willing, and feeling, but we must practice in our everyday lives.

As we strengthen our own “I,” we can cultivate these higher senses with our colleagues and in our work. We can find ways to bring social artistry to life. We can, with intention and with artistry, share our life stories and goals, our thoughts and feelings and deeds, in order to understand one another as we work with fairy tales, child development, the temperaments, and so on. How do these things relate to our own lives, our own experience? When we practice in this way with each other, people become more real to us, more three-dimensional. When we freely direct our attention and interest toward the other, we often find love arising. And as Steiner tells us, we are here to develop love and freedom.

Through this interest and sharing, the picture of the other that arises in us awakens a real feeling for karma. What do we have to do with each other? And how do we find out? If we wish to see what we have to offer one another and for what purpose we must do what is not easy in these egotistical times; we must truly listen with deep interest. This requires that we die to ourselves for a time—that we lay down our “own life” for another. This is one way to the Christ, as described by Rudolf Steiner.

We have in this a mysterious transformation of the lower senses. When we are in balance within ourselves, we can truly hear the other. Stilling our own sense of movement allows us to be inwardly moved by the words of another. If in our life sense, we are comfortable in our own skin, we can lay aside our own thoughts and opinions to truly perceive the thoughts of another. And as we move beyond the need to defend our own standpoint and enter deeply into another, we can be touched by the “I – being” who stands behind the sound, the words, and the meanings we perceive.

We are building temples together through our human ties and connections. The natural world revives us now, but in the future we will need to find this revival with each other. We have all experienced how our life sense is nourished when we truly meet another. (And lord knows we have plenty of “meetings”! What if we used them as opportunities for this kind of meeting-encounter?)

Rudolf Steiner said, “The longing to be seen and heard in our full reality has arisen in every human soul since the beginning of this century and will grow increasingly urgent.” So if everyone longs to be seen and understood, who’s doing the seeing, hearing, and understanding? We have to take turns. We have to do this for each other, to offer our warm interest to one another. That’s what gives birth to this new faculty that wants to be born, the consciousness soul. When we meet eye-to-eye and “I”-to-“I” our sense of wellbeing, the sense of life, is nourished beyond measure.

The things done here on earth through love, friendship and the intimate understanding of one another; these are the building stones of temples being erected in the regions of spirit. For those convinced of this truth, it should be an uplifting feeling to know that the ties binding soul to soul are the basis for eternal being. —Rudolf Steiner

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**The Sense of Life from a Medical Doctor’s Perspective**

**— Dr. Adam Blanning**

Dr. Adam Blanning is an anthroposophic family practice physician from Denver, CO. In addition to his private practice, he serves as school doctor and consultant to Colorado Waldorf schools. He is the president of AAMTA, a medical and therapeutic association for anthroposophical therapies; trains physicians in anthroposophical medicine; and is a frequent conference lecturer. He began his lectures with a companion—a “heavy baby” in arms—who showed the pathway through the lower senses to the security of the life sense.

Dr. Blanning began by stating that it is pretty easy to experience the disturbed life sense of another person if we see him sick. When the life sense is functioning well, we take it for granted. The feeling we can have after a good meal is an experience of this healthy sense. When we are tired, we experience a diminution of the life sense. We can see the disturbed life sense in children who are uneasy and restless, who need a lot of attention and direction. These needs often come forth suddenly in transition
times. Circle has ended. It is time for free play and there is a problem. A similar moment can happen when we are readying to put on snow clothes. One of these children always has an argument or meltdown. This is expression of an undeveloped life sense out of balance.

The life sense hovers in areas where we are not always aware—states of hunger, thirst, needing the bathroom. These are all aspects of the life sense. Children who have a disturbed life sense may have trouble connecting to these body states. They do not normally sense if they are hungry and then are suddenly starving and frantic. Or we may see a child who eats and eats without awareness of when “full” has been reached. These states show imbalance in the life sense, as do needing to go to the bathroom all the time or not feeling the need and waiting until it is too late. Hunger, thirst, need for going to the bathroom, and fatigue are all pathways to the life sense that tell us how we are feeling. When these working well, we feel well and complete. There is harmony in the inner world when all systems are functioning well. This is a healthy life sense.

(Discussion of these senses proceeds from right to left, beginning with TASTE and then descending in an arc through the other senses leading ultimately to LIFE.)

How do we get to the life sense by considering what we do with a newborn baby? If something is wrong or the baby distressed, the best response is to nurse. Nursing is related to taste. This is the best route for the newborn. The baby travels directly from taste to the life sense. This is built in. A newborn nurses and the world is good. She has a complete sense of wellbeing.

As the baby gets a little older, it can be helpful to have someone else hold the baby sometimes, like the dad. The dad tries everything and then gives the baby back to mom. As soon as the child is in mom’s arms and can smell the mother’s milk, the baby calms. Immediately all is well.

What is the next stage if one doesn’t have milk and the right smell? We swaddle the baby, put a hat on her head, and hold her securely. As soon as her limbs come toward her body and the baby feels protected, she calms. Here we deal with touch.

When babies are older, swaddling doesn’t calm and satisfy any more. Then we put the baby up on the shoulder, pat, and move. The baby is being moved. This engages the sense of balance.

Then at a certain point we put the baby down and the baby moves herself and experiences self-movement.

This progression is important because all of us trace these steps on our own pathway into the world. If we observe how we care for a baby, we can see this progression ourselves by beginning with taste. This ordering is different from Rudolf Steiner’s other lectures where touch was the innermost sense. Steiner says that with touch we actually feel ourselves. If I grip something hard or something soft, I am sensing how my hand changes. The object I am touching does not change; the change occurs within myself. Taste is an outward sense. Smell is more inward. Touch in this lecture’s context is even further inward and is a step toward the life sense, which is how I feel myself in myself.

Children struggling with the life sense will go to one of the other senses as a beginning point. Every time we try to go to sleep or to self-soothe, we go through this pathway of the senses. Before sleep, we often move, twitch, snuggle down, and touch. We do this as a pathway to the life sense. Going to sleep is a great opportunity to practice traveling this inward
Each devastating experience we have in life has the potential to rob us of all that we know and force us to strip away our layers, get down to the core of who we are, identify what we stand for, and stand face-to-face with our limiting beliefs. In the darkness of the devastating flood that destroyed our school, we were called upon to rebuild not only our school, but ourselves, from the inside out. Moments like this are often referred to as the dark night of the soul—but if you take the opportunity, these times can be a powerful catalyst for transformation. That is, if you allow yourself to receive the life lessons and divine wisdom that are attempting to come through.

At Boulder Waldorf Kindergarten, we struggled to understand the enormity of what had happened that day in September. Our beloved school was devastated; essentially, a river was running through it. Yet without hesitation, we were “all equal, all equally committed” to persevering—to finding a temporary space to receive the children. We offered them the chance to come to school, to be

Deepening Roots After the Storm
~ Rachel Solt, Orien Mann, Angela Richardson, and Mira Kier

In September, 2013, devastating floods hit Boulder, Colorado. Boulder Waldorf Kindergarten, located on a beautiful two-acre biodynamic farm, was inundated by a four-foot wall of muddy water that destroyed everything in its path. A temporary location was found at a nearby synagogue and classes continued to be held while the work of restoration proceeded. Donations from far and wide, as well as an outpouring of generosity and kindness, helped to sustain the faculty and parents through a difficult time. The following reflections give insight into how the community was actually strengthened through what seemed at first a disastrous experience.