A Collaborative Approach to Educational Freedom

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Lecture 1: Vidar's Triumph: Useful Leather and Worn-out Shoes

The title of this conference is *Responsible Innovation: A Collaborative Approach to Educational Freedom.* There is something so poetically appropriate about tackling the themes of responsibility, innovation, collaboration, and freedom in this city, Philadelphia, and at this time. Waldorf education just completed the 100th academic year since the first school opened its doors in Stuttgart. We have done it against long odds and in the face of opposing cultural currents. We have also done it in the face of opposing inner currents, collectively and within each one of us.

It is especially poetic that we meet here, in this city, where a bold group of men met some 243 years ago and articulated in *The Declaration of Independence* the ideals that are still, by and large, the defining ideals of a country that has struggled ever since to live up to them. The story of this country should give us heart: we are not the first to see goals that we find difficult to realize.

The Founding Fathers were, most of them, not able to live up to their stated ideals. Their thoughts and aspirations reached much higher than their practices. Their continuing practice of enslaving other people is the most obvious aspect of the discrepancy; the enslaved suffered on an unimaginable scale at the hand of the very people who wrote this document that declares "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" as unalienable rights of all; and let's not forget that women, religious minorities, and people with non-traditional sexual or gender orientations suffered discrimination as well, and still do.

The Founders understood the idea of the free and autonomous individual, but understood it in the narrow sense of those that looked like them: white and male. The story of the U.S., and by extension the story of the Western world ever since, has been a gradual, non-linear progression towards the full realization of the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. Individually and collectively, this country has sinned against those ideals over and over again, but it has also worked to advance them again and again. Freedom and autonomy are challenging concepts, especially when you have to share power and wealth if you would abide by those principles. It has not been easy, and it still isn't, but the arc of time seems to expand the roster of those who come under the umbrella. Freedom and autonomy in education are no less challenging, and we will address these concepts in their educational sense in what follows.

But let us agree at the outset that falling short of realizing our aspirations is an inevitable consequence of *having* high aspirations. Our spirit can discern where we should go, but realizing that discernment "in the flesh" takes time. Still, just like the suffragettes, the leaders of the civil rights movement, the environmentalists, and LGBTQ+ activists did not retreat in the face of opposing forces, so will we not shy away from facing the outer and inner demons that would happily see Waldorf education withdraw back into the spiritual world.

Let's remember that the spiritual world has long since realized the capacities for creation, love, and leaving their children (us) free. According to Steiner's lectures on the Mystery of the Trinity (July 30, 1922), the Father is the creative force, the Son is the capacity to love, and the Holy Spirit was sent for the freedom of the human being. Now *we* have to realize those capacities on the earth, and that will take time, maybe a lifetime. Or *lifetimes*, actually.

And since we are acknowledging our host city and its illustrious history, it would behoove us to acknowledge that this city is built on land that was once the home of indigenous people. The forced displacement of millions of human beings is as heavy a burden on the conscience of this country as slavery is, and part of our innovation as an American movement will have to include reckoning with these deeds. Pastor Norwood is one of the leaders of the indigenous community in this area, and with his permission I would like to read out to you the following blessing that he composed:

> The land upon which we gather is part of the traditional territory of the Lenni-Lenape, called "Lenapehoking." The Lenape people lived in harmony with one another upon this

territory for thousands of years. During the colonial era and the early federal period, many were removed west and north, but some also remained here with the three continuing historical tribal communities of the region: The Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation; the Ramapough Lenape Nation; and the Powhatan Lenape Nation. We acknowledge the Lenni-Lenape as the original people of this land and their continuing relationship with their territory. In our acknowledgment of the continued presence of Lenape people in their homeland, we affirm the aspiration of the great 17th century Lenape Chief Tamanend, that there be harmony between the indigenous people of this land and the descendants of the immigrants to this land, "as long as the rivers and creeks flow, and the sun, moon, and stars shine."

Let us now turn to our theme.

Waldorf teachers have been educating students for 100 years. Now we are facing what I think is an inflection point. In the broadest sense, the first 100 years established a curriculum, and now we have to shift our focus to the pedagogy itself, specifically by adopting a more therapeutic mindset. Many of you know that the Pedagogical Section Council published a set of Core Principles several years ago, as well as a book to aid in studying them. I am happy to report that we recently re-worked that document, and that the revised version, as well as a beautiful card with the Core Principles arrayed along a pentagram, are available. I will strive to show that Rudolf Steiner, already during the early years of Waldorf education, indicated that this shift from curricula to a more therapeutic approach was in order, but that for various reasons the movement's focus remained on the curriculum.

The first 100 years [of Waldorf education] established a curriculum, and now we have to shift our focus to the pedagogy itself, specifically by adopting a more therapeutic mindset.

Now, being teachers and educators, let's open with a little story that many of you know quite well. Though I have told this story in the past to my fourth graders, I never quite grasped the significance of a certain aspect of it, and I thank my good friend Cornelia Debus for sending it to me as an illustration of what I was trying to promote.

The Norse gods lived in Asgard, working on world development. These gods included characters like Odin, Thor, Freya, and Vidar, but they also faced forces of evil: the Fenris Wolf and the Midgard Serpent. Vidar, god of the future and Odin's son, was different from the others. He never spoke; he was always listening and helping wherever needed. With time, the forces of the other gods were fading; they became too weak and couldn't resist the Fenris Wolf anymore. Only Vidar, the quiet one, didn't lose his power, and he finally defeated the Fenris Wolf. But Vidar didn't triumph by his own power alone, either. He took the leather scraps of all the shoes that were ever made and sewed a pair of new shoes. Then he put his foot into the throat of the Fenris Wolf and tore it in half. From that moment on, Vidar was speaking.

Now to the meaning of this picture: Every shoe has leather scraps belonging to it. These scraps are full of unused, future potential. Also, they remain innocent as part of the original material, while all finished shoes with which people walk become old and guilty by destiny. The traces of life are drawn into the soles, and the shoes of the Norse gods lost their energy and finally could not suffice against the Fenris Wolf. Only Vidar's shoes, made of unused future potential, taken from the past, were strong enough. All leather scraps of all shoes were part of it, not only his own. The future needs a community wearing Vidar's shoes, made of all leather scraps we didn't need for our nice, well-shaped and beloved old shoes. Our ears, too, will have to open up to hear Vidar's words, coming from the future. The Nordic term 'Vidar' means "the one who is open." In German the name is spelled with a "W," which then reminds us of the English "wide." Our ears, and hearts, have to be wide, wider than we are comfortable, to hear the future speak.

At the risk of over-explaining, I would say that the shift I suggested earlier, from a focus on "the curriculum" to a focus on the pedagogy, is exactly what the notion of "old leather making new shoes" means in our context. The old, comfortable shoes are no longer equal to the task, and the old language isn't, either. The intentions that made the old habits into the realities of the Waldorf school, the familiar shoes, are still leather, but the traditions themselves are growing old. It is the principles that should guide us, and we should dare to fashion new shoes and a new language to

meet the challenges of our time. Broadly, this is what I have in mind when thinking of the word "Innovation." It is the simplest of the four key words in the title of this conference, and we will get to practical ways of bringing about the meaning of this word in the coming lectures. Then there is the word "Responsible." When I first shared the term "responsible innovation" with a colleague out West, she wryly quipped, "Takes all the fun out of it." But I would like to ask, hoping my question doesn't take the fun out: Responsible to *whom* or to *what*? And if our innovation is not responsible, what does that mean?

In reference to the "what," to which innovation is responsible, I suggest the Core Principles.

In reference to "whom" we are responsible to, I think there are here principally two groups: the spiritual hierarchies and the children in our care. At the very outset of *Study of Man*, Rudolf Steiner spoke about the teachers continuing the work that spiritual beings did with the children before birth. Everything that Waldorf education entails is nothing more than that: here are children that were in the care of spiritual beings, and our job is to do for them what these spiritual beings can no longer do. All of our methods, all of our content, all of our intentions, are, finally, only successful if the spiritual world looks upon our work and approves of it. All the ridicule that some critics heap upon us should not deter us. Every person of significance in the history of the world who tried to bring something worthwhile into the world suffered ridicule, scorn, and much worse. You can be sure that beings of all stripes are deeply interested in what we do, and the good ones are not the only ones trying to do something about it.

So we want to innovate out of a sense of responsibility to the spiritual beings on whose behalf we work, and out of a sense of responsibility to the children that come to us, which means learning to take our cues from their needs, especially their *therapeutic needs*, as I elaborated in my essay on "The New Impulse of the Second Teachers' Meditation," rather than from curriculum books. There is nothing wrong with curriculum books, as long as the teachers who use them remember that these books are not authorities. Ultimately, books should serve as inspiration rather than authorities. We will return to this theme in the third lecture. And we will use the Core Principles as shorthand for the key architecture of the quality control process. In other words, the Core Principles can guide us when we assess whether a teacher is doing a good job, since these principles describe a framework rather than give prescriptions.

Now there is also this interesting word in the conference name's sub-title: *freedom*. We will look into it in more detail tomorrow, when you are not so tired from your travels. Tonight, I want to stipulate a few things about freedom and education and also to look at some of the hindrances that stand in our way.

There is a famous quote from Marie Steiner's introduction to "A Modern Art of Education" that says, "Our highest endeavor must be to educate free human beings who are able of themselves to impart direction and meaning to their lives." It is oft-quoted, but that doesn't mean that it is easy to understand. I would like to offer three basic thoughts as a foundation for addressing the question of freedom in education:

1. Whereas it is not a requirement that freedom can only be brought into education by those who are already free (or very few would ever be able to do it), it is very much a requirement that those who wish to educate free human beings take on unfolding their own freedom. Otherwise, all that's present is a phony oration. So we have to ask ourselves: are our actions and forms of institutional life suitable models for our students of a freedom-building community?

2. Striving towards freedom in an institutional setting, when the institution itself stands for freedom, cannot happen without collaboration. Agreements and conversations are not an obstacle on the path towards freedom but rather give an individual striving the necessary context. Regardless of the particular form of leadership in a school, a top-down reality is, ipso-facto, unfree. Whether the top (in the top-down structure) is a principal, a dominant colleague, or any other figure of authority matters less than the outcome, which is that the teacher is not acting out of freedom.

3. By Freedom we mean: action arising out of love (intuitive thinking), unencumbered by the past. Both Rudolf Steiner in his epistemological works and Georg Kühlewind in many of his essays describe the possibility of reaching this level of inner activity. This is the final stage of a long process, cognitive, emotional, and volitional. More on that tomorrow.

I would like to add two other thoughts. The first is that any decision that does not arise out of an intuitive process, in Steiner's sense of the word—meaning not intuitive as in "gut feeling" but as a super-present state of consciousness—is subject to errors of the most varied, dangerous, and occasionally amusing or embarrassing kind. A little more on that in a minute. The second is that in order to unfold freedom in our relationships with others, it is necessary to understand the role of the night and the way it connects us with the cosmos, with the region of existence where we are not separate but rather *are part of a whole*.

Let's explore these two a little bit. My guide in exploring the calamities of the not-intuitive mind is Daniel Kahneman. A psychologist rather than an economist by training, Kahneman won the Nobel Prize in economics for his work, because it was foundational in establishing the field of behavioral economics.

A few years ago he published a book, "Thinking, Fast and Slow." It is a fascinating exploration of several aspects of the ways in which the mind works. None of them is the intuitive or creative mode that responsible innovation needs, so I offered it as background reading for this conference more as a source for cautionary tales. The experience of reading this book is that our mind plays a constant stream of tricks on us, and knowing that it does makes very little difference. We fool ourselves into seeing coherence where none exists, answer easy questions instead of the ones before us, and anchor perspectives and decisions to lazily chosen but readily available facts.

For example: two groups of people were asked to estimate the height of redwood trees. The first group was asked these two questions:

- *Is the height of the tallest redwood more or less than 1,200 feet?*
- *What is your best guess about the height of the tallest redwood?*

The second group was asked the same questions, only the number in the first question was 180 feet.

Now in theory, the suggested numbers should have no effect on the second. You should be able to estimate the height of the tallest redwood independently. In practice, the first group's mean estimate was 844 feet, while the second group's was 282 feet. That's a difference of 562 feet based on nothing more than a random number posed before the question the participants were asked to answer.

(For those who would not be able to ease their minds without knowing this: the actual tallest redwood, "the correct answer" according to Google, is 379.7 feet.)

A second example Kahneman gives tells of an environmental education center in which oil spills are discussed before a contribution is solicited for helping sea birds affected by the spills. When the visitors were simply asked if they would make a contribution, the average gift was $64. When they were asked if they would be willing to contribute $5, the average gift was $20. When they were asked about contributing $400, the average contribution was $123. On average, raising the anchoring (or suggested) figure by $100 brought an increase of $30 in the contribution amount.

Another example of the way in which we are unconsciously influenced is given in an experiment conducted at a British university in the UK. Over a period of 10 weeks, researchers placed two alternating sets of pictures above one of the university's tea and coffee station, which operated on the honor system. During one week these pictures featured flowers while in the following week they featured a pair of eyes looking at the people helping themselves to a hot drink. The difference in contributions from week to week was substantial: on average, eye-banner weeks garnered about three times as much honor-system payments as flower-banner weeks. It is tempting to insert some quip about British honor here, but let's leave it at that. I'm not too sure that an American setting (even a Waldorf conference) would yield different results.

Let's try a little exercise to play with one of our often unacknowledged biases. It is called the availability bias. Please write down which one of the following pairs of causes of death is more frequent and then try to estimate the ratio between them.

- Strokes vs. Accidents (strokes cause about twice as many deaths)
- Tornadoes vs. Asthma (Asthma causes about 20 times as many deaths)

- Lightning vs. Botulism (Lightning causes about 52 times as many deaths)

- Diseases vs. Accidents (Diseases cause 18 times as many deaths)

You can see that accidents, tornadoes, and outbreaks of botulism are "sexy" news stories, so we overestimate their frequency relative to other causes of death by large orders of magnitude. Since we encounter news about such causes of death more often than their actual frequency would indicate (by comparison to less "sexy" news), they take a more prominent place in our mind than more harmful causes.

The effects of such influences are astonishing, as Kahneman's book demonstrates again and again. We are primed by suggestions and change our behavior and judgment without realizing how influenced we are by them. Kahneman then provides many other examples of the ways in which we skew estimates and make bad choices due to myriad mental habits, most of them completely unconscious and all of them unhelpful. Read his book to give yourself a crash course in the hazards of using your mind habitually, in an unchecked manner. It will make a commitment to wakeful thinking easier to follow. It is clear that without strong efforts our capacity for free activity is a mere seed, a dormant possibility.

That is the part about our day consciousness. Now let's look for a moment at our night consciousness.

Falling asleep and the experiences we undergo during the night are not only fundamental pedagogical realities without which Waldorf education is incomprehensible, but they are keys to unfolding free relationships. Steiner's lecture on this issue, which I included in the recommended reading for this conference, was given in London, in 1922 (CW 214). It is titled "The Other Side of Human Existence." Steiner describes how during sleep there are phases in the separation of the soul and spirit from the body that remains in bed, and how successive organs are activated for perceiving the spiritual realities we encounter during the night, and how successive realms of beings are involved in the process. What is crucial for our efforts to unfold a free activity is that we are reminded yet again that the separate existence we experience during our waking hours is an illusion. In reality, we ourselves are woven into a web of beings and relationships. We come into the earth and forget our essential self precisely so that freedom may unfold. It is a paradoxical situation that is nevertheless true: our inmost being is a spiritual core, and as such it is intrinsically one with other beings. Spiritual beings are not separate from one another but rather interwoven in the most manifold ways and work through and with one another. At the same time, we live with an earthly body that is indeed separate from other earthly bodies, and we have to transform both our body and, ultimately, the earth itself, back into a spiritual state. Through the gift of the night we are reminded of our spiritual origins.

Remember these two things: we have to make new shoes from old leather, and entering the night with the right questions will coat you in fairy dust.

If you go to sleep prepared with questions, it is possible to bring back from the hours of sleep spiritual substance with which to overcome the separateness of the earth. This separateness is, as you can see, both an illusion and a reality. Merely thinking it an illusion does not change our experience that it is a reality, nor does it convince our students that we are one with them. And the spiritual world does not respond well to lectures or commands from us. We can't tell spiritual beings to make the students or our colleagues believe that we are one with them (that is, with the students and the colleagues). But the spiritual world does respond to questions, especially those that honestly seek to understand the other. If we can approach sleep with an attitude that the day has shown us things we do not understand about our students or about colleagues or about ourselves or our subject matter's suitability, and that we humbly ask for guidance, then we will find, upon waking, that moments of inspiration will trickle into our work as if by magic. We will have, as it were, little bits of fairy dust sprinkled in our bearing.

If you remember nothing else from this evening, remember these two things: we have to make new shoes from old leather, and entering the night with the right questions will coat you in fairy dust.

Now you can tell everybody that what a Waldorf teacher really needs, aside from the Seven Core Principles, is a new pair of shoes and getting ready to go out properly into the night, every night.

Lecture 2: The Pot of Gold at the End of the Rainbow

I would like to continue by focusing on the notion of freedom. We speak in the Core Principles about the freedom of the teacher; 'freedom' is also named in

the subtitle of our conference. Yesterday, my three stipulations were that striving for freedom is essential, that collaboration is essential in an institutional setting, and that by freedom we mean an action taken out of love for the deed. Let's look at these a little more closely.

First, the question of striving for freedom. On the face of it, nobody would say that he or she does not strive to be free. No one would say: 'freedom scares me and I would rather be unfree.' But freedom in Steiner's sense is not some general dislike of being told what to do. It is an experience found fleetingly enough on a path of cognitive and moral development that does not unfold without effort. My experience as a Waldorf teacher who also teaches adults is that Steiner's roadmap towards freedom is studied only when people *have* to study it, usually in a Foundation Studies program, and almost never again. One reason is that *The Philosophy of Freedom* is a dense philosophical text that, as Fred Amrine notes in his new book, *Kicking Away the Ladder*, combines eternal truths together with German philosophical arguments that are no longer relevant (and probably never were relevant to the average reader) in a mixture that can confuse and tire a reader who isn't familiar with the field. Presenting a chapter from *The Philosophy of Freedom* edited especially for his book, Amrine chops away the specialized—dare I say esoteric in the negative sense—sections from Steiner's presentation, in order to leave the essential ideas accessible. Those of you who would like to tackle this fundamental text can do a lot worse than to use Amrine's abbreviated version. *Kicking Away the Ladder* is one gem of a text even without the chapter on the Essential Philosophy of Freedom, but all the more so for its inclusion.

Let me try to capture a few of these essentials. Rudolf Steiner begins his seminal work on the question of freedom with a long and difficult discourse on epistemology, that is with a theory of knowledge. Working as he did within the context of Kantian and post-Kantian German Idealism, Steiner begins with the question of how we can possibly know anything with certainty. Kant was responding to the British philosopher David Hume, who had shown that Empiricism, which claims that all knowledge originates in sensory experience, was fatally flawed. The assumption that the senses can be trusted proves, upon closer scrutiny, to be untenable, and Kant then showed that Rationalism was capable of proving both sides of every major question with equal validity. He threw the intellectual life of Europe into a whirlwind of activity because the implications of his work were immense. And in his seminal work on ethics, he made Duty, rather than knowledge, the guide to one's moral conduct.

Steiner spent many years and enormous mental efforts trying to show that, whereas Kant's argument had validity for the customary ways of thinking, there was a possible path of knowledge that transcended the limitations of which Kant spoke. As you know, Steiner saw in Goethe a practitioner of science in whose work a new epistemology was hidden in plain sight. Before he could establish the *ethics* of freedom, Steiner had to show that there was a way of knowing the world that could produce a path towards inner freedom. We will return to *The Philosophy of Freedom* shortly, but first I'd like to leap forward in time to 1911 and to a series of lectures published as *The World of the Senses and The World of the Spirit* (CW 134). The discussion there has something essential to tell us about knowing.

Steiner begins with the search for truth, and he articulates four steps on the way to truth:

- The first is *wonder*. He likens knowledge that originates with wonder to a plant that grows out of a seed we place in the earth. In contrast, knowledge that originates with mere acquisition of concepts is like a papier-maché plant (I would imagine that today he would say silk plant): it looks correct, but it is not alive.

- After wonder comes *veneration*. Even a mood of wonder at the outset of an inquiry does not provide sufficient protection against casual arrogance once some content has been gained. The soul must fill itself with reverence for the universe in the truth it encounters.

- The third step requires *feeling oneself in wisdom-filled harmony with the Laws of the Universe*. Say that our plant has grown and we want to know it. After the stage of veneration, we actively feel ourselves at one with it, until its own lawfulness begins to speak to us and reveal itself.

- And the fourth step is that of *surrender*. We live so fully in the reality of the new wisdom that our own 'I' is allowed to rest, so to speak, while we become one with what we have learned.

Steiner then makes a wonderful comment about knowledge acquired along paths that do not include these four steps. He says that such knowledge may very well be *correct*, but it is not *true*! This distinction is very important. Something can be correct, but being

correct does not necessarily make it true. He offers an interesting response to what Kant had done by proving both sides of an argument: Steiner says that as long as we expect thinking to lead us to the truth, we will arrive at the impossibility that Kant demonstrated. Thinking, he says, is only meant to educate us. Truth requires the four steps mentioned above, but thinking only leads to correctness. We can see that for correctness to become truth, *feeling* and *will* are also needed, but it is the feeling of evidence, as in veneration and harmony, not feeling in the sense of emotions, and it is the will in the sense of "soft will," as Kühlewind calls it, the surrendering will, not the will to conquer.

Some teachers may never feel ready to move from an occasional tinkering with traditions to a full-on innovative idea. This hesitation might very well be completely justified.

We live in a world in which correctness (political, legal, and other) often overpowers truth. Steiner actually returns to this theme with slightly modified language in the lectures to the teachers of 1923, when he speaks about Gandhi's trial. The British judge knows that truth is on Gandhi's side, but he, the judge, is forced by his circumstances to apply the correct legal statutes. We should acknowledge at this point that we very commonly have to accommodate correctness in various shapes, and that is simply our reality. But as Steiner said at the end of the first course for teachers, the teacher must never compromise in heart and mind with what is untrue. The fact that accommodations must be made is true, but we should not confuse them with truth.

There is an old joke about two Jews walking in Russia when a Cossack stops them, and on pain of death forces them to eat pork. After he rides off, laughing, the older Jew says to the younger, "God will punish you for this." The younger is stupefied and says, "But you ate it, too! It is said that saving a life trumps other mitzvahs." The older one says, "No one would argue that you had to eat the pork, but why did you have to lick your fingers?"

Our compromises with the truth in the name of correctness may be inevitable. But I repeat: we should not confuse the two within ourselves. We especially should not confuse it in the way that we come to knowledge of our students. Did we pass through these four stages on the way, or did we assign them a temperament, a disability, or a place on the spectrum as a shortcut that makes our assessment of them correct, but not true?

Being 'one with' is consciousness of the night; it is correctness elevated to truth. Much of what is known as assessment is consciousness of the day: correctness often left bereft of truth.

We have to see, or, better yet, *hear* our students in the manner in which they sing themselves into being. Assigning them into little boxes is not necessarily a step on the way to true hearing, even if it is "anthroposophically correct."

Back to *The Philosophy of Freedom*. After establishing the possibility of gaining trustworthy confidence in our knowledge of the world, Steiner moves on to ethics, that is, to the question of the potential freedom of the human being. He admits that we are never wholly free, but points to a region of existence in which freedom could unfold. He describes a kind of dual ladder, like a step ladder, with one side being our personal makeup, referring to the concepts that would activate us, and the other being the concepts themselves, derived from a process of getting to know the world. Each of these two sides needs cultivation, both the inner and the outer. At the highest level, where the two sides of the ladder meet, pure intuition that transcends both my personal past and any moral framework with which I had been familiar becomes the source of my action. Steiner calls this *Moral Intuition*.

For a free deed to come about, Moral Intuition is not enough. The anatomy of a free deed begins there, but then needs the intuition to be followed by Moral Imagination, which means a plan of action, and Moral Technique, which is the realization, the *execution* of the plan. To make this more accessible we can look at a trivial example:

- You have to see and understand something about a child, for example that her limp is caused by a splinter. Then you have to decide what has to be done, for example the splinter needs to be removed. So far, we are dealing with the two sides of Moral Intuition: understanding what the signs (limp) mean and choosing what to do.

- Then you have to plan how to do that which you resolved to do: you happen to have a pair of small tweezers in your pocket, so you will call the child over and take the splinter out: Moral Imagination.

- Finally, you actually have to do it without making matters worse; hopefully: Moral Technique. So, we

need the *discernment*, the *choice of direction*, the *plan*, and the *execution*.

Of course, most of the riddles that our students present to us are not as easily solved as understanding that the limp originated with a splinter. The fourfold path towards knowing why a child is not managing to curtail a tendency towards kleptomania, for example, is much more demanding and time-consuming. The triviality of the example is meant only to make the three basic capacities—Intuition, Imagination, and Technique—easier to see.

As an aside that is not directly related to the theme of innovation, I'd add that happy communities have all three capacities among their members, and those members celebrate each other, realizing that they are all necessary and that they need one another. Unhappy communities often also have all of those capacities, but each one thinks that it is the only one that really matters. The big thinkers that can analyze and direct actions think that they are the only ones who "get it." The planners think that without them nothing would move along. And the doers shake their heads at all the talking and self-importance of those who couldn't figure out how to proceed, or stoop down to set up chairs for a lecture they mean to give.

Back to the theme of freedom. If I may be so bold, I'd like to summarize the idea of freedom: at the stage of free activity, *nothing that comes from the past is allowed to determine the present course of action.* No curriculum, no text, by Steiner or anyone else, no tradition can tell me what to do unless I choose to allow it to tell me. You have seen the child and loved the child, and you understand what your capacities are: now teach!

I can feel the machinations of the minds of those of you that have to answer to the parents and the board at your school cringing at the notion that teachers might be free to disregard the past.

Two things for you to consider:

The first is that everywhere I have introduced this notion of a teacher's freedom, someone always objects that parents complain about a lack of consistency. Well, no one has ever complained about an inconsistent *good* experience that their child had had at school! A lack of consistency is what people might see when they look for the reason that their child is unhappy or isn't learning. Parents of happy, well-adjusted children don't complain about, and usually celebrate the creativity and inconsistency (in the sense of not following the usual ways) of their "genius" teacher. So, let's worry about quality, rather than about consistency for its own sake, and recognize that, as Emerson says, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds." The consistency we should seek is a consistency of *quality*, not of content.

The second point for the worried bunch is that no one should expect a newly-minted teacher to discard norms and traditions; in all but the rarest of cases, a school should probably not allow an inexperienced teacher to go off on her or his own tangent. But there is a model for moving in the direction of creative and free work: the medieval guilds. The first step in the acquisition of a profession was *apprenticeship*. For several years, the young person would sit at the feet of the master, observe, listen, and gradually receive permission to do aspects of the work. Then came the *journeyman* phase: small groups of those who had completed their apprenticeship would leave their towns and travel to other towns, where they could hire themselves out in local workshops. After two or three years, they would return home and then, if their skills proved deserving, receive the *master* designation and could operate their own shops and employ apprentices and journeymen.

The consistency we should seek [in teaching] is a consistency of quality, not of content.

While we do not employ apprentices for periods of years anymore, the process is still relevant. To begin with, the teachers are perfectly justified in doing what the training seminars had taught them. As a new class teacher, and later also as a First Class holder, I felt that my first time doing anything is not yet the time to innovate. Occasionally I may have had a novel idea worth trying, but for the most part I did what I had seen done around me. The focus was on building skills and learning to observe and to reflect. But then, with the second class, I began taking more liberties, and by the time I had my third group, I trusted myself to go into unexplored territories, knowing that I would get lost on occasion but that I would find my way back.

The process of moving from apprenticeship though a journeyman stage to mastery takes time, and there is a *right* amount of time, but not a *set* amount of time, for each teacher to make this transition. Some teachers may never feel ready to move from an occasional tinkering with traditions to a full-on innovative idea. This hesitation might very well be completely justified.

The time these teachers need might have to stretch into another life, and I say this without a shred of criticism. Yet, such a person should not try to prevent others from leaving the confines of the familiar when they are ripe for exploration.

Explorers can bristle at limitations on their freedom to innovate. Ultimately, if our movement does not attract people with the capacity for innovation, and if it does not nurture such people to the point where they can innovate, responsibly, it will ossify and die. I have said on other occasions that Rudolf Steiner was a consummate social innovator. I suspect that he would be deeply disappointed by the orthodoxy that has enveloped so much of what he initiated as revolutionary ideas and practices in his day.

Rudolf Steiner was a consummate social innovator. I suspect that he would be deeply disappointed by the orthodoxy that has enveloped so much of what he initiated as revolutionary ideas and practices in his day.

We stand the danger of thinking about our curriculum like off-the-rack suits: you have a twelve-year-old student? We have just the right suit for him! It is the same suit that all twelve-year-olds need. In fact, if you happen to have been a student at this school yourself, you will recognize it immediately as the same suit we gave you back then! Off-the-rack suits are fine for those who cannot afford anything else, but the reality of an independent school is that our parents expect a little custom tailoring, so to speak, and that may not be a bad thing.

By the same token, just like innovation is an existential necessity for our movement, responsibility is as well. We can take an earnest study of anthroposophy as a marker for the responsible pole of *Responsible Innovation*, though I would quickly add that such asstudy alone is not sufficient. And just like the pole of innovation should have a wide circle drawn around it so that various conditions of destiny can find accommodation in our schools, so, too, the relationship with anthroposophy is a question of destiny. Patience and encouragement work better than resentment and accusation. Then, too, just like suffocating the freedom to innovate will lead to suffocation of renewal and creativity, active resistance to anthroposophy (even in the form of cynicism or passive-aggressive body language) is poison for a Waldorf school. I don't deny that you can find today some statements by Rudolf Steiner objectionable, or that there are aspects of his work with which you may feel no connection; but to deny anthroposophy's role in the vitality of Waldorf education, not only historically but for the future, is the spiritual emasculation of Waldorf education, divorcing it from the spiritual world.

Waldorf has to mean something, and what it means is drawn directly from Rudolf Steiner. Our responsibility to the spiritual world cannot be met without an active anthroposophical striving. People who say that "Waldorf would be great if they only dropped that crazy anthroposophy stuff" may believe themselves supportive of the schools, but their advice would lead to complete dissolution of the essential fabric of the movement. Anthroposophy is the light that Waldorf schools photo-synthesize into their living organism. The schools obviously do not teach it, but for the teachers to carry out their work in a manner true to their identity as Waldorf teachers, anthroposophy is simply irreplaceable. It is similarly essential for contemplating the relationships between teachers.

And this leads us to the second stipulation: collaboration. Inevitably, each teacher develops a sense for what constitutes responsible teaching, whether innovative or not, and what constitutes anthroposophical striving. If we all ran one-room schoolhouses, each teacher's perspective would be the guiding principle for his or her school, and that would be the end of it. Schools would thrive or struggle or shut down based on how successful the teacher was in establishing credibility in that particular community. But in our schools, the collective effort is not only important: it is potentially our biggest asset. The journey through the stages of knowledge that lead to truth is fraught.

Last night, we looked at some of the obstacles that beset us long before we embark on a spiritual path, and we know that there are many others obstacles beside these: interpersonal and internal. I spoke about interpersonal obstacles in Portland a couple of years ago. Briefly, the interpersonal amounts to the presence of adversarial spiritual forces that most readily wreck a collaborative effort, and the presence of the highest benevolent forces that can fill these efforts with grace. Freedom is a moment of grace, and so is benevolent innovation, too. The presence of our spiritual family, our brothers and sisters, can allow our meetings to become celebrations. Finding the Intuitions, Imaginations, and

Techniques we need is so much easier when we have colleagues who can call on what we have to offer, and provide what we cannot. I have had the good fortune of spending a few years in two separate working groups that found a groove, so to speak, and became productive in service to their constituents in ways that transcended anything that the individual members could have done on their own. On good days, you could feel the feet of the angels in the soft breeze that wafted through the conversation.

But just as crucially from the point of view of institutional work, collaboration is a message to students that adults are capable of working together. When we abdicate the chalice image in favor of more efficient management structures, we lose something of our moral authority to stand before our students in the name of the new mysteries. The spaces in between grow fallow. We are more efficient, maybe, and we get to go home sooner, but something dies. We leave the development of the new art, the social art, to the future. I understand that sometimes it's all that can be done. Just like not every marriage can be saved, not every collaboration can become fruitful. We are dealing, after all, with destiny questions. Not every question can find an answer yet. But again, we want to become healers, and if we don't work on healing our own wounds, it is much more difficult to bring healing to others. We can bring students content just as easily in a hierarchical structure as in a collaborative one, but an education towards freedom is challenged because we have shut down a whole region of potential knowledge and growth when we discarded collaborative leadership.

At the end of the arc that stretches from heaven to earth, the Waldorf impulse in its purity is found in the union of my capacity to love with the need of the other for healing.

Last of the three stipulations is the nature of a free deed, which we have touched on already. We aim to act purely out of love. In the pedagogical sense this will mean directing our love towards the needs of our pupils. We first have to see and understand them, of course; once we have heard within us what they are trying to say, how they sing themselves into being, we sing back. We obviously won't always hear them, and occasionally we will only sing the songs we know already. But the goal, the aim, is improvisational singing.

In an article that my colleague Jennifer Snyder wrote for the book on the Seven Core Principles, Jennifer uses the metaphor of jazz music. In its highest form, jazz is the musical incarnation of responsible innovation: it has principles and requires both imagination and technique, but it is always new. And just like innovation, jazz can also be irresponsible. In its debased forms it appeals to base instincts and draws inspiration from them as well.

I would now like to describe how Rudolf Steiner's own relationship with Waldorf education went through an arc of development. In my article on the second teachers' meditation[1] there is a detailed description of this development. I would like to now add to this description the aforementioned three-phase process of the old guilds.

The apprenticeship phase of Waldorf education began with the original two-week, three-part course. We rightly continue to read *Study of Man*, a.k.a. *The Foundations of Human Experience*, and the two companion books – *Practical Advice to Teachers* and *Discussions with Teachers* – because when an impulse descends from the spiritual world, an aspect of apprenticeship remains relevant for hundreds of years. Steiner spent a lot of those two weeks discussing curriculum and methods. In the early years of the first Waldorf school, as the school added a high school and established relationships with the state, the main focus remained for a while on curriculum and methods, as well as on questions of governance. At the same time, right from the beginning there was also an emphasis on the teacher's inner life and on relationships with both students and the spiritual world. In the first teachers' meditation, the self of the teacher is found at the intersection of the path of knowledge of the world and the path of inner development. There is no question that a meditative path was completely assumed and taken for granted when the first faculty was assembled. So, we can be sure that the expectation that new spiritual substance would flow into the work of the teachers was woven into the fabric of the school right from the beginning. But the lectures and the faculty meetings had, by necessity, to focus on establishing basic practices.

Already in *Balance in Teaching* (1920), there is more emphasis on seeing principles at play: the incarnating and excarnating effects of the various subjects and

1 "The New Impulse of the Second Teacher's Meditation" in Elan Leibner, *See the Child, Love the Child, Know Yourself: Now Teach* (Hudson, NY: Waldorf Publications, 2019).

certain aspects within subjects. Rather than told to teach X or Y, the teachers are told about the *effects* of X or Y and they are left to intuit how to use those options for maximum benefit. It could be considered the journeyman phase: you understand technique, now here is some greater depth, go and use it wisely.

After the first Goetheanum burned on New Year's Eve 1922-23, Steiner showed exasperation with the anthroposophical movement in general and also with the teachers of the first Waldorf school. In my view, he was frustrated with their focus on "the curriculum" and felt that their teaching had grown intellectual and atomistic. If you read the lectures of October 1923, given just before the second teachers' meditation was given, it is completely clear that he did not look very favorably on what the teachers were doing. Those three lectures imply some striking problems at the school, before pointing towards holistic teaching, and particularly towards a focus on the need to heal.

Please forgive me a little personal perspective here: I've spent many years reading these lectures again and again, then working with the second meditation in order to find the answers to three questions:

1. Why did Steiner give the teachers a second meditation?

2. How is this meditation different from the first one?

3. And how is this meditation connected to the lectures that came on the preceding days?

None of these questions had an obvious answer, as far as I could see. My assumption was that Steiner was extremely busy in those years and had to be economic and purposeful; therefore, if he said *these* things at *that* time, it was because he felt that the teachers needed to hear them. Similarly, if he gave them a second meditation it was not because he had nothing to do on the car ride from Dornach, which he then used to doodle something just for heck of it. I felt I had to discover a mystery hidden in plain sight, but it was not revealing itself to me. Still, I had a feeling that local sports fans will recognize immediately: I trusted the process. There was something there, and if I gave it time and earnest effort, it will sing its song to me. But it was mostly silent for many years. Occasionally there were whispers, but nothing that became clear enough. Then, during a Pedagogical Section conference that preceded an AWSNA conference, many different threads suddenly came together for me. The result of that moment is described in my article on the New Impulse of the Second Teachers' Meditation (see footnote above). I would say that everything I have done since has been profoundly colored by that experience.

I suggest that what Steiner was after at that point was *mastery*. He wanted the teachers to find their task in the needs of their students and went so far as to give a meditation wherein the self of the teacher is found in "Man's inner being." Note: not MY inner being but Man's inner being: the other's inner being. This is radical stuff! My Self, my highest Self, is a task: to love the other by addressing the other's need for healing. At this stage, nothing else matters: no tradition, no standards, no fear of ridicule. If you can see the child, and love the child, and know what it is that you can do: do it. That's all. Whether this thing you do is old, new, or middle-aged.

This is what I mean by the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow: at the end of the arc that stretches from heaven to earth, the Waldorf impulse in its purity is found in the union of my capacity to love with the need of the other for healing. The word 'healing' is used here not in the sense of *fixing* a problem; recognizing and encouraging a talent can be all the healing that one needs, too. The alchemists spoke of gold as metallic sunlight. Healing has this quality that what was imbalanced and therefore dark, finds its balance and is therefore light-filled, sun-like again. My realized Self in the inner being of the other: heart forces as sun forces. Gold!

Lecture 3: The American Scholar

When I went to Emerson College in 2008, I was an Israeli-American working in England with a class of trainees that had only one British student; the others hailed from Japan, Korea, Norway, Russia, Mauritius, and Saudi Arabia. The international flavor of Emerson College was its signature right from the beginning. Francis Edmunds, the college founder, saw it as a meeting point of East and West, right on the 0° meridian, to which people would come, spend a year or two, and then go back to their countries and spread the word. It was something of a riddle to me that Edmunds chose to name an anthroposophical college in the UK after an American philosopher, even though for me Emerson had been a favorite I read since the beginning of my teaching career. But why not "Steiner College" or any other European or English namesake?

Thankfully, one of Edmund's co-workers, John Thompson, was giving a talk about the history of the college. He explained that it was Emerson's essay, *The American Scholar*, that inspired Edmunds and justified

naming the college after its author. Of course, after the talk I went right back to my house to re-read that essay.

Reading Emerson has been, for me, like reading nascent anthroposophy in beautiful, poetic English. His language soars and touches the heart in a way that translated German almost never does. Years before my visit to Emerson college, when I still was a first-year teacher, I used to go on weekends to the cemetery overlooking my little New Jersey town, climb to the top of the hill where the oldest graves are, sit among the gravestones of those I imagined might have even met Emerson in their day, and read his essays. It sounds romantic now, and there was something of that back then, but it was also a real experience of solace at a time when I was incredibly lonely. The loneliness of young, single, class teachers is often difficult for other people to grasp. Emerson was giving me respite with his poetic philosophy.

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Then I met my wife, my weekends became family time, and for many years Emerson was more a treasured memory than an active companion. Somehow, I still brought his book of essays to England with me, and how glad I was to return to reading his work now that the hectic life of a class teacher gave way to the measured pace of a college environment.

In *The American Scholar*, Emerson proposes that the education of the scholar comes from three sources: from *Nature*, from *the mind of the Past*, especially as it manifests through books, and from *action*. Francis Edmunds saw in that tripartite proposal a perfect framework for establishing an anthroposophical college. We will look at these three teachers of the scholar in a moment. First, we note that before he begins explicating these sources of education, Emerson paints a picture worth sharing here.

I do not know if there is a way to improve on Emerson's language, but I have to apologize at the outset that he uses the male pronouns throughout. Bear with me if you can, because if you can inwardly substitute the word 'human' for Emerson's 'Man,' you will find that the thought is really beautiful.

Emerson calls it an ancient fable, that in the beginning the gods divided Man into men, the whole into parts, and allowed for specialization of the offices in which the archetype is made manifest. Thus, like the organs of the body specializing in one aspect of "body-hood," if you will, the various professions manifest specific attributes of archetypal Man, or, as we would say today, the human archetype. But, he says, the whole has been chopped into so many pieces that it can no longer be gathered together again: "The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about so many monsters—a good finger, a neck, a stomach, but never a man." And so, Man on the farm becomes a mere farmer, the attorney a statute book, the mechanic a machine. Each lives the little life, blind to their potential as an attribute of Man.

Emerson introduces the scholar thus: "In this distribution of functions the scholar is the designated intellect. In the right state he is Man Thinking. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking."

Then, Emerson proposes the three teachers, or sources of education, of the scholar I mentioned earlier:

- First in time and in importance is Nature. In the infinite cycles of nature, in her rhythms, we find an echo of the infinity of the human spirit: without beginning, without end. In the interrelationships of her seemingly disparate systems, the scholar learns to see the hidden threads that bind the world into a whole: what at one time looked an isolated fact becomes, upon further review, a detail in a deeper tapestry. Then comes this remarkable observation: nature's every law has correspondence in the human soul. One is the seal, the other its print. Emerson concludes with what will sound familiar to many of you: "*And, in fine, the ancient precept, 'Know thyself,' and the modern precept, 'Study nature,' become at last one maxim*." This final convergence of the outer path and inner path is a familiar theme, as we saw yesterday when discussing freedom. So nature is the teacher of contextual learning, the origin of our capacity to grasp a detail in its place within a narrative: ourselves as *singular entities*, membered into the fellowship of mankind; *ourselves collectively*, written large on the canvas of the universe.

- The second teacher is what Emerson calls "the mind of the Past," in which he includes all human

endeavors and institutions, but especially books. In good books the experience of life has been transmuted into truth, and what makes them worth reading is the opportunity to experience life again through the truth. Karl König once said that every act of writing is a Good Friday deed, killing living meaning into ink, and every act of reading is an Easter deed, resurrecting meaning from the dead ink. But, says Emerson, no transmutation is perfect for all time. What is sacred about the act of translating an experience into language is the act itself, which is a deed of Man Thinking, not its outcome, which are the thoughts written down. So the scholar should read the mind of the Past in idle hours, fallow times, when his own mind is not astir with actual direct experiences of life. Fallow times must come, and books are our companions then, but better yet is the direct translation of life into truth by the scholar, when the spirit would reveal itself to the active mind.

Stepping away from Emerson for a moment, let me editorialize: we, who have been fortunate to come into the treasure trove of recorded experiences once had by Rudolf Steiner, stand both the immeasurable beneficiary of learning from them and the danger of remaining forever in the stage of memorizing, combining, and comparing them rather than seeking our own experiences. Georg Kühlewind once likened anthroposophy to an airport runway: it is meant to help you take off! He then quipped that too many people take magnifying glasses to the runway and study the way in which the pebbles rest next to each other. It might be of interest to a runway engineer, but not the point of having a runway. We are meant, at last, to take flight. If this sounds like an echo of the passage from apprenticeship to mastery, you are hearing well. Just like a concert pianist practices scales and arpeggios daily, so we return to the Bible, Shakespeare, Emerson, and Steiner. But if our Waldorf education is truly the art of education, we must, at last, create our own art, too: write our books, play our concerts, sing our tune. In fallow times we go back to scales, arpeggios, even the Symphony of the Creative Word, but then, however haltingly, we must compose.

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- The third influence of the scholar according to Emerson is Action. While it is, for the scholar, subordinate to nature and to the mind of the Past, it is the matrix out of which future learning is born. Do today, and tomorrow you will have something on which to reflect and from which to learn. Though Emerson does not go that far, I would say that in his description of Action, of Willing, as the third great influence, there are clear echoes of the notion that the will has a seed nature, and that our current thinking is a reflection of past deeds. Rudolf Steiner went so far as to say that our countenance today bears the imprint of our limb nature in our past life. On a smaller and more modest scale, the Seven Core Principles, in the Methodology section, speak of moving from experience to concept, from doing to learning.

And so Emerson, in his beautiful language, essentially tells us to learn from the present, from the observation of Nature; then from the past, from books in the broadest sense of culture; and then to prepare for future learning by taking Action. Is this far from Spirit beholding, Spirit recalling, Spirit vision? These practices, for those newer to this work, come from Rudolf Steiner's *Foundation Stone Meditation*.

I would like to look specifically at the challenge of working with the past and the future, with *learning*, or reflecting on what is and has been, and with *doing*, which is seeding the future. In the classroom we have to create a rhythm between these two. In our jargon we call it incarnating and excarnating, thinking and willing, and we call the swing towards the past *thinking*, or *inhaling*, or *waking*, and the swing towards the future *willing*, or *exhaling*, or *falling asleep*. At the extremes of human life, it is birth and death: contraction and expansion. Steiner often said that teaching the children to breathe and sleep (not directly, of course) are the two essential tasks of the teacher. The teacher is the mediator of learning and doing, the spiritual midwife that helps the student learn how to live healthfully on earth.

For us, as professionals and as strivers after truth, there is another kind of pendulum. One side is the professional path, and the other a pure spiritual, esoteric path. The first is principally turned outwards, the second principally inwards.

On the one side is our life as Waldorf teachers. Let's use *Study of Pedagogy* as a marker for that. It should be clear from what I said yesterday that we should study, at the very least, the whole arc of Steiner's work with

the teachers, not just *Study of Man*, and we should also study what our contemporaries are doing both inside and outside the Waldorf movement. A difficulty implied in my opening story about getting to read Emerson again when I got to Emerson College is that for the preceding eighteen years I felt like I was often behind a few 8-balls, like I didn't have time to expand my horizons because I was too busy keeping my head above water. Still, I did not yet have children at home, and was at least able to spend time studying anthroposophy. So the reality is that even the study of pedagogy can be challenging, but it is still just one half of the story.

It is not difficult to tell parents in any town or city how the local Waldorf school is different from the other local schools, but it can be almost impossible to tell how your Waldorf school is meaningfully different from other Waldorf schools.

Then there is our life as seekers of truth in an inward sense. I would suggest that the marker for that is the lessons of the *First Class of the School for Spiritual Science*. For those who are new to this term, the School for Spiritual Science was established by Steiner when the Anthroposophical Society was re-founded on Christmas of 1923, a year after the first Goetheanum burned down, and with Steiner as its President. The term First Class means something akin to first grade, not to an aristocratic social tier. It was meant to be the first of three classes, or grades, of esoteric schooling, but Steiner died before he was able to teach the lessons for the second and third classes. There are 19 lessons of the First Class, each centered around a mantra. Three additional mantras were given, making a total of 22. These lessons and mantras describe a path and guide the soul on the journey into the higher worlds. Today, the members of the School for Spiritual Science typically meet about once per month to have Class lessons that are read or freely rendered by local Class holders, as they are called. People who join the First Class are able to team up with others in their professional fields and form sections of the School for Spiritual Science. These sections strive to make the lessons and the mantras of service to their respective fields and also to encourage and coordinate new research.

When I said yesterday that I twice had the experience of working in groups that found a collaborative groove that made the whole substantially greater than the sum of its parts, the North American Section Council of the School for Spiritual Science was one of them. It still is. I can only say to those of you, who wish to make your outer and inner life resonate with one another and with other people, that the Pedagogical Section should, by all rights, be a home for you. The next step in our work on this continent should be a greater activation of Section members regionally, without needing the Council's initiative. If this sounds like an approach that speaks to your own yearning, then please feel invited to find your brothers and sisters and get to work.

At the end, the outer and inner paths have to meet. It is important and good that, a few years ago, the leadership of the anthroposophical society in Dornach recognized that a gap had opened between those whose focus was the professional paths arising out of anthroposophy (teachers, doctors, farmers, etc.) and those whose focus was esotericism. There were those who worked and those who studied, to put it crudely and one-sidedly. Society members decided to reform the way in which they worked and to encourage all the various sections to work on bridging this gap. So now the executive team and the leaders of the sections work as one circle, and within the Pedagogical Section there has been a concerted effort to study the lectures of *Study of Man* together with lessons of the First Class. This has been a fascinating study and I am certain that much good will come of it in the coming years.

And now we will take a turn.

Everything I have said to this point was meant to establish the conceptual framework that could undergird the practice of responsible innovation. I hope that I was able to establish the "why" aspect clearly enough.

Now, in the immortal words of the pilots who flew you here, we begin our descent. We will now look at the "how" aspect, and both in what the vignettes and the panel are bringing and in what I plan to bring tomorrow, we will share instances of "what" as examples of attempts at responsible innovation.

How might a school go about establishing a protocol for responsible innovation? I will get into more detail than some might find necessary, because, to me, above and below have to connect. We have found the justification for this work, I hope, and now I would like all of you to be able to go back to your schools with a useful protocol, in case you wish to try one out.

The most basic process has four steps. As a rising 6th grade teacher, I will use the Roman SPQR acronym:

1. Study and establishment of agreements
2. Planning and previewing possible innovative projects
3. Questing, or trying them out
4. Reviewing them

Note: I have also done this work in relation to the transition from early childhood to the grade school and from grade school to high school, and I applied the same principles to working on innovation in the festival life of the school. The process is essentially the same: begin with agreements about what the intention and the underlying principles are, then suggest and refine ideas, then try them out, and finally review them. This is to say, that the example below will focus on innovation in the curriculum, but the process is readily applicable to other aspects of the school life.

Let's go through these steps in more detail:

Study and forming of agreements: The faculty divides by the age group that they teach. Those who teach multiple age groups can choose where they want to go. Steiner speaks of child development in chunks of about $2^1/_3$ years (or 7 divided by 3). Usually, the Early Childhood folks all work together (although with the proliferation of very early childhood programs it is certainly possible to sub-divide this group as well).

The grade school folks divide into three age groups: 7-9, 9-12, 12-14. Alternatively, groupings can include grades 1-3, 4-5, and 6-8. High school groups sometimes work all together, and sometimes divide into 9-10th grades, and 11-12th.

Each group has four sets of points to consider:

1. Child Development: What do we know and consider important about child development at this age? This should include physiological, emotional, and cognitive aspects.
2. Child Experiences: When we have children of this age in our classroom, what are the age-appropriate experiences we would like them to have? (In other words, not what do I want to teach, but rather what do I want the child to *experience* in my classroom.)
3. Skills and Capacities: What academic, artistic, social and practical skills and capacities should the students develop at this age?
4. Local Flavor (terroir): What in our area is good and deserving of a place in our program, as aspects that will help make us local and organic to our community? What flavors, qualities, arts, crafts, and traditions would we be wise to incorporate? It is not difficult to tell parents in any town or city how the local Waldorf school is different from the other local schools, but it can be almost impossible to tell a Waldorf person how your school is meaningfully different from other Waldorf schools. I think that it will be important to change that going forward, important to grow more local and organic. One point to consider is that the population we serve in most independent schools, and, I imagine, many of the charter schools, does not necessarily live in the communities wherein the schools are located. Parents moved there for work, and most of the extended family is not nearby. Most of the teachers are also not from that community, so there is a sense of being a bit of an alien insertion into the community. The affinities between Waldorf schools and the lack of local flavor and local families are usually a fact of life, and we should strive to grow more rooted in our community by seeking and connecting with its positive attributes.

As a practical matter, I usually have each member of each group write words, phrases, or sentences about each of these four aspects on large post-it sheets, which we put up on the blackboard. Then the group goes from sheet to sheet, looks at each one together, and decides if anything is missing. At that point, each person gets a few votes (five or so per topic) and marks the votes next to the points that seem most important. Any point that gets more than half of the voting faculty's votes is circled and considered an agreement for this school. At the end of this first session, there are four sets of agreements for each age group.

Then each person has to add two more aspects. The first is to identify the particular students for whom that teacher would like to innovate. The reason could be because these students have a problem the teacher would like to address, a gift the teacher would like to nurture, or they are part of a social dynamic in the group that the teacher wants to help remedy or foster. As I mentioned yesterday, we have to sense where our healing attention is needed. Sometimes it can be what we could call "a question of our time," such as

the addiction to electronic devices, or the question of gender identity or sexual orientation that lives in this group in a particular way. The teacher will need to feel what his or her students are asking for. This is where the meditative life really comes into play. In the constant contemplation of individuals and classes, certain questions rise to the surface and beg to be addressed. Sometimes we know what to do out of established practices, but sometimes we can feel that a new practice is needed because our efforts, arising from the familiar, have not addressed the question sufficiently.

The last point is you yourself, the teacher. What do you love? If you could do anything tomorrow morning with your students, what would get you springing out of bed full of eagerness? Listen to that. An eager teacher brings an infectious enthusiasm to the classroom. The healing that the students are asking for can come in different flavors. You are their teacher for a reason. Trust that there is a way to gift them something that comes from your heart of hearts. If you are a musician, maybe you can write a song; if a poet, write poetry; paint a picture with or for them, if an outdoors person, plan an experience in nature.

Planning: Altogether there are four sets of agreements to this project and two more personal aspects. These six elements can be imagined as the six sides of a honeycomb. Now each person goes home and has to "make honey," which means to come up with an idea or ideas that incorporate as many of these six as possible and that violates none of them.

Preview: On the next day, or the next meeting if the faculty does this over time, the group is divided into smaller groups of three, where each person introduces his or her innovative idea to the other two colleagues. In a workshop, they get about ten minutes to share the idea and ask for suggestions and reflections. The ten minutes are simply a matter of time limitations. If time is available in greater or lesser amounts, the discussion periods can change. It is very important that this phase is conducted with honesty, that each colleague feels responsible to reflect on the new ideas as they map back to the four agreements, and that each colleague says what is on his or her mind, especially if the new idea does not seem to map back to the agreements. While it is not always easy to share or to reflect back questions, this aspect is a big part of the *responsible* pole of responsible innovation. The innovation has to be responsible, accountable to the agreements of the school. This is part of what the "collaborative" in the sub-title of this conference is about.

It takes about 30 minutes for each of the three subgroup members to review and enhance their idea through conversation, and then the whole group (organized by student-age) can come together and hear short (1-2 minutes) summaries of the new, refined ideas. It is also helpful if each age group chooses one or two new possibilities and prepares a few minutes of a sample lesson delivered to the whole faculty. A workshop can end with a series of experimental innovations from the different age groups.

Two steps remain:

Questing: Trying the new possibility with students.

Review: Gathering relevant impressions from colleagues, parents, and, as appropriate, students as well. This step is important for several reasons: the first is that we can only see the process from one point of view, our own. Parents, however, hear about it at home; colleagues experience the class during the hours and days surrounding the experiment; and the students themselves, once they are old enough, often have meaningful things to tell us if we are willing to listen. The other reason is that we tend to judge our own efforts favorably. Daniel Kahneman shows several ways in which we tend of over-estimate our knowledge, and after the fact we tend to construct a narrative that affirms our suspicions and that leaves us "looking good." In other words, we need a coherent narrative in which we are "the good guys" and we tend to select the observations that will affirm this narrative. If we have honest colleagues who want to help us grow, a bit of honest feedback can help nudge us in the direction of a clear-eyed perspective of what worked well and what might need, at the very least, a bit of tweaking if it were to be repeated. This is another aspect of responsibility and collaboration in the innovative process. If we count the initial process of reaching agreements, the preview, and the review, we have three processes promoting responsibility around the development of innovative practices. This is not an accident. In *How to Know Higher Worlds*, Rudolf Steiner advises that for every step on the spiritual path

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we should take three steps in the perfection of our character. Seeking to innovate for children is asking for spiritual substance; it is an attempt to open a little window and allow the spiritual world to inspire and work with us. It is noble and fraught. All manner of weaknesses in our constitution can lead us astray, and leaving room for our colleagues to help us do our work so that it is as healing and nourishing as we would wish it to be is sound practice.

I would like to suggest that once a faculty has created a set of agreements about the curriculum, the festivals, or the transitions between the sections of the school, the people who carry pedagogical leadership roles should gather those sheets, transfer them to computer files, and render them available to the entire faculty. Once or twice a year, the faculty can perform an abbreviated first session, in which it looks at the old agreements, sees if changes are necessary, and then repeats the process of soliciting each other's ideas for new possibilities, offering reflections, and setting out on quests.

A school that can repeatedly make room for collaborative, responsible innovation is a happening place; it will attract creative people with collaborative inclinations and will inspire all who come to visit it with the creative energy of its faculty. It is my experience that nothing attracts the parents we really want to have more than the fire in an inspired teacher's eye. But give me a parent who is strong enough to come visit a school despite these attacks, and if that parent is the kind of open-minded person that, in the end, makes for the partner I wish to have in the education of their child, then the passion of inspiration will let them know that this place will serve their child well.

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