The Optimist and the Pessimist
Working with After-Impressions
By Rudiger Janisch

Two people see a glass of water filled halfway. One says: it is half full. The other says: it is half empty. Both are correct. The first is called an optimist—he sees what is there, and the second a pessimist—he sees what is not there.

When it comes to the material world, which we perceive with our senses, we are all optimists. We perceive what is there and we can test it out with all the twelve senses that Rudolf Steiner identified. Here is a list below. Give it a try! When doing so it is best to do it blindfolded, except for the sense of sight obviously. This helps so that the sense of sight does not overpower all the other senses:

- If we touch something we feel the object (sense of touch)
- If we have pain in our body we locate it (sense of life or well-being)
- If we raise our arms to have the fingers touch each other we notice their position (sense of movement)
- If we try to rise on our tiptoes with closed eyes we struggle to keep balance (sense of balance)
- If we smell the scent of a flower, or some food, we identify its source (sense of smell)
- If we place a pinch of salt in our mouth, the taste is on our tongue (sense of taste)
- If we open our eyes we see all the forms and colors around us (sense of sight)
- If we change locations, or put our hands in warm water, we feel the different temperature (sense of warmth)
- If a tone sounds we hear it (sense of hearing)
- If somebody speaks we hear words even if it is a language we don't understand (sense of word)
- If we listen through the words to their meaning we perceive the thoughts (sense of thought or concept)
- And if we go beyond the message and get interested in who is speaking, we perceive the unique personality, the ‘I’ of the person in front of us (sense of I or ego)

With all these twelve senses we are ‘optimists’ of the sense world, and we can become quite distressed if even one of the senses does not want to function properly.

But what about the ‘pessimist’ of the material world? How do we perceive what is “not there”? Do this experiment using the sense of sight. Draw two identical black silhouette profiles and place them facing each other not too far apart. We now can look at the two black profiles as good material ‘optimist’. But we can also look at the space between the two profiles and discover a vase shape—space and counterspace!

Another experiment with the sense of sight is to stare intently at a brilliant red shape and shift the gaze to a white or light gray surface. The well-known after-image color appears. This can be done with any strong color and will have various fascinating results—a color in the material gives way to its countercolor.

Try this in regard to the sense of movement: We stand close to a wall and for a moment press our arm with full strength against the wall. Then we step away from the wall and what does our arm do? Without my will or effort it just rises up. What force makes our arms rise? Out there is a whole world of movement, but also one of countermovement, of space and counterspace.

For those who have an affinity towards the world of tones, of music, you can listen to a sequence of tones or a music piece and pay attention to what after-experiences arise. Most easily one has the experience of movement. If the music has a certain rhythm, we are naturally inclined to dance. But the movement experience of music can be very differentiated. Some people even have colors as after-experience.

We can also explore the sense of word by taking a vowel, a consonant, a syllable, or even a word and sound it for ourselves in a contemplative inquiring mood. What after-experience arises, what gesture does an Ah evoke in me, or a B? What picture does a sound combination like w-l-w-l-r bring forth? For those familiar with eurythmy they will find a great help there.

This is a way of playful inquiry, to explore all our senses and try to discover after-experiences and other complementary qualities. In following the soul’s inner response to outer stimuli we may trace the working of the supersensible—the “pessimist’s” counterspace opens to new, inner realms.

In anthroposophy Rudolf Steiner suggests calling these phenomena the world of the living, the etheric world, the counterspace, the world in which thoughts are not memory pictures or abstractions but living working forces.
Dear Readers,

In our 25th issue, we feature two articles on the human senses as taught by Rudolf Steiner: “The Twelve Senses” by Mark Ebersole, and “The Optimist and Pessimist: Working with After-Impressions” by Rudiger Janisch. Steiner spoke of twelve senses, rather than five or six, which can be surprising at first. Yet we live our lives every day in and through these senses, and may readily explore them ourselves in thought and practice. As with Waldorf education and so much else in Steiner’s work, the whole human being is grasped and explored: our physical being, our soul, and our spirit. Each grounds us in a different world—the first in our living bodies, the second in our immediate environment, and the third in our deeper, timeless being—and each has the requisite senses to open these worlds to us. We hope these articles and exercises will bring new insights and inner work for each of you.

We were very happy to have completed our goal of sending all of our current participants a copy of How to Know Higher Worlds and an accompanying study guide. Now that we’ve begun receiving back your completed study guides, we can see through your carefully thought out answers just how much of your time, effort, and heart has gone into this work. The dedication you’ve shown in finishing them is immense and we’re humbled by your words and experiences. To those of you still working on them, you are welcome to send them in to our office once you have finished. We would love to see the work you have done! If you wish it returned to you for future reference, just let us know in your letter. If you have not yet received this book and study guide, write to us and we can send one off to you.

Your art and poetry submissions are also always welcome, especially work imagined out of your anthroposophical studies. We have begun to post some art and poetry to our Facebook page and website. Many people respond and say they are encouraged by your artistic work. As in the newsletter, we use first names only and the city and state where one is located.

We hope these articles on the senses as well as the words of your fellow inmates will continue to inspire you. Feel free to share these newsletters with others. Many of you have discovered anthroposophy in this way.

Blessings on your path, Kathy Serafin

Illuminations

You people have helped me so much! Knowing that you cared about me, and about me learning to improve all areas of my life has given me great sustenance. I’ve written letters to you when I was in the hole on punitive, feeling sad and depressed or suicidal, and you sent me texts to help stabilize my mind and encourage my spirit. I’ve written when I was happy and just wanted to talk. I have so much affection for you who represent anthroposophy. If I saw you, I would greet you as friends with warmth and a smile on my face. 

Linnitte, Newport, AR

Let me say that from the darker aspects of life and my traumatic experiences, I have found light. I do not regret any situation in my life, because from that discourse I have found some harmony, and others that I maybe have caused unrest or emotional pain may have learned and grown from these experiences also. This is an example of the dual nature and interworkings of the different polarities in life and the assimilation of these dual experiences in order to achieve balance in all realms. Eyvind, Jarratt, VA

This has been a hard year for me and I’m trying to reboorn – right now I’m taking in the “Victims Awareness Offender’s Program”. The group is all about compassions and empathy – these are the things I can share with them as they are part of my learning from studying anthroposophy. Steve, Ione, CA

I can clearly see that APO and these books are introducing me to an understanding of the higher worlds. I mean actually seeing and experiencing how everything is falling into place. Opening up the organs to perceive and experience what was and is all around me all the time. Subjects that I had read before that did not make any sense at the time are now beginning to come together and make more sense. I had a deep inkling that I was being told something, this was years ago, and holding onto the belief and pursuing forward has allowed me to receive more understanding. But true genuine understanding of the truth lies outside and beyond books, beyond intellectual philosophical understanding. It comes through direct experience of the spiritual world and the beings in that realm. I now understand that they have been guiding me, guiding me as much to the capacity that I was able to understand, and endure. I guess I could say, because one must be prepared before he sees into the spiritual world. James, Carrabelle, FL

One of the things that caught my attention was the love and the passion of Rudolf Steiner for human kind, that he dedicated most of his life to share, and taught his own experiences. Whenever he gained, he gained for all of us. In many ways, it’s much better to study than just to read.

Rodolfo, Ellsworth, KS

My life has been a jumble of late, and my studies have suffered my lack of attention to them. Hopefully, now I have put some things behind me, I can become more focused on my studies. My thanks to you and the society for your letters of encouragement and hope. Struggles are daily inside, mostly with those that are lost and have no path. I see these as ones who are yet to try and find self. Lost, groping blindly in darkness, holding on to what they have known most of their lives; hatred of their fellows, fear of even trying to seek spiritual self—I hope I have moved past those things and hold our hope where hope was once lost. Samuel, Whiteville, TN

All my self-perceived burdens have fallen away. Through detachment, pain and suffering has been reduced to something that is to be lived through and endured with strength and courage so that it can be used for its intended purpose of leaning humankind to the knowledge of good and evil. The hardest thing for me is keeping myself shielded from all the “ugly” that surrounds me in this environment, so I am learning how to shut my mind off to these negative forces through meditation. I enjoy helping others find their way to a higher state of being. I’ve found that all it takes is a small kernel of truth and they are off on the quest. The mystery religions fill the empty places in the heart and bring a much needed shot of life and light. Daniel, Ionia, MI

One piece of advice I’d give the entire world is to question everything, respectfully, for if and when the mind poses the “right” question then we may begin the process to better comprehend a thing, whether external or internal. But for an unbiased, “rightful” answer, we must not rely on the mind alone for, the mind being the tool of reasoning and reasoning is subject to error, we must begin to rely more on the state of consciousness that sits above our power of reasoning which is none other than the seat of intuition; our higher self in spirit. We must begin to sincerely and diligently develop our higher spiritual self if we ever expect to effect a change in the way we perceive things and the results we receive on our journey in life. I’d sincerely say, APO is a great primer for that development, but the power is in you! Kecunda, Gradys, AR

I hope to find something lost to me, I’m not quite sure how to explain it. At this point in my life, enlightenment is all that matters. I believe in my past lives, this path was apparent as well. There is truth in most all faiths/sciences, I call it tangible spirituality. I seek higher worlds. Kenneth, Carrabelle, FL
How many worlds do we live in as human beings!

On the inside we live in our soul: a never-ending, ever pulsing sea of reactions, reflections, feelings and thoughts that are absolutely personal. No one else, really, knows what or how I feel, and how I think about things—this world is private and subjective.

On the outside is that mystery called “reality.” The world of technology only works if my car, my phone, my computer, whatever, follows the same pathways and gives the same results as every other—if not, it is broken and of no use. We share this world successfully through knowledge and command of these physical forces. These forces are totally impersonal and objective.

Between inner and outer are two bridges. Through my will I change the world around me. Rudolf Steiner talks of the life of the will, the sum total of our deeds on earth, as the most important aspect of how we will live in the future, in this life and in all future lives. These deeds live on, their effects continue, long after I have turned to other things. Though I may have forgotten them, these effects belong to me—they will return to me, sooner or later.

The other bridge is that of the senses. They live on the periphery of my being and unite my inner life with the world around me. Steiner pointed out that there are three inner platforms through which I connect, in different ways, to the world: through my body, through my soul, and through my spirit. Each of these portals is served by four different senses, making a total of twelve. Steiner spoke in different contexts of these twelve senses; what follows is a recap of many years study and exploration of them.

I am born into a physical body, and spend many years making this body the instrument of my soul. I live in my skin, and through it I experience the archetype of all the senses: that of touch (1). Whether through the skin, or sight or sound or warmth or balance, I touch the world and the world touches me. Very interesting experiments have been done in sensory deprivation, immersing people in body-warm liquid darkness, floating gloved and swathed and blind. States closely akin to schizophrenia, myriad bright hallucinations, are soon produced by the soul so cut off. We need the touch of the world to be healthy and human. Birth is the granddaddy of all touching, awakening the entire physical being to its altered state in the most dramatic way, stimulating it, bringing it alive. The skin, as the most specific organ of this sense, encloses our entire being: we feel ourselves one whole, healthy being “in our skin” when all is well.

The infant lives then further in the sense of life (2): hunger, satiation, physical discomfort and comfort rule its existence. In healthy development these processes fade with time more into the unconscious: only if I am ill, or hungry, or hurting, does my adult sense of life become conscious. When all is well with me my physical being and metabolism, through this sense of life, give a basis of unthinking, happy oneness; my soul may direct all its powers to higher pursuits—we see that same “wholeness” created as with touch. If you feel your liver, or spleen, or bowels, or muscles, consciously, you are usually hurting and in a bad way.

Then the child spends its first year lifting this soft blob of a body into strong uprightness, from top to bottom, until it stands on its feet. Hours and hours a day are spent in endless practice mastering this body—rarely or never in uprightness, from top to bottom, until it stands on its feet. Hours and hours a day are spent in endless practice mastering this body—rarely or never in uprightness, from top to bottom, until it stands on its feet. Hours and hours a day are spent in endless practice mastering this body—rarely or never in uprightness, from top to bottom, until it stands on its feet. Hours and hours a day are spent in endless practice mastering this body—rarely or never in uprightness, from top to bottom, until it stands on its feet. Hours and hours a day are spent in endless practice mastering this body—rarely or never in uprightness, from top to bottom, until it stands on its feet. Hours and hours a day are spent in endless practice mastering this body—rarely or never in uprightness, from top to bottom, until it stands on its feet.

The middle senses are those we know so well: smell (5), taste (6), sight (7), and warmth (8). We are generally quite conscious of what they are telling us: our daily life unfolds in the ongoing drama of these senses. Smell and taste create a bridge to the metabolic world of nourishment. Smells tell us of the inwardness of things in a peculiarly memorable way, sweet or sharp, doggy or rancid, fresh or rotten. Taste gives great pleasure, but also, similar to smell, holds great wisdom and knowledge—with practice and discernment I can tell a great deal about the quality and makeup of what I am eating. It has been said that smell in particular plays the role with animals—that think of the dog!—that intelligence does in the human being.

Sight opens the wideness of the world to us. Light travels in beautiful straight lines, it illuminates, it unfolds vistas. I become a citizen of a great wide world through sight, a world of things in a wealth of colors, dazzling me, distracting me, taking me out of myself—so much to see and do! Sports, travel, games, research, the draw and pursuit of beauty—sight is like a magician bringing forth endless colorful scarves.

Warmth has to do with the basis of our higher being—compare lower, cold-blooded animals, dependent on an ambient temperature. Birds, mammals and human beings command inner warmth, and a much expanded soul life. Our human life of soul lives in a subtle counterpoint with the earth’s yearly cycle of warmth and cold: dreamily expanded in summer’s heat; contracted but much more self-aware in winter’s cold.

These four are the senses of soul, with them I live in active communion with the daily world around me, going out and perceiving, then returning to myself to consider the perceptions. With my breath I take the world in, and distance myself again as I breathe out. My heart responds to the world from moment to moment, with ever-changing emotions, now faster, now slower—the heart dances with every new impression!

How different is the sense of hearing (9)! Sight leads me out into distance but it leaves me on the surface of things. Sound leads me into the inwardness of the world. If you knock on a surface, you can tell whether it is wooden, or metal, or plastic, which the eye often cannot. You can hear how hollow or how thick. You can hear through walls, in the dark, around the corner, you can hear in all directions without turning your head. You can hear if a sound is produced by a rock or tree, or by an animal, a bird, or a human—you can hear the soul behind it.

A mysterious moment: I hear faint sounds—the wind? Water? And then I realize—it is words! Notice in that moment how a whole new world of sensibility opens, I know a human being is giving voice to soul content, so different than an element or animal sounding. The sense of word (10) is mastery of language, in a foreign tongue. How words signify specific things and specific moments, thoughts create whole realities, making connections through time, space, and causation.
THE TWELVE SENSES

In this arc of creation, from the ability to hear the inner soul or substance nature when something sounds, to grasping meaningful words, to building vistas of thought, each of these higher senses opens yet larger inner worlds of understanding, insight and context. So we come to the mystery of the twelfth and highest sense, that of the “I being” or “Ego.” (12) No, I am not sensing my own “I being”—that one I know in and through my intimate self-consciousness—but that of another! There was an interesting experiment I read of: couples engaged in a speed-dating evening were divided into two groups. One group was specifically enjoined, after conversation, to look each other deep in the eyes for a full minute, the other group not. Those who engaged in the deep-gaze exercise came together as couples much more often than the others! Gazing deep into someone’s eyes opens the gates to a new world—we touch their inner being, their “I”.

There can be a brotherhood of the will established at this level by engaging in hard and difficult work with someone else. If you “click” with them here, a deep bond may be established. Having a knock-down drag-out fight with someone, and reconciling afterward, can be deeply bonding.

In all of the above examples we meet and get to know others through speech bent toward acts of will. In the work we conquer, in the relationships we build, in the stories we swap, in the verbal support we give or receive, we touch one another and get to know one another. Falling in love always includes a sharing of life experiences and found soul communions. This is the sense of “I” or Ego at work.

The senses of hearing, word, thought, and “I being” are those that open the gates of the spirit.

As touch is the lowest and most archetypal sense, so when I know another human being deeply I am “touched” by them. Just as my skin holds me in healthy wholeness, so does a communion of “I” beings create a greater oneness, a new soul/spiritual unit. We can form such communities of soul in love, in a church congregation, on the job, or in other strivings. We all know the subtle differences between light encounters—“let’s do lunch!”—and those that are of a more serious and lasting nature—these latter almost always involve a commitment of the will, a common goal. We come together with other “I” beings to change the world, to create it anew.

These twelve senses open all worlds to the soul: the inherited creation of the body that harks back to old Saturn through the lower senses; the wonders of daily life on earth through the middle senses; and the perspectives of past and future, of inner meaning, of higher purpose and striving, through the senses of the spirit. The highest meaning is found then in the love and sharing of life with other human beings; together in spirit, deeds of the will may be undertaken, old worlds saved, new worlds created, children raised and art and science pursued, in common joy and striving.

EXPLORING THE SENSES THROUGH EURYTHMY

There is an archetypal eurythmic exercise, the “Ee, Ah, Oh,” which may be varied to help explore some of these senses.

Let your upright posture go, let your head grow heavy, your back, hips, knees, and ankles give way until you are squating on the ground, your hands touching. Feel the weight and warm darkness of the earth. Then slowly but surely rise, feeling a resistance to the earth awakening in your toes and feet, bringing the heels down. Let this impulse rise to your knees, your hips, slowly up through your back, finally lifting your head into light. Feel yourself as a column of light, feel the light stretching through you.

Feel the oneness of yourself as this column: this arises from the sense of touching the earth with your feet, and touching—actually being pulled by—the light with your head. Feel how you “touch” the surroundings with your vision; feel the wholeness of yourself in your skin.

Rock back on your heels—how does this feel? Now rock forward onto your toes: how does this feel? Feel your sense of movement in all of the above, in the unfolding and rising, in the rocking. Feel how your sense of balance mediates, keeping you free and clear in your uprightness, allowing you to explore the world behind you as you rock back, and opens the world in front of you as you lean into the world. Be aware that, unconsciously, a whole world of metabolic processes is working to make this moment possible: energy conversion in digestion involving all those inner organs, energy being converted and utilized in all muscles—the sense of life at work.

This exercise is a form of the archetypal eurythmic exercise, “Ee, Ah, Oh.” These vowel sounds live deeply in the human soul, expressing basic states of that soul. In the pure upright I feel “Ee,” pure light that goes through me, the secret of my humanity: “This is me!” You may extend one arm up into the light to further express this—it too must be straight and stretched, fingers together! Light, like me, is straight and pure. The sense of sight lives in this crystalline clarity of lines, opening the world around me.

Leaning back, feel the “Ah.” Here I am opening to the world behind me, that of Father, Mother, and Love—all “Ah” words—that is our holy origin. Feel “Ah” as a breath of relief and renewal in your soul. The arm gesture would be upward, grasping a star in either hand, radiating diagonally out from the heart, again stretched. Feel the blessings of the Spiritual descending! We may feel the warmth of these worlds enfolding us—in this warmth our ego powers live, (literally, 98.6˚), in this warmth our soul and our will may thrive—a few degrees too few or too many, and paralysis or chaos ensues. Our sense of warmth ensures that a physical factor—warmth—opens the gates of soul and spirit on earth. The “backspace” so opened is also called “the listening space,” the gate to the spirit through the sense of hearing, and through all the higher senses.

Leaning forward, over your toes, your eyes open, you take in the world: the feeling is “Oh.” This is the “whole world,” in which I “work,” which I make “my own”—listen to the qualities of the “Oh” sound in these worlds! The arms reach out to both sides and enfold this world, meeting fingertip to fingertip, in a perfect circle, before me—or above me, or below me, according to where I am directing my soul. I see the world, I smell it, I taste it when I eat something, I explore the world and make it part of me, my own: the middle senses reign.
I love you all and I want to thank you so much for sending me my very own How to Know Higher Worlds, plus the work book. I'll be so forever grateful to you all. Joe Luis, Pollock, LA

That individual freedom and judgment be respected at every point. This is the third time I read this book, but it feels like the first. That is from this study guide. It requested my patience, and gave more in return for it anchoring me to the present moment line upon line. It was like yoga with a pen. Domenic, Waynesburg, PA

Thank you for the personal copy of How to Know Higher Worlds and the study guide. I haven't had a chance to start working it because being in the Faith Dorm, we have classes that have to be completed, but when the semester is over, Charles, Unis, and myself will work together on it. I will write to let you know how it goes. John, Clio, AL

The explanation about "soul hygiene" and how for myself, this process unfolds in its own natural process from thinking and practicing Steiner's "great work" is so beautiful. The "living world of silent thought activity", these forms (beings) elusively experiencing the designs of our lives that they create. Steiner's words creating an awe-inspiring ascension into higher mental forms, i.e. the world's wisdom lights up a stream of thinking. This thinking builds into freedom of the soul. I am experiencing more equanimity in my life. A relaxed state of peace knowing I am being worked with and at the same time being allowed to become free in journeying the worlds. My life experiences are lessons in this great experiment of physical matter. Now I do not get moody or angry at the same level. There is this space, this openness of love that allows me to feel (see) the underlying purpose of what appears to be chaos. David, El Reno, OK

This is one of the most fascinating books I have ever read, and gives confirmation to a lot of my beliefs in how we are creative energy that can be perceived, and how we essentially are all immortal 'cause the I that exists in me, exists in us all, and it will take as many incarnations as necessary for us all to realize this fact, no matter our race, color, creed, or nationality. We all much look within and develop the inner "I". Steven, Menard, IL

Thank you for How to Know Higher Worlds. This book has helped me grow and evolve spiritually, by realizing concepts about initiation, and cultivating inner peace. I look forward to a spiritual awakening on earth, and peace and unity consciousness. Keith, Rosharon, TX

I had to add a formal letter of praise for the literature and study guide you so kindly provided me, thank you ever so much. You can definitely expect the study guide to be returned to you completed, however it will take some time for me to do. I truly am grateful to you, your services, and to all who serve within the Anthroposophical Prison Outreach. You all truly make a difference for all of us behind the cages, amongst the bars. Jeremy, Lucasville, OH

Thank you for sending How to Know Higher Worlds. In Chapter 6 - Some Effects of Initiation has opened some new areas of understating for me. Things I'm experiencing no one understands but me. I find it hard to put into words what I see. I travel at all times in spiritual vision and have this strange gift of projecting what I seem to fully understand.

My spiritual eye is opened before me
A flame of burning seering light
Forces that were once invisible to me
Form in this crystal light
I always know something mystical was
The essence of life
Everything I see around me are spinning
Molecules of light
Pulled by the forces that surround me.
I come before the Tree of Life
As I knelt before the Tree of Life on one knee
Like a knight
The tree branch reached out and touched me
I became the light
Michael, Huntsville, TX
**WHAT ARE THE FRUITS OF ANTHROPOSOPHY FOR YOU?**

**READING/STUDYING ANTHROPOSOPHY** has placed my life on another level. I can truly see things as they are, from a deep down development of skill that I’d never thought I had. The fruits that I hold now are kindness and love for all things. **Jonathan, Huntsville, TX**

**ANTHROPOSOPHY** has made a great impact on my entire life, leading me to understand by knowing better myself, my surroundings, and my relationship with the spiritual realm. **Eric, Palestine, TX**

**READING/STUDYING anthroposophy** has influenced my sense of self-worth in a tremendous way. So now I’m more grounded in “self” and my role in the universe on a broader scale. **Gregory, Punta Gorda, FL**

**ANTHROPOSOPHY** alters my thinking, opening me to new insights and understanding. It brings to life what others theorize as mundane. It renews my faith in Christ and the destiny of humankind. My being is more steady. I tend to be more open and inquiring. I’m more engaged—studying, drawing, questioning. **John, Lompoc, CA**

I HAVE a richer understanding of the world and of humanity as a whole. It has deepened my empathy towards others and I have a much stronger control over my emotions. **Gary, Tennessee Colony, TX**

**I AM TRYING** to get a deeper spiritual meaning of myself and find out who I really am. I hope that I may be able to become a productive person and that I may be able to learn to better myself, and use what I learn to benefit and help others, and myself. **Brandon, Homer, LA**

**I FEEL THAT** I have had unconscious experiences that I have not yet the understanding of. I hope to gain more knowledge and insight about myself, the world around me, and the things I do not understand. **Rosalynn, Greenville, MS**

**THE POTENTIAL** for personal growth, development, and power. I also think it has something to do with my past life. Self-transformation, but I want to have the power to help my family grow. I also hurt deep inside, not only for myself, but for all those in the world who suffer with no one to help. **Shiva, Marcy, NY**

**I PERSONALLY HOPE** that I’m able to understand why I am here and why the universe is allowing me to take anthroposophy. Also, I hope I’m able to help others from what I learn in this program. It’s a few different reasons, but most importantly, I truly want to get to know myself as a person, father, son, and as a man. **Samuel, Joliet, IL**

**A MORE IN DEPTH logical explanation** as to why I am here. Where was I before I entered this physical vessel? What’s the purpose of this entire endeavor? Where will I go after my stay here on earth? Also a deeper degree of wisdom and understanding. This school of thought exceeds the “religious” arena, which perpetuates doctrine that doesn’t provide evidence based practice. That which is not thoroughly expounded upon, it’s mandated that you just believe, and if one is dubious or too inquisitive about what they want you to believe, you’re a heretic or the devil is in you. **Dante, Victoria, VA**

**I WANT TO HAVE** more love and peace, and compassion towards others. Release of judgment, fear, and comparing negative energies in others. More knowledge to teach my three children and society. To become a part of a group with higher awareness and positive support. My soul guided me to you. **Ricardo, Nashville, TN**

**ANTHROPOSOPHY** has been a way to enlighten myself in a new way. Understanding the Bible, especially the Gospels, in a new way has brought me back to study Christianity that I had neglected for some time. Also by practicing mediation and exercises, I have become a better person. I used to let anger take over me, especially in discussing religious or political issues, now I’m calmer and listen more to others. I also have learned how to forgive myself and others. **Ruben, White Deer, PA**

**ANTHROPOSOPHY** HAS HELPED me grow in my faith with God. It has helped me to see more clearly as a Roman Catholic. **Ricardo, Nashville, TN**

So far, it has STRENGTHENED my position that humanity is one, and that we are all responsible for each other. The fruits are compassion and altruism. **Waldo, Florida City, FL**

I’VE ALWAYS KNOWN blind faith is essential to success of any religious pursuit. Anthroposophy has taught me that my faith ensures that success by engaging natural laws that if described fully, would render a perfect image of God. **Joseph, Tennessee Colony, TX**

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Hungry Manchild
(Urchin in the Promised Land)

No layers of protection in my home, to protect me from the evil within. Like a hungry onion strained with hunger pains, sandwiched in a bad place fleeing into the night. Not today I say. Tonight I’m gonna eat. So my hungry onion travelers on this road. A thirst for knowledge I know to exist. **Brent, Jonesville, VA**

**I HOPING THIS** might be a program that will help me gain a better understanding of life, people, and myself. To gain tools to be able to have a better stand on my emotions, ‘cause it’s hard to stay positive in the pen, and it’s always good to learn new reasons how. **Anthony, Jamestown, CA**

**I LOVE TO LEARN** about new things, and I am deep into learning about meditation and karma. I want to learn about this program’s knowledge. To me, knowledge is power. Plus to help me in my own practice of meditation. I also want to learn about my higher self and a higher God. **Brandon, Pontiac, IL**

Looking to understand reincarnation, karma, higher states of consciousness, meditation. And what do I do with the knowledge I have been given? And to develop the gifts that God has given me. **James, Carrabelle, FL**

TO BE STRONG and not afraid so when people look at me they see a man with self knowledge and understanding that shows the beauty of wisdom. **Ricardo, Nashville, TN**
**The Eternal Path**

There comes a time
In all close relationships
When the wick is trimmed
And the fire lit.
Their thoughts merge
And become fluent,
Solid ground is created
By each for the other.
Their state of union
Is balance and harmony,
This etheric connectedness
Flows
Through all elements freely.
They shine brightly
Within this flame's center
While on this path
Of spiritual surrender.
In this ordinary process
They have journeyed to this shore
And found they are whole
And one with the great
"I Am".

Ethan, Meridian, MS

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**JUST LOVE**

Lean against a tree.
Find the love in you and me.
Laugh at your mistakes.
Just love your brother,
That's all it takes.
Give a smile to everyone.
Let God's will be done.

George, Stockton, CA

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**Self-Titled**

To know self is
to step without
And observe
To know self is
to look within
And question
To know self is
to seek and define
Truth
To know self is
Having courage to love
You

Devon, Joliet, IL

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**Lazarus**

Lazarus
John the Baptist
John the Evangelist
Three in one
One in three
A trinity
They come back
Re-incarnate
In my soul
In me
Inside me
Lazarus come forward!
Lazarus step out!
Lazarus be free!
Let's move the stone
The one preventing us to be free
And let's move
Let's step out of our tombs
Let's look at freedom
With clear, new eyes
Lazarus, come forth!
And I come out of my darkness…

Ruben, White Deer, PA

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Art and Poetry

Kevin, Waynesburg, PA

James, Coal Township, PA

Daniel, Ionia, MI

Jeremy, Crawfordville, FL

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Ruben, White Deer, PA

George, Stockton, CA

Kevin, Waynesburg, PA

Ethan, Meridian, MS
Book Reviews

The Great Initiates  Edouard Schure
The book entitled The Great Initiates: A Study of the Secret History of Religion is really a historical treatise on the growth and development of the evolutionary teaching of the soul. It is through every initiate or prophet that one truly gets a glimpse of how each revelation broadened and grew from what was previously taught by the successor until we get to the synthesis of the science of the immortal soul, in Christ—who is really the archetype of humanity; the apex, the example.  Kevin, Homer, LA

The Secret Stream  Rudolph Steiner
The Secret Stream covers so much. Pre- and post-Atlantean wisdom is not only real, it’s obtainable. This type of learning brings awareness and puts a desire for one to read the Akashic record one day, hopefully. The book expounded on the Tau, the Tao, and so much especially the Eastern and Western mysteries of the streams of knowledge than we have entered into. The true wisdom of the Rose Cross is something they learned not all at once, which is evident in the conscious revelation, dreams, and manifestations from books and people encountered, and, let’s not forget the higher order beings. They know those who genuinely meditate on and search for truth.  Jeff, Crawfordville, FL

The Anthroposophical Understanding of the Soul  F.W. Zeylmans van Emmichoven
This book explains the soul from the inside out, and its place in the universe. In order to develop your soul, understanding how it functions, interacts, and is nourished is imperative. Consciousness or ‘levels of awareness’ is explained to gain an understanding of why exercises in feeling, desiring, and willing are important. This book gave a specific view of how I am responsible for my soul development, just like I care for the rest of the human body. The difference is the soul is my ‘I’, and it is eternal. The body will cease its function, but the soul will not. Then, whatever I, or rather, the “I” has developed will assist me in my next life, because of the level of awareness I have for the Soul to grow and develop. This course of a process. Thinking, feeling, and willing “permeates and rules the Soul and gives to the body life and form in a threefold manner.” Lest we forget.  Wayne, Richmond, TX

Astronomy and Astrology  Rudolf Steiner
As an occult scientist of thirty-five years and sixteen years practicing astrology, I can say this book is a must read for anyone with a desire for the higher truth of man’s relation to the universe. Steiner not only explains how the planets in our solar system influence human beings, but he also explains how each of the heavenly bodies governs the souls and spirits of those who have moved on to the next life. He further touches on the angels that rule these realms and even hints at how the sun and stars can be gateways. However, just understanding how the human race is so spiritually connected to our solar system is a wonderfully enlightening concept in its own right. For once we realize how we are so connected to the universe, we begin to expand the mind, as Steiner explains, that the soul is constantly expanding; well so is the universe and our solar system, the life of the universe as a whole is constantly evolving in its expansion. We now begin to see why we are here, and how we are evolving to higher states. This book is truly “Finding a Relationship to the Cosmos”.  Darrin, Pontiac, IL

Founding a Science of the Spirit  Rudolf Steiner
Founding a Science of the Spirit threw me for a loop with all of the wisdom it contained! Rudolf Steiner speaks true when he says that that which is spiritual cannot always be described with human language, yet with his knowledge he manages to do just that, making it logical and clear while keeping the content simple enough for all to understand. Here is a book which offers answers to the various spiritual phenomena (visions, flashbacks, déjà vu, near-death, etc.) that many people experience throughout their lives and that which works within us through the spiritual world to make it possible. This book is a definite must read!  Jason, Tennessee Colony, TX

Esoteric Christianity and the Mission of Christian Rosenkreutz  Rudolf Steiner
Esoteric Christianity and the Mission of Christian Rosenkreutz delves deep into the esoteric world of Christianity that has remained timeless and out of mainstream religion, kept secret by the brothers of the Rose Cross. For anyone who wants to clear up any confusion that is so prevalent in modern Christianity that they have, this book provides the first step towards finding the Gnosis.  Jason, Florence, CO

Meditations

I meditate daily in order to be able to see things clearly. I prefer to do it when I first wake up for my mind is cleared of all thoughts, and therefore it is very quiet. I then think of a subject that may have been disturbing me, I run it through my mind. I ask the question “why?”, and then see the answer from different points of view, and the results are a positive ending that I then bring into action at any time. I then think of a subject that may have been disturbing me, I run it through my mind is cleared of all thoughts, and therefore it is very quiet. I meditate daily in order to be able to see things clearly. I prefer to do it when I first wake up for my mind is cleared of all thoughts, and therefore it is very quiet. I then think of a subject that may have been disturbing me, I run it through my mind. I ask the question “why?”, and then see the answer from different points of view, and the results are a positive ending that I then bring into action at any time. I then think of a subject that may have been disturbing me, I run it through my mind...
Lesson #1: Introduction
I learned that many beliefs about my fellow man are illusions based on life teachings I use as a guide for protection. That the meaning of change is much larger than I perceived: a process never completed. While I do ask questions from my inner and outer being, I may not be asking enough of the right questions. This need/desire for change is resonating strongly and closest to my heart. I will try working with all aspects within the polarities about forming beliefs or judgements about a person. I recognize the need to change my quick-thinking and judging. This I will do! Kenneth, St. Clairsville, OH

Lesson #1: Introduction
I liked the process of not accepting answers as a finality of knowledge, which could be dead, and looking for answers with life that lead to new questions. I will be more careful in accepting satisfactory answers because I believe satisfaction limits, stops or hinder, the exploration of knowledge, feelings, thoughts, humanity, spirituality, worlds, and universal freedom. I will also try not to judge. I will do this by trying to understand feelings that lead to thoughts, then deeds. Jimmy, Winnfield, LA

Lesson #2: First Steps in the Light on the Path
The three gifts were new to me: upright, speech, thinking—the gifts of the gods. This level of development is what puts our stamp on the whole world. This is how the divine has manifested in human beings. I also came to understand that sensory perception isn’t changed, but by effort the information organizes and the appreciation of the elements have changed, and this has to do with one’s intention. I shall try to ennable my divine gifts and approach the divine with respect and gratitude. Jared, Warrburg, TN

Lesson #3: Understanding, Caring, and Developing the Human Senses
I have a better understanding of the twelve senses and how to interpret them correctly. I find that when doing the experiments, the “practical application” of interpreting what I am reading is understood better. I enjoyed the sight-sense and how the experiment brought forth questions to better understand the phenomena of afterimages and ghost images. I will utilize it in developing new themes in my artwork. I’m gonna try to recreate visual phenomena by hand. A fun experiment. Kerry, Lake City, FL

Lesson #4: Understanding, Caring, and Developing the Human Senses, Part 2
I learned about the hierarchy of the senses. They are not simply random. The “1” sense is based on the resting, motionless human form and separates me from the outer world and all other I’s. I need to be conscious that we are all operating from our own sense of “1” ness, taking that into consideration when evaluating the actions of others and myself. What seems to be random interests, opinions, experiences, and preferences may not be so random at all, but the expression or manifestation of underdeveloped senses causing challenges. Lomnie, Umatilla, OR

Lesson #10 Artistic Expression
A picture of self, as self was, as self is, and as self could be. Knowledge, much deeper, much truer, of those around me.
Four sides, “selfs” in each person, who knew such truth? As if a veil had been lifted, and all revealed. I see all of me, and the “each of you” in you. Melancholic, phlegmatic, sanguine, choleric. Hello.

Lesson #6: The Threefold Human Constitution
The threefoldness can be found in all parts of our bodies as well as throughout nature. It’s important to find a way to examine closely the way that threefoldness can be examined in all things around by control of thinking. I can use the control of thinking exercise to better understand myself and the inner workings of spirit through myself. Robert, Bismarck, ND

Lesson #8: The Human Being and the Four Kingdoms of Nature
I liked the basic similarities we share with the other kingdoms of nature and how we can reflect just by paying close attention to our environment and understand the great importance of our consciousness. The faculties of our constitution is to be taken great care of by making proper use of them in a productive and creative way as they are meant to be, and this includes education of the faculties and exercise of the faculties. I will dedicate myself to the devotion of exercising and making proper use of all these faculties of the human being, and be constantly reminded by the other kingdoms of my responsibilities that I have, and hopefully be a good example to others within my environment. Chimeniem, Children, TX

Lesson #10: The Human Being, the Four Tempers, the Four Elements, and the Four Ethers
The four temperaments were new to me. This lesson was very thought-provoking and I enjoyed the elemental allusions. It was very important to see myself as I have been, presently am, and can one day be. Truly a revelation. I will definitely employ this knowledge in my future counseling practice. I can study the material regularly and conduct research, I’ve discussed it with friends, great lesson! Christopher, Reidsville, GA

Lesson #14: Review of the First Half-Year
There are many new things in this lesson, such as sympathology, the recognizing change in functions. To recognize that which causes discord in society, such as religions and economic fundamentalism, which are fueled by hatred and greed, which is one polarity, and the other polarity being pluralism, Rudolf Steiner’s Goetheanum and his anthroposophical research, I believe, helped to counter the fundamentalism by educating humanity with the tools to seek the higher challenges of the spiritual science and what’s needed for human advancement. Alan, Nelsonville, OH

Lesson #18: The Arts and their Mission, Living Words
In music, man experiences the world as his own. Now the soul does not assert something it needs upon descending into or leaving the physical, rather it experiences something which lives and vibrates here and now, on earth, in his own soul-spirit nature. In ancient times people felt the gods were talking to them in poetry through the muses. In drama they felt the will of the subterranean gods conveyed to them—like the god Dionysus expressed his divine will through his helpers, a chorus around him. I can focus on it, absorb it into my innate existence, then self-actualization of these jewels. Mario, McAlester, OK

Lesson #25: Health and Nutrition, Part 3 of 3
What I found most interesting in this lesson was that physical illness has a soul-spiritual cause. This has made me think about fasting, to reconsidering my belief in it. As like the other three about Nutrition, this one has much information to help me to know, to understand, and to have better ways to take care of my health. I am glad because by putting attention about how my body reacts when I eat different kinds of food, it makes me be more aware of it. When I want to meditate, to study, or just be relaxed, I just have to refrain from certain foods, and so on. This is happening to me now because of the good teaching of these three lessons about nutrition. Eric, Palestine, TX
I have just finished *Sleep and Dreams*, the book has helped me to understand the balance of my dreams and the difference for when I sleep. It has taken longer to read this book than I liked, but I could not just fast read it. I had to take my time and walk through everything piecemeal. I try to meditate on the lessons of this book and I hope I will continue to learn and grow in my spiritual and physical life.

**Donald, Huntsville, TX**

The Occult Significance of Forgiveness – I always understood the need to forgive others if I myself worked to be forgiving; however, I really never realized that the entire Bible from cover to cover is a basic teaching of Forgiveness. So, can we find forgiveness for the one who accuses us? I guess only time will tell. But I am gonna try to be more understanding of others and what I discern as their faults because I am not sure how worse off I might be in their same situation. Maybe they are doing the best that can ever be done in their set of circumstances. The book definitely shines a new light on each Bible story and that light is... yep you guessed it: FORGIVENESS!

**James, Livingston, TX**

Rosicrucian Wisdom and An Outline of Esoteric Science were an amazing combination; they complimented each other wonderfully. Together they put into a comprehensible perspective of the levels of human evolution. Many other books lightly skim the surface of that which treats of the various soul bodies and their correlation to higher planes. Steiner seems to boldly tread upon ground where others merely tiptoe. I am impressed by the vast spiritual knowledge that he possessed and thankful that he was endowed with the love to preserve his wisdom in writings which now serve as a bridge to assist us across the murky waters of ignorance, superstition, and intellectual tyranny. I will be forever grateful for having been introduced to this knowledge.

**Bruce, Victoria, VA**

From the book *Nonviolent Communication* I have taken my time to let things soak in, and began to practice the knowledge within. It has caused an understanding that I wouldn’t have been able to grasp without it. I can listen to others, and ask the right questions if needed, and use the correct vocabulary so as to stimulate the conversation towards the desired outcome for me and others whom I talk to.

**Roger, Brunswick, NC**

Ancient Myths and the New his Mystery contains some valuable gems of information. The way the author explains how the epochs correspond with the ages of man (Egypt being Taurus, Persia being Gemini) was easily understood. Roger, Brunswick, NC

How to Transform Thinking, Feeling, and Willing has proven to be an invaluable didactic source on elucidating the meditative path. When I last wrote, I tried to explain about a period in my life that felt like the night within had approached, and I was completely unprepared. Then I mentioned the dawn’s rays permeating the darkness, representing hope and understanding. Let me mention that God works in mysterious ways, and what seems like an insignificant coincidence can be the impetus for a monumental shift in consciousness. So can you imagine my surprise when I reached page 24, reading the top of the page “wisdom lives in the light.” Farther down I read more of my own impressions in this author’s words verbatim. “One is in a forest at night. The sky is covered with clouds, and total darkness reigns. It is impossible to see anything of one’s surroundings. Slowly, however, comes the dawn, until the radiant daylight brings the whole surroundings into view in all their forms and colors.” Coincidence? Not likely! Daniel, Daytona Beach, FL.

During my 16+ years of incarceration, I have read numerous books on spirituality, meditation, religion, occult, etc. and I have also had my own spiritual experiences. I have come to the point in my understanding that I should not have preconceived beliefs about something until I experience it myself, and I know that within my spirit lies all the faculties for obtaining truth. After reading Rudolf Steiner’s *An Introduction to his Spiritual Worldview, Anthroposophy* my curiosity has been reawakened. I am asking myself questions such as: Is Christ real? Have the hierarchies been working with me in my dreams? Is karma a real universal principle? etc. I am interested to read more of Rudolf Steiner’s works. What this outreach offers towards prisoners is a great thing.

**Jeremy, Wrightsville, AR**

I just finished reading *Transforming the Soul Vol 1.* My eyes have never been so open to the spiritual science of my soul and spirit; since I have come in connection with your project I have shared your information with some people also on the path of knowledge. I have to study more to gain wisdom of the spirit world. I loved the study on the ‘moon’ and I wish to learn more about the moon and the way it moves us on the earth. My goal is to read all the books you all have and get a good understanding. I have more learning to do on this foundation of spiritual science.

**Joshua, Raiford, FL**

I’ve read Christianity as Mystical Fact a few times before, but it is always enriching, for it points out how what we now understand as Christianity as existed since the beginning in archetypal form. It related the Christ to early schools of initiation, philosophers, and our own culture. It really does so much to bring back the mystery and the grandeur of the Christian religion from a quite different point of view than most of us are used to. Alexis, Holdenville, OK

The two books you sent me have been very insightful, especially *Old and New Mysteries*. I really enjoyed it because it shows me how we as humans, in this era, are evolving and going through certain stages of initiation. I am not anxious over things I can’t control any longer, I have inner peace now.

**Ruben, Raiford, FL**

Paths of the Christian Mysteries has been a blessing for me. The history it contains has enlightened my interest and the desire for knowledge and true understanding for God’s creation and the mysteries involved with mankind. My soul spiritual experience with this book has been fascinating. Victor, Navasota, TX

I spent a lot of time in this book. Staying Connected, it was weird that I was having sort of an intermittent connection, then after reading about half of the book, it was consistent, and then by the time I was finished, it was not as strong. It was very helpful in some respects, others contradicted some other things I have read, so I am working on that, seeing what works and what does not. I still do not have a full understanding, but I will get more when I reread it. Edwin, Perry, FL.

In the book *Bees* Rudolf Steiner predicted the current state of the honeybee in 1923. Today, over 60% of the American honeybee population has disappeared. These bee lectures captured my attention, I could not put the book down until finished. Amazing insights describe the wisdom inside a beehive.

**Stephen, Vinita, OK**

Thank you for sending another installment of books from your library and as always, I found them very insightful. Now my favorite one was *Nonviolent Communication* by Rosenberg. This is a subject that needs to be taught in every middle and high school all across these United States. We have become such a high speed information culture to the point where we only listen for what we want to hear and speak without thinking.

**Samuel, Sneads, FL**

Pathways to the New Sun is a beautiful book. It’s fascinating. This is a subject that needs to be taught in every middle and high school all across these United States. We have become such a high speed information culture to the point where we only listen for what we want to hear and speak without thinking.

Alexis, Holdenville, OK

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to read these books. I shared them with a few fellow prisoners and we had a great series of conversations, I look forward to more.

**Michael, St. Clairville, OH**

Lately I’ve been in discussions, contemplations and studies with others here on the so-called subject of creation. There are many opinions on it from different schools of thought, I’m mostly interested in the scientific and esoteric explanations. As a student of the mysteries, I am seeking to unveil the veil.

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Waldo, Florida City, FL
manifest in nature in the growing plants, in the meteorological processes of the local and global climate, in the movement of the continents, the earthquakes, volcano eruptions, in tidal waves and more. In these phenomena, living, working thoughts show their hidden powers. The same powers live in human deeds. All our actions are based on conscious or unconscious thoughts and these thoughts can unleash tremendous effects in positive as well as negative ways.

To explore what we perceive with the sense of thought we can choose a simple activity: tying shoe laces, shaving, sweeping the floor, or something we repeat every day. At a moment of leisure time we focus on this activity and simply try to re-create it in our mind precisely beginning with the first movement till the action is completed. Experiment with this. You can share what happens through such an exercise with others who tried it.

And, as a next step you can reverse the sequence, beginning at the end and go backwards to the start. This opens up another whole world of discoveries. Thus we find that the complementary reality to our actions is the world of thought. We can now go on and look at actions we have done during the day or at earlier times in our life and try to awaken to the after-image, the thought gesture working in such deeds, the message which speaks in us.

Lastly we can attempt to find the after-experience of the sense with which we perceive the I of the other person: the sense of ego. What do we perceive of the other? The posture, the way of walking, the gestures, handshake, the gaze, the intonation of the speaking and so many other things. Think about how you can recognize someone from quite a distance away, simply by the way they walk. These are initially all material perceptions but they increasingly become transparent: the uniqueness of the encountered person becomes tangible, the “counter-space” of their spiritual entity, that makes its unique mark on all physical actions.

It continues after the encounter: what feeling arises in my soul? is it one of warmth or coldness? of joy or rejection? When I look back to what was spoken, does it leave me with light or darkness? does the encounter resound in us or not? does it enliven, inspire us or does it paralyze us? A very special moment of encounter can be the sharing of the biography. That certainly opens up a most precious after-experience.

With these examples I wanted to draw attention to that empty half of the water glass. Those ‘pessimists’ of our material sense world have a chance. They have a way into the future to become ‘optimists’ for the world of the living thoughts, the etheric, the reality of the living. Through practice of the above exercises we strengthen our perception of that ‘other’ aspect of reality, which is just as real as the material aspect.

**What New Ways of Thinking, Feeling and Willing are you Applying?**

**APO has helped me** understand the other side of things, to guide myself—the inner self, ‘cause I was ready in my heart, at peace with myself, for the higher journey that my soul has been thirsting for. And now I trust my inner feelings and understand how to use the tools I have gained to find direction, meaning, and purpose. I am grateful. I really have changed my thinking/feeling and beliefs. I still live by my constitution, but have tweaked my rules of conviction. I look in the mirror and see my big smile and bright blue eyes, and ask a question: What’s next? Jason, Jonesville, VA

I haven’t looked at life the same ever since I started studying the occult and metaphysics. I feel love on a higher level now, a spiritual love for all souls and the earth. I don’t think of people shortcoming like a cult and metaphysics. I feel love on a higher level now, a spiritual love at life the same ever since I started studying the occult. I haven’t looked at life the same ever since I started studying the occult and metaphysics. I feel love on a higher level now, a spiritual love for all souls and the earth. I don’t think of people shortcoming like a cult and metaphysics.

I am thinking more fluidly. My thoughts seem to flow positively. My feelings have of lately been benevolent. By giving a situation a moment to pause and think things over before speaking, mistakes are minimized. Alan, Nelsonville, OH

My thoughts are not as dominant in my life. I’ve learned to clear my mind and be more forward and productive. I feel a genuine connection with the earth and others. I perceive spiritual truths and laws, if only a little. I’m better grounded and centered. I am realizing that there are forces at work and appreciate a way to do things differently. Jeff, Crawfordsville, FL

I am thinking in a positive way. I’m feeling that there’s a spiritual change within love that needs to be unlocked, so I can show myself a love of the spiritual world. Things I do differently is that I have a lot of patience for others. Johnathon, Huntsville, TX

I’m perceiving spirituality differently. I feel more awakened, and I’m doing better with my will through meditation. Reginald, Doral, FL

**Mastering Your Self**

Meditative classes have begun at a women’s prison in Ypsilanti, MI. The course works with the **Self Development in the Penitentiary pamphlet by Fred Janney based on Rudolf Steiner’s Six Basic Exercises.**

We asked students their experiences with the exercises, here are some responses.

The class was thorough and brought critical ways of thinking and balancing our daily demands. Understanding how the universe works and the different worlds, then this one. The exercises changed me in a positive way. A change in daily routine, more detailed than before. Yes, I am more of a thinker, in this world and other worlds. Mary

This was a very knowledgeable class that I needed. So much to learn. I learned a lot; control of any actions, positive thinking, control of moods, meditation and relaxation, peace, and no negativity. Something is lifting me to a higher level of control over all things surrounding me. I am calm, positive of my thinking, and how I do well with others. Sandretta

I am impressed by how some of the exercises really relax you, your mind, and give you peace. I notice once I got the exercise done, I felt calmer. Eli

Yes I am doing the exercises. For myself, I’m slowing down to recognize my inner thoughts. I am learning to focus and get in touch with my inner self. Melissa

I am using a toothbrush to focus on. I use the focus exercise to calm my thoughts, like if I wake in the middle of the night with thoughts of what I need to do the next day, etc. I use the exercise to calm my mind. I think it’s still too early to see in depth the lasting effects. Overall I enjoyed the class. I liked that the lessons were interactive. I got a clear understanding of the purpose of each exercise and how to do it. I am interested to see how these will impact and sculpt my thinking and actions in the future. Heather

I’ve noticed subtle changes for the better, in my ability to focus. I plan on starting again, but choosing a different item to focus on. I initially chose my pen, but find it difficult to spend five minutes on it. Christine

I’m becoming more aware of what I’m thinking throughout the day, in certain situations and I’m learning to control it and turn it into more positive things. Other people have noticed a difference. Kelly

I have noticed I’m more humble, I don’t get as angry. I’m more calm. And yes, others see a change; they ask what is wrong with me (smile)! I am doing the meditative exercise every other day. I think the class was wonderful. Shaneke

The exercises affect me by helping with some of my emotions. People notice my change and they compliment me on it. Tiara
Meditative Verse

The abundance of the material world,
Out of creation's depths,
Streams urgently into the human senses,
Full of mysteries.
The word of the spirit
From world heights
Streams into depths of soul,
Bringing clarity.
In the human heart these streams become one,
As wisdom-filled reality.

Rudolf Steiner