

# The Journey of Spirit Recollection

## A Handbook for the Practice of Steiner's Karmic Exercises



"'Practise spirit remembering' (spirit recollection) not only means that we learn how our own 'I' is part of God's 'I'—no, out of cosmic heights we hear resound: 'From the divine, humanity takes its existence,' the humanity together with which we must come to a brotherly, social community."<sup>1</sup>

In looking at the exercises of Spirit Recollection, "it should really be possible, after several years of these exercises, to look back on one's whole life as a detached observer."<sup>2</sup>

"Spirit Recollection begins on the other side of the threshold. We then enter a field that was aimed at during initiation in the ancient Egyptian Mysteries: the faculty to remember one's own life up to the previous incarnations."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Emanuel Zeylmans, *Willem Zeylmans van Emmichoven: An Inspiration for Anthroposophy* (Forest Row, UK: Temple Lodge, 2002), 249.

<sup>2</sup> Willem Zeylmans van Emmichoven, *The Foundation Stone* (Forest Row, UK: Temple Lodge, 2002), 42–43.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard C. J. Lievegoed, *Présence de la Pierre de fondation* (Dunham, Québec: Les Éditions Perceval, 2018), 47.

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The following are guidelines for applying Steiner's karmic exercises in our lives for a deeper understanding of the forces at play in our biography. The exercises can be applied on our own, of course. For beginners, however, another person listening can make a big difference. She can help us keep closer to the form and purpose of the exercises, and offer encouragement and feedback.

A section of the manual contemplates the formation of a group under the guidance of an experienced facilitator as a possible variation. This scenario would be accompanied by coaching if necessary.

The objectives of this course are:

- Acquire detachment from our life and see more objectively our past
- Face our life with confidence and trust in the wise guidance of karma
- Acquire greater moral imagination and moral technique: devise better strategies for tackling difficult situations.
- Reconnect more deeply with our prebirth intentions

### **A Few Threads**

This handbook follows a few archetypal threads. On one hand are the seven life processes as an archetype for deepening our understanding of destiny and connecting with our prebirth resolves. They apply to various exercises in different ways. On the other hand the sequence of the exercises is arranged around the archetype of the journey of the soul between death and a new birth. The path of experiencing our destiny is a conscious undertaking of much that would come after death; it is a path of initiation into what Steiner calls Spirit Recollection in the first panel of the Foundation Stone Meditation. It leads to a recognition of our role and responsibility in shaping our destiny, possibly giving us inklings about our previous incarnations.

A word about this last statement. Steiner's exercises are so arranged here that the apex of the path of Spirit Recollection are two exercises—the Greater Karma exercises and the Saturn/Sun/Moon exercise—which can provide us insights about our own and other people's previous incarnations. However, at least for this course, knowledge/experience of some aspects of our previous lives, though perfectly licit, is not the main goal of the journey. The two exercises above are listed, but not worked upon. The main goal of this course is the landmark achievement of taking complete responsibility for our lives. Glimpses into our previous incarnations undoubtedly strengthen this resolve, so once more this is not an either/or. Taking responsibility is the aim, and reaching insights about previous lives enhances this very same goal. Neither detracts from the other.

The sequence of the exercises is generally speaking ordered from the simpler ones to the more difficult, but also from those that look to the past to those that look to the present and future. It is here that the archetype of the journey between death and a new birth has been followed. In the first part of the journey we undergo a process of review and evaluation. At the zenith the journey offers us a panorama of our previous incarnations; in the descending part of the arc we start looking with interest at the earth and our future. The last is a stage of planning, prevision,

looking forward. This sequence of revision and evaluation, understanding/insight and prevision/planning is followed in the ordering of the exercises with more layers of detail, as we will see shortly.

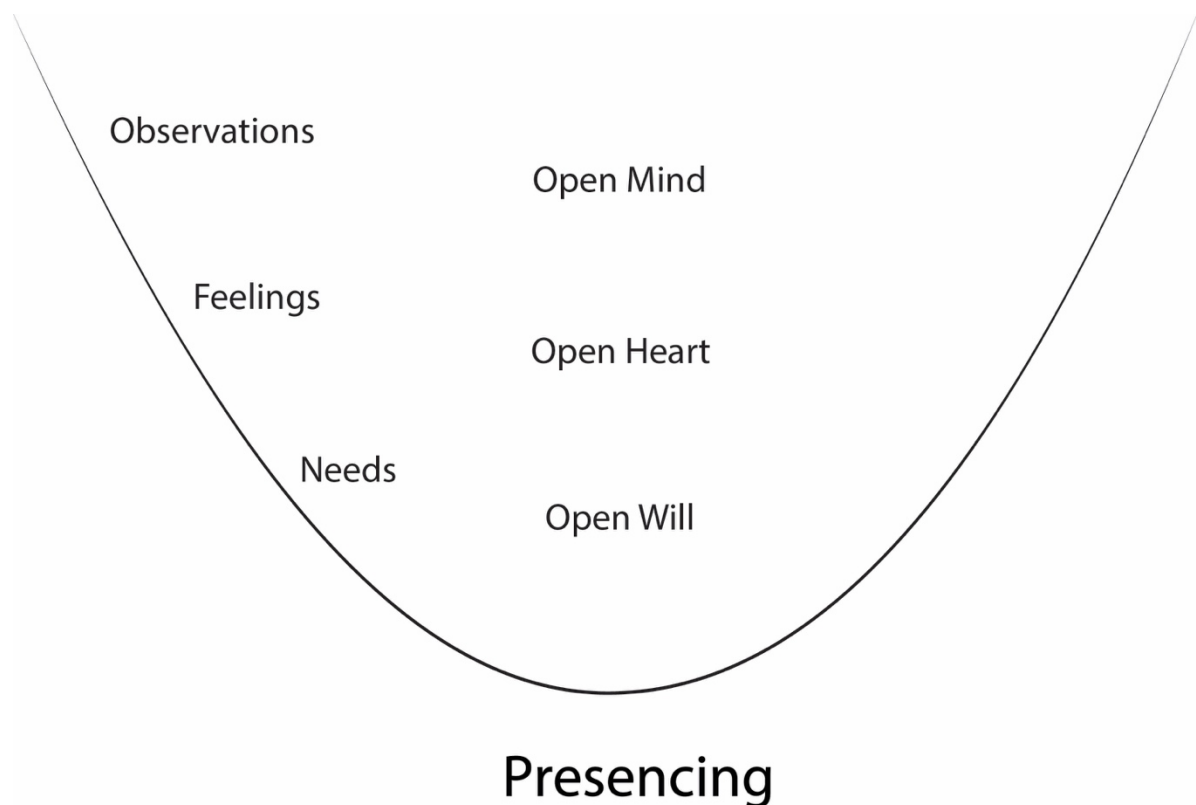
Another word about the genesis of this particular format. To Steiner's exercises have been added variations, all within the spirit of pure observation, review, and evaluation. I have come with variations from experiences and trainings I have followed. The first one is that of Coen van Houten's Destiny Learning, whose first stage is in effect an extended four-day/three-night exercise (Greater Karma Exercise) conducted in small groups with facilitators, which I have taken through NALM (New Adult Learning Movement) in Germany in 2001.

The training with Coen van Houten's Destiny Learning, and also his Adult Education, involves, among other things, the designing of exercises for both developing our learning capacities around anthroposophical knowledge (Adult Education) and around life learning (Destiny Learning). In this spirit some of the exercises offered here are particular variations of Steiner's exercises. As Steiner asks us to look at any particular event in certain phenomenological ways, I ask the participants to choose a specific type of event. An example: an event that I'm grateful about, a moment in my life in which I received great inspiration (peak experience), or a moment/time in which I felt greatly estranged from myself (valley experience). In the same way other exercises have been devised about reconnecting with our prebirth experiences, having to do with either the realm of values (the will) or with turning-point experiences. Once more we remain bound to the content of our biographies in a phenomenological way. From this the course never strays.

The course journey offers various aides and pointers both for individual and dyad practice. These I have taken from various fields of personal experience, mainly references to Nonviolent Communication, as a phenomena-based, experiential approach to personal and interpersonal growth. In the personal realm I look at the ways to render the work more enjoyable, productive, and sustainable in the long-term. In the dyad work I look at ways of relating the personal experiences phenomenologically, eschewing interpretation, one of the greatest enemies to the perception of the forces of karma. Pure observation is emphasized over and over again. This much concerns the speaker. The other tips are offered for the benefit of the enhancement of the listener's skills.

After offering a review of the correspondence of the exercises with the journey between death and a new birth, we will look at the exercises themselves. These are offered in Steiner's words in Appendix 1. To each exercise have been added forms/templates that follow the patterns of the seven life processes and/or the four bodily sheaths (physical, etheric, astral, ego). The templates emerged in my own personal process of exploration with Steiner's exercises. The exercises are deceptively simple, but when I tried to apply them, my mind wandered from one idea to associated ideas in ways that were random and unproductive. In other words, I got lost. The forms are there to give direction and finality. They are not written as an ultimate document but are open to improvement.

As mentioned, the exercise forms follow broadly speaking the archetype of the seven life processes, as they metamorphose in the soul and social realms. I have spoken elsewhere about the correlation between the seven life processes and the building of the bodily sheaths (physical, etheric, astral, ego) during the first twenty-one years and their working in the soul realm; an example of this lies in the path of Destiny Learning (Coen van Houten).<sup>4</sup> This workbook looks at the understanding of the seven life processes as a deepening of soul experience through the steps of observation/thinking, feeling, and will. Otto Scharmer has characterized these steps as those of Open Mind, Open Heart, and Open Will (see Figure 1). The majority of the forms will follow this progression from observation to feeling and needs/values (realm of the will).



**Figure 1:** Steps in Theory U

Finally, for those who would like to follow this matter further, or would like to know more about what they are embarking upon before taking the journey, apart from Appendix 1 there is a list of references and lectures to deepen the understanding of the path of Spirit Recollection and its various possible modalities. The references also direct you to aspects that are important in the pursuit of an understanding of our biography, including what is important in the exercises and why.

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<sup>4</sup> Luigi Morelli, *Karl Julius Schröer and Rudolf Steiner: Anthroposophy and the Teachings of Karma and Reincarnation* (iUniverse: 2015) Chapter 3.

## **The Journey between Death and a New Life, and Correspondence with the Exercises**

What follows is a brief indication of the correspondence between the exercises in the current path with the stages of the soul's journey between death and a new life. It is clear that what happens in the planetary spheres is much more complex than what is presented below, and that various stages are repeated and deepened, rather than presenting themselves in a single way. Nevertheless, the correspondence remains true in a general way. What gives strength to the exercises is retracing this universal archetype of the soul's journey from death to new life, which is repeated in a lesser way every night while the ego and the astral body are in the spiritual worlds.

The first phase of our experience in the afterlife has been popularized by accounts of near-death experiences. It is known as the life tableau. By virtue of the metamorphosis of time and space that takes place after death, the soul simultaneously perceives its whole life unfolded before its sight. Survivors of near-death experiences describe it as seeing their whole life in a very short space of time. For the seer this process takes place in an average time of three days. This tableau expands further and further away from us and at the same time becomes less and less distinct to our perception.

### Pure Review

#### 1) Rückschau

The region that we cross first after death is located between the Earth and the Moon. It begins what the ancient Hindu tradition calls the stage of purification or kamaloca. In this arduous time, immediately following the view of our life tableau, we experience the effects of our actions on our fellow human beings and on all the other dimensions of creation, be they plant and animal kingdoms or other spiritual dimensions. Unlike the previous life tableau, kamaloca occurs in reverse order; first we examine the events closest to our death, then we move toward our birth. This process takes place throughout the lunar phase of consciousness and through the expansion of our consciousness through the inner planets of Mercury and Venus.

### Review and Evaluation

- 2) Rückschau in the Moment (Spot Check)
- 3) Celebrations
- 4) Peak Experience
- 5) Valley Experience
- 6) Slice of Life Exercise
- 7) Remembering Someone with Gratitude

After Venus we reach the sphere of the Sun, a region that takes much of our time in the planetary spheres. In the region of the Sun there are only pure moral relationships. Here goodness bestows blessings, and evil has no place. The entrance

into the realm of the Sun is therefore accompanied by a feeling of bliss due to the fact that we have left behind everything that was connected with our lower nature on earth, all that was of a selfish nature. We now connect with other human beings, from spirit to spirit, and are completely surrounded by spiritual beings.

In the first half of the Sun existence, we shape with spiritual beings our next incarnation on earth. In the second part of our stay, we begin to gather experiences from the cosmos. In the solar region, those who have not recognized the universally human in their fellows and have not recognized—implicitly or explicitly—the Christ principle live a life of complete isolation.

In the sphere of Saturn we can only look for what is needed for the further progress of the whole of humanity. Not only do we review our last incarnation, but also in a sense its spiritual "blueprint." In the contrast between real life and the project, we perceive all our flaws. A person who has received inspiration from this sphere will have a natural inclination in the next life toward all spiritual reality. Another characteristic of human beings inspired by this realm is that they are able to receive indications of future evolution on earth and sow the seeds for their realization.

#### Taking Responsibility for Our Lives

- 8) Minor Karma Exercise
- 9) Variation: Closed Door Situation

Beyond Saturn we penetrate the "realm of fixed stars" and complete our process of expansion during the Cosmic Midnight. Each individual will experience this according to his own state of consciousness. Most souls will experience this as a state of rest and regeneration that offers the ability to forget. Our consciousness will be clouded, and we will receive restorative influences from the most distant regions of the cosmos. Relatively few souls will be able to maintain consciousness. At the Cosmic Midnight we also have the opportunity to examine, as an external manifestation, all previous incarnations and intermediate times, just as we saw our last life immediately after death. The pain and sadness we have experienced in life permeate our soul so much that they generate new forces in our will.

#### Recognizing the Causes in Previous Lives

Although this lies beyond the immediate scope of this course, we mention these exercises for the sake of completeness for those interested in going further:

- a) Major Karma Exercise (4 days / 3 nights) from the May 9, 1924, lecture in *Karmic Relationships*, volume 2. For this you can use the same form as the one for the lesser karma exercise.
- b) Saturn/Sun/Moon Exercise from the May 4, 1924, lecture in *Karmic Relationships*, volume 2.

As we experience, outside of ourselves, a panorama of our past and intermediate lives, an intense desire arises within us to unite again with a body. With our will

expanding, we come into contact with those forces that operate in nature in the line of heredity throughout the generations.

The individual now begins to feel like a Self, separated from the surrounding world. As such she returns to feel sympathy or antipathy toward what surrounds her and therefore she crosses the planetary spheres in a strongly individual fashion. Along with this contraction, in the dimensions of consciousness appear the first glimmers of alienation from the cosmos. As the spheres of the inner planets pass, an orientation of consciousness toward definite living environments is established—settings such as life tasks and karma groupings of future terrestrial life. Here the first relationships are intertwined with those with whom the soul will be most closely associated in earthly life. The region of Mercury has more influence on the formation of race relations; the region of Venus, in the formation of family relations. These bonds can be strong or weak, determining to what extent the individual will be closely associated with and shaped by race, culture, and family ties.

### Exercises to Stimulate Inspiration

- 10) Learning from Our Regrets
- 11) Exercise to Encourage Inspiration

In our descent from the cosmos, we develop a deep interest in the circumstances of future earthly life from the point of view of the spiritual world—from decades to centuries—before we incarnate. We follow with deep interest the development of the generations in which we intend to incarnate. We develop our prebirth intentions.

### Prebirth Intentions

- 12) Social Impact Statement
- 13) Discovering Our Core Values
- 14) The Wise Guidance of Our Karma

A summary of the progression of the exercises appears in Table 2.

<b>Exercises 1-2</b>	<b>Exercises 3-7</b>	<b>Exercises 8-9</b>	<b>Exercises a-b</b>	<b>Exercises 10-11</b>	<b>Exercises 12-14</b>
Pure review	Review and evaluation	Taking responsibility for our life	Recognizing the deeper causes	Preview	Recognizing our prebirth intentions
Observer consciousness	Develop imaginations of self and others	Live life in a more conscious way	Recognize fragments of previous lives	Confront the future with the help of inspiration	Unite consciously with our destiny

**Table 2:** Progression of the Karmic Exercises



## **Tips and Aids for Individual Work**

It is important to base all work in this handbook on precise and exhaustive observation. At the first stage we need to be able to observe and relate the events as fully and precisely as possible (Open Mind), see the impacts these have on our feelings (Open Heart), and observe what arises in the realm of the will (Open Will). After these preliminary stages can emerge acceptance of the facts and insights. Insights arise only when we are sure to fully honor each part of the process. An example to the contrary: it is easy to skip a full recalling of an event and to start generalizing on a series of events, and/or follow a train of thought that connects to larger concepts borrowed from psychology, be it mainstream or anthroposophical. When this happens, it is nearly impossible to have genuine insights arise in the soul.

The first exercise (Rückschau) is related to pure observation. The daily practice of this exercise forms the basis for all following work (see specific recommendations at the top of Appendix 4).

All the following exercises add the element of evaluation. It is true that we need to evaluate the reactions of our inner world or the experience of other people's souls. But how can we do so objectively? One way is to relate to feelings on one hand and impulses of will on the other. We guess as closely as possible, refraining from interpreting. For this purpose are offered lists of feelings (positive and negative) and needs/values (see Appendix 2).

The feelings are self-explanatory. Though we all have a personal experience of them, we all know what anger is, or sadness, confusion, excitement, happiness, etc. At the beginning of the journey it may be useful to refer to lists of positive and negative feelings. You will soon judge if you need them, or if you can tell for yourselves without need of external supports.

The same can be said about the realm of the will. If we categorize this in values/needs, we have an objective frame of reference just like it has been said about feelings. We all know what autonomy, support, empathy, and creativity are, to name just a few. We all know them in individual ways, but we can all relate to something similar when we name them.

A word about the difference between needs and values: The same words we use here for needs can be used for values. In the way they are seen here, values apply for a long-term view of our lives; most of the time, values in the moment are expressed as needs. At times we will refer as values as in the case of our prebirth intentions since these concern a larger timespan, in fact our whole life.

The impulses of will are arranged in terms that echo Steiner's characterization of the will in "Study of Man."<sup>5</sup> The will expresses itself in each of our sheaths; the physical with instincts, the etheric with drives, the astral with desires, and the ego with motives. Above the ego there are no newer needs/values. What changes is the force with which these values operate in the soul. At the level of the Spirit Self (Manas) we speak about wish, for the Life Spirit (Buddhi) of intention, and when we attain Spirit Man (Atma) of resolution. While the initial levels may be obvious (physical, etheric) as we move further it becomes a little arbitrary to separate specific values between desires and motives (astral and ego). Thus the form is only meant as a general guideline that can be adapted to individual perceptions. Be creative, without changing the universal character of needs/values, and adapt it as you see fit.

A great part of the journey of Spirit Recollection implies acquiring greater familiarity with the realm of feelings (our own and those of others) and of needs/values. Sometimes feelings come over us, but we may not be able to recognize them or name them. This is common in situations of trauma, be this temporary or longer term. The same is true, only all the more so, in the realm of needs. We may be able to articulate something we want in general terms, but not be able to condense it down to a particular need. A fuller understanding of the realm of feelings supports our greater awareness of our own and other people's needs. If we are unclear about our feelings, it is all the harder to fathom our own and other people's needs, and therefore to find clear direction in our lives and perceive the forces of destiny.

The three forms—two feelings and one needs—are the most basic aides for following the journey of the soul here proposed. Try using them in tandem with the questionnaires for each particular exercise. You will see in fact that most of the exercise forms refer to observation, feelings, and needs/values.

### **Support for Individual Work**

Other aides and tips are offered for the work's sustainability:

- Celebration and Gratitude. There is a reason why the first exercises on this journey have to do with celebration. On one hand it promotes play; on the other, it brings a sense of lightness to what we want to undertake. If you find you have a hard time coming up with celebrations, take an additional step and start journaling for gratitude at the end of the day. See if you can regularly increase the number of things for which you have been grateful during the day.

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<sup>5</sup> Rudolf Steiner, "Study of Man," lecture of August 25, 1919 (GA 293).

- Play (See document in Appendix 2). This is a crucial part of rendering our work sustainable and enjoyable. The document explores the various dimensions of play. It is not exhaustive; try adding your own ideas. Play is the tool that allows you to move from "I must" to "I want." What is felt as a "must" will most often inhibit the soul's desire to carry out work, most likely because it hinders our sense of freedom and ease. Play will sustain your work in the long term.
- Accountability Structures (See document in Appendix 2). In the spirit of play, but one step further, you can decide how you are going to remind and support yourself in carrying out this work. Personal, playful, even outrageous accountability structures will help you bring work closer to play.
- Rhythm and Dose. Rhythm replaces strength. Five minutes a day for a month (2.5 hours) amount to more in terms of building soul strength than a total of 3–4 hours over the space of 10 days and nothing during the remaining 20 days. Choosing something simple, doing it often, and carrying it to completion has much more value in building self-confidence than attempting something big, or even heroic, and falling short of the goal. "Easy does it" is not a cliché.
- Amount of Practice for Each Exercise. Each exercise is used in different ways and frequencies, and/or for particular situations. See top of Appendix 4 for recommendations for each exercise.
- Stay Close to the Form. This will help you avoid interpretation and speculation.
- Circumscribe What You Will Look at. A single event looked at in great detail offers much more insight than a group of events surveyed as a whole in general terms. Limiting helps you stick to observation.

### **Supporting Each Other**

Here are some tips on top of what has been said above.

#### For Speaker and Listener:

- Regular times work best! Nothing better for the etheric, which means making things easier for both of you.

#### For the Speaker:

- In the journey through the soul layers, honor the absolute importance of the sentient soul (observation, both outer and inner); see connections but refrain

from interpreting; leave time for insights to emerge when they are ready, generally after the session.

- Just follow the form as much as possible: it obliges you to describe rather than interpret.
- If you find yourself talking on and on, stop; most likely you are interpreting.

#### For the Listener:

- Listen without commenting at all, or just paraphrase. Ask only clarifying questions, if really necessary, in order not to interrupt the flow of the conversation.
- Save comments for after the end of the form: write them down if it helps you keep down your impatience and listen better.
- Help your companion return to the form if s/he strays from it!

### **Guidelines for Group Facilitation**

It is possible to experience this path in a group, but only with the help of a facilitator with extensive experience, who has practiced the exercises assiduously for a year or more, or has done something similar, such as extensive practice with Nonviolent Communication or Twelve Step. Alternatively the tasks could be subdivided between an experienced facilitator and somebody with practice experience.

#### Session Format

This is a general format that has proved effective:

- Optional before the official session: social time exploring light themes, individual celebrations, any other news that inspires
- Verse followed by 1–2 minutes of silence: 2 possible verses are offered in Appendix 3
- Check in: better if said in 2–3 sentences maximum. Among possibilities: analogy check-in on theme, e.g., "If you were an animal, flower, song, ecosystem, book, hobbies, music, dishes, which one would you be today?" Perhaps, after mid-course or beyond, check-in with three words "How I feel."

The check-in is meant to inspire listening and connection; this is not the time to offer comments or respond to or dialogue with others.

- Last week's exercise review:
  - o What worked
  - o What didn't work
  - o What caused surprise

Participants can help each other, especially in addressing the second question.

- Exercise for the session to carry over to the next session:

- First offered as an example by the facilitator or a volunteer
- Then carried out in dyads in breakout space. Allow ample time: from 40 to 60 minutes according to the exercise.

Tip: Start with two sessions on the celebration exercise to create an atmosphere of support and play. For the rest it is best to stick to the sequence of the exercises.

- Review / check out:
  - Celebrations
  - Mournings, critical feedback, and suggestions for improvement

The check-out is important for the format of the session. It is what allows you to create a group consciousness that invites the spiritual being of the group and allows you to evolve and improve. It is only when everyone feels equally welcome to contribute, and there is no fear of co-constructive criticism, that a group can be considered a true group. And that is why it is all the more important to have an experienced facilitator.

Review themes:

- How the tips offered in this manual work
- Other suggestions offered by the participants

The facilitator will figure out how to incorporate the comments and propose changes. In general it is good to ask if there is anyone who objects (be careful to leave ample opportunity), and to incorporate her needs; also to be open to testing and adapting as needed in subsequent sessions. The format is offered in such a way that there is little need for change, but it is good that the group feels free to adapt.

### Work Between Sessions

We recommend to:

- Adopt the rückschau as a daily practice: starting from the last 3–4 hours of the day, to half a day, up to the whole day.
- Do an exercise in pairs at least once a week.
- Doing another exercise on your own per week is recommended to create personal motivation and habit.
- Create dyads/trios for a minimum period of 4 weeks, i.e., 2 or 3 permutations at most during the course. It is advisable to ensure that paired people know that they are available for the duration of the period; otherwise form a trio to ensure there are always at least two people available.
- Follow the recommendations of this manual on how to work in pairs.

### Support in the Event of Difficulties Arising

- Coaching will be offered in ways to be determined.
- New ideas will be incorporated into the manual in order to improve it.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Excerpts on Karmic Exercises from Steiner's Lectures**

The following are some examples of "Karma Exercises", excerpted from Steiner's lectures. Two additional excerpts have been included solely for personal consideration. The first concerns the attitude the student should have toward everything that brings us joy. The second is the 'Call of Christian Rosenkreutz', here included because it is a unique event in a person's life, but more common than we normally give it credit.

#### **Rückschau**

From *Occult Science*, Chapter 5, Part 2.

The pupil will find he can gradually attain the necessary ability in this direction, if every evening when the day's work is done, he lets pass before his mind's eye pictures of the day's experiences, watching himself go through them. This will mean that he is looking at himself as he is in daily life—from without. To begin with, let him take small sections of the day. That will give him practice; and he will find that he grows more and more skillful in this "looking backward" until at last he is able to picture the whole day through in quite a short span of time. This beholding of our experiences in backward direction has a special value for spiritual training: it helps us disengage our thinking from its accustomed habit of holding on to the outer, material, and sense-perceptible events. When we think backward, we picture the events correctly, but we are no longer sustained by the obvious external sequence. The pupil needs this liberation if he is to make his way into the supersensible world. He will find too that by this freedom his thinking and ideation are strengthened, and in a thoroughly healthy manner. It is accordingly good also to review other things in backward order—a play, for example, a story, a melody, and so on.

#### **Gratitude Recollection Exercise**

From "Inner Aspect of the Social Question," lecture of February 4, 1919:

But we shall not attain to this unless we do something about it. One thing we can do is to strive to deepen our own life of soul. There are many paths to that. I will mention only one, a meditative path. From various points of view, and with various aims, we can cast a backward glance over our own lives. We can ask ourselves: How has this life of mine unfolded since childhood? But we can do this also in a special way. Instead of bringing before our gaze what we ourselves have enjoyed or experienced, we can turn out attention to the persons who have figured in our lives as parents, brothers and sisters, friends, teachers and so on, and we can summon before our soul the inner nature of each of these persons, in place of our own. After a time we shall find ourselves reflecting how little we really owe to ourselves, and how much to all that has flowed into us from others. If we honestly build up this kind of self-scrutiny into an inner picture, we shall arrive at quite a new relationship to the outer world. From such a backward survey we retain certain feelings and impressions. And these are like fertile seeds planted in us—seeds for the



growth of a true knowledge of man. Whoever undertakes again and again this inward contemplation, so that he recognises the contribution which other persons, perhaps long dead or far distant, have made to his own life, then when he meets another man, and establishes a personal relationship with him, an imagination of the other man's true being will rise before him.

This is something which must emerge as an inward and truly heartfelt social demand, bound up with this present time and necessary to the future development of mankind. So must Spiritual Science reveal its practical power to kindle and enrich human life.

This subject has a further aspect. In earlier times all self-knowledge, all introspection, was a much simpler affair, for a deeply inward social impulse is now emerging—and not only because of the enhanced awareness of some people concerning property or poverty. This impulse shows itself, for example, in the following way. Nowadays we pay very little attention to the fact that throughout life a constant process of ripening goes on. Inwardly honest men, such as Goethe, feel this. Even in his latest years Goethe was still eager to learn. His inward growth continued; he felt he had not finished with the task of becoming a man. And in looking back on his youth and prime he saw in all that had come to him then a preparation for the experiences brought by old age. Nowadays people very seldom think in that way—least of all when taking account of man as a social being. Everyone, as soon as he is twenty, wants to belong to some corporate body and—in the favourite phrase—to exercise his democratic judgment! It never occurs to anyone that there are things in life worth waiting for, because increasing ripeness comes with the years. Men to-day have no idea of that!

That is one thing we must learn, my dear friends—that all stages of life—and not only the first two or three decades of youth—bring gifts to man.

From "Social and Anti-social Forces in the Human Being," lecture of December 6, 1918:

It is possible for men to meet one another for years and not to know each other better at the end than they did at the beginning. The precise need of the future is that the social shall be brought to meet the antisocial in a systematic way. For this there are various inner soul methods. One is that we frequently attempt to look back over our present incarnation to survey what has happened to us in this life through our relations with others. If we are honest in this, most of us will say: Nowadays we generally regard the entrance of many people into our life in such a way that we see ourselves, our own personalities, as the center of the review. What have we gained from this or that person who has come into our life? This is our natural way of feeling. It is exactly this which we must try to combat. We should try in our souls to think of others, such as teachers, friends, those who have helped us and also those who have injured us (to whom we often owe more than to those who, from a certain point of view, have been of use to us). We should try to allow these pictures to pass before our souls as vividly as possible in order to see what each has done.

We shall see, if we proceed in this way, that by degrees we learn to forget ourselves, that in reality we find that almost everything which forms part of us could not be there at all unless this or that person had affected our lives, helping us on or teaching us something. When we look back on the years in the more distant past to people with whom we are no longer in contact and about whom it is easier to be objective, then we shall see how the soul-substance of our life has been created by the people and circumstances of the past. Our gaze then extends over a multitude of people whom we have known in the course of time. If we try to develop a sense of the debt we owe to this or that person—if we try to see ourselves in the mirror of those who have influenced us in the course of time, and who have been associated with us—then we shall be able to experience the opening-up of a new sense in our souls, a sense which enables us to gain a picture of the people whom we meet even in the present, with whom we stand face to face today. This is because we have practiced developing an objective picture of our indebtedness to people in the past. It is tremendously important that the impulse should awaken in us, not merely to feel sympathy or antipathy toward the people we meet, not merely to hate or love something connected with the person, but to awaken a true picture of the other in us, free from love or hate.

Perhaps you will not feel that what I am saying now is extremely important—but it is. For this ability to picture the other in oneself without love or hate, to allow the other individual to appear again within our soul, this is a faculty which is decreasing week by week in the evolution of humanity. It is something which men are, by degrees, completely losing. They pass one another by without arousing any interest in each other. Yet this ability to develop an imaginative faculty for the other is something that must enter into pedagogy and the education of children. For we can really develop this imaginative faculty in us if, instead of striving after the immediate sensations of life as is often done today, we are not afraid to look back quietly in our soul and see our relationships to other human beings. Then we shall be in a position to relate ourselves imaginatively to those whom we meet in the present. In this way we awaken the social instinct in us against the anti-social which quite unconsciously and of necessity continues to develop. This is one side of the picture.

### **Phase of Life Recollection**

From "Social and Anti-social Forces in the Human Being," lecture of December 6, 1918:

The other is something that can be linked up with this review of our relations to others. It is when we try to become more and more objective about ourselves. Here we must also go back to our earlier years. Then we can directly, so to speak, go to the facts themselves. Suppose you are 30 or 40 years of age. You think, "How was it with me when I was ten years old? I will imagine myself entirely into the situation of that time. I will picture myself as another boy or girl of ten years old. I will try to forget that I was that; I will really take pains to objectify myself." This objectifying of oneself, this freeing of oneself in the present from one's own past, this shelling-

out of the Ego from its experiences, must be specially striven for in our present time. For the present has the tendency toward linking up the Ego more and more with its experiences.

Nowadays man wants to be instinctively that which his experiences make him. For this reason it is so very difficult to acquire the activity which Spiritual Science gives. The spirit must make a fresh effort each time. According to true occult science, nothing can be done by comfortably remaining in one's position. One forgets things and must always be cultivating them afresh. This is just as it should be because fresh efforts need to continually be made. He who has already made some progress in the realm of Spiritual Science attempts the most elementary things every day; others are ashamed to pay attention to the basics. For Spiritual Science, nothing should depend on remembering, but on man's immediate experience in the present. It is therefore a question of training ourselves in this faculty—through making ourselves objective—that we picture this boy or girl as if he or she were a stranger at an earlier time in our lives; of bestirring ourselves more and more, of getting free of events, and of being less haunted at 30 by the impulses of a 10 year old. Detachment from the past does not mean denial of the past. We gain it in another way again, and that is what is so important. On the one hand, we cultivate the social instinct and impulses in us by looking back upon those who have been connected with us in the past and regarding our souls as the products of these persons. In this way we acquire the imagination for meeting people in the present. On the other hand, through objectifying ourselves we gain possibilities of developing imagination directly. This objectifying of our earlier years is fruitful insofar as it does not work in us unconsciously. Think for a moment: If the 10-year-old child works on unconsciously in you, then you are the 30- or 40-year-old augmented by the 10-year-old. It is just the same with the 11-, the 12-year-old child and so on. Egoism has tremendous power, but its power is lessened when you separate the earlier years from yourself and when you make them objective. This is the important point on which we must fix our attention.

**From "Esoteric Christianity and the Mission of Christian Rosenkretz," lecture of January 30, 1912, the "Lesser Karma Exercise":**

The point is not to pay attention to all manner of things, but to confine ourselves in our retrospective memory to something that vitally affected our life. If, for instance, a man has never felt any desire, nor had any motive to become a sailor, a will-impulse such as was referred to in the last lecture does not come into consideration at all, but only one whereby he actually brought about a change of fate, a reversal of some situation in life. But when in later life we remember something of this kind and realise that we extricated ourselves, we should not cultivate any rueful feelings about it, as though we ought to have stayed where we were. The essential point is not the practical outcome of the decision, but the recollection of *when* such turning points occurred. Then with regard to events of which we say, "This happened by chance," or "We were in such and such a position but have extricated ourselves from it," we must evoke with utmost energy the following inner experience.

We say to ourselves: "I will imagine that the position from which I extricated myself was one in which I deliberately placed myself with the strongest impulse of will." We bring before our own souls the very thing that was repugnant to us and from which we extricated ourselves. We do this in such a way that we say: "As an experiment I will give myself up to the idea that I willed this with all my might; I will bring before my soul the picture of a man who willed something like this with all his might."

And let us imagine that we ourselves brought about the events called "accidents." Suppose it has come back to our memory that at some place a stone fell from a building on to our shoulders and hurt us badly. Then let us imagine that we had climbed on to the roof and placed the stone so that it was bound to fall, and that then we ran quickly under it so that it had to fall on us. It is of no consequence that such ideas are grotesque; the point is what we want to acquire through them.

Let us now put ourselves right into the soul of a man of whom we have built up such a picture, a man who has actually willed everything that has happened to us "by accident," who has desired everything from which we have extricated ourselves. There will be no result in the soul if we practise such an exercise two or three or four times only, but a great deal will result if we practise it in connection with the innumerable experiences which we shall find if we look for them. If we do this over and over again, forming a living conception of a man who has willed everything that we have *not* willed, we shall find that the picture never leaves us again, that it makes a very remarkable impression on us, as though it really had something to do with us. If we then acquire a certain delicate perception in this kind of self-probation, we shall soon discover how such a mood and such a picture, built up by ourselves, resemble an image we have called up from memory. The difference is only this, that when we call up such an image from memory in the ordinary way, it generally remains simply an image, but when we practise the exercises of which we have been speaking, what comes to life in the soul has in it an element of *feeling*, an element connected more with the moods of the soul, and less with images. We feel a particular relationship to this picture. The picture itself is not of much account, but the feelings we have make an impression similar to that made by memory-images. If we repeat this process over and over again, we arrive through an inner clarification at the "knowledge," one might say, that the picture we have built up is becoming clearer and clearer, just as a memory-image does when one starts to recall it out of dark depths of the soul.

Thus it is not a question of *what* we imagine, for this changes and becomes something different. It goes through a process similar to that which occurs when we want to remember a particular name and it nearly comes and then goes; we have a partial recollection of it and then say, for instance, *Nuszbaumer*, yet we have a feeling that this is not quite right, and then, without our being able to say why, the right name comes to us—*Nuszdorfer*, perhaps. Just as here the names *Nuszbaumer*, *Nuszdorfer*, build each other up, so the picture rights itself and changes. This is what causes the feeling to arise: "Here I have attained something which exists within me, and by the way it exists within me and is related to the rest of my soul-life, it plainly shows me that it cannot have existed within me in *this* form in my present incarnation!" So we perceive with the greatest inner clarity that what

exists within us in this form, lies further back. Only we must realise that we are here dealing with a kind of faculty of remembrance which can be developed in the human soul, a faculty which, in contradistinction to the ordinary faculty of remembrance, must be designated by a different name. We must designate the ordinary faculty of remembrance as "image-memory," but the faculty of remembrance now in question must really be described as a kind of "feeling and experience memory." That this has a certain foundation can be proved by the following reflections.

From "The Dawn of Occultism in the Modern Age," lecture of January 29, 1912:

Suppose someone has been frivolous and superficial in the present incarnation and is subsequently struck by a blow of fate. It may not be possible, externally, to connect the blow of fate directly with the frivolousness, but a feeling arises, nevertheless, that there is justice in it. Further examination of life will reveal blows of fate which we can only attribute to chance, for which we find no explanation whatever. These two categories of experiences are to be discovered as we look back over our life. Now it is important to make a clear distinction between apparent *chance* and obvious *necessity*. When a man reviews his life with reference to these two kinds of happenings, he will fail to reach any higher stage of development unless he endeavours to have a very clear perception of everything that seems to him to be chance. We must try, above all, to have clear perception of those things we have *not* desired, which go right against the grain. It is possible to induce a certain attitude of soul and to say to ourselves: How would it be if I were to take those things which I have not desired, which are disagreeable to me and imagine that I myself actually *willed* them? In other words, we imagine with all intensity that we ourselves willed our particular circumstances.

In regard to apparently fortuitous happenings, we must picture the possibility of having ourselves put forth a deliberate and strong effort of will in order to bring them about. Meditatively as it were, we must induce this attitude to happenings which, on the face of them, seem to be purely fortuitous in our lives. Every human being today is capable of this mental exercise. If we proceed in this way, a very definite impression will ultimately be made upon the soul; we shall feel as though something were striving to be released from us. The soul says to itself: "Here, as a mental image, I have before me a second being; he is actually there." We cannot get rid of this image and the being gradually becomes our "Double." The soul begins to feel a real connection with this being who has been imagined into existence, to realise that this being actually exists within us. If this conception deepens into a vivid and intense experience, we become aware that this "imagined" being is by no means without significance. The conviction comes to us: this being was already once in existence and at that time you had within you the impulses of will which led to the apparently chance happenings of today. Thereby we reach a deep-rooted conviction that we were already in existence before coming down into the body. Every human being today can have this conviction.

## Freeing Inspiration for the Moment

From "The Stages of Higher Knowledge," published in 1905 in the magazine *Lucifer-Gnosis*:

Thus far we have spoken only of the qualities that must be developed in the feeling life so that Inspiration may occur in the correct way. The next question is: How do the feelings become fruitful so that they are accurately represented for the world of Inspiration? If one wishes to understand what occult science has to offer in answer to this question, acquaintance is necessary with the fact that man's soul life has always a certain treasure of feeling over and above those stimulated by sense perceptions. The human being feels, as it were, far more than things compel him to feel, only in ordinary life this excess is employed in a direction that through occult training must be transformed into another. Take, for instance, a feeling of anxiety or fear. It can be crystal clear that often fear or anxiety is greater than it would be if it were in true proportion to the corresponding outer event. Imagine that the occult student is working energetically on himself with the aim to feel in no instance more fear and anxiety than is justified by the corresponding external events. Now a given amount of fear or anxiety always entails an expenditure of soul force. This soul force is actually lost as a result when fear or anxiety is produced. The student really conserves this soul force when he denies himself fear or anxiety—or other such feelings—and it remains at his disposal for some other purpose. If he repeats such processes often, he will build up an inner treasure of these continually husbanded soul forces, and the occult student will soon find that out of such economies of feeling will arise the germs of those inner images that will bring to expression the revelations of a higher life. Such things cannot be "proved" in the ordinary sense; the occult student can only be advised to do this or that, and if he does so to watch for the indubitable results.

A careless examination of what has been described might easily make it appear as a contradiction to demand from the one side an enrichment of the feeling world, with feelings of pleasure or pain to be kindled by what otherwise arouses only intellectual judgment, and from the other side to talk in almost the same breath of economy of feeling. This contradiction quickly disappears if it is borne in mind that the economies are to be effected in those feelings aroused by the outer senses. Just what is conserved there appears conversely as an enrichment of spiritual experience, and it is wholly correct that the feelings conserved in this way in the world of sense perception not only become free in the other sphere, but prove creative in that sphere.—They shape the matrix substance for those representations wherein the spiritual world reveals itself.

But it would not accomplish much to remain at a standstill with only such economies as those indicated above. For greater results, still more is necessary. A far greater treasure still of power to create feeling must be supplied to the soul than is possible in this way alone. For instance, as a test, one must expose oneself to certain outer impressions, and then wholly deny oneself the feelings that "normally" arise as a result. One must, for instance, face an occurrence that "normally" excites the soul, and absolutely and totally forbid oneself the excitation. This can be accomplished either by actually confronting such an experience, or by

conjuring it up imaginatively. The imaginative method is even better for a really fruitful occult training. As the student is initiated into Imagination, either before his preparation for Inspiration or simultaneously with it, he should actually be in a position to place an occurrence imaginatively before the soul with the same force as if it were in fact taking place.—If, therefore, in the course of long inner work the student ever again and again subjects himself to things and events, yet denies himself the corresponding “normal” feelings, a fertile ground for Inspiration will be created in his soul.

### **Greater Karma Exercise**

From “Perception of Karma,” lecture of May 9, 1924,

Now the possibility exists for a comparatively quick ripening of insight into karmic connections if, for a considerable time, we endeavour patiently, and with inner activity, to picture in our consciousness, more and more clearly, an experience which would otherwise simply take its course externally, without being properly grasped, so that it fades away in the course of life. After all, this fading away is what really happens with the events of life. For what does a man do with events and experiences, as they approach him in the course of the day? He experiences them, but in reality only half observes them. You can realise how experiences are only half observed if you sit down one day in the afternoon or in the evening—and I advise you to do it—and ask yourself: “What did I actually experience this morning at half-past nine?” And now try to call up such an experience in all details before your soul, recall it as if it were actually there, say at half-past seven in the evening—as if you were creating it spiritually before you. You will see how much you will find lacking, how much you failed to observe, and how difficult it is. If you take a pen or pencil to write it all down, you will soon begin to bite at the pen or the pencil, because you cannot hit upon the details—and, in time, you want to bite them out of the pencil!

Yes, but that is just the point, to take upon oneself the task of placing before the mind, in all precision, an experience one has had,—not at the moment when it is actually there, but afterwards. It must be placed before the soul as if one were going to paint it spiritually. If the experience were one in which somebody spoke, this must be made quite objectively real: the ring of the voice, the way in which the words were used, clumsily or cleverly—the picture must be made with strength and vigour. In short, we try to make a picture of what we have experienced. If we make a picture of such an experience of the day, then in the following night, the astral body, when it is outside the physical body and the etheric body, occupies itself with this picture. The astral body itself is, in reality, the bearer of the picture, and gives shape to it outside the body. The astral body takes the picture with it when it goes out on the first night. It shapes it there, outside the physical and etheric bodies.

That is the first stage (we will take these stages quite exactly): the sleeping astral body, when outside the physical and etheric bodies, shapes the picture of the experience. Where does it do this? In the external ether. It is now in the external etheric world; it does this in the external ether.



Now picture to yourself the human being: his physical and etheric bodies lie in bed, and the astral body is outside. We will leave aside the ego. There outside is the astral body, reshaping this picture that has been made. But the astral body does this in the external ether. In consequence of this the following happens—think of it: the astral body is there outside, shaping this picture. All this happens in the external ether which encrusts, as it were, with its own substance that which is formed as a picture within the astral body. So the external ether makes the etheric form (dotted [dark] outline) into a picture which is clearly and precisely visualised by the eye of spirit.

In the morning you return into the physical and etheric bodies and bear into them what has been made substantial by the external ether. That is to say: the sleeping astral body shapes the picture of the experience outside the physical and etheric bodies. The external ether then impregnates the picture with its own substance. You can imagine that the picture becomes stronger thereby, and that now, when the astral body returns in the morning with this stronger substantiality, it can make an impression upon the etheric body in the human being. With forces that are derived from the external ether, the astral body now stamps an impression into the etheric body.

The second stage is therefore: The picture is impressed into the etheric body by the astral body.

There we have the events of the first day and the first night. Now we come to the second day. On the second day, while you are busying yourself with all the little things of life in full waking consciousness, there, underneath the consciousness, in the unconscious, the picture is descending into the etheric body. And in the next night, when the etheric body is undisturbed, when the astral body has gone out again, the etheric body elaborates this picture.

Thus in the second night the picture is elaborated by the man's own etheric body. There we have the second stage:—The picture is impressed into the etheric body



by the astral body; and in the next night the etheric body elaborates the picture. Thus we have: the second day and the second night.

Now if you do this, if you actually do not give up occupying yourself with the picture you formed on the preceding day—and you can continue to occupy yourself with it, for a reason which I shall immediately mention—if you do not disdain to do this, then you will find that you are living on further with the picture. What does this mean—to continue occupying yourself with it? If you really take pains to shape such a picture, vigorously, elaborating it plastically in characteristic, strong lines on the first day after you had the experience, then you have really exerted yourself spiritually. Such things cost spiritual exertion. I don't mean what I am going to say as a hint—present company is, of course, always excepted in these matters!—but after all, it must be said that the majority of men simply do not know what spiritual exertion is. Spiritual exertion, true spiritual exertion, comes about only by means of activity of soul. When you allow the world to work upon you, and let thoughts run their course without taking them in hand, then there is no spiritual exertion. We should not imagine, when something tires us, that we have exerted ourselves spiritually. Getting tired does not imply that there has been spiritual exertion. We can get tired, for instance, from reading. But if we have not ourselves been productive in some way during the reading, if we merely let the thoughts contained in the book act on us, then we are *not* exerting ourselves. On the contrary, a person who has really exerted himself spiritually, who has exerted himself out of the inner activity of his soul, may then take up a book, a very interesting one, and just “sleep off” his spiritual exertion in the best possible way, in the reading of it. Naturally, we can fall asleep over a book if we are tired. This getting tired is no sign at all of spiritual exertion.

A sign of spiritual exertion, however, is this: that one feels—the brain is used up. It is just as we may feel that a demand has been made on the muscle of the arm when lifting things. Ordinary thought makes no such strong claims upon the brain. The process continues, and you will even notice that when you try it for the first time, the second, the third, the tenth, you get a slight headache. It is not that you get tired or fall asleep; on the contrary, you cannot fall asleep; you get a slight headache from it. Only you must not regard this headache as something baleful; on the contrary, you must take it as actual proof of the fact that you have exerted your head.

Well, the process goes on ... it stays with you until you go to sleep. If you have really done this on the preceding day, then you will awake in the morning with the feeling: “There actually *is* something in me! I don't quite know what it is, but there is something in me, and it wants something from me. Yes, after all it is not a matter of indifference that I made this picture for myself yesterday. It really means something. This picture has changed. To-day it is giving me quite different feelings from those I had previously. The picture is making me have quite definite feelings.”

All this stays with you through the next day as the remaining inner experience of the picture which you made for yourself. And what you feel, and cannot get rid of through the whole of the day—this is a witness to the fact that the picture is now

descending into the etheric body, as I have described to you, and that the etheric body is receiving it.

Now you will probably experience on waking after the next night—when you slip into your body after these two days—that you find this picture slightly changed, slightly transformed. You find it again ... precisely on waking the third day you find it again within you. It appears to you like a very real dream. But it has undergone a transformation. It will clothe itself in manifold pictures until it is other than it was. It will assume an appearance as if spiritual beings were now bringing you this experience. And you actually receive the impression: Yes, this experience which I had and which I subsequently formed into a picture, has actually been brought to me. If the experience happened to be with another human being, then we have the feeling after this has all happened, that actually we did not only experience it through that human being, but that it was really brought to us. Other forces, spiritual forces, have been at play. It was they who brought it to us.

The next day comes. This next day the picture is carried down from the etheric body into the physical body. The etheric body impresses this picture into the physical body, into the nerve-processes, into the blood-processes. On the third day the picture is impressed into the physical body. So the third stage is: The picture is stamped into the physical body by the etheric body.

And now comes the next night. You have been attending throughout the day to the ordinary little trifles of life, and underneath it all this important process is going on: the picture is being carried down into the physical body. All this goes on in the subconscious. When the following night comes, the picture is elaborated in the physical body. It is spiritualised in the physical body. First of all, throughout the day, the picture is brought down into the processes of the blood and nerves, but in the night it is spiritualised. Those who have vision see how this picture is now elaborated by the physical body, but it appears spiritually as an altogether changed picture. We can say: the physical body elaborates the picture during the next night.

*1st Day and 1st Night:*

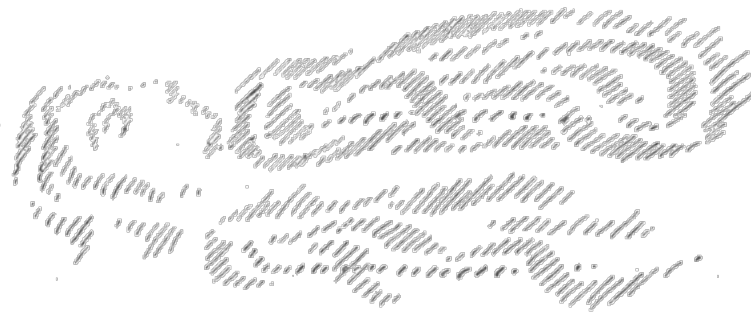
When outside the physical and etheric bodies, the astral body shapes the picture of the experience. The outer ether impregnates the picture with its own substance.

*2nd Day and 2nd Night:*

The picture is stamped by the astral body into the etheric body. And the etheric body elaborates the picture during the next day.

*3rd Day and 3rd Night:*

The picture is stamped by the etheric body into the physical body. And the physical body elaborates the picture during the next night.



Now this is something of which you must make an absolutely correct mental picture. The physical body actually works up this picture spiritually. It spiritualises the picture. So that when all this has really been gone through, it does happen—when the human being is asleep—that his physical body works up the whole picture, but not in such a way that it remains within the physical body. Out of the physical body there arises a transformation, a greatly magnified transformation of the picture. And when you get up in the morning, this picture stands there, and in truth you hover in it; it is like a kind of cloud in which you yourself are. With this picture you get up in the morning.

So this is the third day and the third night. With this picture, which is entirely transformed, you get out of bed on the fourth day. You rise from sleep, enveloped by this cloud. And if you have actually shaped the picture with the necessary strength on the first day, and if you have paid attention to what your feeling conveyed to you on the second day, you will notice now that your will is contained in the picture as it now is. The will is contained in it! But this will is unable to express itself; it is as though fettered. Put into somewhat radical terms, it is actually as if one had planned after the manner of an incredibly daring sprinter, who might resolve to make a display of a bravado race: I will run, now I am running to Ober-Dornach, I make a picture of it already, I've got it within me. It is my will. ... But in the very moment when I want to start, when the will is strongest, somebody fetters me, so that I stand there quite rigidly. The whole will has unfolded, but I cannot carry out the will. Such, approximately, is the process.

When this experience of feeling yourself in a pillory develops—for it is a feeling of being in a pillory after the third night—when you again awake in it, feeling in a pillory as it were, with the will fettered through and through, then, if you can pay attention to it, you will find that the will begins to transform itself. This will becomes *sight*. In itself it can do nothing, but it leads to our seeing something. It becomes an eye of the soul. And the picture, with which one rose from sleep, becomes objective. What it shows is the event of the previous earth-life, or of some previous earth-life, which had been the cause of the experience that we shaped into a picture on the first day. By means of this transformation through feeling and through will, one gets the picture of the causal event of a preceding incarnation.

When we describe these things, they appear somewhat overpowering. This is not to be wondered at, for they are utterly unfamiliar to the human being of the present

time. They were not so unknown to the men of earlier culture-epochs. Only, according to the opinion of modern men who are clever, those other men—in their whole way of living—were stupid! Nevertheless, those 'stupid' men of the earlier culture-epochs really had these experiences, only modern man darkens everything by his intellect, which makes him clever, but not exactly wise.

**NOTE:** the work of Destiny Learning (Coenraad van Houten) practically takes on this exercise over a 3- or 4-day workshop.

### **Saturn/Sun/Moon exercise**

From "The Study of Karma and Moral Life," lecture of May 4, 1924:

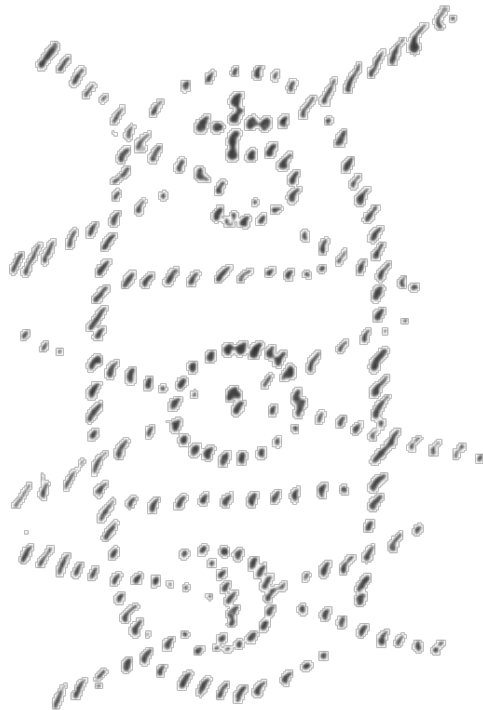
in order to find karmic connections, it is not only important to consider what we experience just in the moment of meeting him; it is often most illuminating to recall some intimate previous experience, for we may find that we understand it only when we see how it connects with what we afterwards perceive in him or through him.

The very things that prove so illuminating for karma are often things that throw their shadows in advance—or, we may also say, their *light*. We need a fine sense for the intimacies of life, which sometimes means that we not only connect the future with the past, but regard the past as something that elucidates the future. Unless we can learn to look at life in this intimate way, we shall not easily develop that inner mobility of soul which is necessary for a deeper penetration into karmic connections. It is indeed a fact that when specially significant karmic events enter a man's life, they are connected with inner events in his life which may date from several years previously. We have to acquire in this way an expanded view of life.

For think of the following:—When you look at the thinking element in man, as it exists in ordinary consciousness, you find it related only to the past. When, however, you look at human feeling, with the many shades and nuances it receives from emotional and temperamental depths, then you come upon very strange secrets of life. The course of a man's life can be very little gauged by the way he thinks; but very much by the way he feels. And when you observe such a life, let us say, as Goethe's, and ask yourself: How did Goethe feel in the year 1790?—then, through the peculiar stamp and character of Goethe's feeling in the year 1790 you get the entire later colouring of his life; it is all present as a nucleus in the feeling of 1790. As soon as we descend into the depths of the human soul we really perceive the peculiar colouring—not of course the details—of the subsequent life. A man might gain a great deal of illumination on his own life if he paid more attention to the inexplicable shades of feeling which are not caused from without but from the depths within.

Men will accustom themselves to taking this kind of thing specially into account if they pay attention to the points I have mentioned to-day. I shall have more to say about them: they are important for a consideration of life that intends to take note of karmic connections. And this holds good, whether one is dealing with karmic

connections in one's own life, or with karmic connections of those who are dear to one. For you must understand that if one desires to consider karma, it is a question really of *looking through* a human being in a certain way. When no more than the ordinary physical human being stands in your field of vision, he stands there before you nontransparent. You look at his face, at the way he moves about and behaves, at the way he speaks, or perhaps even also at the way he thinks,—the latter being, on the whole, generally only a conventional reflection of his upbringing and experience. But so long as you look no further than this, the karma of this human being does not stand objectively before you.



When, however, a man becomes transparent for you, then at first you really have the feeling that he is hovering in the air. Gradually it comes about that you no longer think of him as walking or moving his arms and hands. You lose all sense of this. Understand me aright, my dear friends. In ordinary life what a man does with his arms and legs is extremely important. But this loses its importance when one wishes to observe the deeper elements in man. You must take what I am saying in its fullest meaning. Can you look right away from what a man achieves by means of his arms and hands, and see him hovering, as it were, not so much in respect of space as in respect of life? I mean, take no account of journeys he has made, of all his goings and comings, in short, of all he does with his legs; and attach equally little importance to the work he does with his hands. Watch rather his mood, his temperament; watch everything in him in which arms and legs take no part. Then you have, so to speak, the first transparency to which you can attain. And what will this first transparency show? Picture to yourselves, you have here an object. At first you see nothing but the object. Well and good. But then something is drawn upon the object. And now it is again erased. This is how it is with man when you arrive at the first transparency, when you look away from the man of ordinary life and completely disregard his arms and legs. You have to tear him right out of the

connections into which he has come through the activity of his arms and legs. If you now observe him, something in him becomes transparent, and you look through to what was previously covered up by the activity of arms and legs.

And what is it you see? You begin to understand that behind the man the Moon appears. I will draw here diagrammatically the threefold man. Now suppose, this (i.e., the lower part) first becomes transparent; we disregard the arms and legs. Then the man no longer appears to us detached from the universe as he otherwise does; he begins to reveal behind him the Moon, with all the impulses which work in man from the Moon. We begin to say: "Yes, man has a certain power of phantasy,—whether it be developed or no, he has this power in him. He cannot help it. Moon forces are behind this. They are hidden from us only by the activity of arms and legs. But now all that has vanished, and in the background appears before us the creative Moon."

We go on. We try to make man still more transparent. By a kind of suggestion, we think away all that makes man emotional, all that endows him with a certain temperament—in short, those features—of his every-day life in which his soul-nature is chiefly expressed. Still more disappears; he becomes still more transparent. And we can go farther. We can disregard all that exists in man, because he has senses. First, you disregard everything that is in man by virtue of his having arms and legs. Now you ask yourself: what remains over from man, when I ignore the fact that he has ever perceived anything by means of his senses? There remains a certain direction of thought, a certain impulsive force of his thought, a tendency of life. At this point, however, the whole rhythmic system, the breast of man, becomes transparent. It vanishes, and in the background appears before you all that exists there as Sun-impulse (see diagram). You look through man and behold in reality the Sun, when you ignore all that man has perceived by means of his senses. You can try this on yourself. You can ask yourself: what do I owe to my senses? And then, when you look away from all this, you see through yourself and behold yourself as a Sun-being.

And when further you disregard man's thoughts, the direction of his thinking, then the head too disappears. Now the whole man is gone. You look through, and finally behold Saturn in the background. But in this moment, the man's karma, or your own karma, lies open before you. For in the moment when you observe the working of Saturn in a man, when a man has become entirely transparent to you, and you observe him so extensively that you behold him on the background of the whole planetary system—on the background of Moon, Sun and Saturn—in that moment the karma of the man lies open before you. And if one is going to speak of practical karma-exercises—I told you already that I wanted to do it at the beginning of the foundation of the Anthroposophical Society, but did not succeed at that time—then one must really begin in this way. One must say: It is a matter first of all of disregarding—in ourselves or in others—all that we are in life, inasmuch as we are beings endowed with arms and legs. Cut this right out of your thought. All you have ever attained through the fact that you are a being endowed with arms and legs—this you must ignore.

Then you will say: "Yes, but we fulfil our karma just because we have arms and legs!" So you do. So long, however, as you look at your arms and legs, you are not aware of what it is you fulfil through having arms and legs. This you see only when you no longer look at your arms and legs any more, but find in the activity of arms and legs the impulses of the Moon. Then it is a matter of going a step further, and disregarding all that man absorbs by means of his senses, what he has in his soul by means of his senses—whether you are practising the exercise with yourself or with others. You behold man then as Sun-being, you see the Sun-impulse in him. And again, you must disregard the fact that he has a certain tendency of thought, a certain tendency of soul—then you realise him to be a Saturn-being.

Should you arrive thus far, then you have man once more before you, but now—as a spirit. Now the legs move and the arms work, but spiritually, and they show us what they do. But they show us this according to the *forces* which work and rule in them. This is what we have to learn and experience.

When I do the most trifling thing, when I pick up the chalk here—as long as I merely see this fact, the picking-up of the chalk, then I know nothing of karma. I must do away with all this. I must bring it about that all this can reproduce itself in a picture, can appear again in a picture. Not in the strength that is contained in my muscles—this can explain nothing at all—but in the picture that takes the place of the act, appears the force that induces the hand to move, in order to pick up the chalk. And it appears as something coming from previous incarnations.

This is how it is, when I gradually do away with visible man in the above manner and see behind him his Moon-impulses, his Sun-impulses, and his Saturn-impulses. Then the image or picture of the man comes to meet me again from the cosmos. But it is not the man in his present incarnation; it is the man in one of his preceding incarnations or in several previous incarnations. I must first bring it about that the man who is walking here at my side, becomes transparent for me, ever more and more transparent, in that I put away from my vision his whole life. Then there comes to the same spot, but now proceeding from cosmic distances, the man as he was in his previous earthly lives.

Other indications to consider:

### **Attitude toward Joy**

From "Facing Karma," lecture of February 8, 1912:

If anyone were to say: Joy and happiness have a weakening, deadening effect, therefore I will flee from them (which is the attitude of false asceticism and forms of self-torture)—such a man would be fleeing from the Grace bestowed upon him by the Gods. And in truth the self-torture practised by the ascetics and monks in olden days was a form of resistance against the Gods. We must learn to regard suffering as something brought by our karma and to feel happiness as Grace breathed down to us by the Divine. Joy and happiness should be to us the sign of how closely the Gods have drawn us to themselves; suffering and pain should be

the sign of how remote we are from the goal before us as intelligent human beings. Such is the true attitude to karma and without it we shall make no real progress in life. Whenever the world vouchsafes to us the good and the beautiful, we must feel that behind this world stand those Powers of whom the Bible says: "And they saw that it [the world] was good." But in our experiences of pain and suffering we must recognise what, in the course of incarnations, man has made of the world which in the beginning was good and what he must amend by educating himself to resolute endurance of these sufferings.

I have been speaking merely of two ways of accepting karma. From one aspect, our karma consists of suffering and happiness; and we accept our karma with the right kind of will—as if we ourselves have willed it—when we adopt the true attitude to the suffering and the happiness that come our way. But we can do still more.—And this will be the theme of the lectures today and tomorrow.

From "Jeshu ben Pandira," lecture of November 5, 1911:

What do we mean by this? It means that—not merely theoretically but in a living way—when our own sorrow or the sorrow of another comes upon us, when we experience joy or the heaviest blow of fate, we shall really be fully aware that, in a certain higher sense, we ourselves have given the occasion for this painful blow of fate: this means developing such a mood that we accept an experience of joy with gratitude, but are also clearly aware, especially in regard to joy, that we must not go to excess, since this is perilous. If we desire to progress in our development, we can conceive joy in the following way. For the most part, joy is something which points to a future destiny, not to one already past. In human life joy is usually something one has not deserved through previous actions. When we investigate karma by occult means, we always discover that in most cases joy has not been earned, and we should accept it gratefully as sent to us by the gods, as a gift of the gods, and to say to ourselves: The joy which comes to meet us today ought to kindle in us the will to work in such a way as to take into ourselves the forces streaming to us through this joy, and to apply these usefully. We must look upon joy as a sort of prepayment on account for the future.

### **Recognizing the Call of Christian Rosenkreutz in Our Lives**

From "The Dawn of Occultism in the Modern Age," lecture of January 29, 1912:

Suppose a man has occasion to go somewhere or other and his path takes him in the wake of another human being, a child perhaps. Suddenly the man catches sight of a yawning chasm at the edge of the path along which the child is walking. A few steps further and the child will inevitably fall over the edge into the chasm. He runs to save the child, runs and runs, entirely forgetting about the chasm. Then he suddenly hears a voice calling out to him from somewhere: 'Stand still!' He halts as though nailed to the spot. At that moment the child catches hold of a tree and also stops, so that no harm befalls. If no voice had called at that moment the man would inevitably have fallen into the chasm. He wonders where the voice came from. He finds no single soul who could have called, but he realises that he would



quite certainly have lost his life if he had not heard this voice; yet, however closely he investigates he cannot find that the warning came from any physical voice.

Through close self-observation many human beings living at the present time would be able to recognise a similar experience in their lives. But far too little attention is paid to such things. An experience of this kind may pass by without leaving a trace—then the impression fades away and no importance is attached to the experience. But suppose a man has been attentive and realises that it was not without significance. The thought may then occur to him: At that point in your life you were facing a crisis, a karmic crisis; your life should really have ended at that moment, for you had forfeited it. You were saved by something akin to chance, and since then a second life has as it were been grafted onto the first; this second life is to be regarded as a gift bestowed upon you and you must act accordingly. When such an experience makes a man feel that his life from that time onwards has been bestowed upon him as a gift, this means that he can be accounted a follower of Christian Rosenkreutz. For this is how Christian Rosenkreutz calls the souls whom he has chosen. A man who can recall such an occurrence—and everyone sitting here can discover something of the kind in their lives if they observe closely enough—has the right to say to himself: Christian Rosenkreutz has given me a sign from the spiritual world that I belong to his stream. Christian Rosenkreutz has added such an experience to my karma. This is the way in which Christian Rosenkreutz chooses his pupils; this is how he gathers his community. A man who is conscious of this experience knows with certainty that a path has been pointed out to him which he must follow, trying to discover how he can dedicate himself to the service of rosicrucianism. If there are some people who have not yet recognised the sign, they will do so later on; for he to whom the sign has once been given will never again be free from it.

Such an experience comes to a man because during the period between his last death and his present birth he was in contact with Christian Rosenkreutz in the spiritual world. It was then that Christian Rosenkreutz chose us, imparting an impulse of will which leads us now to such experiences.

From "Need for the Development of a 'Feeling-Memory' before Direct Experience of Reincarnation Is Possible," lecture of January 30, 1912:

We have shown in this way how earlier experience shines into present experiences, and how through careful soul-development we really can create for ourselves the conviction—not only a theoretical conviction but a practical conviction—that our soul reincarnates; we come to know that it has existed before. There are, however, experiences of a very different kind in our lives—experiences of which, when we recall them in memory, we must say: "In the form in which they appear, they do not explain an earlier life to us." To-day I shall give an example of only one kind of such experiences, although the same thing may happen in a hundred, in a thousand, different ways.

A man may be walking in a wood, and being lost in thought may forget that the woodland path ends within a few steps at a precipice. Absorbed in his problem, he

walks on at such a pace that in two or three steps more it will be impossible for him to stop, and he will fall over to his death. But just as he is on the verge, he hears a voice say, "Stop!" The voice makes such an impression upon him that he stops as though nailed to the spot. He thinks there must be someone who has saved him. He realises that his life would have been at an end if he had not been pulled up in this way. He looks round—and sees nobody.

The materialistic thinker will say that owing to some circumstance or other an auditory hallucination had come from the depths of the man's soul, and it was a happy chance that he was saved in this way. But there may be other ways of looking at the event; that at least should be admitted. I only mention this to-day, for these "other ways" can only be told, not proved. We may say: "Processes in the spiritual world have brought it about that at the moment when you reached your karmic crisis, your life was bestowed on you as a gift. If things had gone further without this occurrence, your life would have been at an end; it is now as though a gift to you, and you owe this new life to the Powers who stand behind the voice."

Many people of the present time might have such experiences if they would only practise real self-knowledge. Such occurrences happen in the lives of many, many people in the present age. It is not that they do not happen, but that people do not pay attention to them, for such things do not always happen so decisively as in the example given; with their habitual lack of attention, people overlook them. The following is a characteristic example of how unobservant people are of what happens around them. ...

... And such a voice, calling as it does to many people, is not to be regarded as a hallucination; for through such a voice the leader whom we call by the name of Christian Rosenkreuz speaks to those whom he chooses from among the multitude to be his followers. The call proceeds from that Individuality who lived in a special incarnation in the 13th century. So that a man who has an experience of this kind has a sign, a token of recognition, through which he can enter the spiritual world.

## Appendix 2: Aids for Individual Work

### Positive Feelings

stunned	playful		
reverent	dazzled	mischievous	cheerful
inspired	enchanted	rejoiced	satisfied
amazed	ecstatic	carefree	bold
awed	bewitched	amused	euphoric
surprised	fascinated		
affectionate	grateful		
open	soft	expansive	
warm	compassionate	moved	
friendly	magnanimous	struck	
loving	grateful	sympathetic	
happy	enthusiastic		
blessed	exalted	ardent	enthused
happy	excited	fervent	sensual
exultant	jubilant	passionate	exultant
excited	delighted		
exuberant	ecstatic		
cheerful	lively		
satisfied	reassured		
interested	lively		
absorbed	stimulated	creative	optimist
taken	intrigued	bubbly	vital
enraptured	interested	energetic	vigorous
	fascinated	passionate	reinvigorated
	effervescent	curious	
	renewed	healthy	
relaxed	alert		
controlled	conscious	phlegmatic	calm
languid	rested	stable	

## Negative Feelings

passive	boring apathetic tired exhausted	lazy listless emptied	drowsy fatigued depleted
frosty	cold burning	warm boiling	hot
irritable	nervous agitated annoyed violent	tense anxious terrified	restless upset angry
surprised	frightened stunned shocked stunned	upset dismayed terrified	impressed horrified electrocuted
awkward	confused overworked perplexed	unstable disoriented dazed	pressed interdicted

## NEEDS AND EXPRESSION OF THE WILL

Needs are listed in relation to the expression of the will as it moves and metamorphoses in the human sheaths. This list is not 'exact' nor exhaustive!

### **INSTINCTS (physical)**

Sustenance: food, water, air, shelter  
Physical safety  
Sex and reproduction

### **DRIVES (etheric)**

Comfort  
Space  
Rest, relaxation  
Nurturing  
Protection  
Security  
Play

### **IMPULSES (astral)**

Order, stability  
Reliability, honoring agreements  
Healing  
Stimulation  
Ease, efficiency  
Information  
Consistency, continuity  
Appreciation  
Acceptance  
Warmth, caring, support  
Fairness  
Belonging  
Fun  
Enjoyment  
Variety  
Adventure, discovery  
Companionship, intimacy  
Privacy

### **MOTIVES (ego)**

Choice  
Freedom, autonomy  
Coherence  
Honesty, integrity  
Awareness

Openness  
Clarity  
Communication, input, feedback  
Self-connection  
Self-expression, creativity  
Challenge  
Humor  
Balance, harmony  
Flexibility  
Peace  
Inspiration  
Meaning, significance  
Dignity  
Respect, consideration  
Acknowledgment, recognition  
Inclusion, participation  
Mutuality  
Gratitude, wonder, inspiration  
Hope  
Mourning  
Connection, communion  
Empathy, understanding  
Contribution, accomplishment  
Celebration  
Wholeness  
Truth/Wisdom  
Beauty  
Goodness  
Love

Above motives there are no new needs;  
rather a deepening of motivation

### **WISH (Spirit Self)**

Mourning and resolve to improve

### **INTENTION (Life Spirit)**

Far future

### **RESOLUTION (Spirit Man)**

## Play and Spiritual Work

Reflections on play (with invitation to contribute ideas)

Play: creativity, spaciousness, breaking habits (understood as routine), creating spaces for innovation; transforming extrinsic motivation into intrinsic motivation; re-respond in a new way to recurrent situations, taking distance from oneself; being able to take life seriously but laugh at yourself; forget yourself in what you are doing, forget your role and persona (as can happen in playing with children; drugs do not count!); do not compromise with yourself.

Steiner indicates that in developing ethical individualism, we liberate moral imagination, and makes a brief nod to moral technique, the ability to translate moral imagination into action. Play increases with the ability to develop moral technique, and vice-versa; they are intimately linked to each other. Habit (not rhythm!) ages us; play renews and rejuvenates us.

Some ideas (add your own):

- Take a habit that you no longer need and try to change it, even slightly, but a little every day. Generally a habit can be changed within a month: for example, a change of diet.
- Do a "freer act," starting by changing the way you think about a situation or someone.
- Apply your best skills to overcome a life challenge: it can be study, conversation with friends, practice, art, humor...
- Create moments of beauty, curiosity, openness, pleasure in the middle of your day; something that interrupts the monotony, that gives you back strength and desire to start again. Examples: a walk, a bit of sport, the pleasure of a phone call to a friend or relative, reading material that inspires, part of the work that gives you pleasure and recharges you.
- Alternate activities: take the more challenging ones in segments interrupted by other, more restorative activities.
- Ask for help of the night and record what the morning brings you: an idea, a feeling, a new energy. Take naps if your day allows; sleep restores.
- Put before your eyes an acronym/motto that makes you laugh, a quote that inspires you.
- Study how to use your biorhythms in order to draw the greatest energy from the force that is released naturally.
- Use rhythm instead of force: little done repeatedly and lightly is better than a larger, discontinuous amount, which requires more effort and does not create pleasure in commitment. A dose of pleasure facilitates discipline, although there is always a threshold to cross in the act of discipline, and sometimes more than others.
- Use a journal to review your day and list the things you are grateful for; over time you will notice more.
- Try new roles just beyond your immediate comfort zone.

- Defuse a difficult situation with a joke, or with an open question that makes the other person think.
- Make a pleasant surprise to a friend; the simplest, express your appreciation for what she/he offers to your life.
- Use the resources you have but don't use; ask for help from friends and acquaintances. The act of contributing is a need that we all have and therefore also those who are close to you. Do this only if you are ready to receive a no for an answer, so use this in conjunction with other ideas and choose well who you ask. If you expect an automatic yes, you set yourself up for disappointments.
- Accept that there is nothing more permanent than change; ask yourself how you can gain enthusiasm for change.
- Space for other ideas:
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- Want to go further? Choose a couple of ideas and put them into practice.

### **What Has Been Said about Play**

Heraclitus: "Eternity is a child at play; it is the domain of a child." Heraclitus judges that when a human being can attain an understanding of the eternal, then he recovers the spirit of the child. That is why he calls life a play; but he may also have defined it as the most serious thing possible. He did not choose the latter because of the "seriousness" and weight of the culture of his time.

Friedrich Schiller said of play: "The human being plays only when in the full meaning of the word he is human, and is completely human only when he plays." This statement comes from the fifteenth letter of "The Aesthetic Education of Man." Play is thus the main expression of the human spirit. Schiller divides creative impulses into three: impulse of the senses (matter), impulse of form (spirit), and impulse of play. He names play (*Spieltrieb*) the salvation of the other two.

Marshall Rosenberg: "When I recommend: 'Don't do anything that's not a game!' some consider me radical. However, I sincerely believe that an important form of self-compassion is to make choices motivated solely by our desire to contribute to life rather than fear, guilt, shame, duty or obligation. When we are aware of the life-enriching purpose behind an action we undertake, then even hard work has an element of play in it. On the contrary, an otherwise joyful activity carried out of obligation, duty, fear, guilt or shame will lose its joy and eventually generate resistance."

## Accountability Structures

Through accountability we create focus and discipline. Structures serve us to remind ourselves to take responsibility for our lives. They will work only if we notice them. Examples of structures are entries on a daily planner and meditation time in the mornings. The key word of structures is PLAY (in the sense of Schiller or Heraclitus) to increase likeliness of follow through. Play is paradoxically the best tool to take something seriously. (I like the saying and practice: "Don't do anything that isn't play," which means for me "Turn everything you can into play.") The more playful/outrageous the structure, the more likely it is to grab your attention and to break your routine.

### Examples of Structures:

- Create a special screen saver
- Post notes: reminders or affirmations
- Use pictures for your goals (create your own)
- Use a particular piece of music to do the project
- Light a candle or burn incense; read a verse before the activity
- Change something in your room
- Create deadlines for celebration
- Talk to a friend about your goals
- Ask your loved one(s) to remind you of your goals (in whichever way you like)
- Have an exercise partner
- Go for a walk to think about an issue/inquiry
- Use Bach flower remedies to overcome a soul mood
- Create your own deadline on the day you start a project: plan for a meeting/celebration when you meet the deadline
- Challenge yourself to new behaviors, new ways of being: place your office chair elsewhere, change the placing of the furniture, etc.
- Have a journal to document the times you can counter your natural tendencies with new responses
- Are there other ones you can come up with?



**Appendix 3:  
Two Verses to Support the Work**

The wishes of the soul are springing,  
The deeds of the will are thriving,  
The fruits of life are maturing

I feel my fate,  
My fate finds me.  
I feel my star,  
My star finds me.  
I feel my goals in life,  
My goals in life are finding me.

My soul and the great world are one.

Life grows more radiant about me,  
Life grows more arduous for me,  
Grows more abundant within me.

Rudolf Steiner

Work done inwardly  
Works outwardly.  
Judge not  
Only listen.  
Wonder not  
Only observe.  
Love everyone.

Experience of the world  
Works within.  
Don't avoid,  
Only seek.  
Don't defend, just endure,  
Until you reach the goal.

Peace within,  
Love outwardly.  
Say nothing,  
Just suffer.  
Ask nothing,  
Just wait,  
Until it is given.

Rudolf Steiner, October 2, 1906.

## **Appendix 4: Karma Exercises Forms**

The forms are presented below in PDF format; for adaptable forms that can be expanded or filled electronically see the file: "Forms Remembrance of the Spirit" in Word document, where you can copy and paste each specific exercise.

### **List of Exercises and Recommended Frequency**

#### Pure Review

- Rückschau. The rückschau is the basic exercise; *it should be practiced daily.*

#### Review and Evaluation

- Rückschau in the Moment (spot check): This exercise helps us to acquire distance and perspective about an event that just happened. *The rückschau in the moment can be done when something has caused us upset, in order to gain distance and perspective.*
- Celebration: *Do this exercise whenever the opportunity arises. If we fail to bring to the surface reasons to celebrate, it is advisable to keep a diary in which to record everything for which we are grateful during the day, what makes us smile, what inspires us, etc.*
- Peak Experience and
- Valley Experience: *Review one experience in each category over the last 3-4 years.*
- Slice of Life Exercise: *Review slices of life (of 3- to 7-year periods): ideally complete your life review over 4 to 6 months: do the exercise 2 to 3 times/month.*
- Remembering Someone with Gratitude: *It is advisable to do this frequently (at least once or twice a month) so that it may become a new way of looking at people we meet.*

#### Taking Responsibility for Our Lives

- Minor Karma Exercise: *Best practiced in difficult times in life, in order to face them with more equanimity; once you have acquired the practice, explore moments of your life that have not been fully digested, then even the most difficult ones. You will be able to judge your own strengths if you progress gradually.*
- Variation: Closed Door Situation (situations in which you cannot confront the other party): *Practice more or less like the above.*

#### Preview: Exercise to Awaken Inspiration

- Learning from our Regrets: *Do this every time the need arises, until it becomes a habit.*
- Exercise to Encourage Inspiration: *Do this every time the need arises (e.g., foreseeing a difficult situation to tackle), until it becomes a habit.*

#### Prebirth Intentions

- Discovering our Core Values: *To be practiced once every 4-5 years or narrower intervals depending on age. These values do not change radically except perhaps in youth, after which they are mostly refined.*

- Social Impact Statement: *Do as above, since one exercise strengthens the other.*
- The Wise Guidance of Destiny: *To be done once only, though it can be kept open to add information that rises to awareness.*

Although beyond the scope of this course, it is good to mention the following for those who are interested in going further into recognizing events from previous lives:

- Major Karma Exercise (4 days/3 nights): conference of May 9, 1924, in *Karmic Relationships*, volume 2. For this exercise you can use the same form used for the Minor Karma Exercise.
- Saturn/Sun/Moon Exercise; conference of May 4, 1924, in *Karmic Relationships*, volume 2.

## **Rückschau in the Moment (Spot Check)**

*This exercise gives better results if done as close as possible to the events to be reviewed, at the latest in the evening before sleep. When we are dissatisfied, it is easy to make judgments and give vent to emotions. If we take the time to observe correctly, we can discover links between single steps (between what I said/did and what the other person said/did) and see the event in a new light. The same is true when the event involves only ourselves and we are the ones who judge ourselves critically, rather than objectively.*

Review an experience that has left you disappointed, perplexed, irritated. Look back moment by moment and answer the questions below. This form is general and will have to be adapted to the specific situation (example: an event that does not involve another person). To better answer the questions, use the following sheets as needed: Positive Feelings, Negative Feelings, Needs and Expressions of the Will.

When reviewing the event, note the following things: describe the context, the people present, the specific circumstance, with as much sensory information as possible (what you see, hear, smell, touch, etc.).

If another person is involved, how did she present herself to your senses: how was she dressed, at what distance from you, what did she have in front and behind, how did she behave, etc.)

At that moment (last moment of the event), I said to myself ... (explain how this event resonates in your soul).

### **Now revisit the event one small step at a time:**

The last thing I said/didn't say and/or did/didn't do was

At that moment I felt

I believe I needed

### **Going back another step:**

The other person said or did

At that moment s/he could have felt

And may have needed

### **Going back one step:**

What I said/didn't say and/or did/didn't do was

At that moment I felt

I believe I needed

Keep going back in memory until you get to the beginning or until it seems sufficient to you (for example, until you notice a significant change in the way you see what happened or how you feel about it).

**When you're done**, ask yourself if your feelings have changed. If they have not, you can stop.

**If your feelings have changed:**

What has changed in what I say to myself?

How do I feel?

What are the needs that I did not meet in the event?

What could I do now?

What could I do differently in the face of the same, identical situation?

What did I learn from doing this exercise?

Optional: What would make it possible to make this practice a habit?

## Celebration Questionnaire

*Every day brings reasons to celebrate or things to be grateful for. We may miss them if we are expecting something important or grandiose. This exercise invites us to look at even the smallest reasons to celebrate, and do so in a very precise way. It invites to discern the value of gratitude as a tool for inner growth.*

Examples of celebration: confronting a difficult situation in a new way, and/or better than the last time; take note of something beautiful/positive in the middle of a difficult situation; do something new and improvised that brings you joy; express yourself in ways that foster connection; try to express what you usually take for granted (e.g., gratitude toward someone); accept the trust you receive; accept a present with gratitude; start a conversation with a stranger; refrain from doing/saying something that you would regret.

### **Use the Needs and Expressions of the Will sheet and Positive Feelings sheet as needed.**

Looking back at the last 2–3 weeks, ask yourself if there was a moment where you offered a new response to an old challenge, even if ever so slightly.

Was there something I did/did not do or said/did not say that I want to celebrate?

Describe it:

How did you feel?

What intentions was I trying to satisfy with this choice?

What needs were satisfied?

Optional: How did this choice satisfy my needs better than I have in the past?

Optional: What else am I learning in reviewing this event?

Optional: What can I do to sustain this learning and change in the future?

## Peak Experience Questionnaire

*Looking back in our biography, we can recognise key moments, glimmers of our eternal Self, events that have inaugurated the new and put us in conscious contact (or more conscious than usual) with the stream of time that comes from the future.*

Examples of a peak experience:

- a meeting with someone who opened new doors for us
- a spiritual experience, perhaps at the least expected moment
- a gift of grace
- a moment when we realized our unique gifts/skills
- an experience that has marked the direction of our professional, emotional, spiritual life
- an obstacle we overcame in an unexpected way
- a birth, death, turning point in the lives of others
- a resolution taken at the end of a difficult experience

**Use the Needs and Expressions of the Will and the Positive Feelings sheets as needed.**

Describe the event in as much sensory detail as possible. If it is a protracted event, choose the most significant moment in the space of a day.

How did I feel?

What intentions was I trying to accomplish?

What needs/values were met?

What else am I learning about reviewing the event?

Optional: How much profit did I make from this experience?

Optional: Is there any unexplored potential left?



## Valley Experience Questionnaire

*Looking back in our biography, we can recognize moments when we have lost touch with our eternal Self; moments when we have not been able to fight for what was important to us. By retracing the events we can realize how far we have strayed from our core values. Reviewing them in conjunction with summit experiences serves to highlight in negative what appears on the other side in positive; we have highlighted our fundamental values in one as we have neglected or were unable to do in the other. In retracing what is likely to be a protracted time, choose a day that represents and symbolizes the period.*

**Use the Needs and Expressions of the Will and the Positive Feelings sheets as needed.**

Describe the event in as much sensory detail as possible. If it is a protracted event, choose the most significant moment in the space of a day.

How did I feel?

What intentions was I trying to accomplish?

What needs/values were not met?

What needs/values were met?

What else am I learning about reviewing the event?

Optional: How much profit did I make from this experience?

Optional: Is there any unexplored potential left?

## Slice of Life Exercise Questionnaire

*This exercise, Rudolf Steiner points out, serves to help see us see ourselves both as participants in and observers of our lives. The more we can observe without emotions that cloud perception, the more we will perceive the forces of destiny and let the present moment inspire us toward the right decision.*

Look back at a time in your life. The best conditions are those in which:

- it really feels like a part of your past
- it is defined by some boundaries: you were in a different setting than now, at a completely different phase of life
- it had a recognizable beginning and ending: e.g., a job you held for a definite amount of time; a place you lived in for a number of years; a relationship that was important to you and that lasted a certain amount of years; the period of certain studies (college, professional formation, anthroposophical course), etc.

Why are you choosing this slice of life? Is there something you want to learn from it?

What were the physical parameters of that period?

- Describe yourself, especially in the ways you presented yourself differently to the world (e.g.: I used to dress like a hippie, a punk,...):
- Describe where you lived:
- Describe what was your work, and/or your studies, and/or other activities/hobbies:
- Who were the people you related to; what were the things you enjoyed doing together?

What was your mood of soul? What were the things that preoccupied you from day to day?

- Mood of soul: Were you happy-go-lucky? Were you predominantly serious or light-minded? Were you angry at certain individuals, groups of people? Etc.
- What were some of your main interests? Were you politically active? Were you a spiritual seeker? Were you devoted to one cause or another, different from the above?

- Were you focused on an artistic pursuit, a sport, someone in your family, etc.?

**What were some of the key events that happened to you in this period?**

- Was there an intellectual/emotional/spiritual/personal important event? The exposure to a spiritual path; a key individual you met or broke off with; a teacher that left an important awakening; a physical accident/injury; a dramatic change of fortunes; an illness, etc.
- What were the questions (one step deeper than interests, but based on your interests) that you started asking yourself at this time? Did they have to do with the state of the soul, with the state of the world, with children's upbringing, family, religious/spiritual groupings? How did these questions emerge?

Live with the above questions during a day or two. Bring the following questions to your mind before the night.

Look at then and look at now:

- How is this being you are looking at similar to you now?
- How is this being you are looking at different from you now?
- What inspires you in looking back?
- What surprises you in looking back?

## Remembering Someone with Gratitude Questionnaire

*Most social difficulties are common these days because we are developing antisocial impulses. One way to counter them is to create images of other human beings. Where we tend to make judgments based on sympathy and dislike, we try instead to see qualities, gestures, archetypes. In other words, we try to create a portrait, an imagination of the other person within our soul.*

Part of the difficulty of doing the exercise is that Steiner gives us only minimal indications. He gives more in the following exercise in which he also asks us to look at persons that impacted us "negatively."

You can use questions to go deeper into the being of the person in question.

Separate people in categories:

Close family: father, mother, siblings  
Relatives  
Friends  
Teachers and mentors  
Colleagues  
Other

Take a person in one category and ask yourself

- What did the person look like? What was his/her physical appearance? How did s/he look most of the time? How did s/he dress? How did s/he wear her/his hair? What did s/he pay most attention to about her/his external appearance?
- How did the person occupy the space around her? How did s/he walk? How did s/he react to external stimuli? How did the person address you? How did the person listen to you? What was the impact this person had on others (think of when s/he entered a room)?
- What were the primary interests of this person (in the outer world, in the inner world, in relation to the people s/he was meeting)? Where could you detect real passion? Where could you see fear or unease?
- What were some unique/unusual things that the person did or said? What are some key life messages that the person lives out of? (See examples in separate sheet.)

- How did s/he try to make sense of the world (e.g., intellectually, aesthetically, experientially, devotionally, other...)? What was most important in her/his experience of the world?
- If you had to say it in 1–2 sentences, what was this person about? E.g.: For X the world was about ...; X was unique because of ...; When I think of X what most comes to mind is ...; I wish X were with me when I need ... (when I am in ... when I think of...).

The first time around may be difficult. Repeat this exercise with a second person.

## Minor Karma Exercise

*This is one of the key exercises for recognizing the role of the "second human being who lives in us," the one who is the author of our choices. It invites us to realize that we are responsible for most of the events we encounter in our biography. It is for taking responsibility, rather than attributing our life events to pure chance, or blaming others.*

### **The Positive and Negative Feelings and Needs and Expressions of the Will sheets may be useful for this exercise.**

Look at an event in your life that you have not wished to happen to yourself, something you may consider unfortunate, harmful, shaming, arbitrary, etc. The best is to look at something that holds some charge but not too much charge in the present. Recurring events also hold more potential than one-of-a-kind events.

- Describe the moments before the event itself: If there were others involved, what did they do/not do, say/not say?
- Describe the setting around the event with all your senses (as much as possible):
- Describe the event itself: If there were others involved what did they do/not do, say/not say?
- Describe your reactions after the event. What went on in your mind? What were you telling yourself?
- How did you feel (before, in the moment and afterwards)?
- What were your intentions? I wanted (hoped, wished,...) to ...
- What were your needs based on these intentions?

### **Remember the Previous Events**

What have been the preludes (events) that have led to the event? Try to imagine how you have prepared each step leading to the central event.

Sequence of events: remember in reverse order the events that preceded and made possible the central event. List them in reverse order.

- Event z
- Event v
- Event u
- Event t
- ...

After listing the events, look at one event after another and imagine that you wanted it to happen, starting with the most recent going back to the most remote (from z back in time). In the part that has to do with events z, v, u, etc., you do not have to dwell at the same level of depth. Just tell yourself/feel/perceive that you wanted those events that led to the central event.

**Look again at the central event:**

- If this were an event designed to maximize your growth, what do you see it serving? How is it leading you to your better self?
- What could you learn in the short term? What do you feel called to do?

### **Variation: Closed Door Scenario**

*This exercise is a particular variation of the Minor Karma Exercise. Sometimes it will not be possible to find a solution to difficulties and conflicts with the people involved. In this case we can still take care of our needs and acquire more empathy toward the needs of others.*

**The Positive and Negative Feelings and Needs and Expressions of the Will sheets may be useful for this exercise.**

Think of a situation that has come to an end, one that you cannot solve with another person/people involved. In this situation there is no terminal event, rather the lack of it.

Ask yourself:

How do I feel?

What judgments do I have of myself?

What do I need most?

What judgments do I have about the other person(s)?

What do I need most now?

**Remember the last, penultimate, or most important event before the current situation:**

Describe the setting around the event with all your senses (as much as possible):

How did you feel?

What were your intentions (I wanted, hoped, desired,...)?

What were your needs?

Describe the event itself: if there were other people involved, what did they do/didn't, said/didn't say?



How did you feel?

What were your intentions (I wanted, hoped, desired,...)? Your needs?

Describe your reactions after the event. What were you saying to yourself?

How did you feel?

What were your intentions (I wanted, hoped, desired,...)? Your needs?

Ask yourself: What could you have done differently?

### **Return to the Present Moment**

How do you feel now?

What do you need most (needs/values)?

NOTE: When you've brought to the surface what you need, pause to appreciate how important your needs/values are, even if you can't meet them.

## Learning from My Regrets Questionnaire

*Through regrets and remorse we create a bridge between past and future. Regret shows us that we have failed to express ourselves in a way that truly honors all our intentions. By distinguishing which values have been met and which have not, it is natural to try to conclude the review/evaluation with an understanding of how we may act differently in the future.*

### **Use the Positive and Negative Feelings and Needs and Expressions of the Will sheets if necessary.**

Explore a recent experience that has generated regrets and ask yourself what new answers you could offer to this challenge.

NOTE: The perception of the forces of destiny pushes us to broaden our moral imagination. Ideas derived from moral imagination are transformed into reality through the so-called moral technique. The clearer we are about our spectrum of choices, the more we can expand our moral technique.

What was the chain of events that led to the situation of regret?

How did I feel? How do I feel now?

What were my intentions?

What needs/values have been met?

What needs/values have not been met?

How could I satisfy all my needs (and the needs of others) more successfully in a similar future situation? List some alternatives (remember: positive, concrete, feasible).

What could I do to support this learning and change in the future?

## Exercise to Encourage Inspiration

*This exercise is the one that completes the path because it looks completely toward the future. If we can calm the anxiety and fear of what comes our way from the future, the spiritual world can inspire us with new ideas that break the cycles of the past.*

Think of an event in the near future that creates a certain amount of anxiety and/or apprehension. If you can limit the anxiety that such an event generates in you, you can allow the spiritual world to cause you to receive inspiration and find new solutions to old problems.

Review what happened (last or one of the latest events) that caused you anxiety:

Describe the event with all your senses:

How did you feel?

What did you need most?

What do you need now thinking about the future?

Looking at the other person/group:

Describe what he/they said/did:

Based on what has been observed, try to guess/understand:

What does the other person(s) feel?

What can the other person(s) need?

Take this key realization (last question) with you in the consideration of the event in the immediate future. Think about how to meet both your own needs and the needs of others with what you will do in the near future.

Imagine as vividly as possible the scenario of the next event (example: maybe you know that you will face the situation in a meeting, an encounter, at work, in the gym, etc.).

Think and, if necessary, write a variety of things you would like to say/do to:

- Reduce your anxiety/apprehension
- Meet all your and other people's needs

Repeat the phrases you thought of out loud to your dyad/trio partner(s). How do you feel right now thinking about the next event?

NOTE: If you still feel tension, repeat the exercise again tomorrow, or however early it is.

## Core Values Exercise

*The more we are in tune with ourselves, the more our core values reflect the intentions that led us to incarnate. The following exercise serves to bring to consciousness on what values we build our lives. Repeating the exercise over time will make us more and more aware of them.*

This exercise can be formulated in a general way as an analogy of the journey of life. Life is compared to an endurance sporting feat: a kayak trip through the rapids, a crossing of the ocean or desert, the climbing of a mountain, and so on. Let's take the first example.

We are going down a dangerous river on a raft and carrying our ten values with us. These are important (valuable) and add weight to the boat.

Take time to make a list of the ten most important values in your life. Refer to the Needs and Expressions of the Will sheet if necessary.

We start the journey where the river of life is wide and deep. Everything is fine.

Now we get to where it gets narrower and faster. It's time to get rid of three values. Your captain asks you, and you feel that you must trust his words since you have no le

Now the river is becoming turbulent, and the captain knows from experience that two other values must be discarded. He doesn't want to lose anyone on the way. Put on your life jacket if you haven't done it yet.

You are left with five values and hope that things will be simplified. Unfortunately not. Now the river begins to enter a gorge with many fast meanders. The captain advises you to throw a ballast: one value.

In addition to meanders there are rocks just below the surface, and you have to lighten to the maximum. Throw away all your charge and another value.

Oh God, there are rocks on the surface and you have to slalom between the rocks; throw away all the food and another value.

Now there is a big rock right in front of you. Be prepared to avoid it and divert the kayak with rudder and oar. Throw away another value.

Luckily the waters calm down and have arrived at a lake. You are safe and sound. The captain hopes he has not lost anyone.

At the end of the exercise, notice the order of importance of the values. Tweak and readjust if necessary.

## **Social Impact Statement (Destiny Questions)**

*This is one of two forms that guide us to recognize the nature of our prenatal intentions: what motivates us, what puts us in touch with the individual mission of our incarnation. The other is the form for the exercise on Core Values.*

### **What broke my heart?**

- Events in my life
  - o What events?
  - o How did they impact me?
- Events in the world
  - o What events?
  - o How did they impact me?

Original (destiny) question:

### **What awakened my heart?**

- Examples that inspired me: books, individuals, groups/organizations personal encounters
- How did they impact me?

What new questions have arisen?

### **What makes my heart sing?**

- When did I feel that I had an impact on my world? What allowed me to make an impact?
- 
- What is today's question?
- Where do I see as promises and possibilities?
- What new steps can I take? (Examples; meetings, readings, trainings, personal development, conversations)
- What is the consciousness I need to develop?
- How can I adapt day by day? How can I have more hope and less expectations? How can I adapt permanently?

## The Wise Guidance of Destiny

*This exercise can make us aware of how sometimes external events that seem to be due purely to chance bring us back in the direction of our destiny when we get lost along the way.*

Looking back at your biography, what events are you grateful for now that you may figure out the larger pattern of things, even if you weren't grateful for them at the time?

Think of the family situation, school life, unexpected changes, deaths in the family or in nearby circles, accidents, illnesses, operations, love disappointments, changes of profession, sociopolitical changes, injustices suffered, etc. Think of those events/situations that no longer weigh on you because you can surmise their place in the whole of your biography.

You may use as an example the thread of events that allowed you to find anthroposophy. What "negative" situations/events led you to anthroposophy?

Review each event/situation in two to three sentences.

Example 1: Describe the event

What difficulties did this event/situation present initially? How did you react?

What did these things allow and make possible that would not have been possible otherwise?

Example 2: Describe the event

What difficulties did this event/situation present initially? How did you react?

What did these things allow and make possible that would not have been possible otherwise?

Examples 3, 4, 5, 6,...

Describe and repeat the above questions.

At the end of this exploration, ask yourself:

Do you see one or two themes that are repeated in these events/situations?