

The Psychology of Rudolf Steiner

A workshop about the phenomenology of the Soul or Astral Body according to Rudolf Steiner's psychological theories.

Following Rudolf Steiner's principle of developing a human psychology not from the theoretical but from a phenomenological basis, we will attempt to isolate and study the different observations that can be made by reflecting on human soul experience. Beginning with an understanding of what distinguishes animated beings from other living beings, we progress to the Senses, Will in its varied desires and how these develop systematically in the child. The gradual intrusion of the world of sex, money and power around the middle of childhood bring new desires, pressures and fears, which it tries variously to adopt, adapt, serve or escape from. Self-awareness, inner conflicts, conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious motives and actions become part of most human being's lives.

The levels of human awareness – waking life, dream and sleep – and the fluctuation between presence and absence of mind in daily life cause inner contradictions that lead many of us to seek help in coming to some kind of understanding and reconciliation with ourselves.

Our waking conscious life we experience through our memory, which gives us our identity, and through what we manifest as our intellectual life, our emotions and our desires and choices. Besides this, influencing these in a manner we find it difficult to grasp, we have sub-conscious prejudices, desires and blockages that influence all of our waking life. And, in order to recede from the stresses of these processes, we find respite in sleep, which is in turn, coloured by dreams and impulses that reflect and influence our waking life.

How we deal with this, whether in therapy, in counselling or other outside interference, or simply in an attempt to expose these phenomena to ourselves, an exchange with others is always helpful and can lead to new insights and understanding. This is the aim of the workshop.

Basic Program

Animation

The essential difference between an animated being and a plant is that the animated being is enclosed within its own skin, has an independent metabolism and can move through its own volition.

This implies an instinct for survival (desire) and senses to perceive the world around (sensation)

The Senses

The two pillars of Rudolf Steiner's psychology are his theories of the 12 senses and of the will.

Evolution of the senses through the animal and human kingdoms and their further development through conscious life.

The Will

The will in its manifestation as *instinct, drive, desire, motive, intention, wish and decision* as they evolve through the animal into the human kingdom.

Child Development

During the first 3 years, the child learns to walk, speak and think – the basis of its sense existence. It also develops, grows up systematically and sequentially, specifically human desires.

Money, Sex, Power and Puberty

The world of sex, money and power places the essential stamp on most of our society. In the face of this, the desire to maintain intellectual, cultural and spiritual values has to be maintained so as not to lose one's sense of identity altogether.

Identity

This has its seat in memory, the basis of self-consciousness with its own progress through evolution.

Together with the faculties of thinking, feeling and will, it makes up our waking day consciousness. It is this part of life in which we "identify".

Unconscious and Subconscious Life

The physiological and psychological influences affecting the soul unconsciously while awake in its views, choices and reactions.

Sleeping and Dreaming

While also not conscious, they affect the life of the soul in quite a different manner than does the subconscious.

The Difference between Conventional Psychology and That of Rudolf Steiner

From what has been considered during the workshop, what are these basic differences?