



Welcome to *PiP Talk*

This is your new SPP newsletter. It's informal, contains briefer items than *Practical Philosophy* and aims to keep you in touch with events and news in the world of philosophy in practice.

This issue shows what you can expect. But it's very much your newsletter so feel free to contribute. We welcome news of your own activities putting philosophy into practice and news of future events of interest to your fellow SPP members. I edit *PiP Talk* and invite you to think of it as your moderated noticeboard. Suggestions welcome!

Nigel Laurie

Nigel.laurie@managementphilosophers.com

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CPP New 1 Day Events Series

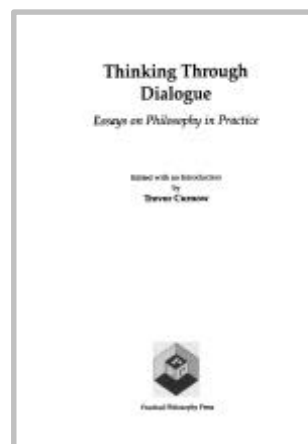
The Centre for Philosophy in Practice is planning a series of 1 day events in London in association with a group of partners.

Discussions with SAPERE are under way for the first, provisionally scheduled for **Saturday 18 May**.

The focus will be using the Community of Enquiry approach to teach Thinking Skills. Besides presentations from SAPERE, Susan Wright will talk about her work with Gifted and Talented youngsters in Islington and work in Camden integrating Thinking Skills and the Community of Enquiry approach into a maths enhancement summer school.

Topics for later events include: dialogue as an educational process; using Socratic Dialogue to improve professional practice; and resolving ethical dilemmas at work
Details from Susanewri@aol.com

Thinking Through Dialogue Reprinted and Reviewed



Thinking Through Dialogue the Society's first book publication is now back in print and available to order.



You may have seen that Peter Raabe recommended it in his review in November's *Practical Philosophy*:

There are...many wonderfully written passages in the essays which give a welcome relief from the conventional critical/analytical writing found in so many philosophy papers. Creative philosophical thinking shines brightly in some of the essays...This sort of writing is what makes philosophy not only informative but also a pleasure to read...Trevor Curnow has written a helpful editorial introduction to each section as well as an informative essay titled "Thinking About Dialogue"...

This book is a rich aggregation of information and insights for both the novice and the experienced practitioner...I would highly recommend this book to anyone looking for both a broader and a deeper understanding of philosophy in practice

To obtain your copy, use the order form at the end of this *PiP Talk*.

New Practical Philosophy Course in London

Tim LeBon invites you to join him in a course on Practical Philosophy at the City Lit in London on Monday evenings from 7.40 to 9.40. We start on 15 April with Socrates and end on 2 July with the meaning of life. The full provisional programme is:

1. Socrates on The Good Life
2. Aristotle versus Bentham on How to be Happy
3. How to avoid Suffering – Seneca or Epicurus?
4. Caution: How faulty thinking can damage your happiness
5. How to be Authentic – Heidegger & existentialism
6. How to develop more enlightened values.
7. How to make wiser decisions - Aristotle
8. Philosophical Counselling
9. Philosophy for Children – the community of enquiry
10. The Meaning of Life

The course is designed for beginners in philosophy as well as those who are philosophically adept – Tim says he certainly expects to learn plenty himself! The emphasis will be very much on how philosophy can help us to live more wisely.

If you would like to enrol, please contact the City Lit on 020 7242 9872

Quoting:

Course code: HXP04

Course title: Ways into Philosophy (Practical Philosophy)

Cost: £51 (concessions £25.50) for 10 weeks

Gale Prawda Offers Food and Drink for Thought

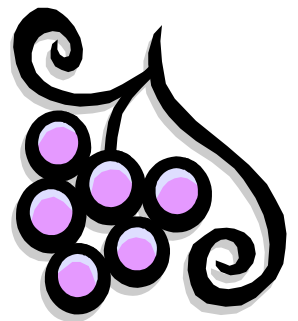
Gale Prawda has announced the following London-based events

pub philo discussions

Saturdays : March 30,
April 20,
May 25, June 22
All at 3 pm
Door charge £3.00

philo dinners

Saturdays at 7:00 pm
March 30 Integrity
April 20 Origins
May 25 Art & Philosophy
June 22 TBA
Participation fee £15.00



Venue for all events

The Mitre Pub, 24 Craven Terrace, London
W2 3QH Tube : Lancaster Gate/Paddington

It Needn't All Be Greek

Nigel Laurie is preparing a call for papers for a new anthology on dialogue to be published by Practical Philosophy Press. Items currently unavailable in English will be especially welcome. Suggestions and offers to Nigel at Nigel.laurie@managementphilosophers.com



Anger Workshop Report

Philosophy is easy and fun. Practical Philosophy is easy, fun and useful. That's what I've always thought, and I'd like to think it was in the session I'm about to describe. The setting was a philosophy class at the City Lit, one of the leading adult education centres in London. I was teaching Stoicism, and, of course, started by showing the class the hilarious part of the Alain de Botton programme when Alain heroically fails to persuade Wayne, a white van driver, that he should be a latter-day Stoic. In the second part of the session I thought I'd try out some on the use of creative and critical thinking. The question we would discuss is: Is anger a good thing?



The class (a group of people with little experience of philosophy) split into groups of three. Those on the left side of the room were asked to come up with reasons for anger being good; the others with reasons for anger being bad. For the first five

minutes or so they were asked to brainstorm reasons. "Just write down a list of possible reasons, without evaluating them.", I suggested. Next, they next asked to pick out the best two reasons from their list. Finally I suggested a representative from each group should write out what they thought was the best reason on the whiteboard. This is what they came up with:

*Arguments **for** anger being a good thing*

1. Motivation to do positive things
2. Can feel good
3. Defence (self)

*Arguments **against** anger being a good thing*

1. Can lead to aggression and violence
2. Can be against reason
3. Can cloud judgement

(I should have spotted that 2 and 3 were very similar at this stage, but didn't ...)

We then tried to assess the reasons by asking whether these reasons were true, relevant and strong. The table summarises what came up.

For

<i>Reason</i>	<i>True?</i>	<i>Relevant?</i>	<i>Strong (/5)</i>
Motivation to do positive things	Yes, if qualified by saying that it <i>sometimes</i> motivates us to do positive things (sometimes negative too !)	Yes – but maybe we would be better off with the Stoic virtues of courage, determination and awareness	3
Can feel good	Yes (but can make you feel bad too). Distinction between short-term feeling good and longer-term regretting outburst.	Yes	2
Defence (self)	Yes – especially in motivating others to do what we want and avoid being doormats (but recall woman killed at Euston recently)	Yes – but is anger better than assertiveness here (which is less dangerous and may not lead to pervasive angry atmosphere) (But some people only take notice of anger – it's the only language they understand ..)	4

Against

<i>Reason</i>	<i>True ?</i>	<i>Relevant ?</i>	<i>Strong (/5)</i>
Can lead to aggression and violence	Yes (and can lead to over-reaction in general)	Yes	4
Can be against reason/ cloud judgement	Yes	Yes	5



The ensuing discussion also touched on the undesirability of repressed anger (an additional reason for being angry in an unrepressed way). There appeared to be a clear consensus about the following

- ◆ There were powerful arguments against anger, in terms of its propensity to cause aggression/violence and cloud judgement
- ◆ There were also good arguments for anger, particularly in terms of motivating ourselves and others.
- ◆ The answer? Well, possibly to try to have the virtues of courage, determination and awareness to motivate ourselves and assertiveness to motivate others.
- ◆ If we are to be angry, then we should aim for 'calm anger', where we have the judgements about what should be done (this is not repressed or ignored) and we act accordingly – this I think complements the above point
- ◆ We should also aim for Aristotle's appropriate anger – at the right person, to the right degree, at the right time – the above, though, suggests that we may be best at doing this if we have 'calm anger' – if we 'lose it' we are less likely to exhibit appropriate anger.

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Tim's Desert Island Books...

I'd be interested in SPP members thoughts about their favourite books in the area of Practical Philosophy. Probably with loads of serious omissions, and completely off the top of my head, here is my list to set the ball rolling.

I'm deliberately limiting myself to 3 classics and 3 books from the last century.

Classics

1. *Utilitarianism* J.S. Mill

Partly sentimental value (it was the first philosophy book I read) but for all its flaws still a great synthesis of Bentham and Aristotle

2. *The Republic* Plato

Politically incorrect, implausible, downright wrong in places - but it's got to be included. Plato has to be the Shakespeare of Practical Philosophy, and *The Republic* is his *Hamlet*.

3. *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle

Get over its prosaic, OK dull, style and sometimes platitudinous nature and this book probably provides the most plausible, practical philosophy book ever written.

Modern Classics

1. *An Atheist's Values* Richard Robinson

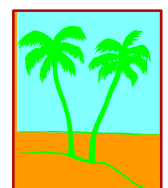
Robinson clearly ploughed a lone furrow doing practical philosophy in 1950s Oxford and it's a modern classic. Despite its title, it's a book about personal and political goods that is still of interest to all, not just atheists.

2. *The Examined Life* John Kekes

Modern neo-Aristotelianism lives on in this accessible and very wise book.

3. *Well-being* James Griffin

Very intelligent discussion of well-being in the utilitarian tradition, but going beyond that.



Why not tell us yours?



Good Questions?

A new course has been designed to meet teachers' demand for help in formulating good questions for enquiry:

Ideas for Philosophical Questioning in and Beyond the Classroom

Managers, counsellors and parents will also greatly benefit from this course. It uniquely combines professional development with personal growth. It is offered at the time of year when people welcome a holiday that not only relaxes the body, but also stretches the mind. It raises philosophical awareness and supports teachers' efforts to deepen their own and their students' thinking.

Family, friends, or older children are welcome.

The art of questioning is central to caring, critical and creative thinking. This is because reasoning is at its most powerful when we seek answers to questions that really puzzle us whether this takes place in a boardroom, a classroom or counselling room. Philosophical enquiry is often stimulated and driven by open questions that contain philosophical concepts, such as anger in the question 'can I justify getting angry?', the concept good when reflecting on behaviour or thoughts, and the concept evidence when we encourage our pupils to test hypotheses. How to ask the right questions is neither taught at school, nor at college, or at university, but without good open-ended questions, enquiries will never properly start, nor be sustained.

This course is aimed at all managers, counsellors and educators in schools and colleges, Level 1-3 students in Philosophy with Children, but also for anyone interested in deepening and changing their thinking through philosophical reflection.

Date: August 27-30
Venue: 17th century Old Jordans,
Beaconsfield nr London
Tutor: Dr Karin Murriss

Thinking of Conferences...

The 10th International Conference on Thinking will take place in Harrogate, England, from June 15-19 2002. All welcome.

Details at www.changing-minds.org.uk

Thinking is more than merely critical...

Dr. Roy van den Brink Budgen, a leader in the field of critical thinking, has joined forces with Dialogueworks to create a new course, aimed particularly at secondary teachers. Roy, a chief examiner for Critical Thinking A/S level, and involved recently in 'Gifted and Talented Masterclasses' at Nottingham University, gave a memorable presentation at the 2001 SAPERE annual conference. He argued against the narrow view that critical thinking is so 'logical' as to preclude creative thinking. Using evidence of highly original and imaginative thinking by the young people whom he teaches at Hollesley prison, he pointed out that full evaluation of argument almost always requires consideration of alternative premises, values and possibilities to those embedded in the argument itself – not to mention the need to create an appropriate set of criteria for judgement.

Roger Sutcliffe, chair of SAPERE and organiser of the conference, subsequently agreed with Roy that developing the desire and capacity to think 'alternatively' was one of the chief benefits of taking part in a philosophical community of enquiry. Accordingly, he suggested that they teamed up, together with Karin Murriss, Roger's partner in Dialogueworks, to trial a 10-hour course that gave equal emphasis to developing critical and creative thinking.



The course could ultimately be of appeal to teachers in primary or post-secondary settings, but initially the focus will be on secondary materials and settings. Roy will bring with him the experience of running course in Critical Thinking A/S level for the OCR, whilst Roger will draw on his experience as a secondary English teacher. Roger and Karin have also, of course, been at the forefront of training teachers at all levels in stimulating and managing dialogue in the classroom.

Dialogue is increasingly seen as fundamental to the health of a democratic society, not to mention the learning process, so that this course should be relevant to teachers in every domain, not least that of citizenship in the curriculum.

Dates and Venues

Feb 23/4 London
May 11/12 Winchester
July 13/14 Birmingham)

For further details visit
www.dialogueworks.co.uk
or phone Roger Sutcliffe on 01962 853 516

Member Activities

Nigel Laurie

Facilitating Socratic Dialogues...

Nigel has been invited to facilitate two Socratic dialogues at the 4th Annual Conference of the Society for the Furtherance of Critical Philosophy (Birmingham 28 June - August 3). The meeting theme is Ethics and Socratic Dialogue in Civic Society. See: www.sfcpc.org.uk

Topics for the two dialogues are:

- ◆ What is a human community? (1 day)
- ◆ When is philosophy relevant in voluntary organisations? (2 days)

And Developing Philosophy of Management

Nigel's Journal - *Reason in Practice: The Journal of Philosophy of Management* - is hosting the first international conference on philosophy of management:

Developing Philosophy of Management - Crossing Frontiers
St Anne's College, Oxford 26-29 June

Over 70 speakers from 20 countries will address philosophical aspects of the theory, teaching and practice of management in all cultures. Sessions will take varied forms: talks, interviews, panel discussions and workshops. A unique Practitioner Pathway offers philosophically based techniques and methods for managers and consultants.

Confirmed presenters include senior executives, consultants from major firms and teachers from major business schools including MIT, The Wharton School, IESE and London. Philosophical practitioners will recognise names such as Lydia Amir, David Arnaud, Tim LeBon, Gale Prawda and Roger Sutcliffe in the programme.

The Conference is organised in association with the Forum for European Philosophy. Full details at:

www.managementphilosophers.com

Register at the Free Alerts page to receive the full programme in April.

Tim LeBon

Each issue of *PiP Talk* will publish a 5 minute, interview with someone active in practical philosophy, to hear about their latest projects, hopes, news etc. We start with committee member and editor of *Practical Philosophy*, Tim LeBon, who has recently had his first book *Wise Therapy: Philosophy for Counsellors* published by Continuum.



PiPTalk: Tim, if this isn't a silly question, why exactly did you write *Wise Therapy*, and what were you hoping to achieve?

TL: It's a very good question, and one that I asked myself many times! Actually the book evolved as I was writing it. It began as a thematic guide to the main areas of philosophy most relevant to counsellors. As I was writing it, though, it became very clear to me that this theoretical material had fundamental implications for the way practice should be carried out. It was also clear that philosophical theory can critique some of the more philosophical therapies (cognitive therapy, existential therapy and logotherapy) yet these therapies also provide a lot of useful material. So the project became one of integrating what I found to be the most important parts of existing therapies with acceptable philosophical theory.

PiPTalk: That sounds rather ambitious...

TL: Yes, but less so in that a lot of this work was being carried out already by people active in philosophy in London – for example David Arnaud and Antonia Macaro and myself were already working on the *Progress* model for decision-making, and I was using the methods developed in my client work, so it all, I hope, came together at the right time.

PiPTalk: You haven't mentioned philosophical counselling yet?

TL: Well there's plenty about PC in the book, and one of the exciting aspects was discussing how it compares with the other philosophical therapies and how they can all be informed by and complement each other.

PiPTalk: Have you been pleased by the way *Wise Therapy* has been received?

TL: It's been gratifying that people well known in the field, like Irvin Yalom, Vaughana Feary and Jesse Fleming, have said nice things about it. Vaughana and other people have also reported back on using some of the practical ideas in it – and that's really the most rewarding part of it.

PiPTalk: Any plans for a follow-up?

TL: At some stage I'd like to do a book focussing on the practical methods (RSVP, Progress, CDM etc) featuring case material. But the next book I'd like to write is in the personal development field.

PiPTalk: And your hopes for practical philosophy in general?

TL: I'd like to see it really catch on with the general public in the UK. I think one way forward is to develop inexpensive practical philosophy courses. Peter Raabe talks about PC being partly educational, and has pioneered what might be termed 'group philosophical counselling'. I'm very interested in pursuing similar ideas in this country and am starting something at the City Lit after Easter along these lines.

PiPTalk: Hope it goes well, and thanks for talking to us...

Schools As Thinking Communities

Dialogue Works continue to offer their philosophical enquiry courses for school teachers: Schools As Thinking Communities

Level 1 – Introductory
Level 2 – Developing Practice
Level 3 – Developing Theory

Courses run throughout the year in various UK locations.

For dates, venues, booking details etc see www.dialogueworks.co.uk

Or email enquiries@dialogueworks.co.uk

Or tel Roger on 01962 853 516 or Karin on 01239 820 440



Dialogue Breaks

Dialogue Works organises residential Dialogue Breaks next to the beautiful Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. These are held in April, May, June and September - the most beautiful months on the West Wales coast - at New House Farm, Little Treffgarne Mountain (only 8 miles from beaches).

Each dialogue aims to collectively attempt to answer an important question, such as *What are the limits of tolerance?*, *Can I know with certainty?*, *What is friendship?*, *Should I get angry?*, *What is human dignity?* The participants themselves choose the question. Although these questions are very general in nature, gaining insight into them will not be done by referring to any particular theory, e.g., a philosophical or psychological theory, but by applying the question to a concrete experience from one of the participants. Everyone carefully and systematically reflects upon this experience in a careful process that demands slow and rigorous thinking and a willingness to engage with others in deepening one's own thinking

No qualifications or previous experience is necessary.

The next available dialogue is Bank Holiday Weekend Break: from Saturday morning 4 May to Monday 6 May 2002 (early afternoon). Fee: £225.00 (all in, including Friday night; discount when sharing a room).

The venue and luxury accommodation are in the 19th century self-catering cottages at New House Farm (4-star graded by the Wales Tourist Board). Individual (double) rooms. Organic wholefood meals during the day, and restaurant evening meal. Optional cliff-top walks in the National Park or Tai-Chi work-outs. There are substantial discounts for room-sharing. Special rates for extra nights at the venue. To look at the venue see: www.newhousefarm.net.

Participants will receive a certificate for attendance that counts towards eventual training as a dialogue facilitator. The dialogues, for groups of 6-10 participants, will be facilitated by Dr Karin Murriss, philosopher, educational consultant and internationally qualified facilitator in philosophical dialogues (including Leonard Nelson Socratic dialogues).

Contact: Dr Karin Murriss, The Old School Centre, Newport, Pembrokeshire SA42 0TS. 01437 741754; karin@dialogueworks.co.uk www.dialogueworks.co.uk

Philosophy Gatecrashes Politics

...we must encourage the debate now going on in the Muslim world, one that has risen and fallen for 1,300 years, about the nature of truth, the nature of difference, the role of reason and the possibility of positive, nonviolent change.

(Author and source at the end of this *PiP Talk*.)

Philosophical Counselling Workshop at The Hassocks, Sussex, November 2001

The PC course for 2001 was, I think, very well received, certainly judging by the feedback forms we received from participants. As usual, the course integrated theory (via readings, discussions and, for the first time, written work) and practice (through experience as a client, counsellor and client of real sessions). Seven participants, from as far afield as Italy and Switzerland as well as from various parts of the UK, gathered on Friday afternoon along with the three facilitators (David Arnaud, Antonia Macaro and myself) looking forward to a long weekend of philosophical counselling.



We basically followed the example started by Anette Prins in the first workshop she gave us on PC in making the real counselling sessions the core of the workshop. This really brings the process alive, and allows people the chance to develop the way they work in the three days. We were very impressed that all participants improved dramatically – those with little experience beforehand ended up doing well, and those who did well in their first sessions were really excellent by the end.

If there was one criticism that could have been made of previous courses, it was that theory and practice could be integrated more harmoniously. In order to achieve this, we gave short seminars on philosophical themes (decision-making, the good life, the emotions) before counselling sessions in the same areas. (for example, the seminar on decision-making was followed by a counselling session in which the clients discussed a decision they were facing). This worked pretty well. We also had a very interesting discussion about Ran Lahav's *Practical Philosophy* piece on *Philosophical Counselling as the Quest for Wisdom* and had a somewhat more gentle introduction to Sunday morning (very necessary after Saturday night in the local pub!) watching the video of Alain de Botton vainly trying to convince Wayne the van driver to be more stoical in the face of other drivers' incompetence.

As always, the main limitation was a lack of time, and it would have been nice both to have had longer at The Hassocks and to have longer breaks (and some nice country walks!) when we were there. The location was pleasant, our hosts friendly, and the ambience very positive. So much so that many of us left planning some more philosophy weekends – anyone for a residential workshop on 'The Good Life?'

The next philosophical counselling workshop will take place in the second half of 2002.

Contact *Tim LeBon* for further details:

timplebon@aol.com

Socratic Dialogues

Nigel Laurie will be facilitating two Socratic Dialogues in the autumn. One will be a 1 day event and the other is likely to be residential over a weekend. Register to receive details - and let Nigel know what question(s) you would like to investigate:

Nigel.laurie@managementphilosophers.com

Your Membership - It's Renewal Time

We invite you to renew your membership for 2002 now by using the form below. If you pay by standing order please note that you need take no action. Rates remain unchanged for a further year.

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Society for Philosophy in Practice

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Please renew your membership now by credit card or cheque. If you already pay by standing order or have a multi-year membership you need take no action. Please let us know of any changes to your details since last renewing eg address, interests, qualifications.

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£25 sterling pa £15 sterling (full time students and registered unemployed)

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