

Practical Training In Thought

A Lecture By Rudolf Steiner Karlsruhe, January 18, 1909 GA 108

Many people who call themselves practical imagine that their actions are guided by the most practical principles. But if we inquire more closely, it is found that their so-called “practical thought” is often not thought at all but only the continuing pursuit of traditional opinions and habits. An entirely objective observation of the “practical” man's thought and an examination of what is usually termed “practical thinking” will reveal the fact that it generally contains little that can be called practical. What to them is known as practical thought or thinking consists in following the example of some authority whose ideas are accepted as a standard in the construction of some object. Anyone who thinks differently is considered impractical because this thought does not coincide with traditional ideas.

Whenever anything really practical has been invented, it has been done by a person without practical knowledge of that particular subject. Take, for instance, the modern postage stamp. It would be most natural to assume that it was invented by some practical post office official. It was not. At the beginning of the last century it was a complicated affair to mail a letter. In order to dispatch a letter one had to go to the nearest receiving office where various books had to be referred to and many other formalities complied with. The uniform rate of postage known today is hardly sixty years old, and our present postage stamp that makes this possible was not invented by a practical postal employee at all but by someone completely outside the post office. This was the Englishman, Rowland Hill.

After the uniform system of postage stamps had been devised, the English minister who then had charge of the mails declared in Parliament that one could not assume any simplification of the system would increase the volume of mail as the impractical Hill anticipated. Even if it did, the London post office would be entirely inadequate to handle the increased volume. It never occurred to this highly “practical” individual that the post office must be fitted to the amount of business, not the business to the size of the post office. Indeed, in the shortest possible time this idea, which an “impractical” man had to defend against a “practical” authority, became a fact. Today, stamps are used everywhere as a matter of course for sending letters.

It was similar with the railroads. When in 1837 the first railroad in Germany was to be built, the members of the Bavarian College of Medicine were consulted on the advisability of the project and they voiced the opinion that it would be unwise to build railroads. They added that if this project were to be carried out, then at least a high

board fence would have to be erected on both sides of the line to protect the public from possible brain and nervous shock.

When the railroad from Potsdam to Berlin was planned, Postmaster General Stengler said, "I am now dispatching two stage coaches daily to Potsdam and these are never full. If people are determined to throw their money out the window, they can do it much more simply without building a railroad!"

But the real facts of life often sweep aside the "practical," that is to say, those who believe in their own ability to be practical. We must clearly distinguish between genuine thinking and so-called "practical thinking" that is merely reasoning in traditional ruts of thought.

As a starting point to our consideration I will tell you of an experience I had during my student days. A young colleague once came to me glowing with the joy of one who has just hit upon a really clever idea, and announced that he must go at once to see Professor X (who at the time taught machine construction at the University) for he had just made a great discovery. "I have discovered," he said, "how, with a small amount of steam power and by simply rearranging the machinery, an enormous amount of work can be done by one machine." He was in such a rush to see the Professor that that was all he could tell me. He failed to find him, however, so he returned and explained the whole matter to me. It all smacked of perpetual motion, but after all, why shouldn't even that be possible? After I had listened to his explanation I had to tell him that although his plan undoubtedly appeared to be cleverly thought out, it was a case that might be compared in practice with that of a person who, on boarding a railway car, pushes with all his might and then believes when it moves that he has actually started it. "That," I said to him, "is the thought principle underlying your discovery." Finally, he saw it himself and did not return to the Professor.

It is thus quite possible to shut ourselves up within a shell fashioned by our own thoughts. In rare cases this can be observed distinctly, but there are many similar examples in life that do not always reach such a striking extreme as the one just cited. He who is able to study human nature more intimately, however, knows that a large number of thought processes are of this kind. He often sees, we might say, people standing in the car pushing it from within and believing that they are making it move. Many of the events of life would take a different course if people did not so often try to solve their problems by thus deluding themselves.

True practice in thinking presupposes a right attitude and proper feeling for thinking. How can a right attitude toward thinking be attained? Anyone who believes that thought is merely an activity that takes place within his head or in his soul cannot have the right feeling for thought. Whoever harbors this idea will be constantly diverted by a false feeling from seeking right habits of thought and from making the necessary demands on his thinking. He who would acquire the right feeling for thought must say to himself, "If I can formulate thoughts about things, and learn to understand them through thinking, then

these things themselves must first have contained these thoughts. The things must have been built up according to these thoughts, and only because this is so can I in turn extract these thoughts from the things.”

It can be imagined that this world outside and around us may be regarded in the same way as a watch. The comparison between the human organism and a watch is often used, but those who make it frequently forget the most important point. They forget the watchmaker. The fact must be kept clearly in mind that the wheels have not united and fitted themselves together of their own accord and thus made the watch “go,” but that first there was the watchmaker who put the different parts of the watch together. The watchmaker must never be forgotten. Through thoughts the watch has come into existence. The thoughts have flowed, as it were, into the watch, into the thing.

The works and phenomena of nature must be viewed in a similar way. In the works of man it is easy to picture this to ourselves, but with the works of nature it is not so easily done. Yet these, too, are the result of spiritual activities and behind them are spiritual beings. Thus, when a man thinks about things he only re-thinks what is already in them. The belief that the world has been created by thought and is still ceaselessly being created in this manner is the belief that can alone fructify the actual inner practice of thought.

It is always the denial of the spiritual in the world that produces the worst kind of malpractice in thought, even in the field of science. Consider, for example, the theory that our planetary system arose from a primordial nebula that began to rotate and then densified into a central body from which rings and globes detached themselves, thus mechanically bringing into existence the entire solar system. He who propounds this theory is committing a grave error of thought.

A simple experiment used to be made in the schools to demonstrate this theory. A drop of oil was made to float in a glass of water. The drop was then pierced with a pin and made to rotate. As a result, tiny globules of oil were thrown off from the central drop creating a miniature planetary system, thus proving to the pupil — so the teacher thought — that this planetary system could come into existence through a purely mechanical process.

Only impractical thought can draw such conclusions from this little experiment, for he who would apply this theory to the cosmos has forgotten one thing that it ordinarily might be well to forget occasionally, and that is himself. He forgets that it is he who has brought this whole thing into rotation. If he had not been there and conducted the whole experiment, the separation of the little globules from the large drop would never have occurred. Had this fact been observed and applied logically to the cosmic system, he then would have been using complete healthy thinking. Similar errors of thought play a great part especially in science. Such things are far more important than one generally believes.

Considering the real practice of thought, it must be realized that

thoughts can only be drawn from a world in which they already exist. Just as water can only be taken from a glass that actually contains water, so thoughts can only be extracted from things within which these thoughts are concealed. The world is built by thought, and only for this reason can thought be extracted from it. Were it otherwise, practical thought could not arise. When a person feels the full truth of these words, it will be easy for him to dispense with abstract thought. If he can confidently believe that thoughts are concealed behind the things around him, and that the actual facts of life take their course in obedience to thought if he feels this, he will easily be converted to a practical habit of thinking based on truth and reality.

Let us now look at that practice of thinking that is of special importance to those who stand upon an anthroposophical foundation. The one who is convinced that the world of facts is born of thought will grasp the importance of the development of right thinking.

Let us suppose that someone resolves to fructify his thinking to such a degree that it will always take the right course in life. If he would do this, he must be guided by the following rules and he must understand that these are actual, practical and fundamental principles. If he will try again and again to shape his thinking according to these rules, certain effects will result. His thinking will become practical even though at first it may not seem so. Other additional mental experiences of quite a different kind also will come to the one who applies these fundamental principles.

Let us suppose that somebody tries the following experiment. He begins today by observing, as accurately as possible, something in the outer world that is accessible to him — for instance, the weather. He watches the configuration of the clouds in the evening, the conditions at sunset, etc., and retains in his mind an exact picture of what he has thus observed. He tries to keep the picture before him in all its details for some time and endeavors to preserve as much of it as possible until the next day. At some time the next day he again makes a study of the weather conditions and again endeavors to gain an exact picture of them.

If in this manner he has pictured to himself exactly the sequential order of the weather conditions, he will become distinctly aware that his thinking gradually becomes richer and more intense. For what makes thought impractical is the tendency to ignore details when observing a sequence of events in the world and to retain but a vague, general impression of them. What is of value, what is essential and fructifies thinking, is just this ability to form exact pictures, especially of successive events, so that one can say, “Yesterday it was like that; today it is like this.” Thus, one calls up as graphically as possible an inner image of the two juxtaposed scenes that lie apart in the outer world.

This is, so to speak, nothing else but a certain expression of confidence in the thoughts that underlie reality. The person experimenting ought not to draw any conclusions immediately or to

deduce from today's observation what kind of weather he shall have tomorrow. That would corrupt his thinking. Instead, he must confidently feel that the things of outer reality are definitely related to one another and that tomorrow's events are somehow connected with those of today. But he must not speculate on these things. He must first inwardly re-think the sequence of the outer events as exactly as possible in mental pictures, and then place these images side by side, allowing them to melt into one another. This is a definite rule of thought that must be followed by those who wish to develop factual thinking. It is particularly advisable that this principle be practiced on those very things that are not yet understood and the inner connection of which has not yet been penetrated.

Therefore, the experimenter must have the confidence that such events of which he has as yet no understanding — the weather, for instance — and which in the outer world are connected with one another, will bring about connections within him. This must be done in pictures only while abstaining from thinking. He must say to himself, "I do not yet know what the relation is, but I shall let these things grow within me and if I refrain from speculation they will bring something about in me." It may be easily believed that if he forms exact inner images of succeeding events and at the same time abstains from all thinking something may take place in the invisible members of his nature.

The vehicle of man's thought life is his astral body (see **Note 1**). As long as the human being is engaged in speculative thinking, this astral body is the slave of the ego. This conscious activity, however, does not occupy the astral body exclusively because the latter is also related in a certain manner to the whole cosmos.

Now, to the extent we abstain from arbitrary thinking and simply form mental pictures of successive events, to that extent do the inner thoughts of the world act within us and imprint themselves, without our being aware of it, on our astral body. To the extent we insert ourselves into the course of the world through observation of the events in the world and receive these images into our thoughts with the greatest possible clarity, allowing them to work within us, to that extent do those members of our organism that are withdrawn from our consciousness become ever more intelligent. If, in the case of inwardly connected events, we have once acquired the faculty of letting the new picture melt into the preceding one in the same way that the transition occurred in nature, it shall be found after a time that our thinking has gained considerable flexibility.

This is the procedure to be followed in matters not yet understood. Things, however, that are understood — events of everyday life, for example — should be treated in a somewhat different manner.

Let us presume that someone, perhaps our neighbor, had done this or that. We think about it and ask ourselves why he did it. We decide he has perhaps done it in preparation for something he intends to do the

next day. We do not go any further but clearly picture his act and try to form an image of what he may do, imagining that the next day he will perform such and such an act. Then we wait to see what he really does since he may or may not do what we expected of him. We take note of what does happen and correct our thoughts accordingly. Thus, events of the present are chosen that are followed in thought into the future. Then we wait to see what actually happens.

This can be done either with actions involving people or something else. Whenever something is understood, we try to form a thought picture of what in our opinion will take place. If our opinion proves correct, our thinking is justified and all is well. If, however, something different from our expectation occurs, we review our thoughts and try to discover our mistake. In this way we try to correct our erroneous thinking by calm observation and examination of our errors. An attempt is made to find the reason for things occurring as they did. If we are right, however, we must be especially careful not to boast of our prediction and say, "Oh well, I knew yesterday that this would happen!"

This is again a rule based upon confidence that there is an inner necessity in things and events, that in the facts themselves there slumbers something that moves things. What is thus working within these things from one day to another are thought forces, and we gradually become conscious of them when meditating on things. By such exercises these thought forces are called up into our consciousness and if what has been thus foreseen is fulfilled, we are in tune with them. We have then established an inner relation with the real thought activity of the matter itself. So we train ourselves to think, not arbitrarily, but according to the inner necessity and the inner nature of the things themselves.

But our thinking can also be trained in other directions. An occurrence of today is also linked to what happened yesterday. We might consider a naughty child, for example, and ask ourselves what may have caused this behavior. The events are traced back to the previous day and the unknown cause hypothesized by saying to ourselves, "Since this occurred today, I must believe that it was prepared by this or that event that occurred yesterday or perhaps the day before."

We then find out what had actually occurred and so discover whether or not our thought was correct. If the true cause has been found, very well. But if our conclusion was wrong, then we should try to correct the mistake, find out how our thought process developed, and how it ran its course in reality.

To practice these principles is the important point. Time must be taken to observe things as though we were inside the things themselves with our thinking. We should submerge ourselves in the things and enter into their inner thought activity. If this is done, we gradually become aware of the fact that we are growing together with things. We no longer feel that they are outside us and we are here inside our shell

thinking about them. Instead we come to feel as if our own thinking occurred within the things themselves. When a man has succeeded to a high degree in doing this, many things will become clear to him.

Goethe was such a man. He was a thinker who always lived with his thought within the things themselves. The psychologist Heinroth's book in 1826, *Anthropology*, characterized Goethe's thought as "objective." Goethe himself appreciated this characterization. What was meant is that such thinking does not separate itself from things, but remains within them. It moves within the necessity of things. Goethe's thinking was at the same time perception, and his perception was thinking. He had developed this way of thinking to a remarkable degree. More than once it occurred that, when he had planned to do something, he would go to the window and remark to the person who happened to be with him, "In three hours we shall have rain!" And so it would happen. From the little patch of sky he could see from the window he was able to foretell the weather conditions for the next few hours. His true thinking, remaining within the objects, thus enabled him to sense the coming event preparing itself in the preceding one.

Much more can actually be accomplished through practical thinking than is commonly supposed. When a man has made these principles of thinking his own, he will notice that his thinking really becomes practical, that his horizon widens, and that he can grasp the things of the world in quite a different way. Gradually his attitude towards things and people will change completely. An actual process will take place within him that will alter his whole conduct. It is of immense importance that he tries to grow into the things in this way with his thinking, for it is in the most eminent sense a practical undertaking to train one's thinking by such exercises.

There is another exercise that is to be practiced especially by those to whom the right idea usually does not occur at the right time.

Such people should try above all things to stop their thinking from being forever influenced and controlled by the ordinary course of worldly events and whatever else may come with them. As a rule, when a person lies down for half an hour's rest, his thoughts are allowed to play freely in a thousand different directions, or on the other hand he may become absorbed with some trouble in his life. Before he realizes it such things will have crept into his consciousness and claimed his entire attention. If this habit persists, such a person will never experience the occasion when the right idea occurs to him at the right moment.

If he really wants this to happen, he must say to himself whenever he can spare a half hour for rest, "Whenever I can spare the time, I will think about something I myself have chosen and I will bring it into my consciousness arbitrarily of my own free will. For example, I will think of something that occurred two years ago during a walk. I will deliberately recall what occurred then and I will think about it if only for five minutes. During these five minutes I will banish everything else from my mind and will myself choose the subject about which I wish to

think.”

He need not even choose so difficult a subject as this one. The point is not at all to change one's mental process through difficult exercises, but to get away from the ordinary routine of life in one's thinking. He must think of something quite apart from what enmeshes him during the ordinary course of the day. If nothing occurs to him to think about, he might open a book at random and occupy his thoughts with whatever first catches his eye. Or he may choose to think of something he saw at a particular time that morning on his way to work and to which he would otherwise have paid no attention. The main point is that it should be something totally different from the ordinary run of daily events, something that otherwise would not have occupied his thoughts.

If such exercises are practiced systematically again and again, it will soon be noticed that ideas come at the right moments, and the right thoughts occur when needed. Through these exercises thinking will become activated and mobile — something of immense importance in practical life.

Let us consider another exercise that is especially helpful in improving one's memory.

One tries at first in the crude way people usually recall past events to remember something that occurred, let us say, yesterday. Such recollections are, as a rule, indistinct and colorless, and most people are satisfied if they can just remember a person's name. But if it is desired to develop one's memory, one can no longer be content with this. This must be clear. The following exercise must be systematically practiced, saying to oneself, “I shall recall exactly the person I saw yesterday, also the street corner where I met him, and what happened to be in his vicinity. I shall draw the whole picture as exactly as possible and shall even imagine the color and cut of his coat and vest.” Most people will find themselves utterly incapable of doing this and will quickly see how much is lacking in their recollections to produce a really lifelike, graphic picture of what they met and experienced only yesterday.

Since this is true in the majority of cases, we must begin with that condition in which many people are unable to recollect their most recent experiences. It is only too true that most people's observations of things and events are usually inaccurate and vague. The results of a test given by a professor in one of the universities demonstrated that out of thirty students who took the test, only two had observed an occurrence correctly; the remaining twenty-eight reported it inaccurately. But a good memory is the child of accurate observation. A reliable memory is attained, let me repeat, by accurate observation and it can also be said that in a certain roundabout way of the soul it is born as the child of exact observation.

But if somebody cannot at first accurately remember his experiences of yesterday, what should he do? First, he should try to remember as accurately as he can what actually occurred. Where recollections fail he should fill in the picture with something incorrect

that was not really present. The essential point here is that the picture be complete. Suppose it was forgotten whether or not someone was wearing a brown or a black coat. Then he might be pictured in a brown coat and brown trousers with such and such buttons on his vest and a yellow necktie. One might further imagine a general situation in which there was a yellow wall, a tall man passing on the left, a short one on the right, etc.

All that can be remembered he puts into this picture, and what cannot be remembered is added imaginatively in order to have a completed mental picture. Of course, it is at first incorrect but through the effort to create a complete picture he is induced to observe more accurately. Such exercises must be continued, and although they might be tried and failed fifty times, perhaps the fifty-first time he shall be able to remember accurately what the person he has met looked like, what he wore, and even little details like the buttons on his vest. Then nothing will be overlooked and every detail will imprint itself on his memory. Thus he will have first sharpened his powers of observation by these exercises and in addition, as the fruit of this accurate observation, he will have improved his memory.

He should take special care to retain not only names and main features of what he wishes to remember, but also to retain vivid images covering all the details. If he cannot remember some detail, he must try for the time being to fill in the picture and thus make it a whole. He will then notice that his memory, as though in a roundabout way, slowly becomes reliable. Thus it can be seen how definite direction can be given for making thinking increasingly more practical.

There is still something else that is of particular importance. In thinking about some matters we feel it necessary to come to a conclusion. We consider how this or that should be done and then make up our minds in a certain way. This inclination, although natural, does not lead to practical thinking. All overly hasty thinking does not advance us but sets us back. Patience in these things is absolutely essential.

Suppose, for instance, we desire to carry out some particular plan. There are usually several ways that this might be done. Now we should have the patience first to imagine how things would work[s] out if we were to execute our plan in one way and then we should consider what the results would be of doing it in another. Surely there will always be reasons for preferring one method over another but we should refrain from forming an immediate decision. Instead, an attempt should be made to imagine the two possibilities and then we must say to ourselves, "That will do for the present; I shall now stop thinking about this matter." No doubt there are people who will become fidgety at this point, and although it is difficult to overcome such a condition, it is extremely useful to do so. It then becomes possible to imagine how the matter might be handled in two ways, and to decide to stop thinking about it for awhile.

Whenever it is possible, action should be deferred until the next

day, and the two possibilities considered again at that time. You will find that in the interim[,] conditions have changed and that the next day you will be able to form a different, or at least a more thorough decision than could have been reached the day before. An inner necessity is hidden in things and if we do not act with arbitrary impatience but allow this inner necessity to work in us — and it will — we shall find the next day that it has enriched our thinking, thus making possible a wiser decision. This is exceedingly valuable.

We might, for example, be asked to give our advice on a problem and to make a decision. But let us not thrust forward our decision immediately. We should have the patience to place the various possibilities before ourselves without forming any definite conclusions, and we then should quietly let these possibilities work themselves out within us. Even the popular proverb says that one should sleep over a matter before making a decision.

To sleep over it is not enough, however. It is necessary to consider two or, better still, several possibilities that will continue to work within us when our ego is not consciously occupied with them. Later on, when we return again to the matter in question, it will be found that certain thought forces have been stirred up within us in this manner, and that as a result our thinking has become more factual and practical.

It is certain that what a man seeks can always be found in the world, whether he stands at the carpenter's bench, or follows the plough, or belongs to one of the professions. If he will practice these exercises, he will become a practical thinker in the most ordinary matters of everyday life. If he thus trains himself, he will approach and look at the things of the world in a quite different manner from previously. Although at first these exercises may seem related only to his own innermost life, they are entirely applicable and of the greatest importance precisely for the outer world. They have powerful consequences.

An example will demonstrate how necessary it is to think about things in a really practical manner. Let us imagine that for some reason or other a man climbs a tree. He falls from the tree, strikes the ground, and is picked up dead. Now, the thought most likely to occur to us is that the fall killed him. We would be inclined to say that the fall was the cause and death the effect. In this instance cause and effect seem logically connected. But this assumption may completely confuse the true sequence of facts, for the man may have fallen as a consequence of heart failure. To the observer the external event is exactly the same in both cases. Only when the true causes are known can a correct judgment be formed. In this case it might have been that the man was already dead before he fell and the fall had nothing to do with his death. It is thus possible to invert completely cause and effect. In this instance the error is evident, but often they are not so easily discernible. The frequency with which such errors in thinking occur is amazing. Indeed, it must be said that in the field of science conclusions in which this confusion of cause and effect is permitted are being drawn every day.

Most people do not grasp this fact, however, because they are not acquainted with the possibilities of thinking.

Still another example will show you clearly how such errors in thinking arise and how a person who has been practicing exercises like these can no longer make such mistakes. Suppose someone concludes that man as he is today is a descendent of the ape. This means that what he has come to know in the ape — the forces active in this animal have — attained higher perfection and man is the result. Now, to show the meaning of this theory in terms of thought, let us imagine that this person is the only man on earth, and that besides himself there are only those apes present that, according to his theory, can evolve into human beings. He now studies these apes with the utmost accuracy down to the most minute detail and then forms a concept of what lives in them. Excluding himself and without ever having seen another human being let him now try to develop the concept of a man solely from his concept of the ape. He will find this to be quite impossible. His concept “ape” will never transform itself into the concept “man.”

If he had cultivated correct habits of thinking, this man would have said to himself, “My concept of the ape does not change into the concept of man. What I perceive in the ape, therefore, can never become a human being, otherwise my concept would have to change likewise. There must be something else present that I am unable to perceive.” So he would have to imagine an invisible, supersensible entity behind the physical ape that he would be unable to perceive but that alone would make the ape's transformation into man a possible conception.

We shall not enter into a discussion of the impossibility of this case, but simply point out the erroneous thinking underlying this theory. If this man had thought correctly he would have seen that he could not possibly conceive of such a theory without assuming the existence of something supersensible. Upon further investigation you will discover that an overwhelmingly large number of people has committed this error of thinking. Errors like these, however, will no longer occur to the one who has trained his thinking as suggested here.

For anyone capable of thinking correctly a large part of modern literature (especially that of the sciences) becomes a source of unpleasant experience. The distorted and misguided thinking expressed in it can cause even physical pain in a man who has to work his way through it. It should be understood, however, that this is not said with any intent to slight the wealth of observation and discovery that has been accumulated by modern natural science and its objective methods of research.

Now let us consider “short-sighted” thinking. Most people are unconscious of the fact that their thinking is not factual, but that it is for the most part only the result of thought habits. The decisions and conclusions therefore of a man whose thought penetrates the world and life will differ greatly from those of one whose ability to think is limited or nil. Consider the case of a materialistic thinker. To convince such a

man through reasoning, however logical, sound and good, is not an easy task. It is usually a useless effort to try to convince a person with little knowledge of life through reason. Such a person does not see the reasons that make this or that statement valid and possible if he has formed the habit of seeing nothing but matter in everything and simply adheres to this habit of thinking.

Today it can generally be said that people are not prompted by reasons when making statements but rather by the thinking habits behind these reasons. They have acquired habits of thought that influence all their feelings and sensations, and when reasons are put forth, they are simply the mask of the habitual thinking that screens these feelings and sensations. Not only is the wish often the father of the thought, but it can also be said that all our feelings and mental habits are the parents of our thoughts. He who knows life knows how difficult it is to convince another person by means of logical reasoning. What really decides and convinces lies much deeper in the human soul.

There are good reasons for the existence of the Anthroposophical Movement and for the activities in its various branches. Everyone who has participated in the work of the Movement for any length of time comes to notice that he has acquired a new way of thinking and feeling. For the work in the various branches is not merely confined to finding logical reasons for things. A new and more comprehensive quality of feeling and sensation is also developed.

How some people scoffed a few years ago when they heard their first lectures in spiritual science. Yet today how many things have become self-evident to these same people who previously looked upon these things as impossible absurdities. In working in the Anthroposophical Movement one not only learns to modify one's thinking, one also learns to unfold a wider perspective of soul life.

We must understand that our thoughts derive their coloring from far greater depths than are generally imagined. It is our feelings that frequently impel us to hold certain opinions. The logical reasons that are put forward are often a mere screen or mask for our deeper feelings and habits of thinking.

To bring ourselves to a point at which logical reasons themselves possess a real significance for us, we must have learned to love logic itself. Only when we have learned to love factuality and objectivity will logical reason be decisive for us. We should gradually learn to think objectively, not allowing ourselves to be swayed by our preference for this or that thought. Only then will our vision broaden in the sense that we do not merely follow the mental ruts of others but in such a way that the reality of the things themselves will teach us to think correctly.

True practicality is born of objective thinking, that is, thinking that flows into us from the things themselves. It is only by practicing such exercises as have just been described that we learn to take our thoughts from things. To do these exercises properly we should choose to work with sound and wholesome subjects that are least affected by our

culture. These are the objects of nature.

To train our thinking using the things of nature as objects to think about will make really practical thinkers of us. Once we have trained ourselves in the practical use of this fundamental principle, our thinking, we shall be able to handle the most everyday occupations in a practical way. By training the human soul in this way a practical viewpoint is developed in our thinking.

The fruit of the Anthroposophical Movement must be to place really practical thinkers in life. What we have come to believe is not of as much importance as the fact that we should become capable of surveying with understanding the things around us. That spiritual science should penetrate our souls, thereby stimulating us to inner soul activity and expanding our vision, is of far more importance than merely theorizing about what extends beyond the things of the senses into the spiritual. In this, Anthroposophy is truly practical.

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