

# Learning for Well-being Magazine ④

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## Abstracts

### Viewpoint 1

#### Meaning and Purpose of Music Throughout my Life

By Szymon Brzóska

Music has accompanied me since I was a child, always surrounding me and giving my life meaning in two ways: as a listener (emotional/aesthetic/philosophical/transcendental); and as a professional - performing, composing. In this viewpoint, I share how much music contributes to my well-being and how it influences the expression of my unique self - as a creator, composer; also how I connect, through music, with other people.

One short piece of my music is presented as an example that expresses the quality and essence of my music/unique potential.

### Viewpoint 2

#### An Insufficiency of "I"

By Linda O'Toole

Cultivating an individual sense of self is an aspect of learning that is often downplayed or ignored. Being aware of myself as an individual, and recognizing my own unique qualities and purposes, allows me access to the exploration of being and becoming more fully and deeply human. Discovering and expressing one's unique potential is also critical to how we learn, relate and work together.

I refer to the lack of knowing and expressing one's unique self as an insufficiency of "I." In this viewpoint I will explore what I mean by that phrase. First, I consider the concepts of individualism and interdependency, which are often experienced in opposition to one another; then, I discuss the importance of acknowledging an insufficiency of "I," followed by what is required to cultivate a sufficiency of "I," and the benefits of that stance, as I see it.

### 1

#### Cultivating Human Potential – Towards Flourishing of All

By Scherto Gill

In this paper, I propose that individual and collective/communal human potentials are interdependent and mutually enriching – each person's unique potential is best achieved by participating and engaging in common endeavours and shared ventures with others; and our collective human potential is best attained through fostering and nurturing the individual's qualities and capacities. Such mutuality also suggests that any attempt to

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support our personal growth will equally enhance our human system, all contributing to greater social change and transformation.

Using the work of the Spirit of Humanity (SoH) Forum as an example, this paper further illustrates that at the intersection of individual and collective potential is our authentic energy – the human spirit or spirituality which points to a beyond-ness. This is where peace, justice and flourishing spring from and it is the basis of wholeness, values and relationships. This spiritual nature of our life, when shared in a safe space of dialogue, listening and contemplation, such as in the SoH Forum, can further encourage and inspire individuals to pursue an undivided life of integrity characterised by the right relationships, including relationship with oneself, with others – other people, other community, other cultures, and other beings on Earth, and the greater whole of which all are a part.

2

### Doing your 'Bit' - Because You Can: English Composition Meets Accounting

By Meg Freeling

"Doing Your 'Bit' - Because You Can" is the story of a group of high schoolers in a college English class who explored their own sense of purpose through a series of experiences and writing exercises that culminated in each starting a small business venture. Behind these activities we held the questions, "What does it mean to be a human being?" and "How do I find my 'bit' to do in life?" By linking English composition to a self-created business initiative that met another's need, the practicalities of accounting entered into the learning process. This moved the students out of abstractions into action. The creation, exchange and bookkeeping processes grounded their writing in a new relationship to meaning. As a result, their responses became invitations to fresh new streams of thought.

3

### Enabling Human Potential to Unfold Within School Environments: Education as Dialogue and Narrative at Multiple Levels

By Hartger Wassink & Shanti George

Education is a complex and sensitive process, as reflected in the problems that beset schools today, and discussions about education are equally complex and sensitive. The 'Unfolding' symposium organized in the Netherlands by NIVOZ and the Learning for Well-being Foundation in February this year approached the difficult subject through dialogue rather than debate or simple discussion. This article uses the innovative format and proceedings of the Unfolding symposium to illuminate the process of dialogue as well as the narratives that dialogue can nurture, drawing for illustration on the short films of inspiring practice from classrooms and schools that opened each session of the symposium and that demonstrated the sensitive school climate which is needed if every child is to discover and realise her or his life purpose and meaning within a web of social connectedness.

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### What Lies at the Heart of Teacher Education?

Boxes Within Boxes, Worlds Within Worlds, Seeing and Being Seen

By Maaïke Nap

How can trainee teachers find a deeper meaning and purpose in their experience of teacher education that then motivates and enables them to share such meaning and purpose with their pupils, so that educational processes can nurture existential meaning and purpose within all those involved? Maaïke Nap draws on her years of experience at the HAN College of Education for primary school teachers in the Netherlands to advocate that teacher educators relate to trainee teachers as whole persons, in order to encourage future teachers in turn to interact with their pupils within classrooms as whole persons. The importance of teamwork and the integration of courses within teacher education is underlined, as is the synthesis of the professional and personal worlds of teacher educators, once again in order to model for trainee teachers the importance of wholeness for themselves as well as for their prospective pupils. This discussion is illuminated by examples of exercises that Maaïke sets in motion in class, as well as by her own life experience as a child whose purpose from early on was to be a teacher.

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### Learning for Freedom and Well-being; Reflections about Unfolding our Unique Potential

By Alberto Paganini & Els Laenens

We begin this article by sharing the stories of our personal education journeys and then the education journeys of our children. Both our son (1994) and daughter (2001) reached a time where they were convinced that formal schooling was not the best possible choice for them. There was clear tension between what and how they learned at school and what and how they wanted to learn from their inner desires. Self-schooling gave them the opportunity to come up with personal projects and motivated them to realise them, creating challenging learning environments in which they educate themselves at an intellectual, emotional and spiritual level. We explain how we co-created their personalised schooling as self-educators, supported them in their choices in finding meaning and purpose related to their individual paths and how we all became teachers and students of one another.

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### Giving a Space for Me to be Me – Parenting with Intention

By Agnetha Stagling Birgersson

Parenting is probably one of the most expanding and maturing experiences we will ever have. In fact, there is no better course in personal development than being a parent. In this article, I address the challenges of parenting and how we can learn to be more intentional in our interactions. I share with you how to develop what I call a “pause button” and some useful steps on how to connect with yourself and with your child for mutual learning and development. Children have a tendency to “push our buttons” and we react in ways that are not always so constructive. In the article you will read about how you can act (with intention) rather than just re-acting to whatever feelings are triggered in you in different situations and, in the process, build strong close relationships with your children.

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Queen of the Desert – A Journey  
By Yakarah Attias-Rosen

The “women empowerment trips” organized by the Queen of the Desert help to unleash the vital energy and qualities that provide meaning, purpose and direction in the lives of the women who choose to participate. Through my experience, I hope to show how this journey encourages self-discovery and the expression of each person’s particular gifts and contributions, thus giving these women a chance to find their unique potential or at least take the first steps toward finding it.

8

Answering the Call: The Role of Transformational Art Processes  
By Aviva Gold

Art in all its varieties is the most potent transformational magic available to humankind. It is a revelatory spiritual and healing practice; it is our universal heart-opening language. In this article, Aviva shares the process and impact of her life-long creative work “Painting From The Source®,” an intuitive unplanned painting expression, deepened through multiple modalities such as sound, movement and poetic dialog. Linked to ancient tribal traditions, alchemy, and Jung’s Individuation, Aviva offers a glimpse into this deep and joyful experience that has enlivened and transformed so many lives.

If you are uncertain of your purpose or not yet found what gives you meaning, Aviva invites you to paint, either alone or in a group, regardless of previous experience, knowing that when you engage in transformational art processes what excites you, what makes you feel more alive will become obvious. Quoting Jung: “Trust what gives you meaning and let it be your guide”.