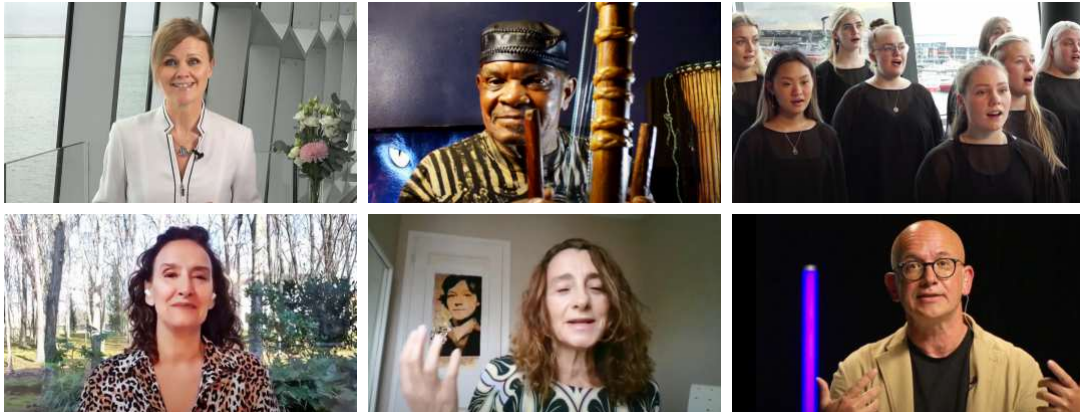




SPIRIT OF HUMANITY FORUM

NEWSLETTER August 2021



Towards a Loving World

Leadership & Governance for Well-Being

This was the theme for the 5th Spirit of Humanity Forum, which was held online for the first time. Up to 3,000 participants worldwide watched the live broadcast from the beautiful Harpa Concert Hall in Reykjavik, Iceland with a session from a TV-studio in Geneva and contributions from all continents.



In her opening address, **the Prime Minister of Iceland, Katrín Jakobsdóttir** spoke of the Wellbeing economy Countries of which Iceland is a founding member: *"It is my steadfast view that the wellbeing economy and its wide ranging values, where people's needs are made central, should be our guiding light to a more equal and sustainable future ...I wish you a good conference"*.

In his welcome, as host of the Forum, **the Mayor of Reykjavik Dagur B. Eggertsson** reminded us that, *"It is the 5th time that Reykjavik has hosted the Spirit of Humanity Forum since it was launched and I am*



extremely proud, as Mayor of the City, to be their host, because the City of Reykjavik has officially put its heart on peace and human rights issues, and we see it as the core of our local and international policies and programmes”.

The virtual venue is now open

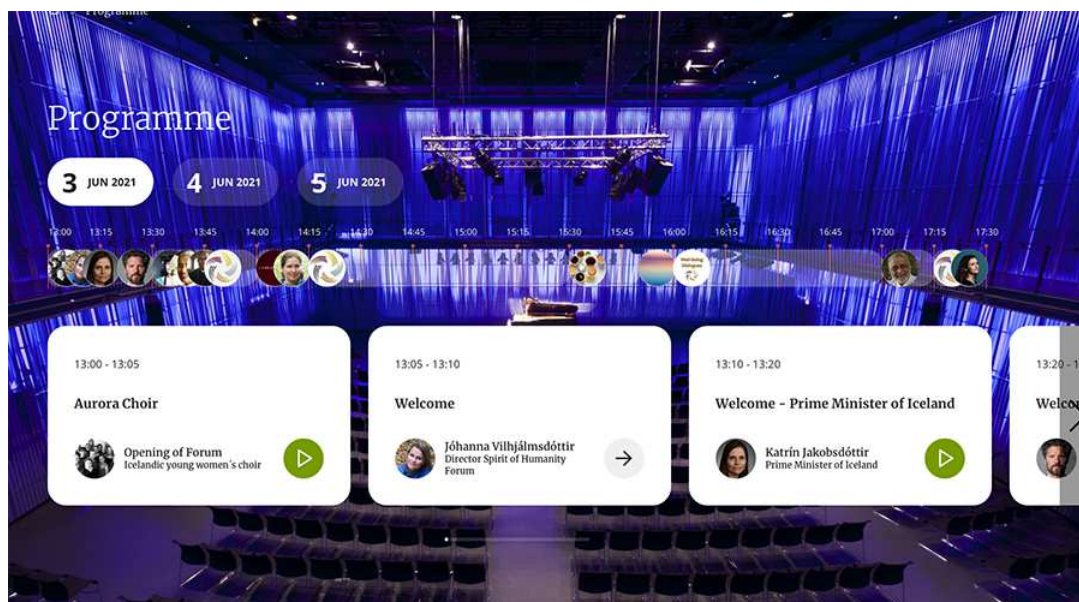
Welcome to watch the whole Forum

French, Spanish and English

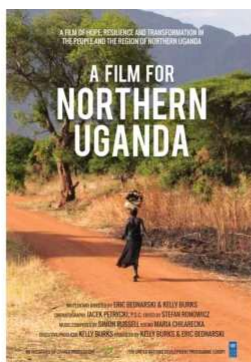
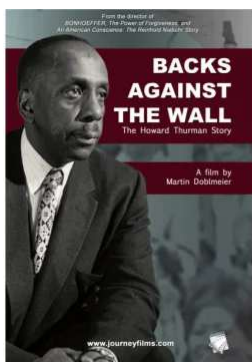


To create the Forum online, we had to set up a virtual venue. This venue is now opened up to anyone who wants to visit and explore the rich and inspiring material from the 5th SoH Forum.

[Virtual Venue HERE](#)



The Little Spirit of Humanity Film Festival



Welcome to watch the films

You can also find the Little Spirit of Humanity Film Festival in the virtual venue, organised in collaboration with the Reykjavik International Film Festival. It is a beautiful collection of documentaries showing concrete examples of love in action. We can all be the change we are dreaming of and inspire change in the world. Everything starts from inside and from where we are standing. Do not wait for others to create a positive change. Just start.

[Watch the films HERE](#)

A Breakthrough

This was a 'breakthrough Forum' in many ways. Being **entirely online for the first time** was a steep learning curve. The challenge was to keep the spiritual dimension, feeling, and energy in the livestream and from everyone's feedback it seems we were successful in that. Well done to all who participated! The natural scenery of the sea and birds flying by, provided a fitting setting for the greatest contribution of all, which was the sincerity and depth with which the presenters shared. We felt a sense of closeness to all of you and our presence together served to truly uplift our spirits and offer wisdom in a world filled with seemingly unsurmountable challenges.



Over three days, we considered the possibility of **LOVE in Leadership and Governance**, our visions of global well-being, and the connection between spirituality and global systems. We heard inspiring new narratives from politics, media, environment, religion, spirituality, education and science.

Particularly profound was young people's contribution in the dialogue with the Icelandic Minister for Social Affairs and Children and high school and university students. It has never been more important to listen to the voices of young people. When asked what wisdom he would like to share with other ministers or other governments about education and children and teenagers, the Minister said, *“Don’t be afraid to let children and young people join you at the table ... on an equal basis ...because you will not lose power, you will govern better”*.

It was very inspiring to hear **leaders and young people talk about how love and spirituality are the basis of changing the world**. It gives hope and reminds us that so many around the globe realize that the power of love is the greatest power for transformation.

The practice of 'holding space'

Timeless wisdom from a young mind

Ella Gregory in 2 min

[WATCH HERE](#)



Listening to the voices of young people



This year the G20 Interfaith Forum Working Group on Education partners launched a unique Global Listening Initiative, inviting adolescents from across five continents to share their experiences during the pandemic and how education can be improved to better support their healing and well-being. At the 5th SoH Forum two young participants from the IF20's listening groups, Ella Gregory, 18, from the UK, and Karam Jaber, 16, from Lebanon participated in an intense and wonderful dialogue with the Icelandic Minister of Children and Social Affairs, Mr Ásmundur Einar Daðason.

In this article Dr. Scherto Gill shares with us the meaningful insights from our worldwide young people.

[READ MORE](#)



Co-Creation, the way forward

For the first time too, **the Forum programme was co-created with our regional teams and partners.** As we put our trust in each other, outcomes in the forum itself and in the wider world become increasingly effective. We have new supporting partners and more wishing to come on board with the Forum's work. Most of those who created the programme did so on voluntary basis with their heart and soul. Co-operation and love made the Forum possible. It was moving to experience that when responsibility is shared there is a deepening of our pure motivation and engagement.

The Forum is an instrument for benevolence so we let it fly!

All 5th Forum Sessions available on YouTube

Why not explore the conversations while on a walk, cleaning or doing some other activity where your mind is rather free. A great way to reflect more deeply [Listen HERE](#)

Participants 5th Forum experience

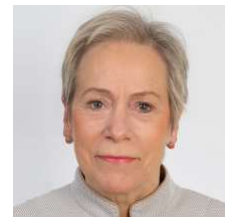
At the end of the first day, we invited the participants to express their experience in just one word through a digital system, which presents the result like this, with the enlarged words that many used.



Reflections from the 5th SoH Forum

"We rarely use the words happiness and love in politics... but why are we in politics? What do we want to achieve in politics if not love and happiness."

Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, fr. Foreign Minister of Iceland



"How does love support our differences? Building trust through open listening. I do need to be authentic to what I believe, but also be able to listen deeply to where others are coming from. It is critical (when our views are challenged) to be able to step back and listen and not fall into reaction. To be able to meet as human beings, to develop a sense of appreciation for the other person and then build on that."

Peggy Dulany, Founder and Chair, Synergos

"Spirituality says that everything begins inside, and then it begins to manifest outside...Learning to love myself is not a sign of ego, but a

sign of spiritual development. And when I can begin to love myself, I can start loving others unconditionally also."

Sister Jayanti, European Director, Brahma Kumaris



"We must be aware when we do our work and carry out the responsibilities that it is very important to take care of ourselves. You may nourish your soul, but if you do not look after your body it will create a problem. Lack of well-being will have an impact on others. Looking after the self is fundamental."

Gabriela Michetti, Former Vice President of Argentina, President, Ser Consultancy

"I was very impressed with what Gabriela was saying. I think it is a big issue... When working with high ambition and wanting to provide quality, one can end up working a lot and get people to work a lot. I think it is a big discussion."

Madeleine von Holzen, Chief editor, 'Le Temps'; Editorial director, 'Heidi.news'



"Indeed, the world needs to hear about well-being and how we can participate, through our love, to create that well-being."

The Most Revd Dr Thabo C. Makgoba, the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town

"A scientific way of thinking can help me understand how the world is made up and what has happened in life, but it cannot tell me how I ought to relate with my fellows."

John, Lord Alderdice, House of Lords, UK



"We want to come up with the stories of how the coming together inspired by our faiths, DIFFERENT faiths and serve together through our different faiths, what does that look like? How simple can that be, and how powerful? How necessary and needed it is."

Azza Karam, Secretary-General, Religions for Peace

"We are not fully aware of what we are not doing. We are not fully aware of the consequences of not playing our part. When this awareness comes, then the world will change."

Kamlesh Patel, Founder, Heartfulness





"We have to be curious. It opens our hearts to others. Anger doesn't allow us to be curious. Curiosity helps us establish a common language rather than an attitude where we don't want to know."

Yves Daccord, Executive Chairman Edgelands Institute @ Harvard, former CEO of the International Red Cross

"Living together as one and spreading and sharing love, and knowing that...the world is on fire, but we still have time, and I have a lot of hope. And I want to call you all to do that, to leave no one behind, to spread love and dreams and do our best so we can prevail."

Myrian Castello, Co-Founder, Dream Factory and Right to Dream Movement

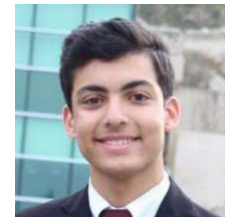


"When you involve young people, you don't lose power, you will make things better."

Ásmundur Einar Daðason, Minister of Social Affairs and Children, Iceland

"Well-being all comes from the mind and the heart. When a person has a calm mind they live peacefully... To be kindhearted, not give with the expectation to get something back, not being sentimental, but even just a sincere smile can draw a smile on your face... To be kind, good and peaceful. ."

Karam Jaber, Secondary School student, Lebanon



"A fundamental part of what we do is based around empathy...the first step is really just listening, listening to other people and be prepared to be changed by those experiences."

Amin Khosravi, Urbanist, Co-founder urbz Geneva

"When I established "Crear vale la pena", I realized that we were trying to make room to work on vulnerability, a vulnerability we tend to see in the less favoured social classes, but which is a kind of vulnerability that is also present in our societies at large."

Ines Sanguinetti, Co-founder and President, Fundación Crear Vale la Pena



"Moving towards a loving world requires each of us to embody love, peace and compassion. This can be encouraged by leaders who embody these values and lead by example, creating effective action and building a kinder world. Leadership and governance can be

beautiful things, inspiring all to live fully and create a socially and environmentally just world."

Ella Gregory, High School Graduate, UK

"We need to learn to love - to expand love into developing energies we have within us which we can draw from and share with each other... we have to unite and relate to each other to develop our humanity in much fuller ways."



Prof Ursula King, Professor of Theology and Religious Studies



"Our world needs love more than anything else. Love that is transcendent, love that is inclusive, love that is accompanied by forgiveness, love that is unconditional."

Mohammed Mohammed, Senior Programme Officer, the Fetzer Institute

"I empathize with leaders who often experience substantial pressures and dependencies in their daily responsibilities and hope that the Forum can strengthen all participants in their capacity to live and lead in accordance with their aspirations."



Dr Thomas Bruhn, Research Group Leader, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS)



"Almost all love is local. Reach out to others, bring well-being to our neighbours, our communities."

Dr Kelly James Clark, Professor of Philosophy at Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul

"Other people can't change the systems for you - you need to participate - we all have personal responsibility because we are all part of the systems."



Martin Frick, Deputy to the Special Envoy for the UN Food Systems Summit 2021



"It is important to find the balance of listening to the public and listening to the experts."

Óttarr Proppé, fr Minister of Health, Iceland; musician, actor and bookseller

"If everyone cultivates themselves we can change the systems from a spiritual level - when you nurture the invisible you can change the visible."

Zhang Lanying, Executive Deputy Dean of the Institute of Rural Reconstruction of China, Southwest University, Chongqing



"Our rhythms are so fast and demanding. They are disconnected with the rhythm of nature."

Nicole Schwab, Co-Director, Nature-based Solutions, World Economic Forum

"Music creates a bridge for people to move out of thinking and into Presence. In my experience, the more powerful communication and connection with the essence of each person happen through the live improvisation. I suppose this is because an improvisation is music created in the present moment."



Ranara Alhoundova, Pianist and composer



"I strongly believe that well-being starts inside. And we must change on the inside to change the outside."

Ragnheiður Gröndal, Singer and Composer

"The paramount purpose of leadership and governance is to secure the well being of all life. The time has come for the power of love to replace the love of power."

Dr Rama Mani, Founder of Theatre of Transformation Academy, Co-founder Home for Humanity



"The Earth does not need to be saved. She just needs to be loved."

Jean-François Clervoy, CNES and ESA astronaut

"Inner transformation is fundamentally important to us as leaders who is dedicated to creating outer transformation in our societies- if we are to overcome the unprecedented challenges we face in the world today we need to create a world where we share and care for each other ... let's create outer peace by creating peace within ourselves."



Dr Vinya Ariyaratne, President of Sarvodaya, the largest Community Development organisation in Sri Lanka



"We need to go beyond the academic understanding of leadership - leadership is about giving, generosity, love and about sharing a part of yourself."

H.E. Haifa Najjar, *Senator* in the Jordanian Parliament,
Superintendent of Ahliya and Mutran International Schools

"Leadership is self-knowledge. A true leader leads with humility, love and selflessness... we need to revive the spirit of co-operation. In Africa, we say that one rich man in a village is a poor man... but when he shares his wealth with everybody, he is a wealthy man ... because he does not need to build high walls to protect himself out of fear"



Father Dr Anselm Adodo, Founder of Pax Herbals, initiator of Pan-African Action Research Network for African Indigenous Knowledge in Nigeria

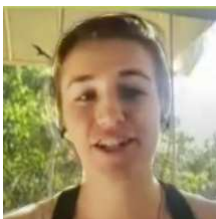


"It is now the time to be the best version of who we can be. We already know it, but we have to re-learn what it means to love and express it."

Thais Corral, Founder of Sinal do Vale

"Love one another, touch someone's hand, head or shoulder and just tell him that you love him."

Pops Mohamed is a South African multi-instrumentalist, jazz musician and producer



"We need to put humanity at the core of leadership - we can have all the technical solutions in the world, but if we don't have the personal evolution in the centre of our leadership we cannot go forward... love must be in the centre."

Katie Weintraub, Partnerships co-ordinator, Sinal do Vale

"Love can be cultivated through inner work, and it will always come back to you. People around you will respond. If you make your kindness visible, that builds trust. Building trust leads to love and compassion, and listening is a very important way to build trust."

Prof Kristín Vala Ragnarsdóttir, Professor of Sustainability Science
University of Iceland



"The only thing you have power over is yourself. So, if you dislike something, like greed, judgement or prejudice in the world, then it is your responsibility to adopt something different. To adopt the values you would like to see more of in the world."

"If we take love seriously ... our whole being is transformed, and our attention is centred on our ways in which we relate lovingly to each other, to the earth and to the cosmos."

Prof David Cadman, Quaker Writer, Professor of Practice at the University of Wales Trinity St. David



"Love is the pulse of the cosmos and the pulse of our own deepest nature. We are all connected to each other, to the earth and the cosmos through our participation in a miraculous way of life."

Anne Baring, Jungian Analyst, Historian and Author

"Being a social neuroscientist and psychologist also working cross-disciplinary together with economists, educators, politicians and health-care providers, I am repeatedly astonished by the fact that in all these large-scale systems we have created, LOVE is somehow a taboo. We do not do research and do not like to speak about it publicly neither. However, it is the basis for humanity."



Prof Tania Singer, scientific head of the Max Planck Social Neuroscience Research Group



"Let us explore, share and co-create practices that enable us to develop as creative, autonomous, emotionally and spiritually mature people, to become leaders that embrace in the joy of caring."

Dr Miriam Subirana, Meditation teacher, Author and Professor at Ramon Llull-Blanquerna University

"To contribute to a transformed world requires we all commit to nurturing loving environments, compassionate cultures and leadership, and cultivating an experienced sense of our interconnection with all."

Michael West CBE is Senior Fellow at The King's Fund, London and Professor at Lancaster University



"Now more than ever, we need to learn to create a loving world, a world in harmony, where well-being for all is our goal, and we seek to heal ourselves and our world in the process."

Richard Dunne, Founder and Director of Education at The Harmony Project

"As we emerge from the Global pandemic, this is a crucial time for leaders to embrace the importance of what it means to have the courage to soften and to face the changes we need to make in order to

"build a more humane and compassionate world for ourselves, for colleagues and for our communities. It is a time to listen and live from within the beauty of our own hearts."

Hester O Connor, Clinical Psychologist, Heartfulness Meditation Trainer



"The ability to lead, love, and help others, starts within each of us. Just as we should put on our own oxygen mask before helping others, a good leader needs the skills, time, and space to look after themselves and plan for a better world and future."

Judith Nelson, Physiotherapist, Journalist and Heartfulness

Meditation Trainer

"We spend a major part of our time in some organisation, which serves consciously or unconsciously as an influencing context. The more constructive, appreciation, connectedness and love we experience in our work, the more we will spread it in our lives, families and networks."



Cornelis (Cees) J. Hoogendijk, Co-creator of Learning Organizations - OrgPanoptics & AI Academy



"Loving the world must begin with loving all life forms fearlessly."

Four Arrows, aka Dr Don Trent Jacobs, college professor, writer and activist for Native American rights.

"Love, compassion and humanist consideration - caring for others - from local community leaders all the way up to the leadership of nations is a key element in moving towards a Loving World. We all have to take responsibility and work together to change our world."



Kelly Burks, explorer, poet, writer, photographer, designer, consultant, young offender counsellor and film-maker

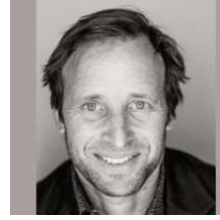


"The Covid pandemic has given many of us time to go within and begin the journey of self-love and self-reflection, which enables us to live more consciously and be more loving towards others and Earth."

Vanitha Chandrasegaram, Pioneer Dramatherapist in Malaysia

"I fully agree that we need more well being and that love is the force for fixing it."

Alan Gegenchatz, Owner and founder, Outobox AG Ltd



"In a time in which societies are shaken and threatened by global challenges such as climate change, the COVID pandemic, increasing populism, strong, global communities are extremely important. For this, we need to create a culture of love and compassion and show genuine leadership towards it."

Carolyn Fraude, works for the transdisciplinary research group 'A Mindset for the Anthropocene', IASS Potsdam

"The common theme that unites us all today is an understanding that the world cannot continue on its present course. What is needed is bold, enlightened and selfless leadership with the courage to forge a new path in both the social and political spheres. But the great obstacle today is the painful erosion of trust in leadership and governance."



Martin Doblmeier, Founder and President of Journey Films

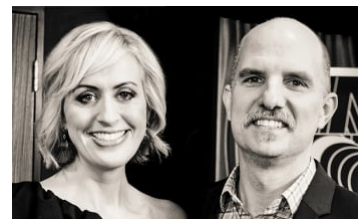


"Through my film work over the years, I have tried to tell inspiring stories of people who have made difference, and who have had a lasting transformation in the world."

Eric Bednarski, film director, writer and producer

"As directors of the Love Them First, a documentary featuring a Minneapolis principal fighting for students in the city's longest-standing 'failing' school, we strongly felt the title of the film should reflect the force behind the school's triumphant turnaround. It all starts with love.

Principal Mauri Friestleben once told us, "If you are in this work, you are in it to change the world." The story has now stretched from Minnesota, across the United States, and around the world to countries like Iceland, farther than we could ever measure as each child is transformed by a school that loved them, just as they are."



Lindsay Seavert & Ben Garvin, Directors 'Love them first'

Love quest

within the language of your soul
tell me the term for love

or, if there is no word
what is its colour
texture
taste ?

how does it smell ?

and does it come with sound
or is it silent ?

how does it make you feel ?

is it a moving being ?

does it belong to you
can it be shared ?

and where are its origins
where was it born
or was it present all along ?

who would you be without it
would you exist at all ?

too many questions
you are right
and yet, I have a final one for you

which other field
is truly worth exploring ?

come
let us travel
all the way

till we become
the answer
to this quest

Prof Alexander Scheiffer
Home for Humanity
6 VI 2021





To support well-being for every child in education our friend **Wendy Ellyatt**, founder of the Flourish Project shares ways of how to keep the dialogue alive

[Read More](#)

Collective trauma and global well-being

Dr. Scherto Gill at GHFP talks with Thomas Hübl

The latest episode in the 'A Narrative of Love' conversation series with thought-leaders and spiritual teachers about their understanding of the significance of love in our personal and public lives.



[Watch HERE](#)

Stories of Purpose-Driven Philanthropy

Very Interesting Podcast by Synergos

Cultivate the Soul: The Podcast features philanthropic and social action leaders

[Read More](#)



Spiritual principles are pragmatic, build peace on respect and collaboration

The Social Democratic Party in Germany had organised two events with representatives of civil society organisations, researchers and members of parliaments to discuss how peace can be strengthened in our societies. Each speaker brought in their specific expertise e. g. banning nuclear weapons, supporting disarmament, and understanding how climate change is increasingly becoming a threat to security among nations. Carolin Fraude who was part of the planning team of the last Spirit of Humanity Forum spoke about the aspect of inner peace, and the importance of creating a culture of being and working together that is based on values such as respect, cooperation, and nonviolent communication. To illustrate how civil society organisations support change in

the political working and communication culture, Carolin shared about the 5th Spirit of Humanity Forum.

Economic Growth instead of GDP Growth



It may sound like a paradox, but it is possible to grow the economy without raising GDP, if we widen the definition of the economy to take account of human wellbeing and nature, says IASS Affiliate Scholar Christian Felber, the founder of the Economy for the Common Good.

A fierce battle is raging around the role of growth in the economy. While critics, such as [British economist Tim Jackson](#), are demanding degrowth or post-growth, neoclassical economists and political leaders seem to be addicted to growing the economy. Without growth, they fear that the capitalistic engine would grind to a halt and the economy die.

[Read More on Christian Felber's blog](#)

Love, Not Fear



By [Bob Boisture](#), President & CEO of the **Fetzer Institute**

[USA Today](#) published an abridged version of this essay in its June 16, 2021 issue.

How did we ever persuade ourselves that we can love America without loving Americans?

Fractured by fear. Living from fear and living from love are very different things. Fear closes our hearts. Love opens them. Fear despairs. Love hopes. Fear shouts. Love listens. Fear has to be right. Love is willing to be wrong. Fear thinks the other side must lose for our side to win. Love knows we can only win together.

Our country is being fractured by fear. We fear rapid and massive change we cannot control. We fear economic instability. We fear leaders, laws, and systems that deny our full humanity. We fear a culture that demeans us and the values we hold dear. We fear the damage we are doing to the natural world. And, increasingly, we fear each other.

To make matters worse, powerful interests amplify and exploit our fear for their own profit and power. News sources, search engines, and social media selectively feed us information that hardens our opinions and makes them more extreme, confident that if they stoke our fear, we will come back for more. Politicians and other factional leaders inflame our tribal fears and prejudice, knowing that they can use these powerful emotions to short-circuit our reason and gain our uncritical support.

[READ MORE](#)

Spiritual Practice: Play at Work

Inspiration to put into practice from [the Fetzer Institute](#)



Do you shy away from “play” as something frivolous--not to be part of your work life? In the video below, Bill Vendley, senior advisor for world religions at the Fetzer Institute, reminds us of the importance of play. This is from someone who dedicated his life's work to conflict resolution! [READ MORE](#)

ELIJAH SUMMER SCHOOL AND INTERRELIGIOUS SEMINAR 2021

August 1-5 online
August 8-12 in Jerusalem



For more information and registration visit <http://summerschool.elijah-interfaith.org>

Global Solidarity and Caring for the Other

Alon-Goshen Gottstein, founder and director of the [Elijah Interfaith Institute](#) since 1997, contributed to the SoH Forum 2014 and is keeping the connection alive with us since then. Alon recently shared news about their upcoming summer school 'Global Solidarity and Caring for the Other'. Among others, Kathryn Marshall, who contributed to the SoH Forum in 2019, will be teaching there. Alon-Goshen Gottstein specializes in bridging the theological and academic dimension with various practical initiatives, especially involving world religious leadership. We are happy to share the news. Further details on their website via the link below.

In line with our theme on Towards a Loving World The Elijah Interfaith Institute offers Summer School on the topic of **Interreligious Perspectives on Global Solidarity and Caring for the Other**

[READ MORE](#)



**ELIJAH
SUMMER
SCHOOL**

Reflective writing on the Power of Love

Nancy Froeling, a personal trainer and organisational consultant from Holland, is sharing a simple and powerful practical method to



bring more positive qualities and powers into our lives. It is simple because everything starts from within with honesty.

Reflective writing is an easy and effective way to explore virtues, powers and themes in your life. It is a method to ask yourself questions and see the answers coming in writing - answers from (deep) within yourself as if your intuition is speaking to you. It works best with pen and paper 😊 Please enjoy connecting to yourself in this way ☐

1. How am I doing at the moment? What are my thoughts and feelings?
2. How was my week (until this moment)?
3. Write my own definition: What does Power mean to me? How would I describe it to myself? What does the Power of Love mean to me? How would I explain that to myself?
4. Do I have experiences with the Power of Love in my life? Can I describe some of them here?
5. Do I know people around me who seem to have/use the Power of Love? What do I see in them?
6. What would I like to learn more about the Power of Love for myself?
7. Which steps do I have to take to increase the Power of Love in my life? What is the first step that I will take now?
8. What has touched me / my heart the most in this reflection?

Wishing you much much Love in your life ☐

Join us for Friday's for Silence



Welcome to stay connected with the Spirit of Humanity Community by joining us in **a simple spiritual practice** to empower yourself and help shift human consciousness towards core human values:

Fridays for Silence – building a subtle network of pure thoughts

Every Friday at 11.00 am GMT for 15 minutes

(Please note: British Summertime is NOT = GMT)

[LINK HERE](#)

Spirit of Humanity Forum

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