

Resilience and the School of Spiritual Science

At our recent visit to Altenschlirf, we crossed a beck in full spate to get from where we were staying to the meeting, and it reminded me of the streams where the trout are absolutely quiet in the water, where on top the debris and sticks rush by and where the salmon swim up the waterfalls to get to their breeding grounds and it seemed to be an apt image for where we get resilience from, from beyond thresholds where time turns on end and space attains different planes.

The title I was given was Resilience and the School of Spiritual Science.

I looked up the meaning and root of the word Resilience: 1640s, "springing back, returning to the original position," from **Latin resilientem** "inclined to bounce or spring back," or "to recoil" and elsewhere: "especially concerning the immaterial".

So what does Resilience take us back to? If it takes us **back to our original state** (What Owen Barfield called Original Participation), how do I do that and what do I find. What tools do I need? If it is a "**re-coil**", are we returning something back to the same place? When you are a sailor you know how important it is to recoil your ropes. I know when I do not re coil my garden hose properly, kinks and blockages need me to go back all the way to where the problem is! If it is a **bounce back**, what are we bouncing back from?

Why has resilience become such a catchword over the last years?

When I look at the themes of the STAG over the years, it has had much to do with the task, the diagnosis, knowledge and discipline, the Image of the Human Being, environment building, creating social and architectural and environmental forms. We have done a lot of work and have attained knowledge and achieved much.

More recently as part of this theme of Resilience Hartwig Ehlers in Weide Hardebeck had shared his research on what he called the 7 social laws Rudolf Steiner gave as a way of looking at Resilience in our organizations, which will be the basis of continued work and research. Udo Pfeil in Zurich spoke about meaningfulness and organisational forms, and he will write a report on the results of this work.

Yet these last decades have shaken us, and our environments, our knowledge, our diagnoses, our relationships; we have experienced increased doubts, fear and hatred in our own lives, in the world and in ourselves.

In 2019 there was an ACESTA (Association for Care, Education and Social Therapy out of Anthroposophy) conference at Emerson College Uk with the title: **Courage, Love and Meaning, Tools for Resilience in the Here and Now.**

What do we need to be resilient for or against? What do we need to bounce back from, how do we re-coil, what do we want to return to. Why Courage Love and Meaning?

And why particularly here and now? (Space and Time)

Hundreds of books have been written on resilience over the last decade. I found in a recent book about resilience:

“Courage is asked for when we are challenged to respond rather than to re-act; to invite the future. It can be scary. Yet, it is exactly when a challenge brings us to our knees that we cultivate our inner wisdom, our integrity and intelligence.” It invites the **future**.

And Love? Shakespeare in his Sonnet on Love writes: “Love does not alter where it alteration finds”. Love invites **Duration**.

Meaning is making sense of what we experience. Making sense always comes after the experience: it deals with the **past**.

These three qualities of Courage Love and Meaning we studied in that conference on Resilience were taken from the content of the School of Spiritual Science.

Why do we join this school? Maybe like the trout and the salmon we need to find a way of being able to be still in the floods and storms of life.

And maybe we need these three qualities, because we experience the pain of a dying planet, of the emptiness of our civilization and of the intense hatred not only of the last century but now and all over the world. Our soul yearns for Light and Warmth and something that helps us make sense of our place in the world.

The work of social therapy gives an added edge to this questioning and yearning. We want to bring relief of suffering, we want to bring light, warmth and meaningfulness into our environments, to understand the other and to invite healing. We cannot just make sense of it by being clever, or only feel it with a good heart, or simply do it out of duty.

But when we really go into the depth of our own experience and questioning, we feel confronted by an abyss and we need all the love, courage and meaning to face the growing need of transcending into the un-knowing, across the emptiness into the dark and confronting death.

And when we try to transcend this abyss, we meet someone: the Guardian. He warns us that - if we go across without preparation - we will meet three fierce beasts head on.

And he describes the qualities we need to tame these “Three Beasts” at the edge of the abyss that looms between our physical daily world and the spiritual world on the other side.

Rudolf Steiner saw that in our time **the whole of mankind has crossed this abyss**, and without preparation; and we see plenty of evidence that mankind is faced with these three beasts.

And my experience is that our work can lead us into the fast lane towards a recognition of the need to develop and know ourselves accordingly. It holds up a mirror but it also gives us an experience of unconditional love from the people who we live and work with.

We then discover something extraordinary: **the voice** that prompts us both tenderly and with cosmic force to know ourselves **is our own**, not Rudolf Steiner’s, or someone else’s. **And the Guardian bears our own face. And the beasts are our own inner distorted soul forces: our thinking feeling and will.**

Like Prospero says about Caliban in Shakespeare's last play The Tempest: "This thing of darkness I must acknowledge as my own."

Our work **demands** courage, it **asks** for Love and it **prompts** understanding and meaningfulness.

Life itself is a path to self-knowledge, that goes for all of humanity – but our healing will and work sharpen the necessary tools to face the three beasts in our thinking feeling and willing: our doubts, our fear and our hatred of the spirit. And when we consciously want to walk this path we can do so through joining the School of Spiritual Science.

We find that by healing we are healed, and that our brothers and sisters with complex needs need our "becoming human" as mentioned in the 7th class lesson.

And we learn that the Angels needed to have a hand in our development to complete their stage of human becoming. And that we have such responsibility for those that will complete their human stage after us. And that all we do think and feel can help not only our own development but the development of a whole cosmos including the starry and planetary worlds of which our Earth forms but a part.

"Christine Gruwez spoke at the end of the conference in Dornach about Healing preceding Suffering. She gave a wonderful lecture pointing to a Manichean perspective. When we do return to the full (final) participation that I spoke about at the start when quoting Owen Barfield, we do so to an utterly changed spiritual environment. Along with all the other beings involved who have also evolved we have and will become different. And it will have been our common and relational work towards a common unity: a true community.

It is as map and imagination that the lessons of the school paint this journey of becoming, **our own but also of the Earth and its nature beings, of the Hierarchies and the Divine.**

In the lessons of the school we find that out of utter loneliness and darkness, we can turn to the needs of the Other, of the Earth and of the Gods.

And we can experience: I entered into Space and Time, the power of a God has led me here.

And when we make the larger journey back across the threshold after death, those whom we have supported here will support us there; also we will not just leave the Earth behind but will be active in the elements and forces that have supported and formed and kindled us together with those we worked with here on this side.

For here we have three soul forces of thinking, feeling and will, that we feel are our own; this is not the case when we cross over. Many of our friends we live and work with do experience this separation even here on Earth, and it is this that gives them their special need and gives us the opportunity to learn, to be helpful and thereby exercise resilience for when this is needed across the threshold.

The same is the case with the 4 elements. We can ask: without a body, with our soul forces spread out, each going their own way, what will hold us up, what will give us form, what will give us self-awareness and sensibility?

We may see that our friends with complex needs are suffering this while on Earth but also that they are gaining new abilities, while offering us an opportunity to learn to travel in the fast lane, towards true resilience, to develop, perceive and feel differently, an opportunity which – without their special needs and suffering – we would not have.

We will soon be celebrating the Easter Festival. Christ suffered without any karmic necessity of His own. His suffering was and is beyond our wildest imagination, carrying as he did our path that was causing soul and spiritual death; bringing the Divine into the Present with unconditional love, including those lost in hell; opening up potential for further human life and development, but leaving us the freedom to recognize the necessity of self development and redemption and that this must be for all and everyone.

Christ's miracles give us this Three fold healing path: First the Recognition of a karmic culminating thread from the past leading to illness, then the Healing of the present condition, and then giving the strength towards future Resilience, which must be something the individual takes on to unfold in freedom and acceptance of the writing in the sand.

All that we do think and feel is written in the sand.

I would like to end with some quotations from recent writers taken from Cambridge University English Corpus:

“To be resilient is to be exceptional. We must have the fortitude to stand tall no matter what is happening. Resilience is achieved through the consistent progress we make each day towards our goals. These goals are the benchmarks we design our life around. To live as the exceptional human being we have the potential to be, we must be willing to risk, to know when to rest and to be unafraid to be different from the rest.”

“To be resilient we must view challenge as the catalyst that inspires our personal development. Life's challenges will absolutely test us to our core.”

“In conclusion, our findings suggest that self-regulation is a prominent predictor of *resilience* among youths living in poverty.”

It says in the bible: Blessed are the poor (in spirit). We all are the poor in this our time, and we also can become more resilient through self-regulation. This is what the School of Spiritual Science may offer us, a path of self-regulation and development in order that we may become truly resilient. And it is given to us through a true Christ Initiate by the Spirit of our Time.

It means work. But that is not all. When we have done the work we are together able to offer it up, lovingly and in freedom to become a grail for healing and redemption for all of creation and the founding of a common unity, a true community.

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