

The Foundation for Health Creation

Spring 2023
Newsletter



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Dear Friends,

Happy spring! Many traditions around the world celebrate this splendid time of new life and rebirth in many forms- Easter, Passover, Ramadan, and the Japanese sakura festival, to name a few. Some of these spring festivals come after a time of cleansing, fasting, and self-sacrifice, when we give-up something in order to make space for something new. In the natural world, this austerity is reflected in the winter season itself, when life quiets and stills, moving deep into the earth where it lies sleeping until now. This cycle of time is also how the earth regenerates itself. Life needs to die, at least in part, in order to be renewed once more.

In this edition, we bring you several features that explore this theme. Sara Norris offers a thoughtful article on discomfort as an approach to creating health and building resilience. Steven Johnson brings us on a nourishing video tour of an evergreen pine grove in early spring, allowing us to experience the special sounds and light qualities created by the grove, and teaching us about the tremendous vitality and regenerative properties of these medicinal trees. We also feature a special approach to elder care at the Fellowship Community in New York state, where elders, youth, and adults live, work and care for each other in ways that embrace the full range of life's ages and abilities in creative and fulfilling ways. And finally we end with an invitation to explore nature's artistic gifts in your own backyard and kitchen! Amanda Jacobs shares her family tradition of easter egg decorating with natural dyes and botanical prints. You can apply these tricks on paper and fabrics too!

We hope you enjoy this time of growth and new beginnings and find time to connect with nature, the season, yourselves and loved ones.

With warm spring greetings,
The FHC Team

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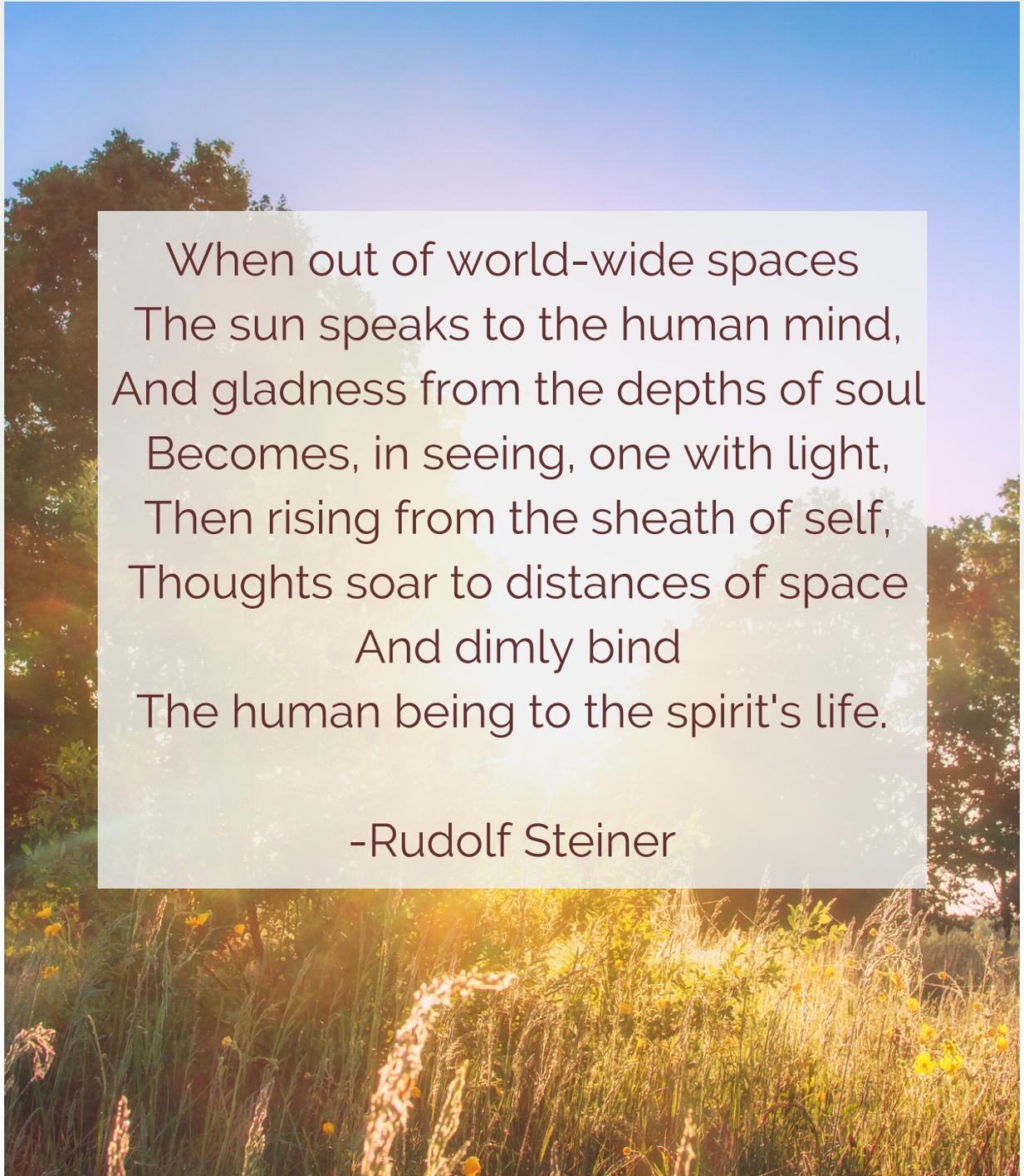
Calendar of the Soul

Week 1: Easter and Spring



When out of world-wide spaces
The sun speaks to the human mind,
And gladness from the depths of soul
Becomes, in seeing, one with light,
Then rising from the sheath of self,
Thoughts soar to distances of space
And dimly bind
The human being to the spirit's life.

-Rudolf Steiner



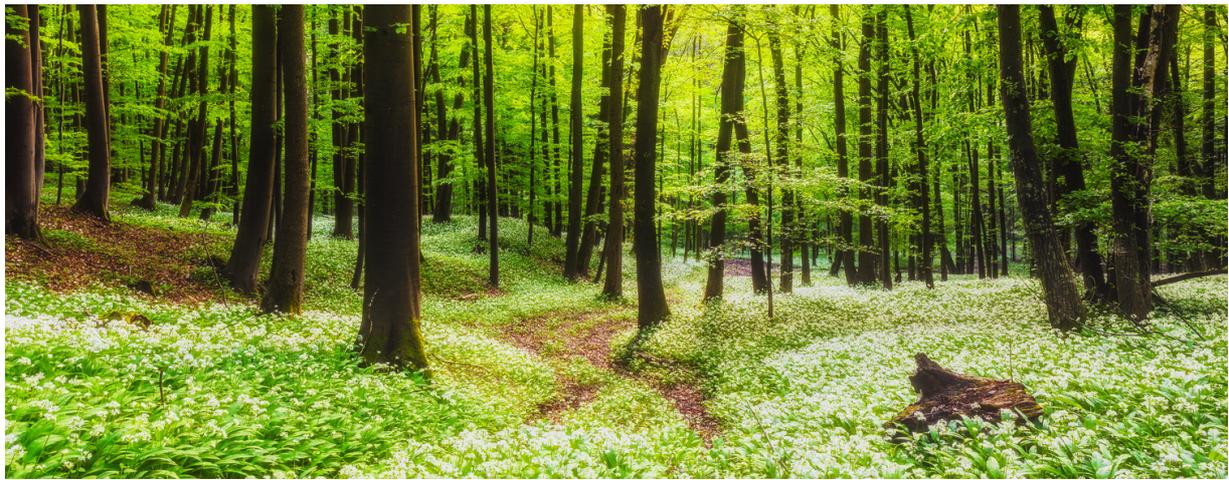
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Experiencing Discomfort: A Wellness Approach

By Sara Norris

There is a tongue-in-cheek version of the Hopi's Emergence story that says what moved the First People through the cavernous darkness of First World were the women complaining to the men about cramped conditions- too many people and not enough space! Every day the women would say, 'why aren't you doing something about this, why are we living this way?!'. When the men grew impatient with the questions and complaining, they would dig a path to the next cavern. This time, they would be a little higher up and have a little more space than before (until they didn't, and then it all began again). This story illustrates a common human dynamic of the balance between comfort and discomfort.



Modern living is increasingly sheltered from any form of discomfort. Our lives have become sterile, climate-controlled, underchallenged, overfed, and undernourished. There is a growing body of evidence across many scientific fields that becoming too comfortable is more harmful than we previously thought. Studies are increasingly showing that through adding specific hormetic stressors (like those experienced by our hunter-gatherer ancestors) to our lives, people are able to prime their body's mechanisms for thriving, not just surviving. It was this realization that led me to practice, and eventually become certified to lead others, in both the practice of Forest Bathing and the Wim Hof Method.

Forest Bathing is a health practice developed in Japan as a direct result of the increase in stress related diseases during the Tech Boom of the 70's and 80's. A guided forest bathing walk, as opposed to a hike or guided nature walk, invites participants to slow down and engage the forest through their senses. It encourages people to pay closer attention to their bodies and step outside of the strictures of time to be fully present to the natural community around them. This practice gets us close to what our hunter-gatherer ancestors would have experienced in their day-to-day lives. Through a series of invitations, a forest therapy guide may invite participants to explore textures, smells, spend time with a sentient being near the path or move like the shadow of a tree. Participants often report an increased sense of well-being and interconnectedness, and a deeper sense of rest and gratitude at the end of guided walks. When we connect with our natural community in this way, we tap into our ancestral roots and form a deeper connection to ourselves.

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The Wim Hof Method was developed by a Dutchman named Wim Hof. It is a 3-fold practice of Breathwork, Deliberate Cold Exposure and Mindset to promote health and well-being. The Wim Hof Method works by acting as a Hormetic Stressor, or deliberate, short-term and acute stressor that has the outcome of reducing perceived stress and increasing psychological resilience. Wim Hof Method breathwork is a 3-step protocol of 30-40 deep inhales followed by a period of hypoventilation, lasting as long as is comfortable to the practitioner and a third step of hypoxic recovery which is a deep breath held for 10-15 seconds. This is repeated over 3 or more rounds of breathwork. Deliberate cold exposure can be a cold shower lasting 15 seconds up to 5 minutes, an ice bath or a brief swim in live water during the winter months. Participants often report increased vitality, focus and bodily awareness at the end of guided breathwork and cold exposure sessions. They form deeper interoceptive connections to their bodies and foster connection to other participants through the experience of overcoming a deliberate stressor together.



Their positive impacts on stress reduction and improved immune response show that we, as a species, were not meant to live separate from our natural community.

Both practices put us back in touch with the natural world (our foundational community) in a revitalizing way; it's "part rewilding and part rewiring" as Michael Easter writes in *The Comfort Crisis*. Their positive impacts on stress reduction and improved immune response show that we, as a species, were not meant to live separate from our natural community. By having deeper and broader experiences in nature, and by incorporating practices that connect us in ways that walk the line of comfort and discomfort, we remember what it is to, as Mary Oliver put it, experience "our one wild and precious life".

Sara Norris is a Certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide through ANFT and a Certified Level One Wim Hof Method Instructor through Inner Fire. Both therapies offer similar benefits; boosting the immune system, decreasing stress, supporting the healing of anxiety and depression and bringing us back in touch with our evolutionary roots. Sara enjoys combining these two methods in her work with clients and participants and loves to share just how connected we were meant to be.

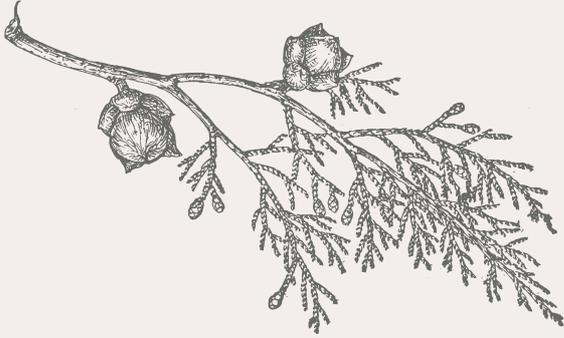
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Video

Getting to Know the Pines: A Late Winter, Early Spring Walk with Steven



Take a visit to the pine grove at Camphill Copake with Dr. Steven Johnson. Get to know their properties and uses while being in their presence- allowing your soul and body to be restored.

[Watch Now](#)

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Heath in Action

The Fellowship Community: Exploring Health as a Social Question

A Conversation with members and co-workers of the Fellowship Community (FC)

Renate Hiller – Elder member
Mac Mead – Co-worker and member
Tari Steinreuk – Co-worker and Director
Nancy Leopold – Co-worker and member
Kim Vaughn – Co-worker and Farmer
Steven Johnson, DO – Conversation Host

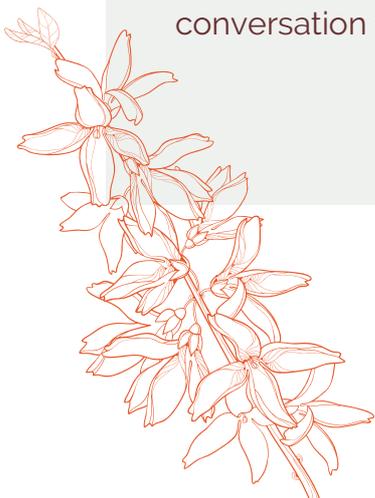


I wanted to have this conversation for several reasons. I grew up around the Fellowship Community as a teenager and later the founder Paul Scharff was one of my mentors for anthroposophic medicine. Both my parents dedicated themselves as co-workers, teachers and administrators of the FC for over 30 years of their life. My father crossed the threshold there and my mother is a member at 85 years old; still overseeing the weavery and remains active in the cultural life of the community. Over the years, I have



witnessed wonderful deeds of humanity and also seen the FC weather difficult challenges. In our current time when "individualism" dominates the social agenda it is a legitimate question to ask: What does the future of community look like? There are so many wonderful stories from the FC which describe the unique capacity of community to impact people's lives in a beautiful way. In this article we will focus on how the FC impacts Health Creation. I hope some of the examples shared in our conversation will lift your "hearts" and inspire you to re-look at community life in a renewed way for the future, where-ever you are!

-Dr. Steven M. Johnson



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Steven:

Dr. Paul and Ann Scharff founded the Fellowship Community in 1966, to address the question of eldercare in the context of Anthroposophy and community life. The Fellowship strives to support the care of the elderly and the land through biodynamic farming and gardening. As my following conversation demonstrates, most co-workers and members come to the FC with the belief that caring for the human being with dignity is best done through the renewal of social, economic, and cultural life. This is something they find in a unique way at the FC and therefore have chosen to live and work in an intentional community environment.

Mac Mead:

I wanted to point out that when the Fellowship started in the 1960's, the dignity of dying was not talked about much. The Fellowship has always respected the wishes of how an elder person and sometimes their family wanted them to die; not in hospital, but surrounded by a community of those who cared for them and understood their unique needs. This has become one of the main reasons many elder people seek out the FC because they know this will always be honored. Many members even have their funeral service at the Fellowship where families and the extended FC family can celebrate a person's passing together often with children around. Co-worker children are also taught to be a part of care and celebrations around the passing of a person. This is something that as a community the FC can uniquely provide and a core part of how the dignity of each person is honored at the community.

Also, the community ended up being much more than just elder care. Several individuals with intellectual disabilities have lived and worked in the community as well. One of the first examples was the founding of the Otto Specht school (still in existence today) which took on the education of a very mentally challenged epileptic student "Emily." Her teacher "Linda" who taught her for many years in a program integrated with the FC life then became paralyzed from the neck down in a car accident. She was able to live and be cared for at the FC while still teaching some of her students from the bedside while requiring extensive pulmonary care for instance. This could only happen because of the special community care setting at the FC and some advanced modern technology that allowed her a certain degree of autonomy of movement. Eventually, an individual came to the FC severely struggling with his own life path. He found his therapy and life task in both caring for and marrying "Linda" It felt "karmic" that such a unique miracle of life and health creation could take place in this way. It is only because this unique community situation existed that the support for such an astounding thing could happen.

Karmic situations such as this were also possible because of the intergenerational nature of the FC. This was an ideal of the founder Paul Scharff and his wife Ann Scharff. The community formed around the needs of the people who lived there. Practical and artistic workshops also sprung up where co-workers and members could further enrich their daily life. It was always the ideal of the FC that a person should be able to develop their own unique talents while also sharing in the general life and needs of the community. This is a special and unique challenge today 60 years later and is the priority of the community- to try and keep this ideal alive and learn how to become even more creative in this regard.

Kim Vaughn:

The covid-19 pandemic really hit the FC hard with so many state regulations and fears and uncertainties about health. Her experience was that during this time the FC discovered a strong part of its resiliency again as common shared experience. Especially because of the surrounding Pfeiffer farm and gardens the FC is surrounded by. Fresh biodynamic food, home-made yogurt still filled the plates in the dining room and with a short stroll outside the green plants, colorful gardens, animals and well-tended green spaces were all around. People were never really isolated alone in their rooms, even if there were compromises at times.

Also, because it was hard to get outside to do maintenance and repairs during the pandemic, all types of people young and old stepped up and helped with plumbing, carpentry and all types of other repairs which were handled through neighborhood and community cooperation. It felt like a true neighborhood community formed during covid-19 and the community in this way did not succumb to the social polarization experienced in so many other communities. The fact that this type of neighborhood cooperation emerged lowered greatly the social angst and anxiety that could have taken over the milieu of the community. The community created a healthy environment where people could still breath and be social.



Tari Steinreuk:

It's not just about the basic physical needs at the FC. She has observed how the FC provides a counterpoint to the isolation and vulnerability people can feel as they get older. The community provides opportunities for members and co-workers to share their gifts and skills with one another. Because in the FC many things you need are provided for there is more freedom to share and teach skills and gifts as well as learn new skills and gifts. During the pandemic people shared all types of skills repairing and mending things that needed doing. Teaching and sharing your gifts with others is encouraged in this type of community setting and can be very rewarding for older members, co-workers and volunteers alike. To "truly feel needed" for a practical purpose is an experience you can't replace or create artificially as we grow older. In a community we see opportunities every day to "serve" in a meaningful and tangible way. In our current world, so riddled with examples of "separation" from each other and so many disappearing into the world of media, video games and technology, it is so heartening to see people out and about and actively engaging each other in community. Even if relationships are not always "rosy" it is still real and people learn how to connect and communicate.

Nancy Leopold:

It is also important to mention that at the FC there is always a crew of young people from Germany, abroad or sometimes from the states that work in the community and participate in the elder care. Watching the loving relationships and bonds that can form between the young and old is uniquely heartening. It would not be possible in another elder care institution to be living nearby when a person is getting ready to cross the threshold and hold their hand through this process. Also, to share stories and biographies between the young and old creates special relationships. It is hard to describe how special it is to see how the development of the younger people in their late teens or early twenties matures and how happy the elder members are to interact with their younger caregivers on a regular basis. It is a dimension of health creation you cannot put in a bottle or prescription. Everyone benefits!

Renate:

I was so moved to see how one of the elder members "Hildegard" was cared for by the young co-workers. They would dress her in beautiful clothes which she loved. Her observation is that work becomes social in these instances and this is a special quality of the community. Community life "invites good deeds" and you see how on a daily basis people want to do good and neighborly things for each other. Serving and caring for others also lifts you out of yourself and your own problems and offers you the opportunity to see things from different perspectives which is so essential for a healthy social life.

This social element is expanded through celebrating the festivals of the year together, processing vegetables from the garden as a community around the table, or even "shucking" corn outside sitting on logs. The festivals are very important because it is a time to share deeper thoughts and contemplate spiritual things. Music, poetry, readings in the Goethe room, eurythmy, and special lectures are always part of the holiday celebrations and bring a deeper meaning to everyone's life as well as a social element.

Tari and Mac:

The community is most special when we can see the higher being in those we are caring for. It is a deed of "love" to care for other people in need. Bringing dignity to the aging process actually increases our capacity for love.

Even the crossing of the threshold can become a festival. With co-workers, families, young children all coming together to share and talk about the life of a member who has passed. In a community like the Fellowship your relationship to birth and death changes. Because most often this is not occurring in a hospital or sterile setting; the "community" becomes palpable as everyone simultaneously agrees without coercion to celebrate the life of a single human being. Even the religious services often take place in the FC.

On The Future of Community at the Fellowship Community



Kim:

In the past the FC was a place where “everyone did everything” and as the community grew this became a bigger and bigger task. The goal in the future is to realize how a particular gift or service one has to give to the community can be supported; where there is a balance of giving and receiving. As a farmer the responsibilities to the land and the animals are never ending if you want to do it well. I can share the harvest from the farm and gardens with the whole community because others allow me the possibility to do this work which I love. I would say “I am because you are” is the ideal; we all need to adapt to create healthy communities in the future. We need to all want to support our mutual development. In a community the economy of sharing also makes it possible for all professions to find the support they need. This is an aspect of the threefold social order described by Rudolf Steiner that is always being strived for.

A healthy social life is found only when, in the mirror of each soul, the whole community finds its reflection, and when, in the whole community, the virtue of each one is living.

-Rudolf Steiner

Tari:

Clearly, communities like the FC need to change and adapt to our current times. There are core aspects to our mission of elder care and community based on anthroposophy that cannot change because they are the heart of our benevolent impulse. On the other hand, you can't just maintain if you want new inspiration and creativity to pulse through the community. Fewer people want to undergo the perceived sacrifice to live in a community, especially because they feel they might lose an important level of their autonomy in a work-based community. The new challenge is to help people to realize that “spiritual” and “creative” freedom and the opportunity to serve our fellow human beings is more possible in many ways in a community. Making sure this reality is palpable is a task of the community today. At the same time people need more space and individual time; the “whole” community has to figure out how to support this for each other while not losing the wonderful “neighborhood” quality of the community and making sure the level of care remains optimal. Overall to be in a community is to learn how to work out of “love”.



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Nancy:

It is interesting right now how many elder people are seeking community. They want to be in a spiritually striving place like the Fellowship because they want to be in a place where they can still work to develop themselves and be active spiritually and physically doing good work when possible. They inspire the co-workers. As long as wise elders like this are seeking the community, we have reason to push forward and continue this special work.

Renate:

The truth is the Fellowship wants to be a blueprint for the future. Not out of egoism, but because the world needs to learn how to create a new culture which recognizes the higher nature of our humanity. This is why I came here when my husband needed care and now that he has crossed the threshold, I will stay here as part of this community.

Steven:

Thank you, everyone. I think that is a profound statement to end our sharing today. I'd like to end with a quote from Rudolf Steiner which this conversation so clearly illustrated, about finding community for the future:

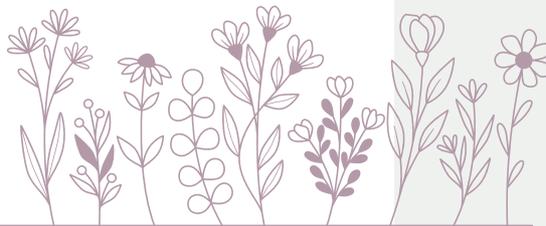
“Live through deeds of love and let others live with tolerance for their unique intentions”



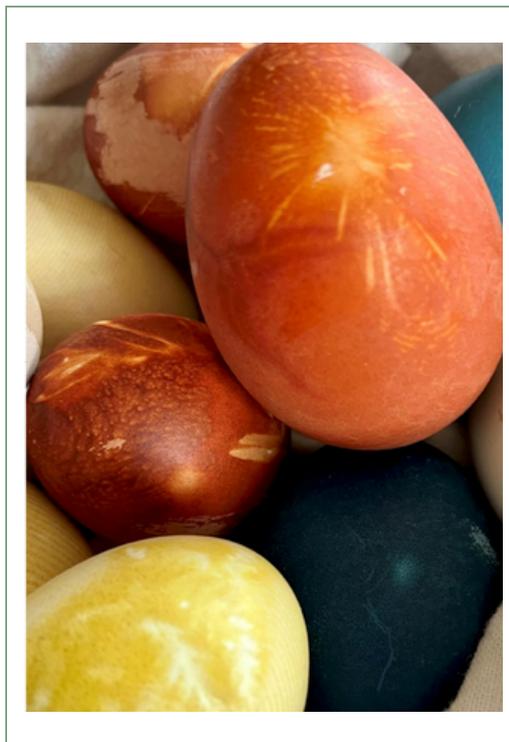
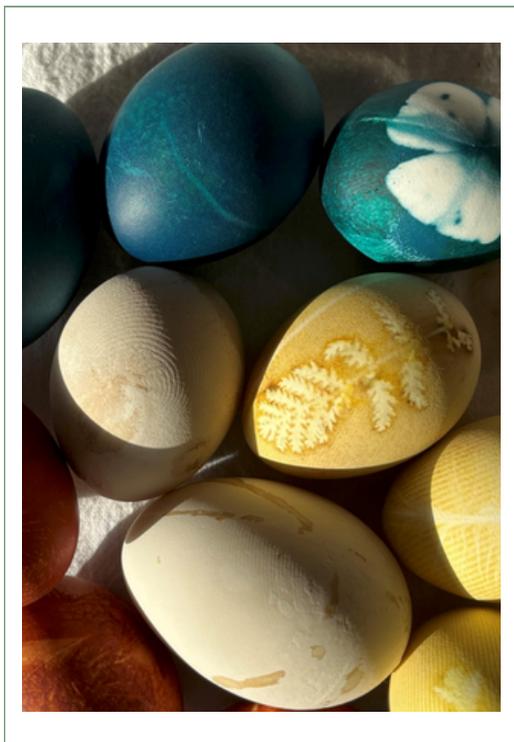
If you'd like to learn more about the Fellowship Community, watch a short video or donate to this work please visit our website or call: (845) 356-8494 Ex. 2

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The Wonderment of Natural Egg Dyeing



Having just passed across the point of equinox, I now find myself newly arrived in Spring! It is still quite cold in the canyonlands where I live, and it's been raining for days and days. Still, the brave first plantlings are sprouting, and the amorous birds seem pleased by the strengthening daylight.

One of our families' favorite rites of Spring is dyeing eggs. There are so many fun egg-dyeing ideas out there, and we've tried a good number of them, but we always return to making our own dyes from kitchen scraps and spices. Not only do the eggs turn out beautiful, but we also get to experience the transformation of the ingredients, even before using the dyes to transform the eggs from white to brilliantly-hued.

This year we decided to keep the effort relatively simple by selecting just four dyes to work with: yellow onion peels, red cabbage, paprika and turmeric. There are other options, such as blueberries, tea, coffee, beets, spinach. A little creativity and perhaps some online research could yield numerous possibilities. The recipes we used are provided on the last page of this feature.

Trainings, and Events

Nourishing Ourselves through Rhythm and Sleep Webinar Series

Presented by Dr. Daciana Iancu, MD

Thursday, May 11, 2023 at 8:30pm EDT

Good sleep and rest help us enjoy life better. Yet a large majority of the population does not get adequate rest and sleep for a variety of reasons. Poor quality or insufficient sleep is associated with poor health outcomes, like cardiovascular and chronic inflammatory disease, mental disorders, even weight gain and long Covid. How can we slow down enough to rest and achieve the nourishing sleep we deserve? What interferes with our ability to sleep well? In this webinar you will learn about the natural rhythms of our body and how we can use these rhythms to become more efficient in our daily tasks and rest better at night. You will gain tools and a list of supplements to help you navigate the challenges of the modern world in order to achieve the rest and sleep your body craves. Dr. Iancu is a well-seasoned Integrative Medicine physician in California and co-director of the Anthroposophic Health Association.



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Nourishing Ourselves through Rhythm and Sleep

Presented by Dr. Daciana Iancu, MD
Thursday, May 11, 2023 at 8:30pm EDT



[Register Now](#)

Save the Date for Our Upcoming Events!

Thursday, October 12th, 2023

"Healing Begins in the Gut – Earthly and Spiritual Nutrition"

Dr. Steven M Johnson, DO

Thursday, December 14th, 2023

"Treating Common Upper Respiratory Infections and Conditions from Allergy to Flu"

Dr. Carmen Herring, DO

From

NAANA

NORTH AMERICAN ANTHROPOSOPHIC NURSES ASSOCIATION

The Foundation Course in
Anthroposophic Nursing

Foundation Course in Anthroposophic Nursing – Module 1

Includes Anthroposophic Homecare- Also open to Caregivers- Meets the Prerequisites for further training in Rhythmical Massage

The Foundation Course in Anthroposophic Nursing Course is given in four modules over two years in Loveland, Colorado with a webinar prior to each module. The training will address the fundamental principles of Anthroposophy, extending particularly to the Anthroposophic view of the human being in health and illness and support of processes of care and healing. This course provides an introduction to the many levels and ways of understanding and assessing, including three-fold, four-fold, seven-fold and twelve-fold dynamic relationships of the human being, and of their practical application in nursing care and therapeutic support. Equally important to the practical applications is the path of inner development of the nurse, therapist and caregiver that elevates how we think, feel and enact our work to its highest potential. This aspect will accompany all of the practical work.

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For any questions reach out at
foundationcoursean@gmail.com.



Trainings, and Events

PAAM Annual Training Week for Physicians and Pharmacists

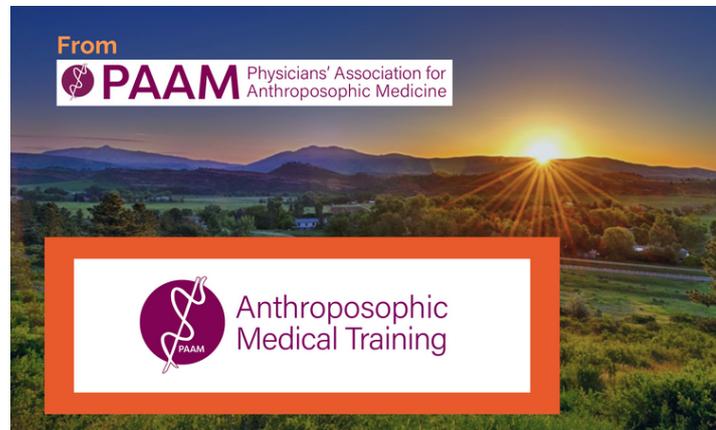
A New Physiologic Paradigm: Threefold Insights for Health and Illness

April 29-May 6, 2023 at Sunrise Ranch, Colorado (an hour north of Denver)

This is the chance for newcomers and more-experienced practitioners to gain insights into "threefold" patterns of anatomy, physiology, and diagnosis and to see how these patterns interweave between body and spirit.

This week-long intensive will teach about the very differentiated physiology of our nervous system versus our digestion and metabolism, and how this relates to both modern integrative approaches to chronic illness and ancient alchemical wisdom. Anthroposophic pharmacy demonstrations will show you these principles in ways you will never forget! Clinical workshops provide practical tools for offering your patients individualized treatment for conditions like hypertension, headache, IBS, eczema and sleep disorders.

Write to paamdrscourse@anthroposophy.org to inquire.



Anthroposophic Health Association Biennial Conference
The Mysteries of Healing: Realizing AnthroPoSophia
July 19-22, 2023 Kimberton, PA

**"Love is the result of Wisdom that
has been reborn in the I"**

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Guest Lecturers: Ursula Flatters, MD, Marion Debus, MD, and James Dyson, M.D.

In the summer of 1923 in Penmaenmawr, Wales, Ita Wegman asked Rudolf Steiner if there could be a path for the mysteries to come into medicine again in our age.

In the summer of 2023 in Kimberton, Pennsylvania, the AHA will hold a conference in recognition of all that came to benefit medicine from this question.

Are you interested in experiencing the gem that AM has to offer in interdisciplinary team medicine? Join us in July to both celebrate the 100 year anniversary of Ita Wegman's important question and learn from fellow healers: physicians, nurses and various anthroposophic therapies in case discussions.