

PERSON TO PERSON INSPIRATION

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and

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Foreword

Philosophic Vision

It is a widespread belief among philosophers of our times that doing genuine philosophy and writing poetry at one and the same time are inexorably incompatible, nay, ineluctably opposed, activities. The reason behind such a belief is the prevailing conception of philosophy itself. This work by Sunnie and Jim Kidd is a glowing counter example to such a belief, for it eminently succeeds in conveying a rare and saving philosophic vision through the medium of a prose which reads like fine poetry. It is not by accident that the authors wrote that way; rather, the vision they wish to articulate and share with the reader is itself such that it cannot be adequately expressed in the deadpan prose so characteristic of countless philosophy books that roll down the press every year.

Our lives are impoverished by lack of the power and facility to inspire and be inspired. As Socrates would have resoundingly approved, Sunnie and Jim are proclaiming that an uninspiring and uninspired life is not worth living. Inspiration is the central theme of this book, by which the authors aspire to enable each of us to lead inspiring and inspired lives—lives of joy and fulfillment.

The method of inquiry is existential phenomenological—what other method is there appropriate to this inquiry? Beginning with a call to poetic living, the authors gently lead the reader through an existential phenomenological view of inspiration, meditative reflection on the Tao and the hermeneutic arc of projective consciousness to the intersubjective heart, which is shown to be, “not only primary to being but to interpersonal relations.” The treatment of these topics is enriched through the insights of Chuang Tzu, William James, Bergson, Buber, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and several poets.

Sunnie and Jim richly deserve to be congratulated for authoring this work of inspiration, which, I am sure, will serve many in our troubled world in discovering meaning and leading inspiring and inspired lives—lives of joy, fulfillment and celebration—and that is no mean philosophic and poetic achievement.

Ramakrishna Puligandla, Ph.D.
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SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

*Movement beyond
the always emerging horizon
out of the implicit
which everything springs
when squares turn
to diamonds
in different form
of existence.*

The Writing Caruso

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Professor Ramakrishna Puligandla for providing the Foreword to this work. As a renowned scholar and author of Indian thought, his was a delightful eye and heart with whom to share this work. Professor Puligandla's expertise on the spirit and mind of the intuitive dimension poignantly catches the essence of what was aspired to with this text, envisioning the qualitative dimensions of life which give shape and form to its meaning. As Ramakrishna says of his own students, they do not understand philosophy until they can write poetry.

Sunnie D. Kidd
Jim Kidd

DEDICATED TO:

MARY

AND

THE OLD MONK

Introduction

Our lives have become questions which ask for responsible answers, questions which can only be answered by the ways in which we choose to live. Poetic Living is an expression of an attitude toward one's own existence, wrapped up in the meanings grown by life. It is an ecological walk-way which we have found at our feet, the one that we have been following. Poetic Living is a life as loved, a dance to the tunes in our hearts and a song of the soul of our earth. To become aware of oneself and our place on this earth leads one to ponder, how shall it be?

Henri Bergson once said "always follow your inspiration." We have found this to be true. Inspiration is the human being's most creative act. Bergson's statement of the human being as a "measureless virtuality," seems to display the height, depth and breadth of inspiration. Although measureless, inspiration is direct and can be seen when enacted by the inspired person. The inspired person can say yes or no to inspiration. This is viewed in terms of degrees of readiness and as an inspired option. If this option is not taken up by the person, can we speak of inspiration? Probably the most respected aspect of inspiration is that it cannot be manipulated. A teacher cannot walk into a situation and say "I think I will inspire four people today." Yet a person can be an inspiration for the other and not know it, at that time and the inspired person does not say, at that time "gee! I'm being inspired." A teacher can only offer the invitation to the possibility of inspiration through openness. An Experiential Expression of this would be "you can call on me." Inspiration is a universal phenomenon yet touches each one of us personally. It cuts across and goes beyond any specific philosophy, psychology and religion. Inspiration comes from beyond. One cannot inspire oneself, inspiration comes from beyond the self and lights up something from within (Martin Heidegger "call to conscience") the inspired person. Inspiration lights up and dis-closes personal meaning in a new way. We make a few distinctions: encouragement is not inspiration, one may encourage the other but the other knows (felt dimension) if it is right, at that time. Although encouragement can, later on, maintain inspiration. In contrast to aspiration, ambition overrides values whereas aspirations outline one's future. While reading, think in terms of an inspiring other and an inspired person. From an existential phenomenological view "you are the other!" The nature of the human being is that being which can be inspired and is an aspiring being. This displays an inspiration/aspiration dialectic. The reader should keep in mind that the Dynamic Aspects of Inspiration is integral and as such this work shows the mutual interflow.

In Universalism as Being-with: Caring itself the structure in existence is presented. It then discusses the three dimensions of temporality which constitute this unity, to bring to light care. Examples given are applicable to psychotherapy and nursing.

In *An Existential Phenomenological View of Inspiration*, the contextual boundaries of inspiration are placed in view through the projective function of consciousness. This function can go limp but it is not the same as existential incompleteness. It is not a lack in being but a deficient mode of being. Death as a boundary to human existence in the existential phenomenological view is a backdrop against which one can see life. Inspiration and death both serve to establish distance to what is possible.

In *Our Own Way*, Tao is a meditative reflection upon how the way of life in today's world is structured and linear. This arrangement results in an unnatural interpretation of time and the rhythm of life. A call is issued to re-discover the natural rhythms of life and to put technology in the modern lifestyle in healthy relation to nature. In so doing, one goes with life rather than against it and the interconnectedness of our place in all that is and all that will be can be revealed.

The Power of Imagination presents the nature of human existence which provides the foundation and insights for this discussion on imagination in its possibility to potentiate a dynamic shift in personal meaning. This work centers on understanding the impact of the other upon the projective function of consciousness, our capacity of imagination. Heidegger's analysis has usually been to illustrate the field of self-experience, while in this work, the social dynamics of a personal shift through the power of imagination remains focal. The positive character of the capacity for delusion is seen as foundational in freeing a person's ownmost possibilities. From a therapeutic view in the authentic interpersonal experience a person's way of being present is the possibility of another person's dynamic shift in personal meaning.

Hermeneutic Arc of Projective Consciousness is a way of displaying the life of consciousness, especially that of imagination. Emphasis is given to the phenomenological quality of teacher-student interaction as an occasion for openness to the other.

The Intersubjective Heart attempts to show that intersubjectivity is the intersubjective heart which is the ground of being. Further, the intersubjective heart is not only primary to being but to interpersonal relations.

Sunnie D. Kidd
Jim Kidd