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South Ural State University
The Department of Philosophy

LANGUAGE OF PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE

BRIEF DICTIONARY-PRESENTATION

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This dictionary gives readers a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the language of philosophical practice. This is the result of the work of Russian scientists fruitfully cooperating with foreign colleagues in the field of philosophical practice. The dictionary briefly and thoroughly reveals basic concepts of philosophical practice with reference to foreign sources, which are so little known to the Russian reader. This is a projective dictionary; it is not “final”. This is an invitation to joint creativity for further understanding of philosophical practice. This dictionary is intended for a wide range of readers.

UDC 101

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*To those, who showed us the way
of Philosophical Practice*

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Preface

Philosophical Practice is gradually becoming a recognized profession. In many countries associations of philosophical practitioners are created, and the number of clients using the services of philosophical practitioners increases. However, the actual aspect of our dictionary is not the institutional aspect of this topic, but the essential and categorical aspects, in fact, what philosophical practice as a direction of modern philosophy is? What is the conceptual apparatus of philosophical practice? What constitutes the invariant (basic) component of this apparatus, and what characterizes its variative features depending on the field of application and distribution area? How in the light of philosophical practice are the basic concepts of philosophy, psychology and pedagogy represented; how are they “transformed” and modified? The answer to these and many other questions are in this dictionary, which became the fruit of the efforts of a whole team of Russian philosophers.

The dictionary enables readers not only to understand the basic concepts that have become most widespread in philosophical practice, but also to outline for themselves a scope of their own interests in this field. Most of the articles in the dictionary are written in a projective style, they involve the reader in a discussion of open problems, and do not impose one single point of view on the directive. Thus, any reader can become a co-author of each article due to his or her own reflections, professional and life experience. And it should be so, because the most important philosopher for a

person is him- or herself. Philosophical practitioner, if we take advantage of the paradoxical statement of Gerd B. Achenbach, is a specialist in a non-speciality, s/he treats his/her visitor seriously: a person is understood not with the help of theories, that is, schematically, and not as “an example confirming a rule”, but as that unique human being that s/he is. It is not judged in accordance with a certain “measure” (for example, “health”). The question is, rather, whether s/he lives in harmony with him- or herself.

A feature of philosophical practice, in contrast to academic philosophy, is that it should be guided by the themes, problems and questions that occupy the one who appeals to philosopher. Philosophy, which begins precisely with what it is asked about, is unlimited, in contrast to the requirements imposed on sciences. This is another objective difficulty in compiling a vocabulary on philosophical practice. After all, philosophical practice is not a scientific specialty, not an academic discipline in the academic sense of the word. And philosophical practitioner is not an expert. Consequently, philosophical practice cannot be determined through an indication of some special “competence”. Philosophy, which begins with what others present to it, can be guided by this rule only when it considers each problem as a philosophical problem and evaluates each question philosophically, i.e. as a question that leads to philosophy.

According to L. Amir’s witty remark, in the practice of education a “non-serious” attitude to philosophy was formed. An example of this attitude is a solid university professor who believes that the philosophical theory is too abstract and has nothing to do with everyday life. However, it is only through the practice of communication that you can actually learn what the difference between serious (but unnecessary) self-giving and serious (really necessary) attitude to your work is: you must take your work seriously, but not to yourself.

Professor of philosophy, who believes that his discipline does not apply to life, is not serious about his or her profession. If s/he were serious about his/her profession as a teacher of philosophy, s/he would participate in philosophical practice, due to the fact that good teaching implies deep

penetration into the subject and the ability to communicate. Moreover, even if this professor “simply” teaches philosophy, s/he can without special training be a philosophical practitioner. All that is required is simply to be a good philosopher, that is, a person who does not avoid direct contact with a student or client (the same student), is enthusiastic about his/her profession, strives for the essence, knows how to listen, ask questions, explain and clarify. If so, there is no gap between academic philosophy and philosophical counseling. Therefore, many articles of our dictionary are devoted to the integration of philosophical practice into the practice of education for children and adults, which is an adequate response to the challenges that modern education poses to education.

Philosophy is a universal “thing”, because it includes all knowledge, everything that has been thought out, investigated and learned belonged to it; the whole world of knowledge in all its diversity is based on philosophy. It finds access to everything, because earlier its original element was already present in any knowledge, opinion, even feeling in the quality of thinking in a very broad sense.

Sergey Borisov

Authenticity Духовные упражнения Acquired Ignorance Философская практика
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ACQUIRED IGNORANCE, a philosophical attitude, a way of being that one can consider as a condition of philosophizing, a state of mind which enables its exercise. The history of philosophy is populated by individuals who take satisfaction in questioning the slightest point of agreement that might have hitherto been conceded, in order to mark forever this harmony or consensus with the seal of their distinctive individuality. These general qualities would be, for example, the desire to know, which presupposes the consciousness of a certain ignorance, hence the desire to see this knowledge progress. Another example is the suspension of judgment, which allows a problem to be examined with a relatively open mind, which too often confines itself to considering adverse assumptions in order to understand them, while in the background being convinced of one's own. In this way, problematization, that is the capacity to envisage the problems given by particular and divergent ideas, would be a more appropriate term, which by no means excludes bias.

The Greek term "epoche", taken up among other things by phenomenology, somewhat captures this availability. It describes this mental action, this moment of thought or contemplation, in which are suspended all our judgments, our knowledge, our convictions, our a priori, in whatever form they may be. This theoretical "mise en abyme" may involve in the same way a suspension of action, mental or physical. A distancing from the very existence of the world and its nature. Our own consciousness is thus subjected to criticism, to questioning, to scrutiny of doubt. Not to condemn it to the limbo of an eternal absence of judgment, but to recast its paradigms, its foundations, its modalities. The idea of judgment is not abandoned as an inherent source of error, but momentarily suspended in order to examine its legitimacy. We are far from the radicality of some Pyrrhonism, determining that we cannot trust either the senses or the reason enjoining us to remain impassive and without opinion, thus condemning us to *aphasia*, this mutism of thought. Although such wisdom is undoubtedly one of the paths leading to *ataraxia*, this absence of trouble and suffering. It is this momentary suspension summoned by Descartes as the epistemic principle of "methodical

doubt". In Husserl, this will be articulated through the "phenomenological reduction", a principle which avoids the pitfalls of our various beliefs — naive or constructed — concerning the existence of the world, in order to examine phenomena as they originally and purely appear to consciousness.

As is known, the term philosophy stems from an acknowledgement of lack and from the desire to fill this gap. However, throughout the history of thought, a phenomenon has gradually been established, attributable to the success of science: the certainty and dogmatism connected with the systematizing spirit and their cortege of established truths. Since time immemorial, more than one patented philosopher had no qualms to assert a certain number of non-negotiable truths, non-problematizable in his/her view. Especially in the last two centuries of "philosophy of the professors". For, it is no longer a question of wisdom the quest of which is open or infinite, but of the efficacy of a thought or of an axiology, both on the level of knowledge and on the level of morality. To be sure, every thought, however interrogative and little assertive it may be, necessarily holds some affirmations which serve as its postulate. But it is nonetheless true that at the level of the attitude, that of the relation to ideas, certain specific patterns more naturally induce a feeling of indubitable certainty, particularly when it comes to the elaboration of a system, while others rather advocate a state of systematic uncertainty the implications of which shall be consequent.

Let us take as an example the principle of the Learned Ignorance of Nicolas of Cusa, which consists largely in asserting that ignorance is a necessary virtue, which is acquired, and allows one to think, for every thought worthy of its name is but a conjecture, an approximation, which always demands to be examined with a scrutinizing and critical eye. This, moreover, coincides with Popper's more recent idea, with its principle of "falsification", according to which science is precisely characterized by the fact that every proposition can be called into question, contrary to dogma, an act of faith, a certainty which is rather of a religious nature. For Leibniz, it will rather be a matter of worrying, of promoting this uneasiness which forbids peace, because the latter signs the death of thought.

In the practice of education, the use of acquired ignorance means: introducing a part of uncertainty into class work, moving from a pattern of knowledge transmission, the actual knowledge, to the implementation of hypotheses, the process of thought. It is a question of being able to abandon our own opinions, to suspend our judgment, even if only for a rigorous and critical examination. To do this, the teacher must no longer confine himself to the scheme of the “right answer”, unique, absolute and omnipotent, to work on the process of reflection, on common reflection and problematization.

Oscar Brenifier

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Related articles: *contemplation, questioning, philosophical practice in education.*

AUTHENTICITY, existential attitude of the subject, the result of establishing a contact with his/her inner *depth*, which could be a goal of *philosophical practice*.

Within the critical thinking approach, provided by Oscar Brenifier, authenticity is addressed among other philosophical attitudes. It reveals such aspect of inner *depth*, as inner truth. After connection with his depth a person in a free and authentic way (in the meaning of content) expresses him- or herself in speech. Furthermore, his/her expression could be limited by the procedure of “precious speaking” (R. Lahav). In this context authenticity is related to the Greek concept of “parrhesia”, which was also used by Michel Foucault due to “courage of truth”. Philosophizing from inner *depth* gives a person authenticity that reveals itself also through courage of truth, which is a desire to freely express him- or herself through speech. A philosophical practitioner acts here as a parrhesiast, implementing his/her thoughts into a speech and expressing him- or herself from the ethos of inner *depth*. Parrhesia here is related to another principle – taking *care of the self*, because it first of all requires care of one’s soul. Nevertheless, focus on the inner *depth* and desire of true self-realization means being a bit deaf to the others. Openness to them and to the whole world can be found in the other attitude – to openness, being in the moment of now, which may complement the attitude to authenticity.

In the vortex of the ordinary life a person’s reactions are usually driven by different patterns. That is why s/he may feel inauthentic and partly participating in his/her life, which often appears to be empty and meaningless. A metaphor of the Plato’s cave could be relevant here. Reaching authenticity is related to a step-by-step going out from the Plato’s cave and establishing connection with your inner *depth*. It could be obtained through *contemplation*, which means transcending beyond ourselves and experiencing togetherness with something more, with the world as a whole. Within an approach of *self-transformation*, authenticity feels like life is meaningful. Thus, patterns are replaced with the feeling of *togetherness*, wholeness and fullness of perception. This existential attitude does not contain criticism, it is focused on resonating with

each other within a session of *philosophical companionship*. Relations between the participants, which provide *togetherness* and authenticity, can be described by the theory of Martin Buber about I-You relationships. It is important that authenticity does not merely sharpen the individuality of a person, but also reveals in *togetherness* with others and the world as a whole. The unity remains in the diversity, like the voices of different instruments in an orchestra.

Therefore, reaching authenticity could be identified as a goal of *philosophical practice*. Gerd Achenbach indicates that philosophy could change our life and make it better. Authenticity could be defined as a match between how we truly want to see ourselves after *self-transformation* and who we really are. *Doing philosophical practice*, “taking philosophy seriously” (Lydia Amir), we could accomplish authenticity. It can be said that for a philosophical practitioner authenticity is, first, a vital condition of philosophizing, second, his/her aim, existential state that should be reached as a result of this philosophizing. The stronger the connection with our *depth*, the more authentic our being could become.

Kirill Rezvushkin

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Related articles: *depth, togetherness, contemplation, care of the self, self-transformation, philosophical companionship, philosophical practice.*

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Care of the Self Communication Contemplation

CARE OF THE SELF, *epimeleia heautou*, a requirement to the process of self-understanding. This requirement presumes a special attitude to yourself and the world around; constant monitoring of yourself; a set of practical skills, i.e. techniques of meditation, memorizing, control over your consciousness and imagination. Care of the self existed practically in every society and in every culture in different forms, which may contradict each other. For example, in modern era the emphasis in understanding of the care of the self shifted from working on yourself to self-understanding, and then it started to associate with egotism and escape, interruption of communication with the whole world. Nowadays the situation is paradoxical: on one hand, the market of recipes of self-improvement and positive thinking is huge, but on the other hand, coercion to normalization through the care of the self moved to an area of body, appearance and positive image, which is an evidence of success in life and tireless work on your body.

Michel Foucault in the course of lectures “Hermeneutics of the Subject” highlighted that starting with Plato the following question arose in our culture: “What is the price of truth?” According to Foucault, this price is in the subject itself in a form of a question: “What work must I do on myself? How should I transform myself? How should I change my existence to realize the truth?” A subject itself is not able to percept the truth. S/he would be able to comprehend it only if s/he modifies him- or herself. These transformations might make him/her capable of expanding his/her opportunities and those of the mankind in general.

A capacity to take care of the self is not innate. It is based on understanding yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, wanted and unwanted qualities. Understanding yourself and your own reality becomes possible through development of self-awareness. The care of the self requires credibility, development of human dignity, reliance on the pursuit of happiness, of self-realization, of love to us and to others.

The care of the self is not equal to self-improvement. The latter requires overcoming yourself in every moment of life (in other words, *self-transformation*, elevation over yourself). For the care of the self the aspect of overcoming yourself and your weaknesses is not compulsory, although it is focused on improvement of functioning. The care of the self always contains a contradiction between overcoming yourself and full self-realization.

The care of the self is not the same as pursuit of happiness. Initially, care of the self is often caused by this pursuit. Nevertheless, according to the beliefs of many philosophical schools and religious doctrines happiness is a by-product of the care of the self, which is not guaranteed. At some stages requirements of the care of the self can match the efforts on achieving happiness, and at other stages they may not correspond.

The care of the self is not an investment to a human capital, because it is significantly less pragmatic. Although in a strategic perspective taking care of the self could be very useful. And yet the care of the self does not produce guaranteed results, but could provide a condition that could ensure achieving these results. The one who takes care of him- or herself focuses on the process of self-improvement to the extent that it enables to achieve a desired state.

The care of the self is not only self-love; it can easily take place without the latter. Care of the self is primarily a clear vision of yourself, an active and reasonable attitude to yourself. Love and care of the self significantly intersect and do not contradict each other.

The care of the self is not complacency; otherwise it would not leave space for discerning, attentive and *contemplative* attitude to yourself.

The care of the self is not a habit, although it may be constant, steady and tireless. It is an attentive and empathetic presence, and not an emptiness of the routine.

The care of the self is not cocooning, it does not take us away from people, but, on the contrary, leads to them. Results of regular practicing of taking care of the self could be different: for example, somebody comes to a true humanity, to a deep *communication*, but someone else opens a door to helping only the loved ones and compassion only for them.

The care of the self gives a person more inner freedom, more awareness and responsibility, and trough it – human dignity. Actually, dignity is a result of the state that is achieved through the care of the self. But if in ancient world a possibility of taking care of the self was a privilege of free people, nowadays it is hard not to admit that miserable people have a right to take care of themselves. In such case the care of the self could be the only means to save human dignity.

Mikhail Gavrilov

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Related articles: *self-transformation, contemplation, communication.*

COMMUNICATION, all conceivable forms of “subject-subject interaction”: direct and indirect, real and imagined; both socially positive and negative, caused by “malicious experiences”. The main thing that distinguishes communication among other ways of social interaction (interaction, management, or service) is the orientation of the person to the Other / others, in whatever form of communicative behavior it is implemented, as an equal, equally active, free, unique person.

In accordance with the Kantian categorical imperative, “You” stands for “I” as a goal, as an equal co-author in the creation of spiritual and material values, and not as a means. In communication, there is a meeting between “I” and “You”, and “We” is born. Communication is necessary there and then, where and when the activity of people acquires the character of creativity. When it comes to creating a new one, not yet the former.

What has been said fully applies to all modifications of *philosophical practice*. When it comes to reproductive activity, about the reproduction of actions that have become routine, then we can confine ourselves to interactions that have a “subject-object” nature.

If we start from the etymology of the term “communication”, it is obvious that it has one root with the word “community”. Consequently, this term emphasizes the integrative, unifying direction of people’s behavior in the process of communication. This behavior is socially significant.

A special role is played by integrative processes in such a modification of *philosophical practice* as *philosophical companionship* (the initiator of this movement is Ran Lahav). One of the basic concepts in the work of philosophical *companionship* is the idea of *togetherness*, which is constantly embodied practically: togetherness with companions and with the philosophical text. The implementation of *philosophical companionship* develops communicative abilities of the members of a group, their communication skills. They also appear outside the group; they help to overcome loneliness, for instance, if it arises in everyday life. Communication, woven into objective activity, often does not satisfy a person. It can create

various kinds of deformations affecting the intellectual sphere of a person's life, the fullness of his/her communication with emotional or activity-volitional components.

Often a person does not fully realize the important social functions of communication: in self-assertion, hedonistic function, integrative; related to the process of cognition: the function of self-knowledge and a heuristic function. In this case, work in the format of *philosophical companionship* or, for example, participation in the activities of “café philosophique” can perform a compensatory function. Considering the fact that philosophical practice presupposes harmonious development of a person and possesses a weighty arsenal of means of improving his/her communication technique in indissoluble connection with its content, the overcoming of loneliness will occur in the higher metaform of compensation-overcompensation. Overcompensation promotes personal growth and radical transformation of the personality as a whole, *self-transformation*.

Vladimir Gladyshev

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Related articles: *philosophical practice, philosophical companionship, togetherness, self-transformation.*

CONTEMPLATION, philosophical (existential) attitude that could be achieved as a result of conscious ceasing or slowing down the ordinary mind, focused on acquisition of a deeper perspective of perception and understanding. Its potential is fruitfully implemented in *philosophical practice*.

In the context of the problem-solving approach Lou Marinoff in 1999 came up with the idea of five steps of the process of philosophical counseling: identification of a problem, expression of emotions, analysis of solutions, contemplation, and equilibrium. Contemplation is a first step, which is philosophical in itself. It differentiates philosophical practice from psychotherapy. After identification of a problem, acknowledging and fruitful undergoing of emotions, caused by the problem, analysis of potential solutions, comes the time of contemplation. Then it becomes necessary to take a pause, to cease intense thinking and to look at the situation as a whole to focus on integrating the results of previous studies of work. In a contemplative mood a counselee is ready to meet and perceive needed philosophical ideas and concepts, to experience philosophical insights that are to provide philosophical position appropriate for this situation. The final step is reaching a state of equilibrium, where it is possible to choose the best solution of a problem.

Philosophical practice developing critical thinking, represented by Oscar Brenifier, is not limited to rational thinking only. Despite the fact that it is crucial, there is also a place for intuition. It presupposes a state of being ready to accept. This is more an attitude, then a thinking activity, which is more connected to “being”, then to “doing”, and it is focused on self-understanding. Intuition, as understood in the context of Plato’s tradition, is a contemplation, which opens a long-term and sustainable dimension of being that could help shed light on the truth in one moment. Intuition has no stages and no methods.

In the self-development approach to *philosophical practice* contemplation plays an important role in *self-transformation*. Contemplation here is a means to inner *depth*, to listen and to perceive with the help of it and to speak from it. Thus, in organization and conducting philosophical practice using

philosophical companionship, Ran Lahav distinguishes discursive and contemplative sessions. Contemplative philosophizing, by contrast with discursive, requires stronger connection with inner *depth*. If analytical thinking is based primarily on rational procedures, philosophizing from inner *depth* involves the whole human being. Contemplative mood influences the direction and also the content of our thoughts. It switches us from the outer world to the inner world, grants access to our *depth*, opens an inner space of listening, which replaces an ongoing chaotic inner monologue, driven by the patterns of our usual behavior. Contemplation eliminates a gap between philosophical ideas and our *existential experience*, allowing us to think “from” instead of thinking “about”. To give voice to inner *depth* does not mean making it a speculative object. Contemplative attitude provides an opportunity to step out from the *perimeter* of our Plato’s cave and to establish connection with inner *depth*, and to reach *togetherness* with other people and the world as a whole.

Reaching the contemplative mood requires applying conscious efforts and special techniques. *Philosophical companionship* includes several contemplative exercises, which also help participants to reach *togetherness*. Thus, in contemplative sessions an appropriate attitude is reached by means of short collective meditation. It is considered here as one of the types of contemplation. In discursive sessions the focus shifts primarily to the methods of working with a text: philosophical chanting and slow reading (*ruminatio*). In this type of sessions *togetherness* is attained not using meditation, but through resonating with the ideas of other participants though verbal *communication*. Resonating plays an important role in reaching contemplative openness, putting aside our usual patterns. As a final stage, the session of philosophical companionship may include an answer to the following question: “What will I take from this session to my everyday life?” The participants here become like those who stepped out from the Plato’s cave to the sunlight to enrich their ordinary life of prisoners who enriched their ordinary life with an *existential experience*, gained as a result of contemplating the light of being.

In different branches of *philosophical practice* contemplation is given its special place. Within problem-solving approach it is one of the stages of *philosophical counseling*. In the critical thinking approach contemplation plays a supporting role in comparison with rational and logical procedures. In self-development and *self-transformational* approach contemplation is a starting point of *philosophizing*.

Kirill Rezyushkin

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Related articles: *depth, togetherness, perimeter, self-transformation, philosophical counseling, philosophical companionship, philosophical practice, existential experience.*

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DEEP PHILOSOPHY GROUP, an international group of philosophers who are committed to doing philosophy in a different way: as a philosophical discourse that involves not just abstract thinking, but a deeper dimension of ourselves. As part of the tradition of Western philosophy, we reflect on fundamental issues of life and reality, but unlike the intellectual discourses of academic philosophy, in deep philosophy we reflect from our inner depth.

“Inner depth” is obviously a metaphor, and although it is difficult to define by words, it is easier to understand it by consulting our personal experience. Most of us have experienced moments at which an insight or understanding appeared in our minds, moving and inspiring us. The insight itself was not necessarily very clever or new, but it felt different from ordinary thoughts — precious, rousing, elevating. It probably felt unexpected and surprising, as if originating not from our ordinary mind but from a different part of our being, from some hidden source that is more primordial and central within ourselves. It may have been accompanied by a sense of inner silence, of wonder and marvel, of realness, or even plenitude. Clearly, a different dimension of our being was touched and stirred up.

This is a common example of the experience of understanding from our inner depth. We may say, then, that *inner depth* is an aspect of our being which lies beyond our ordinary state of mind, and which is not limited to our normal psychological patterns of thinking and feeling. It is, more specifically, a central aspect of our being, an inner fountain so to speak, which projects, when aroused, to our entire being. Correspondingly, *deep understandings* are those insights that touch our inner depth and awaken it, at least momentarily.

The notions of inner depth and deep understanding are central to what we call deep philosophy. The vision that guides our group is that it is possible to do philosophy from our inner depth, to reflect on fundamental issues of life from this deeper dimension within us. We value “deep” philosophizing very highly because it has the power to open us to broader horizons of understanding, beyond our normal intellectual thinking, and to impact our life profoundly, helping us on the road towards gradual self-transformation.

Our Deep Philosophy group was born on September 3, 2017, in the tiny village of Brando near Torino, Italy. This was the last day of an international philosophical-contemplative retreat which I organized with the help of my two friends, Michele Zese, whose family owns the retreat house, and Stefania Giordano, a colleague and friend who had been dreaming of organizing philosophical retreats for a long time.

The village of Brando is surrounded by Mediterranean forest and is situated on a side of a steep mountain, several kilometers from the picturesque town of Coazze – a perfect place for a quiet contemplative activity. It was a weekend retreat. Almost twenty people from several countries attended, and most of them left on Sunday afternoon. On Monday morning, six of us (Michele and Stefania from Italy, Monika Obermeier and Sebastian Drobny from Germany, Regina Penner from Russia, and me from the USA and Israel) remained in the house.

That morning we formulated a draft of a six-point manifesto about our vision. After we went back home, we continued to communicate online and discuss it. Within less than a month we came up with the following version:

A MANIFESTO OF DEEP PHILOSOPHY – September, 2017

DP (Deep Philosophy) is an international network of philosophical practitioners, members and non-members of various associations of philosophical practice around the world. Our purpose is to develop new forms of philosophical practice that would be more philosophical: more focused on basic, universal life-issues, more aware of the philosophical tradition, and aimed at the traditional goal of personal growth and inner transformation.

Many great philosophers throughout history understood that philosophy can transform life, that it can open new dimensions and new inner depths for us. Like them, we believe that philosophy can help transform human lives by going beyond superficial and mechanical ways of living.

Our basic principles:

1. The goal of Deep Philosophical Practice is personal transformation – in other words, awakening new dimensions in the person's life. Its main goal is not to normalize life, and not to solve personal problems, but rather to develop new forms of self-awareness, new meanings, new inner depths, new dimensions of life.

2. Deep Philosophical Practice is based on philosophy, and philosophy is a discourse that deals with general ideas about universal and fundamental life-issues. Any practice which does not deal with general ideas and fundamental life-issues, and which remains on the level of personal problems and particular facts, is not fully philosophical. Likewise, logical analysis or critical thinking by itself is not philosophy if it does not deal with general ideas about universal, fundamental life-issues.

3. Deep Philosophical Practice uses the power of philosophical ideas to impact life and transform it. Philosophical ideas are relevant to life not because they can solve problems, and not just because they “apply” to life or can analyze it, but because they can touch life, inspire it, awaken it. Deep Philosophical Practice is not a form of applied philosophy.

4. A truly philosophical discourse is closely connected with the history of philosophical thought. Philosophical practitioners are not fully philosophizing if they ignore previous thinkers, as if nothing has already been said before.

5. Yet, discourse in Deep Philosophical Practice is creative. It does not blindly accept historical views as authorities or ready-made recipes, but as starting points for an open, creative, personal exploration. In this sense, Deep Philosophical Practice involves a personal dialogue with historical thinkers.

6. In Deep Philosophical Practice we focus on the encounter between an individual's concrete situation and abstract universal ideas. Thus, when we deal with personal experiences and issues, we take individuals beyond their specific condition, beyond their singularity, relating them to the broader horizons of human life. Conversely, when we work with a philosophical text, we do not remain on the theoretical level of abstract discussions, but relate it to an individual's concrete situation, personal issues, emotions and behaviors.

In this way, philosophy becomes a creative dialogue between the individual and universal human issues, in which the two resonate with each other.

7. Deep Philosophical Practice is for people who seek personal growth and transformation – and there are many such people in today's world. Our target audience is people who want a fuller and deeper life, and not people who want to solve personal problems, or who are looking for intellectual entertainment.

If our ideas in this manifesto resonate with you, you are invited to contact us.

We regard this manifesto as a starting point for further investigation and development, not a final statement. Its core idea is that philosophy is capable of touching our inner depth, it can inspire life and transform it. And it can do so without losing its character as philosophy – in other words, as an attempt to address fundamental life-issues¹.

Ran Lahav

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Related articles: *depth, contemplation, philosophical practice, philosophical companionship, retreat, self-transformation.*

¹ This article is made of parts of Ran Lahav's chapter from the book *The Deep Philosophical Book*, Loyev Books, Vermont, 2018

DEPTH, a metaphoric concept that is used to indicate the most significant dimension of a binary anthropological model, on which philosophical practitioners base their approach to *self-transformation*. According to this model, a human being has two dimensions: superficial and deep. The task of the philosophical counselor is to establish a connection between these two dimensions, which should be to large extent regular, strong and sustainable.

In *philosophical practice*, surface is considered as a set of patterns and automatic reactions in a human's behavior. Thus, Ran Lahav compares this superficial dimension to the Plato's cave, calling it a *perimeter*. *Self-transformation* means going out from it step-by-step, in other words, reaching our inner depth. The reason why philosophical a practitioner should deal with depth is yearning, which is hard to express in a rational way. This call urges to search for it, expanding our boundaries beyond the horizons of the ordinary life.

A feeling of the connection with inner depth could be a result of a session of *philosophical companionship*. Establishing this connection, participants focus on philosophizing from this usually hidden and hardly accessible dimension. In contrast to the traditional way of philosophizing, alienated from *existential experience*, participants connect philosophical ideas with their own experience, which is also being enriched through them. Thus, a philosophical potential could be fully engaged into *self-transformation*. In particular, the feeling of *togetherness* during such session means that connection with your inner depth is established. *Togetherness* brings you such feelings as fullness, wholeness and *authenticity*. Therefore, a person stops enduring an inauthenticity of his/her existence. Inner depth could be also reached during contemplative sessions of *philosophical companionship*. By means of *contemplation* we focus our attention on our *existential experience* and also on the experience of other participants that they share. Speaking about the essence of philosophical companionship, Ran Lahav wrote that philosophy itself is a search based on love to knowledge, *depth* and wisdom. Therefore, seekers in the field of *philosophical practice* have a desire to reach their inner *depth*. Depth reminds us of a natural connec-

tion between human and bigger horizons, with the world as a whole.

Within a critical thinking approach to *philosophical practice*, depth is addressed in the epistemological context to describe a degree of understanding. According to Oscar Brenifier, a philosophical practitioner should try to reach the understanding as deep as possible. It is also connected with the ancient view of philosophy as a pursuit of wisdom. Depth of understanding is evident in acknowledging our degree of ignorance due to the Socratic tradition, in other words, in *acquired ignorance*. It is also evident in an urge of understanding armed by the critical thinking techniques. There are several steps of deepening thought: explanation, argumentation, analysis, synthesis, illustrating, identifying presuppositions and interpretation.

Since depth lies beyond ordinary life, usually it is not taken into account in the problem-solving approach in *philosophical practice*, because it is based on bringing the client to the normality of everyday life. It should be mentioned that some religions also use a connection to the inner depth in a somewhat similar way. But the difference is that in philosophical practice it is not mystical, and is outside certain dogmas and traditions. Another area, deep psychology, to larger extent works closer to the surface despite its name. In can be said that psychological work with our inner problems, traumas and negative patterns can become a preliminary stage where we clearing a space to work with inner depth through *philosophical practice*. Recently a new direction of it, that is presented by the *Deep Philosophy group*, had emerged. Within self-development approach it focuses on inner depth, which is a central concept, starting point and crucial condition of philosophizing.

Both of the approaches – critical thinking and self-transformational – deal with the depth in a dialogical or polyphonic way.

Ekaterina Milyaeva, Kirill Rezyushkin

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Related articles: deep philosophy, perimeter, philosophical companionship, self-transformation, philosophical practice, togetherness.

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EXISTENTIAL EXPERIENCE, a notion of existentialism (S. Kierkegaard, J.-P. Sartre, K. Jaspers), existential psychology (R. May, L. Binswanger, E. Straus), and *philosophical practice* (R. Lahav) meaning deep and genuine human measurement. Since the existential experience is irrational, it is difficult to comprehend and bring to the philosophizing surface. Classical philosophy understands experience as interaction with the sensible world. Whereas in existentialism and philosophical practice, existential experience is a direct experience of “secret self”, which generates various existential epiphenomena and feelings.

Existential experience is often revealed through various metaphors and symbols, such as *depth* or “experience of presence”. The features of “presence” are, firstly, the priority of existence over essence (“being-in-the-world”, according to M. Heidegger), and secondly, the property of “always mine”, that is unique personal experience.

Existential experience can be understood as the possibility of one’s own authenticity and existential primacy in an alienated world and the “eternal becoming” of self-identity. Existential experience is the gap between the “thought of” and philosophy as an action, the gap where consciousness must descend, so that, having risen, it can acquire a vital position that is only true for itself at a given moment in time. Existential experience is the place of meeting with self becoming because existence is always connected with being, becoming. Existential experience is the experience of collecting a holistic self from disparate parts, where person is both an artist and his work, and a gardener and his flower, where it is necessary not only to live, but also to comprehend, create oneself in the process of this comprehension, *self-transformation*.

Existential experience is the starting point of *philosophical practice*, and, at the same time, its ultimate goal, to which all procedures and techniques are directed. During sessions or *retreats*, the task is to update and rationalize it. For this, phenomenological analysis of experience is used, not observation, when each participant sees him- or herself as a unique “being-in-the-world”. Phenomenological method as a description of experience from the inside, “being-with-the-self”.

The purpose of the meetings is not to search for objective truth, but, on the contrary, to plunge into the depth of the self, self-knowledge and deep understanding. Existential reduction (judgments) is important for existential experience. Everything begins with experience and ends with it. In “being-in-the-world” of philosophical meetings, in their special atmosphere, it is necessary to distract ourselves from what we know, and as if from a clean slate, here and now try to hear the self. Then meet the Other, experience the Other’s existential experience, and again return to the self, having carried out a double reflection of the received messages: from outside and from within. In *philosophical practice* it is important to be really “present”, and not “mirrored”; a real person, reflective and empathizing, entering into an unalienated relationship with the Other. Owing to a genuine existential experience, you can go beyond your *perimeter*.

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Related articles: philosophical practice, depth, self-transformation, retreat, perimeter.

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PERIMETER, a concept in psychology and philosophical practice, connected with terminological oppositions of surface and depth, authenticity and non-authenticity, freedom and necessity, critical and uncritical thinking. In the most general sense, the concept of perimeter expresses a person's limitations in patterns of emotions, desires, thinking, and behavior. These patterns are determined by psychological and social mechanisms and prevent holistic development of the individual.

In R. Lahav's view, the concept of the perimeter is inextricably linked to the allegory of Platonic Cave. Like a prisoner in an underground cave, a person is limited in the knowledge of the world and himself. The requirement "Know thyself!" assumes that the source of true knowledge hidden in the strata of uncritical judgments is in the soul of man. The philosophy of Plato is also aimed at finding the means of achieving the truth, as well as exposing the imaginary, "illegitimate" (Democritus) knowledge, opposed to the Logos of Doxa. The notion of Doxa (diverse opinion) has not lost its significance to the present day and is used by philosophers in indissoluble connection with myth creation (R. Barthes), as well as symbolic exchange and circulation of simulacra (J. Baudrillard). The non-critical perception and acceptance of social patterns, the operation of Doxa, the lack of self-knowledge form an individual perimeter. The concept of the perimeter is connected with the "everyday existence" (M. Heidegger), and with the dissolution of the presence in "people". Thrown into swarm, the presence dissolves in curiosity, sense and ambiguity.

The illumination of the perimeter and the urge to go beyond its borders are the main goal of philosophical practice in all its diversity. In philosophical practice, there is no universal means to fulfill this goal. The demand of G.B. Achenbach is associated with the ancient tradition of skepticism — philosophy must question everything that looks respectable, normal and robust in everyday life, — emphasizes the need to combat stereotypes, and the importance of overstepping comfort. In R. Lahav's view, the concept of perimeter, in particular, is connected with the dyad of professional — seeker. It is

close to the interpretation of philosophizing as “being on the road” by K. Jaspers. The image of a professional is an image of a person with certain knowledge, certified skills and abilities. The figure of a professional is close (if not identical) to the figure of a knowledgeable person (K. Jaspers). The image of a seeker, on the contrary, is associated with “longing” for knowledge and understanding, with the person’s involvement in life “with the whole being”.

According to R. Lahav, perimeter is one of the key concepts to understand the specifics of a person’s daily existence. The important role in formation of perimeter is played by automatisms and uncritically accepted opinions. At the same time R. Lahav notes that the perimeter as a sum of concepts of life is expressed mainly through habitual behavior, emotions and relationships. Following the philosophical tradition, R. Lahav differentiates the rational and irrational in a person. Perimeter is mainly expressed not in rationality, but in emotions, feelings, faith, desires, alogism of behavior, etc. The key to going beyond the perimeter is in the behavioral and emotional models, the “repertoire” of emotions and styles of behavior. The perimeter lines are guarded by internal forces that prevent any intrusion from outside.

If philosophical counselor sees that his/her client is bored, worried, troubled, or uncomfortable, s/he perceives it as the action of the designated forces, internal struggle in the client’s soul. In fact, one of the main initial tasks of philosophical counseling is to determine the perimeter of the client. Since the client resists the incursions of philosophical counselor and does not want to leave the “comfort zone”, the perimeter determination procedure can be painful for the client.

Artur Dydrov

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Related articles: *philosophical counseling, philosophical companionship, philosophical practice.*

PILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN, a branch of contemporary philosophy of the *philosophical practice*, based on a special form of intellectual activity of a child. This form is personal and existential, and is connected to an intuitive way of exploring the world around. Philosophy for children is focused on development of reflective thinking of a child, which is connected to his/her desire to experience and explore the world around and to find his/her place in it. The priority of philosophy in this process is to facilitate the development of thinking skills with the help of involving a child in the process of philosophizing, which could happen spontaneously because s/he is open and naturally inquisitive. Philosophizing pushes the limits of a child's worldview and provides him/her with the opportunities of self-understanding and self-identification. Philosophy for children includes forms of individual and group work, which contain philosophical techniques and procedures that contribute to emotional and intellectual development of children.

Philosophy for children was institutionalized largely due to a special program developed by the American philosopher Matthew Lipman at the 1970s. Nowadays a lot of associations, institutes, colleges, and schools implementing and developing this program are created. The "Philosophy for Children" program by Lipman and like-minded people is open in the sense of adjustment in general and in particular to the different cultural contexts. It is implemented in many schools in the USA, and also in different parts of the world: in Latin America, Australia, Europe, Africa, and Asia – in more than 20 countries national centers working in the field of cultural adaptation and introduction philosophy for children in school practice were created. The International Council for Inquiry with Children in Madrid carries out the communicative functions and helps people to exchange experience. A significant contribution to the development of this branch was made by Oscar Brenifier, a French philosophical practitioner, who published a book series, which helps to practice philosophy with children. Basic ideas of this activity are reflected in the UNESCO report "La philosophie, une École de la Liberté" (2007).

The movement of Philosophy for Children was widespread in Russia in large part due to explication and theoretical analysis of Lipman's program by Russian philosophers N.S. Yulina and M.N. Dudina, and also owing to the establishment of the Interregional Children's Public organization "Philosophy for Children" in Moscow in 2004 by Russian philosophical practitioner L.T. Retyunskikh.

Naive philosophizing in childhood could be defined as philosophizing which does not go beyond the ordinary and useful knowledge, and is rooted in mythological consciousness of a child, but also contains reflective, existential and critical components. It begins from such conceptual affects as surprise, doubt, enduring existential situations, and continues through intellectual game as a form of communication. As communication is crucial for naive philosophizing, an optimal way of its fulfillment is a fluent conversation in a form of a dialogue, or polylogue, induced by spontaneous *questioning*.

What is a compelling reason to philosophize, and what is its foundation? Naive philosophizing is a reflection of a child on his/her life experience. It becomes his/her urgent need due to the high dynamics of inner and outer changes, which take place in his/her life. It keeps a live connection with a mythological consciousness of a child. A mythological explanation of cause-and-effect relationships spontaneously emerges from the child. Symbolism of mythical images forms a shield that protects his/her life world. It is an essential condition of his/her spiritual and intellectual comfort, a conversion of an emotional tension to a symbolic space of a game.

Reflective thinking draws a child into a state of a mental anxiety, makes him balance on the border between knowledge and ignorance. Therefore a child starts to argue before s/he truly understands and digests something to get rid of this anxiety. Understanding comes to him/her during reflection, and spontaneous associating and exciting fantasizing drive him/her.

A philosophizing child has a special attitude to the truth. Owing to such an intellectual flexibility a child resolves a lot of cognitive tasks and philosophical problems on the spot, impromptu, on the basis of random associations or analogies,

the creativity and originality of which can sometimes be very surprising.

It is also significant that a philosophizing child tries to grasp meaning of words and language. When s/he finds a controversy between sense and meaning of the word, s/he takes it very emotionally.

A process of naive philosophizing is actively stimulated by dialogue. Philosophical dialogue requires a child to change, transform him- or herself, overcome rigid schemes, establish new connections, improve a capacity of understanding the other, deliver his/her opinion, which meets the dynamics of his/her life world. In the philosophical dialogue a sphere of meaning of words of ordinary language, which serve as philosophical concepts, expands and differentiates.

The most widespread form of naive philosophizing of children is *questioning*. It is caused not so much by just satisfying curiosity, but more by personal interest of a child, who looks for guidelines in new, unusual reality. “Redundancy” of children’s questions indicates that questioning involves reasoning, which produces new question and is driven by the previous question.

Naive philosophizing is also a reflection on existential experience. Due to emerging attitudes that is shown by people around him/her, at a very young age s/he encounters a fear of nothing. In his/her perception nothing usually means death. Undergoing this fear brings a child to a surprise – the foundation of philosophy.

The paradox is that a cultural tradition ignores the importance of naive philosophizing in children’s development. However, the recognition of this importance allows to see better all the conventionality of the border between adult and child, to comprehend harmonic wholeness of a human being. The importance of the epistemology of naive philosophizing lies in an opportunity of direct observation and exploration of the specific conditions of intellectual discoveries, which each of us sometime went through. What s/he discovered, realized and expressed, would have a great impact on his/her adult life.

That is why the existing practice of philosophical propaedeutics should be reconsidered. As its core principle we must

consider *care of the self*. In accordance with it we can rightfully establish communication. It is impossible to implement it fully without a mentor. Mentor's right attitude is, in turn, determined by taking care of the care which his apprentice takes of him- or herself.

It is also important that philosophical propaedeutics integrates philosophy and rhetoric, since philosophizing could rightly be considered as argumentation in communication, the functions of which are knowledge and persuasion. Therefore, naive philosophizing as a form of learning could become one of the conditions of supportive educational environment.

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Related articles: questioning, care of the self, existential experience, philosophical practice in education.

PHILOSOPHICAL COMPANIONSHIP, a form of philosophical practice that represents a group of companions engaged in joint philosophical contemplation of various aspects of worldview problems by the method of phenomenological reduction. The main condition of philosophical companionship is a deep concentration on that “pure” experience that can be obtained from a meditative state that takes away all the automatisms of thought and speech of external everyday experience. Concentration on this experience is carried out by the method of slow reading of fragments of philosophical texts containing in themselves complete ideas on the contemplated problem. The statement of one’s own ideas is carried out in unison with the text reading, its main concepts are singled out, from which a common “map of ideas” is constructed by the efforts of the group, supplemented by concepts or images arising in the space of “pure” experience. The purpose of group work is to help collectively clarify philosophical ideas. The work of companions reminds the actions of musicians in a single orchestra.

Each session is based on the principle of equivalence, i.e. companions are equal. However, each session moves according to the scenario proposed by the facilitator (and companions can change each other as facilitators). The togetherness of the participants in the session is achieved by resonating: resonating with depth; resonating with a philosophical text; resonating with companions.

Resonation with the depth presupposes the work of the participant in the session from the depth of him- or herself. The philosophical companion in the process of entering the session and working in it must be cleansed of all superficial in his behavior, of automatic reactions in his answers and his questions. The philosophical companion must and can work from the depths of his/her own self, from that productive emptiness, which s/he can fill with new solutions and concepts co-created in co-creation with philosophers and with companions. In order to achieve the desired emptiness, each session is preceded by a so-called centering exercise, a philosophical meditation as a means of working with the boundaries of the self and an attempt to go beyond corporeality.

Resonation of participants with a philosophical text. In some of works and speeches R. Lahav pointed out that one of the shortcomings of philosophical practice is ignoring of the wealth of philosophical heritage by philosophical counselors and facilitators of philosophical cafes. In turn, philosophical companionship and philosophical meditations are based on classical works of world philosophy. An example of this is a selection of excerpts from works of philosophical classics, presented on the electronic platform for philosophical companionship Agora (<https://philopractice.org>). In working with these passages, companions focus not on an analytical understanding of what is written, but on the opportunity to take a new look at what is known. Within the framework of this goal, various procedures and exercises (“slow reading”, “philosophical repetition”) are used that introduce companions into a special state of deep understanding.

The key condition of the session of companionship is the resonance of companions with each other. In everyday communication a person is ruled by Baconian “idols”: “Idola theatri” force us to accept the position of authority without resentment; “Idola specus” form a prejudiced attitude towards the position and opinions of the Other, introducing us into a state of permanent criticism and controversy. On the contrary, companionship creates a space for listening and understanding the Other. This is not thoughtless compromise; it is an attempt to look at the famous concept from the position of the Other.

All three ways of resonating open up opportunities for deep understanding.

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***Related articles:** philosophical practice, togetherness, depth.*

PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELING, a type of individual or group work in a form of a series of meetings, which are organized and facilitated by a philosophical counselor. At first sight it could remind us one of the types of psychotherapy, in particular existential psychotherapy or Daseinanalysis. However, the philosophical essence of this therapy includes two aspects. First, its vision of the structure of personality is based on the ontological principles of existential philosophy, and not on the biomedical or psychometric characteristics, which are used in psychology. Second, the counseling procedure itself requires the usage of philosophical categories, through which the counselee realizes his/her worldview problems. As a source of this kind of work philosophical texts are often used. With the help of them a counselee should reflect in an appropriate way on the certain manifestations of his “philosophical disease” (A. Holzhey-Kunz).

Usually one of the certain states urges a future counselee to search for a dialogue with a philosophical counselor. For example, among these states are disappointments, some unexpected experience, encounters with other people, and stroke of bad luck, failures, and unpleasant or just boring circumstances. These problems are also connected with desperate sorrow and questions that are hard to solve and at the same time could not be put aside. According to the characteristic of Gerd Achenbach, those people are able to get on with their ordinary life, but live with a vague sense that they have never truly challenged themselves. For instance, they believe that their reality does not match their capacities. People visiting a philosophical counselor are those who want not just to live or to solve a certain problem, but want to become more aware about their own life, to probe its limits, all its numerous “where from”, “why” and “what for”. Quite often their concern is to reflect on certain circumstances, specific difficulties, and ambiguity of their life. To sum up, the goal of their visit to a philosophical counselor is to understand and to be understood.

What is the essence of the method of philosophical counseling? According to Gerd Achenbach, philosophy works more on methods themselves, than with the help of them. By con-

trast, the authority of methods is typical for science and not for philosophy. Philosophical reflection is not walking a well-trodden path. It is an eternal search of a proper path. It does not deal with an improvement of thinking techniques, but clarifies them. Therefore, its goal is not to offer a counselee a philosophically calibrated path, but to help him/her make his/her own progress.

Philosophy is not merely an instrument, and is not a cure for solving one's problems using Plato, Hegel and somebody else. Also it is not a recipe. According to Achenbach, a philosophical counselor is responsible not for something s/he is ready to manage. His expertise is required only in relation to a certain problem. Then s/he becomes responsible for that particular case.

Philosophical counseling usually includes phenomenological and eidetic reduction. A human being has a capacity to cease his/her focused and judging attitude, and turn his/her attention to the capacity itself. S/he could learn to be disciplined about his/her intentionality and by means of phenomenological reduction to question his/her automatic beliefs that are usually taken for granted. Moreover, every person has his/her own perspective. Using the concept of "phenomenon" allows us to avoid a common opposition of the essence and existence. It means that it is not necessary to find organic reasons of psychological manifestations as it is being done in clinical psychiatry, or the dynamics of instincts and affections as their derivatives like in psychoanalysis. Furthermore, it becomes possible to describe the phenomena of the soul themselves and to find correlations only between them and not with the other things. Therefore, a philosophical counselor is interested in human being as a whole, as a real person, and not just in his manifestations.

To enter the personal world means to find a special a priori "existential structure" of the person (L. Binswanger). By the use of the phenomenological method with its absence of preliminary framework in understanding a person, different phenomena are described precisely as the person perceives them. Transcendental structure of the existential a priori is a key to understanding the world of every person, since

it is like a matrix of meanings, where every meaning has its own place. Moreover, it is also a way (“care”), by which a transcendental structure reveals itself in a certain person’s attitude to his/her routine actions and things. Consequently, the general pattern is the following: 1) penetrating homogeneity of a symbolic contour of transcendental structure is expressed in a continuous reproduction of an experience (“care”); 2) encounter with facticity (“thrownness”, “boundary situations”); 3) regression to the past experience through a conflict or meaninglessness (neurosis, psychosis); 4) coming back to a past experience through finding meaning (“light of being”, *self-transformation*).

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Related articles: *existential experience, philosophical practice, self-transformation.*

PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE, a branch in the modern philosophy, using philosophizing as a means for posing, analyzing and solving worldview problems that are determined on the basis of spiritual needs of a client. The task of a philosophical practitioner is to raise the client's private problems to the philosophical level, to carry out with him/her a philosophical reflection on these problems with the goal of widening the boundaries of the client's worldview. As a rule, fragments of philosophical works are used for philosophical reflection. In contrast to psychotherapy in the analysis of the client's personality, philosophical practice relies on the ontological principles of existential philosophy, rather than on biomedical or psychometric characteristics. In addition, the consultation procedure itself involves working with philosophical categories, in the light of which the comprehension of the client's worldview problems takes place. Unlike academic philosophy, philosophical practice deals not with the study of philosophical theories or systems, but with the practical application of certain philosophizing procedures, spiritual exercises (P. Hadot), emphasizing the self-knowledge of the client, contributing to the expansion of the boundaries (transformation) of his/her worldview.

Philosophical practice was institutionalized in 1982, when the first International Association of Philosophical Practice (IGPP) (Germany, Austria and Switzerland) was established under the leadership of G.B. Achenbach. Currently, associations of philosophical practitioners exist in almost all regions of the world.

The most widespread forms of philosophical practice are: *philosophical counseling*, *Socratic dialogue*, *philosophical companionship*.

Philosophical counseling is a form of individual or group work, which is a series of meetings organized and directed by a philosophical counselor. As a rule, philosophical texts serve as material for the work helping the client to carry out the necessary reflection on specific and particular manifestations of his/her "philosophical illness" (A. Holzhey-Kunz). The phrase "philosophical disease" is not a metaphor; it is a real state of human existence in the world of everyday life

characterized by acute sensitivity to the “Call of the Being” (M. Heidegger), coupled with the fear of death, social isolation, freedom and meaninglessness of life. Thus, “philosophical illness” is treated by philosophical methods, which are akin to the ancient practices of *care of the self*, “constructing the self” in the face of faceless structures of everyday life.

Socratic dialogue. The basis of this form of philosophical practice is the principles of working with internal and external speech. Since a person’s external speech, by virtue of its automaticity, does not always correspond to what s/he thinks about, firstly, one or another statement cannot express any thought at all, but completely relate to the manifestations of the emotional state; secondly, a person often resorts to an external speech in order to disguise, conceal real thoughts about him- or herself, others or about the situation, unwittingly deceiving him- or herself and others. Therefore, the task of the philosophical practitioner is to “reconcile” the interlocutor with his own speech (O. Brenifier), i.e. to open for him/her a reflexive plan of analyzing his/her speech utterances to discover those hidden thoughts that mask outward speech. This philosophical practice is effective both for clarifying the meaning of concepts used in external speech, and for clarifying the meaning of problems arising in certain situations that interfere with a person in solution of certain life problems. During the unmasking of emotions, speech and actions automatisms, a person gets the opportunity to understand the *perimeter* (R. Lahav) of his “Platonic cave”, as well as the possibility of emerging from it to a new level of thinking and worldview in general.

Philosophical companionship. This form of philosophical practice is a group of companions engaged in joint philosophical *contemplation* of various aspects of worldview problems by the method of phenomenological reduction. The main condition of philosophical companionship is a deep concentration on that “pure” experience that can be obtained from a meditative state that puts all the automatisms of thought and speech of external everyday experience “beyond the brackets”. Concentration on this experience is carried out by the method of slow reading of fragments of philosophical text containing

complete ideas on the contemplated problem. The statement of one's own ideas is carried out in unison with the text read, its main concepts are singled out, from which a common "map of ideas" is constructed by the efforts of the group, supplemented by concepts or images arising in the space of "pure" experience of each member. The purpose of group work is to help collectively clarify philosophical ideas through joint efforts. The work of members of the group reminds the actions of musicians in a single orchestra.

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PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE IN EDUCATION, a concept the emergence of which is associated with dissatisfaction with the traditional system of education and the search for new strategies that have been growing since the mid-20th century, as with the strengthening of democracies school systems did not become places of cultural development and training for active citizenship, but submitted to another power: economic and technocratic (M. Lipman). These processes are caused by civilizational discontinuities: between the orientation of education on the assimilation of as much knowledge as possible and the increase in the information that appears; between “supporting” education intended for relative stability of the situation, and the rapidly changing and increasingly complex social world; between setting for professionalization, narrow specialization and the need for a holistic systemic vision of the world; finally, between the cultural and national specifics of education and the need for modern technological development in uniform educational standards. Therefore, the solution of many global problems at the level of UNESCO, the Club of Rome, and various international organizations is directly connected to elimination of civilizational gaps and preparation of “a new type of a subject of education.”

In search of solutions to this problem, the key concepts in innovative education projects (both school and university) have become the notion of “thinking” and the associated series of such concepts as “critical thinking”, “reflexive education”, “learning as research”, “interactive learning”, “Socratic method of teaching”, etc. The emphasis in them was shifted from mastering the amount of knowledge by the students to the quality of their ability to reason and gaining the skills of independent thinking. Their common goal is to give the intellect a greater plasticity in resolving unusual problem situations the number of which increases in the 21st century, and also initiate a combination of intellectual and moral literacy and responsibility.

In this regard, the most convincing is M. Lipman’s theoretical, pedagogical and philosophical concept “learning to reduce violence”. This position is based on two prerequisites: first, belief in a person’s reasonableness; second, beliefs that

education, if it becomes reflexive-research (which it is not as of yet), will be able to significantly reduce unreason, violence and develop peaceful attitude.

Another important aspect of the rethinking of modern education is related to the fact that at the beginning of the 21st century a transition to a media reality takes place, in which people become only fragments of this reality, impersonal subjects of communication (V. Savchuk). The new reality can now be described as “everything is media”, “media inside us” and “media perceives us”, so that “current children – future adults” are in the “blind zone” of the all-absorbing thinking virtualization (J. Baudrillard).

Strictly speaking, under the conditions of the current changes, not only new foundations of education are laid, but also new foundations of philosophy itself, and ways of philosophizing, such as, in particular, *philosophical practice*. Having originated as an intellectual movement from the situation and the idea of dissatisfaction with modern higher education and as a result of distancing from it, philosophical practice now has a resource that can help modern education, and which can be proposed as a “paradigm of educational reform” (M. Lipman).

One of the most important ideas that philosophical practice brings to education is the deep and rich ancient idea of *care of the self*. The practice of *caring of the self* can be fulfilled both in academic and in non-academic formats. It is in modern education, in conditions of mediareality, that *care of the self* acquires special significance, since it “implies the abandonment of some of the more profitable activities, for example, waging war or performing public duties that are not at all connected with seeking and gaining integrity” (M. Foucault).

Fulfillment of such *care of the self* in conditions of accelerated, impersonal and standardized formats of modern life, culture and education exacerbates the problem of the authenticity of teacher (professor) of philosophy. It is obvious that only individual self-reflection, only one’s own practice of *care of the self*, and, as its result, self-transformation of the philosopher as teacher can become the basis for effective *care of the self*. Due to such guideline, education can

be transformed from informative into transcending, which is extremely demanded in the context of media education surplus. “Non-verbalized philosophical procedures”, background and performative methods offered by philosophical practitioners are turning to be effective.

Philosophical practice in education in all its diversity (philosophical counseling, Socratic dialogue, philosophical cafes, philosophy for children) is based on observing the following principles: *thematic democracy* implying strong anti-segregation, anti-elite implication, which challenges all hierarchical, elitist and expert in academic philosophy; *dialogue democracy*, which takes participants beyond the bounds of a strictly defined expert culture, and offers broad communication; *a space of opportunity* aimed at helping, inspiring, informing, lighting, enriching, deepening and enlightening people (E. Saarinen, S. Slotte).

In general, the current state of affairs in higher education already clearly indicates that the establishment of a competent, competitive and successful person does not solve so many problems of modern human. Many researchers believe that the need for anthropocosmic (holistic, ecological) paradigm, humanization and humanitarization of education in the context of a new socio-political and economic reality, connected with the conditions of globalization, is now drawn to a head. Therefore, at the center of such education is a person who is not only knowledgeable, but also understands, is capable of self-projecting and self-education. To fulfill this goal, the potential of *philosophical practice* as a *care of the self* is the most adequate to the goals that a new education sets for itself.

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Related articles: *philosophical practice, care of the self, philosophy for children.*

PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY, an orientation for the benefit and result (philosophical pragmatics) possible within any philosophizing, and justified by the means of this philosophizing. In the limit, this is the discourse of the good, and the antinomic couple to the definition of philosophy through *questioning*, *acquired ignorance*. Such an understanding of practical philosophy is characteristic of many philosophers. The question of whether the search for concrete benefits is compatible with the spirit of philosophy is one of the most acute dilemmas of philosophical practice. At a certain stage in the development of practical philosophy, the problematic of “active intervention in the universe” in a broad social context was posed on the agenda, beginning with the proclamation of the transition from contemplation to the transformation of reality in Marxism, and ending with modern concepts of sustainable development and Transhumanism.

In the historical and philosophical context practical philosophy is represented by the majority of ancient philosophers, M. Montaigne, F. Bacon, B. Pascal, A. Schopenhauer, F. Nietzsche, W. James, and others. In “Lectures on the History of Philosophy” H. Hegel used the term “practical philosophy” in the categorical sense.

Practical philosophy in the narrow sense is an applied philosophy. Thus, practical philosophy means the penetration of philosophical knowledge and methods into one or other field of culture (science, art, religion) or activities (politics, education, medicine, law, technology) in the form of specific solutions or products. Therefore, practical philosophy draws its resources from philosophical practice, but differs from philosophical practices in a much more definite orientation toward the tasks and values of the activity itself.

Surely, these values coexist and interact in real phenomena. Thus, the integrated philosophy project of education “Paidéia” is an example of practical philosophy as its ideological platform is substantiated in the manifesto “The Paideia Proposal” and works of other participants of this community, and the activities of the movement “Paideia Group” are carried out in the field of education. The practical basis of this activity, like the concept of paideia itself, goes back to the spir-

itual exercises of antiquity, which were originally practices of reflection and ethical behavior, and then the corpus of their content was deepened by ancient philosophical schools and passed into the present. These varied practices were based on: study (zetesis), research (skepsis), reading (anagnosis), listening (akroasis), attention (prosoche), self-mastery (enkrateia), indifference to utilitarian things, meditation (meletai), passion therapy, fostering the desire for good things and fulfillment of duty. If the Paideia Project and the movement of practical philosophers (which was born in 1982) unite, it will significantly expand the scope of philosophical practice.

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Related articles: *questioning, philosophical practice, spiritual exercises.*

Authenticity Духовные упражнения Acquired Ignorance Философская практика
Philosophy for Children Степенью Глубины Азвеммурночь Philosophical Practice in
Однечие Education Любовь Care for yourself Озвеммурночь Perimeter Философия - герман
Philosophical Counselling Бонпарамме Communion Философская практика и озапозабану
Practical Philosophy «Любимая философия» Socratic dialogue Тракмурека философия
Existential Experience Философские напмнепербо Retreat Егунемме Spiritual Exercises
Трпософемменое нежамме Self-transformation Канонпарефопмауна Contemplation Забона
о себе Unity Перпум Questioning Озпамурекуи гуанор Deep Philosophy Group Фило
софские концептмупобамме Philosophical Practice Извеммугуанмнбннннн Philosophical
Companionship Authenticity Духовные упражнения Acquired Ignorance Философская
практика Philosophy for Children Степенью Глубины Азвеммурночь Philosophical Practi
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Questioning

QUESTIONING, a form of thinking expressing interest, a desire to obtain necessary information (in a narrow sense); a philosophical attitude that determines connection with the world, surprise, reunion with existence and being (in a broad sense). Early Greek philosophers paid much attention to the art of formulating questions. Diogenes Laertius mentioned cases in which Greeks had addressed the Oracle of Delphi with the question on the wisest Hellene. It is known that Heraclitus, talking about a disease, applied an analogy in the question and completely baffled the doctors. According to Plutarch, Heraclitus honored the famous saying “Know thyself.” The question of being does not matter without the question a person must address himself: “...seek within [question] thyself.”

In the Plato’s dialogues, questioning is inseparably linked to the name of Socrates and “maieutics”. In essence, questioning constitutes a dialogue and prompts to focus on a particular problem. A question can set the trajectory of moving towards the essence, to the definition of togetherness in the plurality (for example, “Meno”). Socrates’ interlocutors confessed that they were not used to asking questions or answering them. Critics of “maieutics” argued that Socratic issues diverted from the topic of the conversation and did not contribute to solving the emerging difficulties. Plato’s questioning is inseparably linked to rising to the intelligible. Socrates likened consideration of common issues with ascension. In fact, a questioning person often already has an assimilated answer (“doxa”) and thus devalues the question and the very procedure of questioning.

According to Protagoras, a person should ask questions regardless of whether they arise as a result of a certain vital necessity or not. Questioning for the sake of questioning removes psychological tension caused by fear of being misunderstood, or of saying stupid things, etc. On the other hand, a specially constructed question can lead the questioner outside the established understanding.

Philosophical ideas of Antiquity influenced the further development of philosophy and showed the importance of questioning for the existence of a person in the world.

In *philosophical practice*, questioning is the most important component of both “therapeutic” and “developing” approaches. It organically fits into *philosophical counseling*, *philosophical companionship*, *philosophy for children*, and other directions. In the practice of O. Brenifier, questioning has both worldview and applied (instrumental) significance. The seminar “The Art of Questioning” organized by the philosophical practitioner is aimed at forming the skills of argumentation, the ability to consistently speak, interpret the words of an interlocutor, analyze and critically evaluate information. The worldview significance of questioning is determined in the dialogue and acts of reflection. O. Brenifier recommends replacing many statements with questions. In this case, questioning is not aimed at obtaining new information, but encourages a person to think, analyze and introspect. In the philosophical practice of O. Brenifier, questioning is opposed to statements, to the prevailing ideas about the world.

Humans communicate with themselves and the world, giving individual answers to life’s questions about the nature of love, the meaning of life, the value of work, etc. *Philosophical practice* is a fertile ground for the formulation of these questions. In the discourse of R. Lahav, philosophical questioning is integrated into the context of *philosophical companionship* and has a fundamentally different meaning than questioning in psychotherapy. In psychotherapy, questions help a therapist to reveal the hidden sides of a client’s personality, to exteriorize his/her fears, desires, hidden motives, etc. The concentration of culture on psychological life of an individual R. Lahav called “psychological imperialism.” If individual life problems come to the fore, and a person does not have the opportunity to independently resolve them, then the therapist turns out to be the correct addressee of the person’s request. In *philosophical companionship*, questioning serves as a consonance with the experience of the Other, and is also important in interacting with the text. The question addressed to the text formally remains unanswered, since the questioner as the author of his own life project must ultimately answer it. This does not mean that *philosophical practice* leaves the questioner one-on-one with a meaningful question. But at the same time it does not

give any ready answers, does not offer scenarios for solving the problem and does not give recommendations.

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Retreat

RETREAT, deep spiritual work of a person with himself; it is immersion inward for the sake of resolving something external; it is the awakening of questions within the self and implementation of the practice of questioning.

In the philosophical field retreat practice appeared recently. However, it has its roots, like many of the things that originated and exist in philosophy. First of all, one should note asceticism of retreat activity. Some philosophical schools of antiquity were formed and developed in noisy urban conglomerates, attracting and surprising the crowd; others distanced themselves from the city noise and people producing this noise and being in it. A vivid example of this is the Pythagorean school, which became famous for spiritual exercises (adopted from orphics) and appearance (long togas), which in principle distinguished them from other townspeople.

A facilitator plays a special role in retreat and in questioning. S/he is not a spiritual leader and not a guru, but one who sets forth the basic procedures of philosophical communication, philosophical companionship. This can be compared allegorically to diving to the seabed or moving deep down into a cave. Everyone who dives or moves down, does it in his/her own way, his/her own insights leading to self-transformation; the facilitator, however, illuminates this path, possible and narrow passages. The facilitator is not a leader, s/he is a conductor; the retreat participant through questioning independently paves his/her own way.

Despite the fact that philosophical practice as an independent movement has existed for more than forty years, the practice of retreats appeared in it recently. Retreat cannot be called a widespread form of philosophical practice, in popularity it loses to individual and group forms of work, including philosophical counseling or philosophical cafes.

At the same time, retreat is a bright line of philosophical practice, fundamentally different from academic philosophy. In the retreat form of work there is no transfer of knowledge or exchange of opinions, but immersion into the inner depth, accompanied by a philosopher-conductor.

It should be noted that some well-known practitioners rarely resort to retreat work. For example, G.B. Achenbach

(Germany) prefers the environment of a comfortable cabinet, and L. Amir (Israel) – academic audiences. However, some leaders of the philosophical practice movement, such as R. Lahav (the USA) and O. Brenifier (France), on the contrary, try to distance themselves from academic audiences and urban noise. They organize philosophical retreats in picturesque places far from big urban centers. O. Brenifier has united representatives of various countries wishing to become philosophical counselors in the village La Chapelle Saint Andr , near Vezelay (France); R. Lahav has been conducting annual retreats in Italy for several years. Some of the retreats on philosophical practice are organized for a wide audience, others are of a “closed type” for a certain target audience (for example, the retreat of Deep Philosophy Group). Despite the different composition of audiences and formats of holding, retreats on philosophical practice are aimed at self-transformation of participants, both external (professional) and internal (existential).

Some well-known practitioners (for example, L. Marinoff) participate in retreats not as facilitators, but as “ordinary” participants (for example, a retreat initiated by Tibetan monks – Zen Buddhists). L. Marinoff believes that at the heart of conceptual cognition, the formation of the world outlook and attitude of the world is the interpretation of dharma. Not all Buddhists are ready to embark on this path. Such spiritual practice promotes self-transformation. L. Marinoff is not the only philosopher who has acquired such a deep “synthetic” spiritual experience, but he is one of the few who actively share their experience with a wide audience. L. Marinoff’s popular books have been translated into many languages of the world.

Retreat activity in Russia is connected, first of all, to the so-called alternative forms of spiritual and physical practices (for example, retreats of meditation or yoga). However, the practice of philosophical retreats is also penetrating into Russia. For example, in 2012, L. Retyunskikh on the basis of the interregional children’s public organization “Philosophy for Children” (Moscow) organized the first philosophical summer camp in Russia. Since 2010, A. Makarov and his followers

from the lecture hall “Intellectual Environments” (Volgograd) have been holding a summer school in the Crimea. Finally, in 2017, the Department of Philosophy from South Ural State University (National Research University) (Chelyabinsk) gathered philosophers from different cities of Russia and abroad to the first Russian seminar on philosophical practice; in November the first Russian retreat on philosophical companionship and deep philosophy, facilitated by R. Lahav (the USA), was conducted by the same team.

In general, Russian and foreign experience indicates to an increase in interest in philosophical retreats as a form of philosophical practice.

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SELF-TRANSFORMATION, a condition which a counselee could achieve as a result of the process of *philosophical counseling* related to realizing and overcoming limits of his narrow and restricted worldview (*perimeter*). This approach to philosophical counseling was established by Ran Lahav and is used by him in group and individual work. It is based on a historical tradition of Western philosophy, which was created by “transformational thinkers”. This approach derives from a statement that our everyday life is usually limited to rigid and superficial attitude to ourselves and to the world around us. This is due to the fact that everyday relationships are based on limited understanding of life, which forms what Lahav calls a perimetral worldview. In the process of philosophical counseling a counselor should help people to overcome their narrow worldview or, in the Plato’s language, help them realize that they are imprisoned in a cave, so that they could step out from it to a fuller reality.

Lahav believes that Plato’s allegory refers to all of us, because it reminds us about our inner yearning to live a fuller and richer life. Our everyday world is usually limited to a comfortable and routine “cave”, in which we do our usual things. Only in special moments of self-awareness we suddenly understand, how the cavern roof is pressing on us, and desire to get out from our voluntary prison to a fuller and meaningful life.

According to Lahav, Plato is not the only philosopher who wrote about this longing. We can see it in different works of great thinkers throughout the history of Western philosophy. But we can hear this yearning for *authenticity* also in ordinary and casual chats of people on the street. However, these talks do not always find support. It is very difficult to abandon our cozy cave and change our habitual way of life. This yearning speaks many languages. Nevertheless, despite these differences, it comes from one and the same source – the call to go beyond ourselves. Literature can express this longing in a more poetic and beautiful way, but philosophy is able to express it more clearly.

Lahav calls all philosophers, who focus on this problem, transformational thinkers. Among these he includes Marcus Aurelius, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri Bergson, Martin Buber, Erich Fromm, Krishnamurti, and many others. First, these thinkers tell us that our ordinary life remains on the superficial level, which does not include all the fullness of human existence. Second, according to these thinkers, an alternative way of human being exists. Third, they reflect that it is not easy to proceed from our superficial state to a state of fullness. “Our natural tendencies do not automatically lead us to it, and overcoming these tendencies is a great challenge,” says Lahav. “It is not enough to do a workshop twice a week, to read a new theory about life, to do an exercise from six to six-thirty in the morning. Much more is needed: a total transformation that would color every aspect of our being — our emotions, behaviors, thoughts and attitudes, from the smallest moments to the largest deeds.”¹

It is clear, that these “transformational thinkers” formulate different ideas, understand human condition in a different way, focus on different aspects of human existence, and even come to opposite conclusions. However, despite this diversity, they express the same three themes noted above. Moreover, for these transformational approaches Lahav finds two more common themes. First, these approaches describe our superficial state, governed by rigid patterns, in particular, patterns of behavior, thoughts, wishes and emotions. These patterns are the result of powerful psychological and social mechanisms, which act inside us leading to limited way of being, separating us from the fullness of authentic being. Second, all transformational approaches presume that a state of fullness lies beyond the frameworks of these patterns and could not be connected to any fixed structure. They compare that state with liberation, using such terms as freedom, spontaneity, flow, creativity, uniqueness, authenticity, individuality, openness and expansiveness.

¹ R. Lahav (2016). *Stepping out of Plato’s Cave: Philosophical Counseling, Philosophical Practice and Self-Transformation*, 2 ed., Hardwick, Vermont: Loyev Books, p. 6.

It is interesting, that this release is described only indirectly, without precise analysis. Poetic metaphors, or an appeal to personal feelings are often used. That is not surprising, because patterns and mechanisms have fixed structure and could be analyzed directly and precisely. On the contrary, what goes beyond patterns and fixed structures, contradicts the analysis.

“We may conclude, therefore, that various transformational thinkers were inspired by the same fundamental understanding of human existence,” says Lahav. “It is not by mere coincidence that their insights are so similar to each other. The vision they all express is based on a common human experience, on a major theme that runs through the fabric of human life. We might say that it is one of the basic dimensions of being human.”¹ It appears that transformational thinkers try not just to describe, but to prescribe; not just to depict what people are, but also what they should be. But that does not mean simple expression of personal preferences. These thinkers give voice to the call that always existed, that they did not construct it, but only expressed and articulated it in their own way.

Sergey Borisov

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Related articles: *perimeter, philosophical counseling, existential experience.*

SOCRATIC DIALOGUE, a modern interactive method of *philosophical practice* expressed in the clash of opinions about a strictly defined subject and the gradual resolution of conflict of judgments. This method was developed and applied in the practice of educating children and adults by the German philosopher L. Nelson at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1922 he founded the Philosophical and Political Academy, where the Socratic dialogue was regarded as the main principle of education. According to L. Nelson, Socrates was not a “teacher” (in the usual sense of the word), who wants to “present” something to students. L. Nelson in his Academy adopts the very setting of the Socratic method, according to which it is required to exclude dogmatism in judgments and, in general, to refuse any categorical judgment. With the help of this method, everyone becomes “knowledgeable” (*sachverständig*) in the fundamental questions of ethics, understanding life and being, pedagogy and politics; acquaintance with these basic life issues expands the areas of knowledge of language and logic. L. Nelson wanted to strengthen “trust in reason” both in education of children and adults, in the light of which he at one time developed the school reform in Hessen. There Socratic dialogue took a leading place in the teaching of school disciplines. Socratic dialogue, says L. Nelson, is a method of philosophical studies — “a method of uncompromising struggle for honesty of thinking and language”, a method of efforts in achieving clarity of concepts; a critical check of judgments. Moreover, this method is not content with evasive relativism.

Socratic dialogue is an effective means of educating an individual and one of the mechanisms of socialization. Fulfillment of the function of socialization is provided by specific requirements for organization of Socratic dialogue: to be able to listen to the interlocutor, to be interested in the opponent’s thinking, to participate in the conversation leaving the role of an outside observer, to try to meet the other half-way, not to strive for rivalry as such, but to be able to reach a compromise, etc. In addition to the function of socialization, Socratic dialogue in *philosophical practice* is aimed at developing abilities for formal-logical thinking and creativity of thinking. In

other words, a participant in Socratic dialogue needs to think in abstract concepts that do not require any practical actions or visual-figurative representation.

The so-called “obstetrical aid” function of Socratic dialog according to Plato is connected to the transcendence plan (“eidos”). Socrates, as a conceptual character in the Platonic dialogues, argued that enlightenment is likened to giving eyesight to blind eyes. Such an interpretation of enlightenment, in Plato’s opinion, is fundamentally incorrect, since enlightenment is achieved through considerable efforts and, in particular, efforts in self-knowledge. Socratic dialogue as a method of *philosophical practice*, unlike Plato’s dialogues, does not refer to the plan of transcendence, it works with thinking. The direction of the modern interpretation of Socrates’ method of searching for truth is also questionable. At the heart of the Socratic dialogue, represented by Plato and Xenophon, lay the notion of a dialogical method of reaching the truth, of the struggle of thesis and of antithesis, and the gradual withdrawal of synthesis.

In Socratic dialogue in *philosophical practice* some of Socrates’ contractive dialogues have been preserved: the use of syncrease (counteraction of opinions) and anacrisis (“inducing the interlocutor to articulate his thoughts”), irony, “naive” *questioning*, demand for clarity of utterance. The peculiarity of the application of the contractile dialogue in *philosophical practice*, in particular, is expressed in the fact that it is used in *philosophical counseling* (individual and group ones), and serves as “know thyself”. The consultant plays the role of a “naive” interlocutor asking various questions and forcing the client through clarifying the meaning of words to clarify his/her own thoughts.

In *philosophical counseling*, Socratic dialogue deals with “elements” for the purpose of studying and representing each of them. A vivid example of the representation of some “elements” of Socratic dialogue are the training courses and consulting activities of O. Brenifier. O. Brenifier’s dialogue is based on several principles. The client is required to talk, express his/her thoughts and not hide behind the “screen” of rhetorical figures, behind the “wall” of quotes and references

to authorities. In the abundance of citations and references, it is difficult to see what is personal, what is especially important to a person and what expresses his/her own values. In *philosophical practice* O. Brenifier, A. Makarov and other philosophers demand a laconic expression of thought. This is due to several reasons: first, the brevity of speech is the key to clarity of meaning, and secondly, pithiness is closely connected to “purity” of utterance and freedom from rhetoric.

According to the members of *Society for Philosophy in Practice*, Socratic dialogue is the result of a joint effort aimed at finding answers to conceptual questions, such as: What is freedom? What are the boundaries of tolerance? The process begins with a systematic reflection on a specific example taken from the experience of one of the participants (as decided by the group). Socratic dialogue is a method the popularity of which is growing today in working with business audiences and organizations, especially in Germany and the Netherlands. The spheres of its application are education, medicine, therapy, etc.

Socratic dialogue can be seen as an effective remedy against monologism (J. Kristeva), the authority of “meta-stories” (J.-F. Lyotard), the disclosure of living thought, and the practice of philosophizing, replacing the system of philosophy (the concept of rhizome by G. Deleuze and the opposition to the “tree system”).

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Related articles: *questioning, philosophical counseling, philosophical practice.*

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES, a personal practice, which is intended at development of the individual with the help of his/her will, contributing to his/her *self-transformation*. In the history of philosophy the expression “spiritual exercises” is related either to a Christian tradition of philosophy (i.e. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius), or to the Ancient Greek and Roman philosophical tradition (i.e. spiritual exercises of Empedocles as a technique to remember your past lives or stoic practice to prepare yourself for life challenges). According to the stoics, to endure every stroke of bad luck, sickness, poverty, or exile, we should prepare our mind to the fact that this can happen. We endure better what we expect. Actually, this exercise was known before the stoics. It was preached by Anaxagoras, and also by Euripides in “Theseus”. For example, when Anaxagoras heard his son was dead, he said: “I knew that I begat him mortal.” Another example is Plato’s famous expression in “Phaedo”: “Philosophy is the art of dying”, that is separating yourself from the body and from the sensory and egotistical point of view it imposes on you. The Epicureans also spoke about spiritual exercises: for instance, they mentioned ethical self-estimation, recognizing errors, meditations and limitation of needs.

According to P. Hadot, originally spiritual exercises were not an addition to philosophical theory and philosophical speech. They are not merely practices which only complement a theory and an abstract speech. In fact, philosophy itself is an exercise, as an educational speech and also an inner speech, which guide our action. Spiritual exercises take place primarily through an inner speech and inside it. There is a common expression, a special ancient Greek term used by Epictetus: *epilegein*, which means adding inner speech to a certain situation. For example, we tell ourselves the following maxima: “Do not wish things that are happening not to be happening, but you need to wish things that are happening to be happening the way they happen.” These internal formulas change our mind, change our attitude.

There are spiritual exercises also in outer speech, in educational speech. Philosophical speech is often presented as an answer to some question, like in school method. But there is

no immediate answer to the question; there are a lot of twists and ways around instead, to eventually get the answer (i.e. in Plato's dialogues). These repetitions are intended first of all to teach how to do reasoning, but also to make the subject of reasoning completely familiar and natural (Aristotle). Finally it is about full inner learning of knowledge. The purpose of these exercises becomes clear in relation to a *Socratic dialogue*, where questions or answers are intended to cause doubt and confusion for the individual. This type of dialogue is an austerity: we have to oblige ourselves to the laws of discussion. That means, first, to let the other express himself/herself. And second, if there is an evidence, to acknowledge it, and that is not usually too easy when we discover that we are wrong. Third, to acknowledge what Greeks called "logos" – objective and reasonable speech – beyond the interlocutors. Therefore, the ultimate goal of Socratic speech is to teach how to live a spiritual life. This is about *self-transformation*, about overcoming inferior reasoning, and especially sensual evidence that is knowledge, based only on sensual experience. This is also about rising to a *contemplation* of pure thought and love of truth. In that sense theoretical philosophical speech is valuable as a spiritual exercise, because a listener at the same time makes a spiritual effort of *self-transformation*, in order to get away from usual mental passions and bodily reactions.

Sergey Borisov

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Togetherness

TOGETHERNESS, one of the central concepts of *philosophical practice*, fulfilled within the framework of *philosophical companionship*. Togetherness is a very multi-valued concept. The concretization of the meaning of the concept of “*unification*” occurs depending on the context of its use. But you can also build on some kind of invariant. In this case, by togetherness we mean a close relationship based on togetherness of views, goals, interests; coherence and solidarity. A close connection can arise only as a result of joint activity of people, the necessary and prevailing side of which is *communication* as a “subject-subject” attitude, the relationship of “I” and “You”, from which “We” is born.

Care of the self does not at all imply a suffocating immersion in the depths of one’s own self. But “I” that is born in communication, requiring the filling of another “I”, has nothing to do with the forms of collectivism, in which the personality is forced to abandon the self. In “We”, in *togetherness*, the mystery of the existence of my “I” is fulfilled outside of myself. There is a merging of the external and internal, “interpenetration when separate”. Therefore, togetherness in the process of *philosophical companionship* is trans-rational and cannot be fully expressed by logical means. It is a mystery, which includes elements of art and faith, for which a name has not yet been invented.

Togetherness in *philosophical companionship* is a necessary condition, a process and result of a specially organized *communication* procedure. The concept of togetherness is objectified in organic connection with the fulfillment of such concepts as *depth*, inner dimension, inner relation, “speaking and listening from” (*contemplation*), giving voice and resonating. In their totality, these concepts create the structure, methodology and drama of *philosophical companionship*.

A successful companionship requires the achievement of togetherness on two levels. First of all, this is *togetherness with the text*. At this level, there is a “meeting” with the text that affects our inner depth; meeting with the author’s deep idea and his/her experiences. These ideas are consonant with our thoughts and feelings, touching something that is hidden

within us. It is a meeting with the author of the philosophical text that we read. In this togetherness our co-creativity with the author takes place. It is characteristic that in this *communication* we come in togetherness with our contemplative companions and, just as it happens in collective prayer, we are able to comprehend such depths that were inaccessible to us in our daily, relatively solitary life.

Cultivating *inner depth*, each member of the group refuses to divide the thoughts into my own and the others'. In that case dominance is preferred on the Other, outrunning the assertion of the dignity of the idea of the Other that has not been expressed yet. Goodwill must dominate over competence. It is an important condition of togetherness. As a tuning fork a member of the group should resonate with the topic of the conversation without deviating into passing ideas that entice him/her, resonate with others, with the text. Finally, in order to successfully master the procedures of *philosophical companionship*, for togetherness to be real and not imaginary, one must master a simple and at the same time complex art of listening.

The main goal of any form of *philosophical practice*, *philosophical companionship* and *togetherness*, in the final analysis, is *self-transformation*. The experience of togetherness in the "laboratory conditions" can and should go beyond these boundaries, and will become a habitual style of behavior. This will help improve the culture of communication in society as a whole.

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Welcome to Russian Association of Philosophical Practitioners

Russian Association of Philosophical Practitioners was founded in April 2018 by a group of like-minded people, who are interested in developing philosophical practice in Russia.

The aim of the Association is to share experience, get acquainted with new methods and approaches in the field of philosophical practice, enrich the members of the association with theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

The activities of the Association are not limited to the territory of Russia. We are actively interested in strengthening existing and establishing new international relations with philosophical practitioners around the world.

The Association is guided in its activities by free democratic principles. The doors to it are always open to everyone who shares the ideas of philosophical practice and views philosophy as an effective means of taking care of the self and improving the quality of the life.

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