation studies in anthroposophy

ARTS & EDUCATION SUMMER WEEKS in late June, Open Enrollment

330 COUNTY ROUTE 21C, GHENT, NY 12075 • 518-672-8008 • INFO@ALKIONCENTER.ORG • ALKIONCENTER.ORG



WECAN
Waldorf Education Council of North America
ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA
ASSOCIATE MEMBER INSTITUTE

AW SNA
ASSOCIATION OF WILSON
SCHOOLS OF NORTH AMERICA

IASWECE
International Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education

Another concept central to understanding bad faith is “transcendence.” Sartre writes that transcendence is something that alters the facticity in some way. This is interesting because we recently outlined that the facticity cannot be altered. Before we get to the explanation of how transcendence occurs, we must return to the concept of bad faith. Bad faith is a quality of an action that indicates that one has behaved or done something that negates one’s facticity. Therefore, an act of bad faith would go against principal qualities or facts about oneself or the state of being of someone.

Lastly, the concept of “authenticity” is important to Sartre’s philosophy because authenticity points to the negation of bad faith, which is precisely why I bring these concepts to the table. Authenticity can be defined as living in line with one’s facticity. In looser terminology, this means something like living in line with one’s life purpose. So, I argue that meditation, in its transcendent power, may allow us to change elements of ourselves that we may not have previously thought we could change.

Existentialism as a current does not have a whole lot to say about morality. This is true for many reasons. The line of philosophy is not interested in questions of how moral an act is. Rather, it focuses more on the individual level and the transcendent power of something in order to change oneself. Sartre, for example, writes of the transcendence and the facticity, both approximations of the self as we know it, popularly speaking. We also know that the self can be changed through some act of courage or any other act in which an individual or being is actively doing something to change one’s actions. This can be thought of as a parallel to meditative thought.

Meditative thought is interesting to consider because thought and meditation seem to negate the other. However, as explained previously, meditation is not simply doing nothing. It entails observing thoughts. So, there turns out not to be any negation in the conceptual analysis of meditative thought.

In other words, meditation does not espouse nihilism. Quite the contrary—meditation is a

“ BOTH APPROACHES, THAT IS, MEDITATION AND PHENOMENOLOGY, INVOLVE A “STEPPING BACK” OR A DETACHED OBSERVATION OF PHENOMENA, WHETHER INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL.

“A CONJUNCTION OF PRACTICES IS INVOLVED IN MEDITATION, A BIT LIKE RIDING A BIKE.

vitalizing act that purifies the mind. The vitality proportioned by the practice is what meditators speak of when they talk of its benefits. Thought, here, does not refer to something theoretical. Rather, it relates to the cognitive science previously mentioned. It is a type of “behavioral” cognitive science.

There are potential drawbacks to viewing meditation as a phenomenological practice. As not all readers agree that Existential thought, philosophers included, aligns so wholeheartedly with theories of meditation or even the practice itself, I will have to explain why meditation is a conduit towards an understanding of Existentialism or vice versa. And, as others will argue that meditation is not as I described it, I will need to detail a way of understanding meditation as a mutually agreed-upon definition.

For the first objection, i.e., that Existentialism as a current does not agree fruitfully with theories of meditation or its practice, I would like to explain several things. I grant that Existentialism was developed in the West and meditation in the East, as far as historical undercurrents go. However, this does not mean that their fusion is necessarily incompatible. It does give rise to some difficulties, such as the philosophical undercurrents of meditation when said reflective and contemplative practices were developed, among

other questions. Such questions go beyond the scope of this article.

I also grant that meditation is not always as one believes it to be. There are certain paradoxes to meditation that are unanswerable here. For example, are we one being or two? This question gives rise to many paradoxes in the philosophy of mind. These paradoxes present in the philosophy of mind are better answered in a book of philosophy than in this article.

I believe that phenomenology can adequately account for what I described here as meditative practice, i.e., observing thoughts with an observational current instead of a judgmental one.

In conclusion, philosophical wisdom traditions, Existentialism and Phenomenology included, may account for theories of meditation. This is for multiple reasons, but as we have explored, meditation can be viewed as a sort of negation of bad faith. Indeed, if we act in good faith, we are surely able to transform things about ourselves that we may not have previously known we could change. Meditation, I believe, could be such a conduit towards transformation.

Matthew McDonald is a writer who resides in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He hails from Denver, Colorado, and some of his interests include existential philosophy, translation, and the Spanish language. He aims to complete a master's degree in translation studies this year in Buenos Aires. When he is not busy with translation projects and his English language students, he enjoys studying other languages, most notably Swedish, traveling, writing fiction, and socializing with friends and family.

DIANE DONOVAN REVIEWS

Between Two Gates: A Young Man's Quest Toward Birth

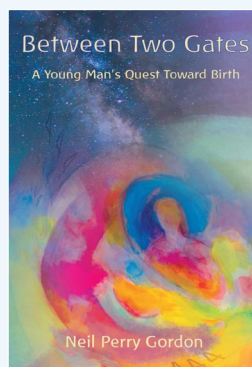
a novel by Neil Perry Gordon

B*etween Two Gates* is a visionary fiction novel that opens with a death. This might seem an unlikely starting point for a novel, but in the story, it comes to represent a new beginning. The thirty-two-year-old protagonist dies from a drug overdose and then experiences a transformation in the afterlife. Samuel's grandfather welcomes his spirit, and the two embark on a quest that embraces Samuel's transition "from [his] life on the Earth to the next stage of [his] existence."

The plot structure takes the form of a three-act production (sans the usual drama screenplay of character calls and responses). It features a wide-ranging spiritual flow, from Samuel's calling to traverse Gehenna's five realms to his confrontation with disparate forms of heaven, hell, and purgatory. His wise grandfather calls his current abode a "good place. A natural place where we continue to exist until that time when we're called upon to make our return."

Samuel's task is to embrace his destiny, rescue his great-great-grandfather from the dangerous entity Solomon, and confront his own karmic heritage while fielding angels and fairies alike. The spiritual and ethereal nature of this metaphysical work requires of its readers a mind open to non-traditional concepts of the afterlife. Those harboring such inclinations will find *Between Two Gates* a wide-ranging, mind-hopping journey that offers tantalizing insights into destiny and life purpose. The author writes:

You keep trying to lure me. But you should know I am not the same naive soul I was when I arrived. I've learned much already, and you should know this: I want nothing to do with you or your



kind." Solomon laughed. "You think you've changed; that's nonsense. We've known each other from previous lifetimes, and we're destined for more. You have no power to break this karmic cycle.

Readers who also harbor affection for philosophical reflection receive this in droves as Samuel confronts others and the self in an afterlife journey that cements his karma and the impact of "doomed desires" that affect and direct his world. The result is a powerful novel of realization, redemption, and afterlife conundrums. It is especially recommended

for audiences interested in considering the lasting impact of their choices and the power of love. Samuel's heroic and epic struggles play out on an afterlife stage replete with thought-provoking insights that will prove as suitable for book club and spirituality group debates as for individual contemplation.

Libraries and readers seeking a visionary story that juxtaposes adventures with afterlife considerations will find *Between Two Gates* compelling and hard to put down.

July, 2023 

Diane Donovan is a voracious reader who has been reviewing books for over 45 years. She has worked with over 300 publishers and 300,000 books. Her interests range from science fiction, biography, cookbooks, and self-help titles, to poetry, history, and children's books. Her reviews, blogs and articles have appeared (over the past four decades) in VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates), *Popular Woodworking*, *GRIT*, *The Bookwatch*, *Children's Bookwatch*, and more. To contact Diane, visit donovansliteraryservices.com

“

A POWERFUL NOVEL OF REALIZATION, REDEMPTION,
AND AFTERLIFE CONUNDRUMS.



The Monsters Among Us

MARY LOU SANELLI

Yesterday was a gray, drizzly day, a chilly reminder of the months ahead. The last few leaves clinging to the maples fell off one by one.

But today is one of those clear fall days after the rain, when the air is filled with a charged anything-is-possible atmosphere. For as long as I can remember, I've been fascinated by this season. The biologist Merlin Sheldrake said that if we

pay close attention to all of the life hidden under the surface of the leaves, it may reveal something about what is going on under the surface of *us*. I don't know whether this is true, but I like to think so anyway.

Because the truth is I feel a little lost lately. Too many things are overwhelming me: men who would rather make war than compromise; AI hiring more and more people to figure out how

“ I TAKE A LONG, DEEP BREATH. DECIDE IT'S TIME FOR A WALK.

employers can hire fewer and fewer of us (and why I urge you to use *human* cashiers); too many guns. You name it.

I take a long, deep breath. Decide it's time for a walk.

Once outside, any illusion that I can control much of anything is dispelled. Nature is the orb, and we are inside of it. Though you probably have your own take on what calmness is, to me, the natural world provides the best of it. I always end a walk feeling better than when I started it. When I think of some of the toughest decisions I've had to make in life, what comes to mind are the walks that helped me see my way. The merge of rustling leaves and squirrels scurrying is one of the most peaceful sounds.

Until the monsters arrive.

They come in a deafening roar, unabashed and unlike any other sound: thick and powerful enough to blast from sidewalk to lawn, filling the air with the stench of gasoline, reminding us that perfect peace is like a perfect world. It doesn't exist. I can't help but compare leaf blowers to gasoline-powered grasshoppers, decimating the ground in minutes.

Only this comparison is unfair to grasshoppers.

Grasshoppers are as much a part of planthood as leaves and roots. Leaf blowers are not.

SPIKENARD FARM HONEYBEE SANCTUARY



Join Our Mission

In Service Of The Honeybee

At Spikenard, our sustainable and biodynamic beekeeping practices honor the true nature of the honeybee and support her health and vitality above all else.

We invite you to explore our live and recorded webinars, in-person educational opportunities, sanctuary-made products, and donate in support of the health of the honeybee worldwide.

Visit us at spikenardfarm.org • Floyd, VA
540-745-2153 • info@spikenardfarm.org

ONLINE

Unite your faculty with foundational understandings of Waldorf principles.

Designed for working teachers.

UNDERSTANDING WALDORF EDUCATION

ACCREDITED 8-MONTH PROGRAM

**Designed for schools with teachers not yet Waldorf trained
who need an introduction to Waldorf principles.**

SEPTEMBER 2024 – APRIL 2025 | ONLINE

- Monthly grade-level and special subject mentor meetings
- Mentor meetings on "what makes Waldorf Waldorf"
- **Philosophical and practical** underpinnings for the Waldorf classroom)
- Special subject cohorts include: foreign/world language; music; handwork; games/movement.
- Art lessons: drawing; watercolor painting; clay modeling
- Virtual mentoring 2 times per year
- One, two- and three-year options available.
- Clock hours are accredited for CEUs for professional development



LEARN MORE: gradalis.edu

720-464-4557 | info@gradalis.edu



GRADALIS

*Are you seeking
medicine with meaning?*

Find out more at
AnthroposophicMedicine.org



They are the most infuriating of all the infuriating environment-destroying tools of the lawn-care industry, as well as the best yardstick of my emotional state. Whatever anger lies suppressed is sure to surface as soon as one of them is fired up within hearing range.

What is so bad about leaves anyway? They are necessary for healthy insect life, which is necessary for birds and other animals. The best thing to do is run over them with your lawn mower and let them be. Why are we so troubled by nature's perfect mulch made of chlorophyll and light?

Sadly, nearly everything about how we "care" for our lawns is harmful. Pesticides poison the insects that feed the birds, and they poison us, too. Store-bought mulch, piled too deep, smothers ground-nesting insects. But gasoline-powered leaf blowers make up an environmental hell all their own, spewing carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides, hydrocarbons—not to mention pollen, mold, animal feces, and chemicals from herbicides and pesticides. With all of the environmental concerns we say we care about in this county, why do we stand for it?

But what if we didn't?

What if we dare to insist on the peace we deserve?



Check out our calendar of
**Online & In-Person
Workshops & Courses**

Low-residency diploma programs in
**Waldorf Early Childhood,
Elementary & High School
Teacher Education**

Certificate programs in
**Waldorf World Language
& Music Teaching**

Financial Aid Available
*including Diversity
Scholarships*

MEd/MALS option

Learn more at

sunbridge.edu

*Full Member AWSNA / WECAN
MALS / MEd Partner SUNY Empire State*

Because we can't complain about something, we don't try to change ourselves. The desire to quickly "clean up" a walkway is understandable; stubbornness to not replace a gasoline model for a quieter, battery-powered one is less so.

The newer battery blowers are less powerful, sure, but when you think about the fact that the gas-powered model was originally invented by a

I'd responded so calmly to so challenging a noise. He gave me a look and then revved his machine, the leaf-blower equivalent of giving me the finger. One block away, another guy raked his yard as if the effort was one of life's primal pleasures. I blew him a kiss.

Eager to include another opinion here, the least I could do is ask somebody else how they

“ANOTHER GUY RAKED HIS YARD AS IF THE EFFORT WAS ONE OF LIFE'S PRIMAL PLEASURES. I BLEW HIM A KISS.

German engineer in 1900 as a flamethrower that was used by the German Army in 1911 and subsequently by other armies, including our own, well, isn't this sort of what it sounds like today? That we are at war with our yards, assaulting rather than nurturing the land?

Maybe, like soft soaps and dryer sheets, we just don't *know* how toxic everyday items have become. But once we do know, what then?

The other day on my bike ride, I watched a man blow a single leaf across a driveway. I knew he wasn't doing this to aggravate me knowingly or consciously. I slowed my pace and thought, *why not just bend over and pick up the leaf?*

Despite the noise, the squirrels kept at it. A lesson in silent acceptance that I know I need. But to be honest, I am really bad at it. I have no patience at all for gasoline-powered leaf blowers. None. "Please stop," I yelled, but not as loud as I could have. Actually, it was probably the first time

feel about gasoline-fueled leaf blowers. I thought long and hard about who I should ask, not wanting to sound like someone who thought they were entitled to live in la-la land where leaf-blowers don't exist simply because *she* thinks they shouldn't. I wound up asking the man standing behind me at Ace Hardware, who was probably in his mid-fifties. He laughed, paused, and said, "They're like letting crazy people run for president. Not enough of us spoke up before the worst of them happened. Not enough of us got off our butts to say, 'This is really crazy, and we should stop.'"

I left the store with a smile on my face, and I'm thinking he went home and said, "Some woman asked me about leaf-blowers today . . ."

Mary Lou Sanelli is the author of *Every Little Thing*, a collection of essays that was nominated for a Washington State Book Award and a Pacific Northwest Book Award. Her previous titles include fiction, non-fiction, and a new children's title, *Bella Likes To Try*. She also works as a speaker and a master dance teacher. For more information about her and her work, visit www.marylousanelli.com.



Lilipoh

at your
'fingertips'
at all times!

Get a one year
online subscription
of Lilipoh for
only \$10!!

SIGN UP AT

lilipoh.com

AdminService



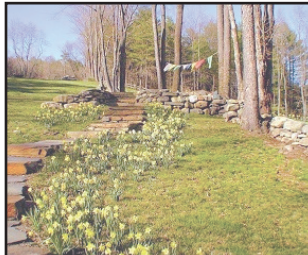
Bookkeeping and
Accounting Services

Personalized, Professional
and Accurate

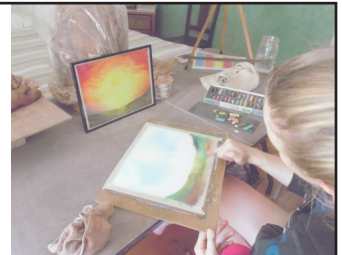
Specializing in
small businesses and
non-profit organizations

Virtual / remote – safety in
social distancing – or onsite

610-917-9101 • www.adminservice.com



deep healing without meds



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OPPORTUNITY

Are you a leader who wants to support profound change in the lives of others?

Inner Fire, a thriving nonprofit residential healing community in Southern Vermont is seeking an Executive Director who believes in the resilience of the human spirit, and understands that choice is a human right, especially for adults who have been given little to none in their own mental health care.

Inner Fire is a catalyst to bring change to an inhumane system in which lifetime use of debilitating psychotropic drugs is ever more widespread and condoned as standard medical treatment. Inner Fire is a critical agent in both individual transformation as well as societal healing by helping people (seekers) navigate and heal from traumatic life challenges without, or with minimal, use of prescribed psychotropic drugs while strengthening themselves on a deeper soul/spiritual level.

If you are caring, honest, loving, and authentic, and would welcome not only a challenging leadership position with competitive compensation, but also meaningful work that saves lives and offers a path of self-knowledge and personal development, please reach out to learn more.

Watch a short video about the directorship role here:

<https://vimeo.com/896009570>

For more information visit www.innerfire.us

Please e-mail your cover letter and resume for this position to
info@adminservice.com

Posting Date: December 20, 2023

Location: Brookline, Vermont

WE CAN
WALDORF EARLY CHILDHOOD
ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA



The Miraculous is Possible.

Openings Currently Available!

The Camphill School's mission is to create wholeness for children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities through education, therapy, and a protective, socially and emotionally rich atmosphere. To learn more, call us at **610-469-9236** or visit our website at **camphillschool.org**.



**The
Camphill
School**

1784 Fairview Road,
Glenmoore, PA 19343
610 469 9236
camphillschool.org

Classifieds

Institute for Eurythmy in the Work Life inspiring positive action and creating self awareness. Consulting, workshops, retreats. For schools, businesses and non-profits. Move to align your mission and values with your work. Leonore Russell and Associates in Understanding and Managing Change. 516-581-5696/
www.understanding-managing-change.com

Homeopathic Dictionary Yasgur's dictionary, also contains many anthroposophical terms -\$24 • Winston's 'Faces of Homoeopathy' homeopathic history in USA -\$60 • View, ?s, ORDER: homeopathyworks.com 800-336-1695

The Power of One-Third: A Prescription for a Balanced Life by Mariola Strahlberg (acupuncturist, educator and Waldorf parent) is a **self-guided or author-assisted 52-week program for your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being, based on ancient wisdom and latest neuroscience.** Start your journey today at powerofonethird.com.

The Waldorf School of Pittsburgh Seeking Early Childhood and Grade Class Teachers. Please contact Administrator at 412-441-5792 or email résumé to: info@waldorfpittsburgh.org

Caregiver. The Fellowship Community is seeking a qualified individual to assist elder members in activities of daily living and provide a warm and supportive "home-like" atmosphere in the adult home. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, assisting members with activities of daily living, including bathing, dressing, grooming, toileting, transfers, serving, feeding, and transport to and from activities and meals. Observing and prompt reporting of changes in physical condition, health status of members to supervisors. Maintaining a clean, safe, and orderly environment for our members and staff. For more information or to apply for the caregiver position, please contact us at jobs@fellowshipcommunity.org



NATIONALLY ACCREDITED

Teacher Training and Summer Programs

Designed for working teachers.



TEACHER TRAINING

For independent and public schools
inspired by Waldorf principles

**NEW COHORT BEGINS SUMMER 2024
DENVER, COLORADO | June 20-July 12**

Choose **Early Childhood** or **Grades 1-8** concentrations. Structured for the busy full-time teacher over 26 months. Includes three hands-on 'Teaching as an Art' weeks. Coursework includes anthroposophical foundations, insights for child observation, arts, movement, music.

Blended Learning Hybrid Model

- Three 3-week summer intensives
- 4 practicum weekends
- Monthly online sessions focused on curriculum for current grade.
- Includes 4 on-site field mentor visits.

SUMMER INTENSIVE

'TEACHING AS AN ART'

Grade-level preparation (ECE and grades 1-8)
for the 2024-2025 school year

**NEW COHORT BEGINS SUMMER 2024
DENVER, COLORADO | June 20-July 12**

Join us for an inspiring week of renewing and practical grade level instruction, Arts and Waldorf approaches for use in the classroom. (Starts late afternoon on Sunday, July 7th and ends at 1:30 July 12th.)

All instructors are Waldorf trained and experienced educators.



LEARN MORE: gradalis.edu | 720-464-4557 | info@gradalis.edu

LILIPOH

317 Church Street, Phoenixville, PA 19460
P: 610.917.0792 F: 610.917.9101
info@lilipoh.com
www.lilipoh.com

PRST STD
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 280
LANCASTER,
PA 17604

Stores order from LILIPOH (610.917.0792); One Source (USA) 1.800.541.5542; Disticor (Canada) 1.800.668.7724



Working together to serve
your organization's missions.

888-511-4110

We know just how hard you work. Long before dawn, devoted teachers are awake crafting the perfect experience for their students. Late at night the lights are on in the office while the dedicated admin team prepares for a big event. Yet there's never, ever enough time! **We lighten the load** by supporting your school's business needs— so you can realize your vision!

adminservice.com

- admin skills courses
- capital campaigns
- communications solutions
- development
- database analysis
- feasibility studies
- financial management
- foundation research
- fundraising support
- grant writing
- international student recruitment
- marketing
- mentoring
- organizational structure
- marketing coordination
- school safety & security
- crisis communications
- school administration
- solicitation training
- staff conferences
- strategic development
- technology support
- training
- web & design services