



Waldzell Meeting 2004

A Global Dialog for Inspiration

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Zitate Referenten 2004

Keynote Speakers at the Waldzell Meeting 2004

Shirin Ebadi

Iranian, Nobel Peace Prize laureate 2003

The Koran swears by the pen and what it writes. Such a sermon and message cannot be in conflict with awareness, knowledge, wisdom, freedom of opinion and expression and cultural pluralism.

Günter Blobel

German emigrant to the U.S., Nobel Prize in Medicine

Humans living on earth at the present time are all descended from a very small group who lived around 200.000 years ago. Thus, all humans on this earth are closely related to each other! And yet we do not understand this and still fight each other, hate each other and kill each other.

Burkhard F. Ellegast

Austrian, 66th Abbot of Melk Abbey

The meaning of our lives has a lot to do with humility.

David J. Goldberg

British, Senior Rabbi

I have more in common with tolerant people from other religions than with intolerant ones from my own religion.

Kary B. Mullis

American, Nobel Prize in Chemistry

Just as you are not able to prohibit an artist from painting you are not able to prevent a researcher from doing research.



Carl M. Djerassi

Austrian emigrant to the U.S., father of „the pill“

If I had not worked on the pill someone else would have invented it. But if Faust had not been written by Goethe Faust would not exist.

Thomas Hampson

American, baritone

Questions without answers make you open to everything--often, the answer only comes at the end.

Alan M. Webber

American, Co-Founder of the magazine „Fast Company“

None of us is as smart as all of us. We live in an economy of networked thinkers. Above all, we have to learn from those who differ the most from ourselves. Diversity is the salvation of companies as much as it is of communities.

Mihály Csikszentmihályi

Hungarian emigrant to the U.S., Thinker of the Year Award 2000

I have studied artists, musicians, composers, athletes, and scientists who really love what they are doing, who don't want to do anything in the world except what they are doing. And they're not doing it in order to get something later; they're not doing it for money, they're not doing it for fame primarily. They don't want to do it just because they want to be appreciated by their peers, but they do it because doing what they do is so important to them, it's so enjoyable, it's so fulfilling that nothing in the world compares to that. And the thing that is amazing to me is that this kind of complete involvement in something that makes life worth living can be obtained from an enormous variety of different things.

Anton Zeilinger

Austrian, quantum researcher

Up to the present day all we have done is but scratching the surface. The really deep things are still ahead of us. The deep questions are those about the nature of things.

Helen Palmer

American, leading Enneagram specialist

In terms of the capacities of the human mind, intuition is not a big deal. It's a very available state of mind, if you have the confidence and the willingness to perform the practices that gain access to it.



Inhalt

<i>WALDZELL – An attempt to describe a vision</i>	7
by Andreas Salcher and Gundula Schatz	7
<i>The Waldzell Meeting 2004 – Three atmospheric descriptions</i>	11
Three lessons and five revolutions	11
Alan M. Webber, Fast Company	11
On the other hand: how can you get to a reasonably satisfactory inscription on our gravestone?	16
Christian Ortner, Format	16
Waldzell: The art of questioning – in times of ignorance	17
Heinz Sichrovsky, NEWS	17
<i>The key questions of the Waldzell Meetings</i>	19
To which extent is a person able to influence history?	19
Conny Bischofberger	19
Are there limits to science and by whom are they defined?	21
Natasa Konopitzky	21
How am I able to find sense and passion for my life and my work? How can we create companies in the future, containing this sense?	24
Simone Leonhartsberger	24
Does God still make sense?	27
Conny Bischofberger	27
<i>The central statements of the keynote speakers at the Waldzell Meeting</i>	30
<i>Eleven life stories containing sense</i>	35
Anton Zeilinger	35
Alan M. Webber	36
Helen Palmer	37
Kary B. Mullis	38
Thomas Hampson	39
David J. Goldberg	40
Burkhard F. Ellegast	41
Shirin Ebadi	42
Carl M. Djerassi	43
Mihály Csikszentmihályi	44
Günter Blobel	45
<i>Melk Abbey: 1000 years of sense and spirituality</i>	46
Burkhard F. Ellegast, 66th Abbot of Melk Abbey	46
<i>What was left at the end of the day at the Meeting 2004 ?</i>	51
Testimonials of the keynote speakers 2004	51
<i>This is not the end. This is the beginning.</i>	53
Next steps for Waldzell	53
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	57

WALDZELL – The attempt to describe a vision

by Andreas Salcher und Gundula Schatz
Founders of the Waldzell Institute



Andreas Salcher and Gundula Schatz

This report attempts to capture the spirit and outcome of a meeting that brought together eleven of the world's brightest minds from the various fields of science, economy, arts, politics and spirituality. The meeting took place in one of the world's most renowned abbeys, and examined the question of how to lead a meaningful life. The Benedictine Abbey Melk, not "Waldzell", rose to world-wide fame through Umberto Eco's novel "The Name of the Rose".

*"But Waldzell breeds the skilful
Glass Bead Game players."*

(Hermann Hesse, "The Glass Bead Game")

Waldzell is a fictitious place in Hermann Hesse's novel "The Glass Bead Game". Once a year, selected people - the "Glass Bead Game Players" - create a universal, intellectual and sensuous work of art, whose effect reaches far beyond the circle of players involved, essentially contributing to the further spiritual development of society.

Despite many efforts to determine the source, the precise origins of the name "Waldzell" are unknown. The myth "Waldzell" has for generations inspired many people to

try and turn this imaginary place - including its ability to enhance well-being and creativity - into reality.

In embarking on the fulfillment of our vision, we have attempted to create just such a special meeting place once a year. We call this endeavour "Waldzell Meeting - A Global Dialog for Inspiration". Hesse's elitist school "Waldzell" serves as a metaphor. The main theme is, no less, the search for the meaning of life.

The first crucial step towards realizing our idea was the invitation extended to Paulo Coelho in April 2003. We visited him at his residence in Tarbes, in southern France and had the opportunity to discuss our plans with him for two days. Not only has he become a friend and mentor, helping and advising us in the project since - we also hiked the Pyrenees with him and he taught us the basics in the art of archery. His support of our project led to the attention vitally necessary for the survival of our idea.

The next important step was to choose a suitable geographical region. It had been clear to us from the beginning that our concept wouldn't fit into the urban atmosphere of a larger city with the interchangeable congress halls and the hustle and bustle of thousands of people. What we were looking for was a small, intimate and very special place!

Eleven outstanding personalities enhanced through dialog

We went to see Erwin Pröll, head of the provincial government of Lower Austria to present our ideas and concept. Great politicians distinguish themselves through their intuitive feeling for a promising opportunity. Erwin Pröll is not only a highly successful politician but also a statesman of historical significance for his province. He placed confidence in our project right from the start - although at the time it was still at a very early stage. And so it was agreed to hold the first Waldzell Meeting in Lower Austria.

The third matter we needed to address in order to realize our vision was - without doubt – the financial aspect! In times when important decisions are mostly taken by anonymous management committees, the chance of coming across a decision-maker who is willing to take own initiatives is slim. President of the Raiffeisenverband, Dr. Christian Konrad, did not only take on the main sponsorship of the project, but became a valuable mentor and helpful advisor to us all as well.

We then met with other affluent, powerful people and presented the “Waldzell” idea to them - the project on “the search for meaning in life!” Some of the appointments were limited to just 15 minutes, but most meetings lasted more than an hour, some even longer.

The plan for the first Waldzell Meeting rested on three pillars:

1. The bringing together of outstanding personalities
2. The quest for purpose in life as central issue in society
3. The remarkable ambience of Melk Abbey

The purpose of this report is to provide information on how our plan worked out, and is directed at sought-after decision-makers, who are influential but under constant time constraints. The goal is simple: to stimulate curiosity to examine the search for meaning in life.

The Muslim Shirin Ebadi, Senior Rabbi David. J. Goldberg and Burkhard F. Ellegast, 66th abbot of Melk Abbey, met each other between the 10th and the 12th of September 2004. At the end of the second day, Goldberg stated that he probably had more in common with tolerant representatives of different religious beliefs, than with the intolerant ones of his own religion.

During the intensive dialogues of those two days, the science-oriented intellectual world of Nobel Prize Winner Günter Blobel collided fervently with the intuitive and instinctive one of psychologist Helen Palmer. The famous baritone Thomas Hampson thrilled those present - not only with his fantastic voice but also with his



Thomas Hampson, Helen Palmer

passionate speech “Thoughts are free, who can guess, what’s thought?” Anton Zeilinger, scientist in the field of quantum physics, questioned the basics in nature, convinced that the surface of knowledge has only been scraped slightly, challenging the world with so many more questions and answers. The most important questions are the ones concerning human nature - this riddle has still to be solved.

The discussion on the limits of scientific research, led by the Nobel Prize winner in the field of chemistry, Kary B. Mullis and by Carl Djerassi, “father of the Pill”, was just as heated! Mullis’ statement that “one could hinder a scientist in his research no less than a painter in drawing” (this does not make sense) let emotions run high. Carl Djerassi made his point by answering the question concerning the importance of an individual person in a field of research by claiming that if he hadn’t been the one to invent the Pill, some other person would have done so - whereas if Goethe hadn’t written “Faust” - well, in that case, “Faust” just wouldn’t exist.

Are there companies that care about the well-being of their employees and their clients - in times of addiction to share-holder values by decision-makers in the industry, causing leading economists to be driven by quarterly reports? Alan M. Webber, longstanding editor-in-chief of the “Harvard Business Review” and founder of “Fast Company” came up with frightening results: “Nowadays, employees are seen as a cost factor - since the overall objective is cost reduction, and to be as fast and as efficient as possible...?! The alarming thing about this way of handling matters isn’t just the implication it has for millions of people on the job or the fact that - while it may seem like a profit-oriented strategy at first sight - it often takes a turn for the worse in business. The real tragedy is that this mistake has already been made in the past.”

The Search for Meaning

The sense of the word “meaning” was newly defined in 1838 in a dictionary published by the Grimm brothers. For many centuries this search was answered by the church, considering its interest in leading the faithful to serve God and hope for salvation.

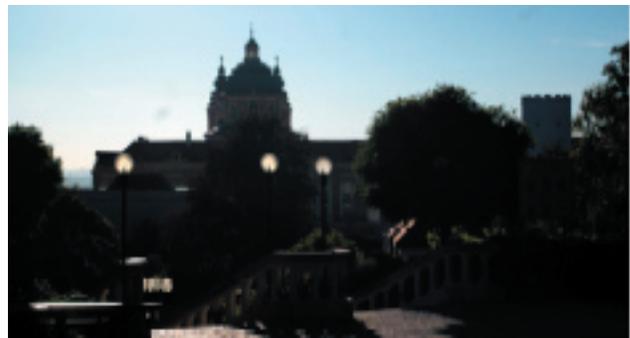
Humanity owes its technical and scientific progress in the last centuries to curiosity and intelligence. The negative implications of this rapid development are enormous: overpopulation, damages to the biosphere, a dangerous weapons race that lead to a proliferation of arms that exceeded by far the amount wanted or needed - all of which threaten the survival of the human race.

“Survival isn’t defined by less scientific research but by more wisdom”

(Christian de Duve,
“Vital Dust: Life as a Cosmic Imperative”)

Waldzell is the attempt to contribute towards solving these problems. Many successful personalities would probably like to know which part of their life achievements will outlast them and be honored - independently of their personal involvement. Even those amongst us who have never attempted to come to terms with the question of the purpose of life, are frequently confronted with it by their children. So many multilingual children, who have traveled the world and plunged into diverse fields of science and ways of life, are left to themselves to find answers to the vital question of their goal and purpose in life, since this question is still considered taboo in our performance-oriented society!

To find the meaning in and sense to life is becoming an ardent desire for an ever growing number of people. This search for meaning, already examined by Victor Frankl, the Austrian psychiatrist, has become a central issue in our pressured and insecure society, nevertheless offering multiple opportunities at the same time. The attempt to come to terms with the meaning of life has gained considerable importance for individuals as well as for the business community. The Waldzell Institute has committed itself to spreading this search for meaning - a search of paramount concern - within our society.



Stift Melk

Melk Abbey: 1000 Years of Sense and Spirituality

The geographical location of “Waldzell” is literary fiction. In order to find a place with an adequate atmosphere, suitable for a dialog between outstanding personalities, we began our search for a venue that existed and was available – and that was as close as possible to the fictitious place we had in mind! We decided to seek further inspirational help from another renowned novel:

“And as I was writing, we reached the vicinity of Melk, where, perched over a bend in the river, the handsome Stift stands to this day, after several restorations during the course of the centuries.”

(Umberto Eco, “Der Name of the Rose”)

The Benedictine abbey in Melk has been an inspiration to architects, painters, scientists and writers - such as Umberto Eco - for more than the thousand years of its existence. In choosing Melk Abbey as venue for the Waldzell Meetings, we were able to combine oriental and occidental

wisdom and experience, gathered and placed into archives, which included questions concerning the present and the future. In the past, abbeys were connected in terms of cultural exchange, a fundamental basis for models of societal interplay and host to reform movements. We thus were convinced that the power of symbolism would be felt at a place like Melk Abbey, laying the foundations for a global dialog for inspiration.

Waldzell's aim though, goes far beyond an annual dialog. We would like the wisdom and knowledge of the personalities involved to become accessible to everyone. Abbot George has offered us the unique opportunity to permanently incorporate the life stories and achievements of our keynote speakers into the renowned library of Melk Abbey in a special work of art called the "Waldzell Collection". This honor was well appreciated and acknowledged by all concerned.

The Answer to the Quest for Meaning and Sense in Life

The wonderful location of Melk Abbey enabled us to combine the tradition of 1000 years of spirituality with the frankness of questions concerning the present and the future. We were able to find eleven outstanding personalities willing to embark on this adventure. High expectations were placed on the outcome of the dialogue between eleven of the brightest minds available on the topic of "sense in life". The possible outcome was discussed at length by many - the media, personal friends and interested participants. The eleven participants themselves never speculated on the conclusions and did not limit themselves to a ready-made solution. Instead, they met this challenge with humor, pleasure and curiosity.

In the "Glass Bead Game" mentioned above, an individual - Joseph Knecht - seeks the meaning in life, providing the basis for passionate discussions in the fields of literature about the fulfillment he might have reached. We believe that this purpose or meaning is relative. The fictitious person's life was very special - as was the fictional place "Waldzell". We attempted to capture this spiritual realm in the two days of the Meeting - to show just how special this place really is.

We would like to invite you to join us in our review of those two wonderful days and ask you to form your own impression.

There is one last crucial question we would like to ask: Why does it make sense to strive for a prosperous future of the human race, if it doesn't make any difference in the short run? The answer was given to us by one of the brightest minds we have ever had the honor to meet: the "Thinker of the Year 2000" and explorer of "Flow", Mihály Csikszentmihályi:

"The best way of finding a sense to your life and to enjoy every step of the way is active, conscious participation in the process of evolution. This doesn't imply giving up personal goals in order to sacrifice them for a distant, greater good. It is far more rewarding to actively influence history than to be passively run over by it."

Das Waldzell Meeting 2004 – Three atmospheric descriptions

Three Lessons and Five Revolutions

Alan M. Webber, Fast Company

It could not be a more glorious September day. The valley is spread out before us, the Danube winds its way below us as we arrive at the Abbey Melk to begin . . . what? What awaits us over the next two days? What has been planned? And what will emerge? What has been prepared? And what will occur spontaneously?

The Waldzell Meeting 2004 has been called by the conveners “A Global Dialog for Inspiration.” If the spirit of the morning is an indication, this is less a “meeting” and more an experience, more a verb and less a noun.

We arrive at the parking lot in front of the entrance to the Melk Abbey. They are ready for us.

Who is “they”? What is ready? Too many questions, my impatient friend. Quiet your mind. You are here for an experience, yes? Then quiet, and experience the experience.

It is as if someone has been reading your mind. You are directed through the gates to the quiet contemplative space of the Abbey’s garden. There is a tranquil pool of water, a magical sphere with a message projected upside-down onto a mirrored surface, gentle music playing. A reminder to be present and in the moment.

A piece of paper carefully folded in a white envelope offers a suggestion. Try looking at a leaf very carefully. Try hearing the sound of your own breathing. Try listening, try looking, try slowing down to the life-speed of this ancient garden.

Down the path a second experience awaits. A series of numbers starting at 80 and ending at 0 wind their way along the garden path. These are the years of your life. Find your current age, then walk your way backward, stopping at each year where a memory speaks to you. You find yourself closing your eyes, remembering. The death of a parent. The birth of a child. Leaving a job, starting a business. Your wedding. College graduation. High school. Go back, winding down the years of your life, getting younger as you walk, until you come at last to your own birth, your arrival at this place. And so it begins.

It ends the next afternoon in Kolomani Hall, with the evening softly falling outside and a sense of peaceful energy within. The room is filled with chairs arranged in a graceful spiral, gradually narrowing down to eleven chairs in the middle for the speakers. Everyone is asked to record their last thoughts—about the event, about the lessons learned, about what they’re taking home with them, about their hopes for the future—on a piece of paper. These are collected; they will be recorded and turned into a book. The book will become a part of the monumental library at Melk Abbey.

Then it is time for last words. It is a benediction of sorts. A microphone moves from speaker to speaker. What remains to be said? Each of the speakers has had a turn from the stage, in a panel, in individual gatherings.



Andreas Salcher, Gundula Schatz, Georg Wilfinger, Martin Rotheneder

All that remains are simple words spoken from the heart. Thanks you—to the organizers and the attendees, to the Abbey. Appreciation—for the opportunity to participate, for the thoughtful exchange of ideas and the heartfelt exchange of emotions. A recognition—that the Waldzell gathering was a leap of faith, itself an expression of hope, and a living example of people leading from their hearts, bringing others together to co-create an experience that could touch and change the lives of many. And a wish—that what was started in this two day gathering

would live on, that those in attendance would carry with them the seeds of this experience so that fresh flowers of understanding would bloom throughout the year.

The last words are spoken by Andreas and Gundula. No one wants to leave the spiral. No one wants to break the connection. The Waldzell gathering is over. The Waldzell experience continues.

Those are the bookend experiences of the two-day gathering—it began in the peaceful calm of the garden and ended in the hopeful expectation of the Kolomani Hall.

But what really happened in the intervening days? If you read the schedule, you'll see that the program was packed, each hour of each day filled with opportunities to talk and listen, to meet and interact with energetic, smart, committed people. You'll see times set aside for presentations by some of the world's most remarkable thinkers and doers—Nobel Prize winning peace advocates and scientists; men and women of courage and understanding; people who have examined and can explain the human heart, the human soul, the human consciousness, the human cell; people who can bring joy to the lives of others and people who can bring meaning to the work of many.

You'll see times set aside for meals, where table talk and hearty fellowship prevail. You'll see times set aside for tours of the Abbey, to see the library and witness the sense of history and faith embedded in the very walls and walkways of the place. Other times were reserved for ceremony: A moving concert and candle-lighting ceremony in the Abbey Church, solidifying the common values of the world's three great religions. Those are some of the things you see if you read the program.

But that doesn't tell you what really happened, or how it happened, or why it matters.

Begin not with the speakers or even with the attendees. Begin with the conveners. The subtitle of the Waldzell Meeting 2004 tells you what they were after: A Global Dialog for Inspiration.



Schlusszeremonie im Kolomanisaal

Inspiration!

How do you go about creating a global dialog for inspiration?

These conveners knew something special about the art of inspiration. Sparking inspiration is like catching a glimpse of the sun: Nothing is more powerful or ephemeral. You don't look directly at it—if you do, you run the risk of blinding your eyes from the intensity of the light. Instead, you catch glimpses of it from different angles. You can't capture inspiration. You invite it and then, rather than seeing inspiration itself, you see how it sparks and sparkles the people it touches.

If you want to invite inspiration, you begin with yourself. This the conveners understood, for it was Gundula who opened the dialog on the first morning with an honest expression of her own story, of how she had sought not just success or power or position in her life, but had gone off looking for meaning.

The first lesson of the day: If you want to use the power to convene people in a search for inspiration, you have to begin with an honest and an open heart yourself.

The second lesson: The venue matters. A sense of place surrounded the Waldzell gathering. Conferences, retreats, public gatherings often take place in conveniently located, sterile buildings: Hotel ballrooms, formal conference centers, convention halls. If you're looking for inspiration, you do not go to a hotel ballroom, a conference center, or a convention hall. You go to Melk Abbey, with its quiet garden, its historic library, its contemplative halls, its vaulted assembly rooms, and its invitation of inspiration. The root of inspiration, after all, is "divine guidance."

The third lesson: The context matters. Dialog is the important word: Conversation is how we learn, it's the way in which we multiply and magnify what each knows but what the other contributes. There is an art to dialog and it was in evidence at Melk Abbey. Dialog needs comfort and safety, it needs good listening as well as good speaking. It thrives on honesty and interchange. Dialog reminds us that we have the most to learn from those who are least like us. And so the Waldzell dialog brought together, by design, a great and thoughtful Muslim voice for peace, a Jewish rabbi with a great mind for understanding, and generous and hardworking Benedictine abbots with the spirit of reconciliation. Natural scientists who understand the atom sat next to social scientists who understand human consciousness. Great musical artists sat next to business thinkers. The whole of such a dialog is greater than the sum of its parts.

And dialog is more than smart talk. Dialog is action: It is an entire hall of people learning to sing together, lifting their voices for fun and learning. It is an entire gathering learning how to cook together, making their own sweet desserts with their own hands, guided by the gentle hands of dirndl-clad local cooks. Dialog is an endlessly long dining table in a medieval hall, lit by candles, laden with sumptuous food and drink and lifted by the sounds and spirit of fellowship.

What the conveners understood, in other words, is that if you want true dialog for inspiration, you must attend to the cardinal points of human experience: Intelligence and instruction, hope and aspiration, joy and empathy, fun and compassion.

That was the vessel for the Waldzell experience. Into that vessel, 11 speakers poured their life's work and their life's stories. The setting was at once intense and intimate, personal and universal.



Tafel in den Arkaden

How can you recapture the magic of hearing from the lips of Shirin Ebadi the lesson of human rights and human dignity as told by an Iranian Muslim woman? What does it feel like to have Helen Palmer, the world's authority on the Enneagram, lead almost 200 people in simultaneous directed meditation. To hear Thomas Hampson, one of the most celebrated baritones in the world, speak with passion and clarity, about the power of freedom that is infused in the spirit of music. Each of the conversations, the formal presentations in the plenary sessions, the panel discussions that followed, and the opportunities for individual dialog opened up a new avenue for insight into the human experience.

Some of the story telling captured in a moment a quality of life that can only be described as inspirational. David Goldberg talking about his work leading a reform Jewish congregation in London to a larger appreciation of community and connection. Anton Zeilinger describing with the art of a poet, the delightful science of quantum physics, a way of understanding reality and our relationship to reality that challenges the mental models of centuries of human understanding. Carl Djerassi describing his intimate history with Vienna and Austria, and his personal journey from world-changing scientist and inventor to world-recognized novelist and playwright. Kary Mullis recalling with laser-like clarity the moment that he saw the scientific breakthrough that would transform the replication of DNA and win him a Nobel Prize. Gunter Blobel describing how what we now know about the cell needs to change how we still think about the evolution of the human species, our human relationships, and our connections to each other. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calming describing how, as a child, his father and mother finally took him on a train to escape Budapest as troops approached the city in the horror of World War II—and how he turned around as the train moved across the bridge, only to see the bridge blown up behind him. He was on the last train to make it out.

Those were some of the stories. Then there were personal moments, the kind each of the attendees captured and holds to this day. There was the eminent Rabbi David Goldberg up to his elbows in dough, rolling out the shell for his own hand-made strudel. Thomas Hampson, a marvelous singer and student of music, mischievously leading half the great hall in a round, gradually increasing the speed, turning the song into a high-spirited competition.

Helen Palmer, surrounded by a small group of intensely interested followers, patiently, carefully answering each question about the way the Enneagramm would work for them.



David J. Goldberg mit Günter Blobel beim Apfelstrudelbacken

Shirin Ebadi patiently answering questions about life in Iran, coming to this gathering only a few weeks after news reports in the international press carried stories about her home having been broken into in another attempt to frighten her. Anton Zeilinger explaining quantum physics in words anyone can understand, and delighting in the both/and-ness of the new science. Kary Mullis enjoying a glass of wine and outlining his unique perspective on every imaginable topic, from AIDs to global warming.

What do you learn when you're in the presence of greatness?

We learned what greatness feels like. We all got to be in a field of thought that could only raise our own fields of thought. We got to approach a way of thinking, and more important, a way of being, that celebrates the unique gifts of each human being, and that transforms the lives of all human beings. We got to laugh with these amazing people.

We got to eat and drink and talk with them about matters lofty and mundane. We got to see them celebrated in ceremonies where their own stories were inducted into the Melk Abbey library.

We got to glimpse, if only briefly, the way the pieces of the puzzle of life on Earth can sometimes fit together into a seamless fabric of creation, of faith, of intelligence, of hard work, of gifts beyond understanding. We got to realize that when you walk beside giants, you feel a little taller yourself.

And what of me personally?

I accepted the invitation not knowing what to expect. I liked the name, the Waldzell Institute. The first book we reviewed in *Fast Company* magazine was Hesse's *Glass Bead Game*. I was curious about the place, the people, the intent.

I spent the first day at the gathering wondering why I'd been invited—there is no Nobel Prize for magazine editors, even for magazine editors whose creations quickly become the fastest growing business magazine in American history, win multiple awards, from best in design to best overall to magazine editor of the year. Still, none of that stands up to the creation of the birth control pill, for example, or the development of the concept of "flow."

And then, in the quiet of the Abbey, it dawned on me. I wasn't there as me, as a resume, or even as a personal story. I was there as witness to the birth of something more important. I was present at the creation of something more universal.

Represented in the room were the five revolutions that are defining our lives and creating our future:

1. The revolution in belief, culture, and society, reshaping the political and spiritual map of the world.
2. The revolution in science and in our understanding of scientific possibility, reshaping everything from the cells of our bodies to the concept of the universe.
3. The revolution in consciousness and our ongoing search for personal meaning.

4. The revolution in art, reshaping our appreciation of freedom, of individual expression, of self-creation.
5. The revolution in business and work, reshaping our sense of purpose and our way of both making a living and making our lives.

Those revolutions were present at the Waldzell gathering, represented by the conveners, the speakers, and the attendees. They boxed the compass of our discussions and integrated our various points of view into a single moment of intensity—heat of thought, warmth of spirit. More than that, these intersection perceptions of a future in the making created new understandings and new relationships between people that will live long beyond the two days we spent at the Abbey Melk.

More than anything, the Waldzell experience confirmed in me a belief that I had not yet found the words to express, but that lived in the spirit and purpose of the global dialog for inspiration: If you change the conversation, you will change the future.

On the other hand: How can you get to a reasonably satisfactory inscription on your gravestone?

Christian Ortner, Format

According to New York producer Woody Allen, only two questions are really able to move humanity: The meaning of life - and how to get hold of a decent hotel room in Philadelphia.

Mr. Allen thus already hints at the way in which we are moved by the “meaning of life.” We are aware that this question is going to turn up with quite some vehemence - nevertheless we assume it to be somewhat naive, in some way embarrassing and slightly out of place. That is why we suppress, mock or bury the question until it erupts - just like the Vesuvius - when it is in a bad temper. This is even more the case amongst the caste of economic achievers: they - at least in our imagination - should be functioning, should be performing and producing results. No time to question topics that cannot generate shareholder values.

Claus Raidl, General Manager of the Boehler-Uddeholm- Group, put it this way: “There is no catholic steel price”. He probably meant that managers are exclusively supposed to follow the laws of supply and demand; the only thing that counts is the law of business. Any executive who pursues a goal other than optimizing the profit is consequently punished in business.

As much as this statement may be true, the persistent application of this idea might negatively influence the sense of well-being, and thus the potential for achieving success, of any executive. A German trainer for executive personnel used to demonstrate this fact to his clients in a very drastic manner: he asked them to fulfil a simple task - to formulate a simple inscription for their own gravestones.

For most of the workshop attendees, there was no doubt that the sentence: “The shareholders owe him profits of 152 percent over the course of the last five years preceding his unfortunately premature death” would not be truly satisfying.

But then again - what would be?

A short column such as this one cannot answer this question without being accused of intellectual overstatement. Decades of research targeting top-performing managers who are not overwhelmed by a feeling of senselessness yield clear results: Those exceptions, as diverse as they may be in character and temperament, have one thing in common:

They enjoy what they do.

This means: they will not put up with a stony, hazardous path in order to reach a distant goal (or else not to reach it), instead they feel comfortable with impasses others would shrink back from.

There is no other explanation for the fact that someone who has already made his first one hundred million does not retire to his villa on the Bahamas, but rather keeps forging ahead to transform those hundred million into his first billion (something that would never occur to any of us lazybones – which is reason enough for us to have missed out on the first million).

You may say this so-called thrill of the challenge is pathological, since the majority would prefer to enjoy a smooth, level path rather than trying to climb a steep hill. On the other hand: who bothers about the guy taking pleasure in a 45 kilometre marathon run instead of driving his car?-
- especially if the production of endorphins does not allow the question bothering anyone else - the question concerning the sense of it all (or at least, how to get hold of a decent hotel room in Philadelphia...)

Waldzell: the art of questioning - in times of ignorance

Heinz Sichrovsky, NEWS

Globalization is becoming visibly evident while ignorance is staging a global coup. The winner is the defined, the obvious, with no loss of time on explanations - ideally condensable into slogans. The losers are those who question. The winner has answers - even before the first question has been posed.

In light of the power banalities have achieved, the paradox turns into a virtue - reason enough to establish the Waldzell Institute with its examination of the sense of globalization. This was the most intense impression this autumn weekend at Melk Abbey was able to convey: the world's greatest minds - so much more qualified in their fields and their answers than anyone else - became the ones to seek answers themselves, when face to face with personalities of equal rank.

You had to see it to believe it:

1. The chemist Karry B. Mullis, who transformed genetic technology from theory into practice - causing it to be a blessing and a disaster at the same time; the physician and humanist Günter Blobel, whose scruples drove him to donate his Nobel Prize money to Jewish, Muslim and Christian institutions. During the course of this weekend, we had many discussions about the limits and taboos of science - to which we weren't able to find answers. Mullis claimed that invention wasn't attached to an individual - if that one person didn't invent it, then another would! Who would be able to define someone's intentions - good or bad and leading to better or worse? Are such intentions debatable at all in the extraterritorial realm of science?
2. The Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi, a practicing Muslim, was in a working group with Carl M. Djerassi, the "father of the Pill" - an invention described falsely as the "Anti-Baby-Pill" - who gave sexual freedom to women of the 20th century. According to Islam, this invention sprang right out of Pandora's box.
3. Thomas Hampson, one of the most famous music-intellectuals of our century, outlined the fields of arts as a haven of creativity and spirituality for great minds, past and present. Sitting at the endless dinner table of the abbey, he realized that he and the "happiness-researcher" Mihály Csikszentmihályi had a lot in common.
4. The inter-confessional ceremony that took place in the Abbey and was presided over by Shirin Ebadi, Senior Rabbi David J. Goldberg and Abbot Burkhard F. Ellegast, pointed at the desperate hopes and expectations in the Middle East.



Burkhard F. Ellegast, Shirin Ebadi and David J. Goldberg in the church

5. The same sacred building hosted the performance of musician Raphael Flieder, who stunned his audience with a Cello-Suite by Bach, converting physicists, chemists and physicians into amazed pupils of this musical universe.
6. Alan M. Webber pointed at the global killer-function of capitalism, supported by Helen Palmer's Enneagrams, who encouraged the trust in intuition as a stringent weapon against preconceived ideas.
7. According to quantum physicist Anton Zeilinger - a scientist forging into fields inaccessible to the rest of us, even on a virtual map of history of thought - the answer to global terror is: "The world consists in everything available and everything possibly available."

"To what extent can a single person influence history?" was one of the key questions of the Waldzell weekend. Has Carl M Djerassi done so by inventing the Pill? No greater influence on women's liberation and youth movement has ever been achieved, than the one by ideologists in the 1960s. Sexual freedom is probably all that remains of the ideas developed at the time. Were those ideas of any advantage - didn't they just replace the unsuitable, ancient values with modern, disastrous (or lacking) ones? All these questions couldn't be answered during this weekend...

Or have they been answered after all...? Could the outcome of "Waldzell 1" have been the ability to question again, thus finally finding the answers to questions of our time?

200 participants were engaged in a dialog with the world's elite - leading to the remarkable realization that, although the association between politics and religion is unfruitful on a daily basis - they can be very compatible at other times. Science combined with art, performed in an enlightening spirit, leads to greater insights. It would be absurd to claim this were true of religion as well, considering the experiences of the past centuries, in which indoctrination and concealment were the norm. Waldzell gave us the opportunity to recognize the distinction between the misuse of religion - when massacres are committed in the name of God - and the essence of pure religiousness.

We might have to construct a patchwork God - consisting of the remains of religion, of the ideology we grew up with and pieces put together from other religions. The only thing that became clear this weekend was that there is no way we can turn - without God! (Isn't this too much of a religious statement?)

The key questions of the Waldzell Meetings

In how far is it possible for a single person to take influence on history?

Conny Bischofberger

An unknown place and a dialog: Der Skeptiker: ‚Die Menge kann tüchtige Menschen nicht entbehren, und die Tüchtigen sind ihnen jederzeit zur Last.‘ Der Wissende: ‚Er stehe fest und sehe hier sich um; dem Tüchtigen ist diese Welt nicht stumm. Was braucht er in die Ewigkeit zu schweifen! Was er erkennt, lässt sich ergreifen.‘ Der Skeptiker: ‚Es ist nicht genug zu wissen, man muss auch anwenden; es ist nicht genug zu wollen, man muss auch tun.‘ Der Wissende: ‚Dass sich das größte Werk vollende, genügt ein Geist für tausend Hände. Es kann die Spur von meinen Erdetagen nicht in Äonen untergehn.‘

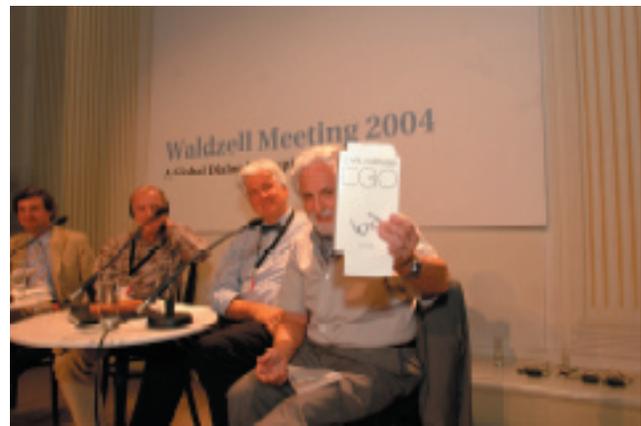
A dialog which of course never took place; the knowing Faust, facing death, letting his life pass in review, in dialog with his Creator and fictitious counterpart Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

How much influence does the individual actually have on history, for setting footprints not blown over by aeons? At least for decades or centuries, if not for eternity. The Melk metamorphose “Waldzell” gives leeway to its illustrious guests for intellectual creativity - a flexible netting of thought, fit for the future. To move forward the advancement of society by actions, thoughts, questions and works, needs the firm inner conviction of a person.

The group of the “eleven of the brightest minds” has managed to turn convictions to actions. Some of them have already written history even if they insistently tried to deny it. Chemist Carl Djerassi said he had just “... lifted a heavy weight off sexuality and helped to give an enormous advantage to the feministic movement.” His research results were the key to the development of the “Pill”. The most popular method of contraception has had large impact on the lives of men and women for half a century, decade by decade.

The influence on history is most probably rather fortunate coincidence than singular and ingenious merit: “There is a fundamental difference - which is the reason why scientists should be humble, something we never manage on an intellectual basis. This is the interesting dilemma of us scientists.” so the American scientist with Austrian roots.

Whatever was achieved in this field could have been achieved by anyone else, is the insisting opinion of Carl Djerassi, irrespective of whether this concerns him or the Nobel Prize winner Karl B. Mullis: “The crucial scientific results of the past decades would have been achieved anyway - maybe a month, a year or a decade later, even if Newton or Einstein hadn’t lived.



Kary B. Mullis, Günter Blobel and Carl M. Djerassi

Whoever considers himself an “intellectual polygamist” such is able to view fundamental incisions through a magic kaleidoscope - dividing one masterpiece from another, however thin the line may be. “This doesn’t account for Mozart, not for Shakespeare, not for Goethe; one thing is clear: had Mozart not existed, whatever he has created would never have been created, Hamlet would never have been written, someone else could have written about him - but not in this specific way.” says the scientist, art collector, patron and play writer.

There are numerous examples that development doesn't necessarily lead to positive actions, as many dolorous happenings of history have shown. Misuse of scientific research and development, adoption of physiological achievements in a baneful way and knowledge of psychological processes applied in mental torture.. 'Just as you are not able to prohibit an artist from painting you are not able to prevent a researcher from doing research', counters Kary B. Mullis. The scientific research reality is always one step ahead of the ethical commissions, trying to install preventive standards, guesses Rabbi David J Goldberg. There don't seem to be limits, nothing seems impossible - numerous disclosed secrets and important creations raise the hope of people, giving way to fear at the same time. Mit 'Ne quid nimis!', dem 'Mass halten', zieht Alt-Abt Burkhard F. Ellegast Grenzen, die besser nicht überschritten werden und sei der Reiz im Menschen auch noch so groß.

The desire of star baritone Hampson becomes understandable in this light: to reach a level without any urge of destruction, a level allowing a peaceful cooperation as global normality. "We should be aware of the fact that we are just one single generation, that there are others to follow" says Hampson. "Humility is part of a learning process. "Its all about the effort to leave a footprint, a symbol, a message and to say: that's the way I thought, that's how I found out, would see it in such and such a context and would like to reach it this way; to stand up in the wilderness and scream: I am not alone!" - understand the set footprints, pass them on and connect small steps with wide jumps!

"I got aware that I must never stop or return on my steps - its the driving forward, that is the important part" is the way Senior Abbot Ellegast chose to express himself. Action, movement, progress and setting signs - or as Professor Mihály Csikszentmihályi verbalizes it so delightfully: "It is so much more rewarding to take active influence on history, than to be run over passively"- falling into jigs at the idea of taking influence on history. The feeling of happiness derivable from a far reaching action is a present - beneficial both to the ego and to history.

The driving force of science is curiosity and it has often served as trigger and accelerator for major break through. "One should know, what holds together the world" as it says in Faust, depicts experimental physicist Anton Zeilinger his urge for research. He predicts quite some more great leaps forward in physics: "The really profound things are still in front of us and the profound questions are those concerning the nature of things." This is just the beginning of science and if - as Zeilinger hopes - philosophy returns to the field of physics and those questions are asked - this door will open wide for future history books to fill.



Georg Wilfinger and Mihály Csikszentmihályi

Influence can be exerted by each one ready to give signals and able to spin his ideas further. Who will soon write history or change the face of the world leading to human gratefulness - this isn't written anywhere; or is it? In doubt an searching, in creativity, in curiosity and in the traces, perplexity hides. Standstill creates nothing - and thus Faust sums up, ostensibly in pain but cleverly nevertheless: "Das ist der Weisheit letzter Schluss: Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben, der täglich sie erobern muss."

Are there limits to science and who defines them?

Natasa Konopitzky

Nobel Prize, Grammy Award, Pour Le Mérite, decorations received in the fields of science and arts-- the Waldzell speakers' awards certainly cover an impressively wide range. What helped them achieve those goals was the question leading to the attendance of many a participant at the Waldzell Meeting. Their intention was clear: taking the wraps off the secret recipes leading to those achievements and obtaining personal inspiration for their own directions in life. It would be too simple to attribute the success of the keynote speakers to personal factors like intelligence, creativity or talent--its roots are probably reaching below these basic components; the courage to cross personal boundaries and the desire to overcome inevitable resistance, both ingredients necessary to create new outlooks, are to be taken into consideration as well.

Fear--beyond personal boundaries

The insight into fields beyond personal boundaries, does not seem so difficult at first sight. Mostly, it does not mean more than "having a look at it". Rare are the cases where courage and determination have led to a crossing of those personal boundaries. An outstanding example of someone having accomplished this is Shirin Ebadi, who, despite existential threats giving rise to personal fear, took up the fight against an oppressing regime and her anxieties at the same time. Her call for fairness and farsightedness was not limited to her own country--she included the rest of the world in her plea to be reasonable. She especially emphasized the importance of western societies diminishing prejudice towards the Islamic world.

Enemies within one's ranks

Key word religion. Senior Rabbi David J. Goldberg has made quite a couple of enemies in the ranks of his fellow Jews, since he devoted his life to struggling for tolerance and frankness. Being a thoroughly political person, he did not back away from problems or from criticism brought up by his own congregation. He crossed religious borders, maintaining that he felt

closer to tolerant representatives of other religions than to conservative ones of his own.

Historic breakthrough

The abbot of Melk Abbey and host to the Waldzell Meetings, Burkhard F. Ellegast, is a religious and at the same time tolerant person. During his personal contribution to the Meeting, he told the participants about the borders he had to cross in attaining the authority he has today in one of the most renowned abbeys in Austria.



Shirin Ebadi with Simultandolmetsch, Anton Zeilinger and David J. Goldberg

Apart from the social barrier of having "only" been the son of the abbey's butcher--there was yet another hurdle he had to overcome. The centuries of traditions of the abbey put a heavy strain on him at the beginning of his career. Instead of diverting his interests to other fields, he accepted the challenge of pushing his ideas and visions through within the boundaries of this place, steeped in tradition at that time. He was convinced that this was exactly the reason he was needed just there and just then.

Where is spirituality to be found?

Next to unconventional thinkers with the ability to be involved in different fields without losing a critical inside view, enabling them to achieve improvements, Enneagram expert Helen Palmer is a fighter on yet another line. She has dedicated her life to overcoming personal obstacles with the help of spirituality. "What is interfering between myself and spiritual experiences?" is the question she asks, convinced that spirituality helps you rise above yourself and face personal development.

Who is still afraid of the steam engine?

The keynote speakers apparently agreed easily on personal boundaries and restrictions. The limits of scientific research, though, were discussed heatedly. Especially in the fields of natural sciences discussions ran high: How far is science allowed to go? What is ethically acceptable? Do scientists have to take responsibility for society?

Kary B. Mullis took a clear stand: "What is not done by me--is going to be done by someone else!" The Nobel Prize winner in chemistry is convinced that scientific progress cannot be restricted or prevented by societal reservations. He considers this a positive aspect--in view of discussions concerning ethical issues deriving out of fear of the new and the unknown and of the fact that nowadays the steam engine does not frighten anyone anymore.

Basic Research cannot be controlled

"Father of the Pill", Carl Djerassi has a more sophisticated view on this matter. The curiosity of researchers cannot be restricted--the application of findings, however, should be prohibited under certain circumstances, says Djerassi. Quantum physicist Anton Zeilinger backs up monitoring and limiting applied sciences, too--although he also thinks that basic research cannot be controlled.

Scientific findings cannot be seen in scientific terms only, says Carl Djerassi, scientific research always throws up societal, moral, ethical and religious questions as well. He thinks that scientists should be more concerned by these questions--taking into consideration the fact that researchers are mostly more interested in molecules than in human beings. He expresses his apprehensions for the future, given the fact that ethics have to be put into perspective--what seemed to be ethical at a certain time has become unethical in the meantime, and vice versa.

What does the future have in store?

The Pill started it all--after centuries sex and fertilization were not necessarily connected to each other any more, although in spite of the presence of a contraceptive, children were still fathered the "good old way". In his opinion, however, the in-vitro fertilization has led to some doubts considering the fact that since 1977 a million babies have been conceived that way and fears that even fertile parents may prefer to produce their offspring in laboratories apparently cannot be rejected at this point.

Research in the fields of science cannot deny societal settings, says the Nobel Prize winner in medicine Günter Blobel--being aware of the fact that his research in the field of human cells does imply ethical problems. He insists on a certain consciousness in this problematic nature: every new discovery may lead to difficulties.

Science without boundaries is frightening

The non-scientists were the ones who criticized scientific research without limits. Baritone Thomas Hampson was frightened by the idea of total scientific freedom. He pleaded for humility and reminded everyone present of the fact that we only constitute a single generation, with hopefully many more to come. He was not open to the argument: "If I am not the one to find it--it will just be someone else!"

Abbot Burkhard F. Ellegast did not only warn scientists of exceeding borders, he included the areas of trade and industry in this warning, pointing out the lack of "faithful souls" in those spheres of influence. Senior Rabbi Goldberg agreed with him, adding the fear that ethic commissions would always lag behind a reality created by scientific research.



Mihály Csikszentmihályi and Alan M. Webber

How can I live and work with meaning and passion? How are we to create companies promoting meaning in the future?

Simone Leonhartsberger

Ideas create values. Innovation drives the engines of the business world. We are in the course of transformation from the industrial age to an economy governed by science. “Fast Company” publisher Alan Webber sees himself as a messenger of the revolution taking place in those fields of labor, business, and economy. In his opinion, know-how, creativity, and motivation are the guarantee for economic success. The higher the profit and the stock exchange yield, the more successful the enterprise’s image is. Is the simple employee or laborer sacrificed as a human being--for economic profit? Do discontentment with your job and anxiety lead to a loss of potential in terms of concentration and profitability? Today, the essential question of economic survival is not dominated by how to survive but by the question “Does it make sense to survive?” The striving for luxury and a prosperous life has been transferred to a longing for time--time to spend on reconsidering the essential things in life. Those requirements paired with the daily necessity of motivation are perceived intensely in the course of working life and work process.

“In the past centuries the value of labor has shifted”, declared Dieter Schnaas, chief contributor to the German “Wirtschaftswoche”, at a group discussion covering the topic “The human being and labor: Organizations and profit”. Here is the comparison he drew: Labor was something frowned upon at the time of Aristoteles. The upper class was busy with other things. Necessary daily chores were executed by slaves. It was the Enlightenment which finally brought acknowledgement to the value of labor. Today we have to go into the question if our values and the contentment we feel within our tasks and leisure time derive from fast cars, luxurious private jets, or holiday trips to the Maldives. How can each individual develop a meaning for his assignments? Is there a way to regain motivation and lost vim?

Motivation

The success story of the best taxi driver in the United States. How to regain the “flow” in your daily chores--and how it all correlates with your personal attitude. Money is not the topic--or is it?

Taking responsibility, cultivating social contacts, being heard and being able to create: these are the criteria for a fulfilling job, pointed out by the participants of the Waldzell Meeting. Alan M. Webber is able to support those ratings by presenting research results: Rather than salary it is personal responsibility, challenge and the possibility to apply professional skills that are the crucial factors for job satisfaction. The journalist quoted a striking example: What would you decide if you had the choice: 50.000 dollars a year, working as an employee in a fulfilling job--or 500.000 dollars a year, cleaning the stables?

It is so much easier to gain daily motivation from a constructive, challenging job. American psychologist and researcher on happiness Mihhály Csikszentmihályi has managed to find a recipe for finding meaning even in simple activities, without financial incentive, by the effects of Flow. As an example, he refers to assembly line workers who may develop an attitude towards their routine work similar to that of Olympic high jumpers-- practicing and striving for even higher jumps than anybody else. Csikszentmihályi made it clear: the enjoyment in work vanishes if there is no more potential for growth and development. The results of a study conducted with scientists, athletes, and musicians proved the effects of flow.

Those people are totally happy with their assignments and challenges. It is not for fame or stardom or even for financial profit; they do what they are doing for the sake of it, there is no “I have to”. They are able to reach a mental state that Csikszentmihályi calls flow. Those artists, scientists, athletes or musicians have no desire for any other occupation. Nothing fulfills them more than their current occupation. Losing every sense of time they achieve complete satisfaction. Research studies on this topic show that we seldom reach this state of mind in our leisure time but rather in tasks that make us stretch the limits of our capabilities.

He was striving for perfection, his car was comfortable, spotlessly clean and he would offer his clients an assortment of daily newspapers and even mineral water. He was proud of being a taxi driver. His commitment and passion for the job were rewarded double: satisfaction for himself and for his clients.

The personal engagement and the individual definition is the vital driving force for choosing this job and not the other one. Webber is convinced that if you do not know why you are working in this particular job, it will never satisfy and fulfill you. Csikszentmihályi gives the example of cleaning staff in a clinic. Some would say: It's my job to empty bedpans--whereas others, doing exactly the same thing, would see their assignment in helping others, keeping them happy and talking to them. They consider their job as vocation. Alan M. Webber told us a similar anecdote. He praises a New York taxi driver--the man's objective was to be chosen best taxi driver of the U.S.

Vision

Nobel Prize winner in peace Shirin Ebadi is fighting for her vision--a democratic interpretation of Islam. Nobel Prize winner in chemistry Kary B. Mullis is devoted to molecules--his findings enable the genetic material to be multiplied a billion times.

The interest, passion, and conviction the keynote speakers at the Waldzell Meeting share in their fields of assignment is backed up by a vision, driving them to devote themselves to their daily work despite occasional resistance. Shirin Ebadi and Senior Rabbi Goldberg for example are fighting for tolerance and understanding between different religions despite their own beliefs--Ebadi for democratic interpretation of Islam, Goldberg for reconciliation between Palestinians and Jews.

Despite short excursions into surfing and the pizza business, Kary B. Mullis always returned to his beloved chemistry, immersed happily in his molecules, not even thinking of retirement at the age of 60. The same accounts for Carl Djerassi, Austrian born immigrant to the U.S. and father of the Pill; his personal "Glass Bead Game", however, involves a variety of glass pearls. After stunning the world with his success in chemistry he has turned to literature, initiates debates of many kinds and ponders on the approach science might have to social problems.

The life of singer Thomas Hampson centers on art and music. He feels privileged to be able to devote his life to interests filling him with passion--to sing and thus operate as an intermediate. In his opinion, art is a way of starting a dialog--music being the connecting language. Csikszentmihályi can feel the effects of flow when the results and statistics of his studies add up to fitting patterns on his computer. The feeling he perceives can be compared to entering unknown territory with Columbus. Alan M. Webber experiences this feeling as a result of success accomplished together with his team, success he wouldn't have achieved alone.

Former abbot of Melk Abbey Burkhard F. Ellegast lives for his commitment as well. His starting time From the very beginning of his work at at the abbey made him doubt the possibility of living up to his mission often enough. He never had regrets as to his decision to live up to the challenge--never. His daily motivation is backed by his faith in God. During his daily assignments, Ellegast adapts himself totally to his vis-à-vis. While talking to the small first graders at the school joining the abbey he feels like a child himself again.

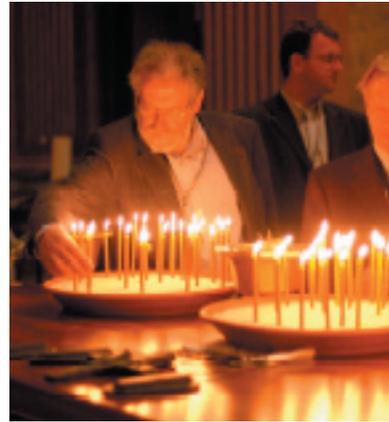
Organization

To treat the employees with respect, giving them the feeling of being important for the organization and the company. In the Benedictine abbey of Abbot Burkhard F. Ellegast these ideas are not mere words.

During his active time, the abbot did not cling to traditional management theories. He considers himself a pessimist and inexperienced in the field of economic concerns. He had to acquire this knowledge during the renovation of the abbey. Technical terms like shareholder or stakeholder still do not mean much to him. His way to deal with leadership was brought into line with his intuition and the rules set by Saint Benedict--an abbot has to be able to lead, but must serve as well. He is well aware of his responsibility for employees and is willing to give both compliments and sympathy at all times. He knows exactly how everyone feels and is sympathetic about their families, he praises a lot but reprimands as well, when necessary. He led the abbey from economical infirmity to a prosperous "abbey- business", establishing a secure resort for the religious order, the school and the visitors.

Humbleness and considerateness are the attributes Burkhard F. Ellegast would demand from the people of our time to. As much as he draws his own boundaries, he recommends this to everyone. He never considered his reelection, having learned to let go and step back from the limelight. He is most concerned about the prosperity and growth of "his" abbey. It is not maximization of share values he aims at; his goal is to preserve the abbey and the school, to pass down cultural heritage and to foster the education of our youth. No need for the abbey to "reach for the stars".

The situation is different outside the walls of the abbey. The companies aim at quarterly financial growth. Webber even claimed that in business you are almost subjected to "infinite growth". Nevertheless companies disregarding the maximization of profit in favor of the well-being of their employees are definitely more successful. The search engine Google, built up by two students from Stanford University and at present one of the most successful enterprises, could serve as an example. The success of a business obviously lays in the conviction of the manager that strength and quality can only be retrieved from the staff's creativity.



Anton Zeilinger

Csikszentmihályi shares this opinion--an enterprise does not only owe the staff wages but should provide a constructive work atmosphere, allowing creativity and motivation to prosper. To think of the maxim of the Benedictines "ora et labora et lege" may prove rewarding for personal balance in any case.

Does God still make sense?

Conny Bischofberger

“Oh, Holy Lord!” But which one? This question is currently occupying humanity - and thus the media. Around the turn of the year the matter of faith was covered by the German “Zeit” just as well as by weekly magazines. The Lord offering an accommodating and exiting topic - without expiration date. This time there might have been more to it, as religion seems to undergo a world wide renaissance. Could there be any better time to search for sense in life and - which location in Austria would be more appropriate for inspiration than Melk Abbey?

The year 2004 has brought the significance of higher forces to the fore. Murder and violence occurred under the cloak of religion - spectacular enough to reach even European daily press coverage this time; with unpredictable locations and with excrescent fanatic backgrounds in question. The re-election of George Bush even in the aftermath of 9/11 doesn't astonish at all - the backing by American devout faith is the though-provoking part of it. The US- president obviously had the ability to plausibly accredit the Lord's support. From his point of view God does make sense!

The market is captured: as a chief character in belletrist bestsellers and in pop and hip-hop songs, the Lord fetches unbelievable revenues - gospel sound is at its best. This seems to make sense economy-wise and as a matter of course - consumer-wise as well, since heavenly contents and divine presence are in demand.

With the help of a global dialog, the Waldzell Meeting is searching for the origin of fulfilled and happy human life. How much does God contribute to it?

Philosopher Georg Christoph Lichtenberg couldn't have put it better: “God created the human race to his image, which probably means that they created Him to their image.” No tinkering and juggling with new forms for the world and the cosmos in places, where believers of world religions are happy with a determinate picture of God. There is great demand for the Lord and belief beyond established structures is growing; who and what is He, what are His capacities, where can I find Him, what is He accountable for, which stuff is He made of and where can I reach Him, when I'm in need? Although the used male forms “He, Him” in monotheism are confusing, it doesn't point to certain associations or perceptions, since it can be seen as linguistic usage. Sense is conferred to our personal environment through a God acting in many different ways. Religious faith and religious commitment are not necessary for the construction of an individual universe - including God.

To wish for “Waldzell’s” visionary capacities in constructing a smoothly polished, stereotype global model of a deity would be rather bold. None of the eleven great minds would have given this option a second thought. Whoever examines human life from different perspectives though, will either have to question the presence of a higher force in this world and in the life of any individual or is confronted with it daily. How does a prayer influence the universe? Is God just coincidence?

Professor Mihály Csikszentmihályi, major expert for luck, was able to quote in the spirit of Albert Einstein’s ideas: “Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.” An advisable position for a scientist: not to believe in God’s interference in solving scientific problems - a possible impact by the unknown magnitude on results is not deniable though.

The mere idea of how the laws of nature might correspond harmonically with deity sparks the faith of the Austrian quantum physicist Anton Zeilinger. “An analytic approach and the modesty not to jump to conclusions too soon or without fair proof is necessary.” he said, rounding off his speech with the initial words of John’s Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Words that make sense in multiple ways and are often misused for all kind of nonsense and insanity.



Shirin Ebadi und Helen Palmer

“Thou shall not kill!” Carl Djerassi, the father of the Pill, who demonstrably didn’t please the Catholic Church with his invention for hormonal conception, dedicates a vital role to religion: “You shall not kill and I am not talking about animals but about humans, persons, human beings. It is a commandment significant for all religions and all countries. Nevertheless the worst and most brutal wars and killers are produced with religious coverage. “I am not talking of any specific religion, I mean all of them.” It seems like a trimming of religion following respective interests, a calculated interpretation of divine commitments in favour of own welfare - baleful for others. Wouldn’t free will exist if God would see everything?



Anton Zeilinger und Alan M. Webber

Rabbi David J. Goldberg put it this way: “We have acted as if we could control our life to be able to lead it in a proper way including thoughtfulness for others.” Two books per household could lead to a first step in direction of a responsible lifestyle - helpfully, one of them the Bible”, a view uniting baritone singer Thomas Hampson with the Senior Rabbi.

Iranian Peace Nobel Prize winner Shirin Ebadi: “In East Asia Moslems had close connections with followers of the other religions like Buddhism and Hinduism. Yes, it is possible to live in peace independent of the respective religious faith and still toll respect to the others.” She wants to ignite the sparkle of peace and clear Islam of its bad reputation. “We need to explain to the Moslems that the key to paradise cannot be found in the hands of Islamic governments and that actions taken by them aren’t necessarily Islamic - even if they occur in the name of Islam.” Shirin Ebadi is a devout Moslem lawyer, involved in a seemingly hopeless fight. By investing so much energy and preserving faith, your God is nourished with life - and vice-versa!

“I donated so much money for the reconstruction of the “Frauenkirche” and the synagogue in Dresden as well as for a mosque constructed in the 9. century in Yemen. I have become aware of so many positive and essential areas in religion and of the important role religion plays in society and in our own life.” says Medicine Nobel Prize winner Günter Blobel.

We have to construct a building for God in order to find a place, suitable for the many questions regarding sense, we need to ask. What separates me from spiritual experiences? Nothing - and again so much, the way we lead our life and thus manage to prevent them, says psychologist Helen Palmer. “Our spiritual experience is just round the corner. We live to see it a hundred times a day - in small doses. We cannot claim it, we can just accept it.” Palmer teaches intuition and has developed the Enneagram as a key to the soul.

The urge for exceptional moments in life like birth, death or sexuality, carried away by a force, stronger than oneself - the question sustains: where do we stand? Where within my inner self am I, when times are rough? It is quite easy to learn to perceive oneself better and develop understanding for others because “God didn’t leave, we just drifted away from Him!”



David J. Goldberg, Kary B. Mullis und Helen Palmer

Eleven most unequal life styles assembled in “Waldzell”, producing an endless row of questions and answers - and a convincing idea: Sense and God have much in common!



Thomas Hampson

The Central Statements of the Keynote Speakers at the Waldzell Meeting 2004

Günter Blobel

The human being evolves from its mother's egg-cell and its father's sperm-cell. The mother and the father evolved from the respective egg-cells and sperm-cells of grandfathers and grandmothers etc. Backtracking this ancestral portrait gallery, you finally reach the first cells which formed about 3,7 billion years ago and resembled present days bacteria. All existence on this planet can be traced back to those cells. So it took 3,7 billion years of constant cell division and cell evolution and considering this fact, you could - as done by some religions- speak of eternal life.

The people living on the planet at present all descend from a very small group of people which lived about 200.000 years ago. Thus all of us are closely related to each other! Nevertheless we do not understand this and fight each other, hate each other and kill each other.

Mihály Csikszentmihályi

Before saying anything else I should say that obviously the events of one's life don't determine what we are going to do. The reason that the events make sense, that they make a difference in one's life depend in part of what we take with us from the culture in which we live, the kind of people we meet, the kind of books we read and they depend of course also on our genes.

I think I am ready to concede that about thirty to fifty percent of our behavior is very strongly determined by the genes we have, but even in that case, what counts really is how we use the particular strengths and weaknesses we inherited, on how we interpret them and how we connect them with the contents of the culture in which we live and the opportunities that we find around us.

I very soon realized that each of us is responsible for the course of the future. We have to spend as much effort as possible in preserving the best of the past. And there the arts, the humanists and religions help us, to select some of those practices, those values, that worked in the past, but we have to separate them also from all the mistakes that have grown around the successful forms of the past.

I have studied artists, musicians, composers, athletes and scientists who really love what they are doing, who don't want to do anything in the world except what they are doing. And they're not doing it in order to get something later, they're not doing it for money, they're not doing it for fame primarily. They don't want to do it just because they want to be appreciate by their peers, but they do it because doing what they do is so important to them, it's so enjoyable, it's so fulfilling that nothing in the world compares to that. And the thing that is amazing to me is that this kind of complete involvement in something that makes life worth living can be obtained from an enormous variety of different things.

Carl M. Djerassi

If I had not worked on the pill someone else would have invented it. But if Faust had not been written by Goethe Faust would not exist.

I am an intellectual Polygamist.

It is not possible to addict scientific research to something that is alterable. Galileo's knowledge definitely was ahead of his time and ahead of ethics. Curiosity cannot and must not be prohibited.

Shirin Ebadi

Man muss die Moslems aufklären, dass der Schlüssel zum Paradies nicht in den Händen der islamischen Regierungen ist und nicht jede Maßnahme ihrer Regierung islamisch ist, auch wenn sie im Namen des Islams erfolgt.

We should separate the misconduct of people from the civilisation and religion they belong to. When an innocent person is killed in the name of Islam, when terror strikes in the name of Islam - be assured that the name of Islam is abused. Islam is opposed to terror and violence.

Die verschiedenen Zivilisationen und Religion haben viele gemeinsame Wurzeln. Reden wir von den Gemeinsamkeiten und nicht von den Unterschieden. Rechtfertigen wir nicht den Krieg, denn niemand verlässt dieses unselige Ereignis erhobenen Hauptes. In der Hoffnung auf Frieden und Ruhe für Sie und für alle Menschen.

Burkhard F. Ellegast

The meaning of our lives has a lot to do with humility.

I believe that everybody feels exactly where limits are. The human being is very tempted though to overstep borders. We should always be able to keep sight of those borders.

Mir wurde klar, dass ich eigentlich nie stehen bleiben darf, oder gar zurückgehen, sondern dass es auf dieses Fortschreiten ankommt.

David J. Goldberg

I have more things in common with tolerant people of other religions than with intolerant ones of my own religion.

Free will means that we cannot know the future. Being free is much harder than being commanded. Free will lets us loose in a small boat on a vast sea.

How free are our actions really? Even if our actions are never completely free, we must act as if we could control our lives in order to lead a decent life in consideration of others.

Well, the most important step towards any form of successful negotiation, from doing a business deal to patching up a shaky personal relationship to concluding a peace treaty, is to be able to see things from the other party's point of view. You have to try to understand and engage with the fears and sensitivities of the other side, whether you think they are valid or not. Any definition of your own self-interest has to allow room for satisfying the aspirations of the other side - that is to say, their self-interest.

Thomas Hampson

Ist man bereit, Antworten auf den Sinn des Lebens zu finden? Für mich sind Fragen wichtiger als Antworten.

Fragen ohne Antworten machen einen offen für alles - die Antwort kommt oft erst am Ende.

Dialog kommt für mich aus der Inspiration.

Ich möchte die schon gesetzten Fußspuren verstehen und weitergeben.

Kary B. Mullis

Sie können einen Forscher ebenso wenig am Forschen hindern, wie Sie einem Künstler verbieten können, zu malen.

Von allen Institutionen der Menschheit ist die Wissenschaft die einzige, die wie Unkraut jedes Jahr wächst.

Wenn wir es nicht machen, macht es ein anderer, egal ob es den Menschen gefällt. Wir müssen die Zügel locker lassen und warten, was passiert.

Der Prozess der Naturwissenschaften ist nicht aufzuhalten. Ignoranz verzögert die Zukunft.

Die Metaphysik ist eine Metatheorie. Die Menschen sind nicht radikal genug für diese objektive Entwicklung.

Helen Palmer

You can shape what you have by imagination and trying to find the skills to live them.

The sense of things is not a thinking state. It has nothing to do with one's thoughts. It's a shift of attention into a state of merger, where the experience is of the other, transmitted through one's own sense of things, one's own feeling state.

In terms of the capacities of the human mind, intuition is not a big deal. It's a very available state of mind, if you have the confidence and the willingness to perform the practices that gain access to it.

The Enneagram is a bridge. The bridge is that people with those same nine center points, or vices, can also be well along the conversion process to its opposite tendency. Whether we know it or not, we're all transforming, because we're hungry for the opposite of our vice.

Alan M. Webber

The job of a leader is not to make decisions, it's to make sense.

Extraordinary people are in great demand. Creativity and spirit at work: that is the new standard. We live in an economy of ideas.

Having the responsibility and the opportunity to make use of my own abilities gives me the feeling that my work is important.

Being content in your job depends on how you define the reason for doing this job. Actually, this is not really a matter of pay. If you do not know why you are in this job you will never be content.

The question is the following: Is there a value in work itself or is there one beyond it? This is a matter of motivation. We have to be able to motivate ourselves. We know this kind of flow from our personal past, yet we seem to have lost it.

None of us is as smart as all of us. We are living in an economy of networked thinkers. We have the most to learn from those who are most different from ourselves. Diversity is the salvation of companies as much as it is of communities.

We should begin to ask new questions about old problems and design new answers for the individual and the larger community.

The issues of each of us are in fact the global issues for the future.

I believe that we are present at the creation of the future. It's happening right now and we are all part of it because we chose to be a part of it.

Anton Zeilinger

Galilei ist für mich eine Größe. Er hat es sich als Mensch angemaß, an die Natur Fragen in Form eines Experiments zu stellen.

Was gefragt ist, ist eine Klarheit des Denkens, eine analytische Vorgehensweise, und auch eine Bescheidenheit, nicht zu früh auf Antworten zu springen.

Wir wissen heute, dass es einen objektiven Zufall gibt... Es ist nicht nur, dass wir den Grund nicht wissen, sondern es gibt keinen Grund. Das bedeutet für mich, dass die Welt sehr viel offener ist als vorher.

Das Faszinierende ist, dass uns die Quantenphysik sagt, dass es Dinge gibt, die sich rein zufällig verhalten. Das heißt, dass die Möglichkeit, irgendwelche Gedankenketten zu konstruieren, nicht funktioniert. Das bedeutet, dass es Dinge gibt, die ohne Grund geschehen. Das ist für mich die wichtigste Erkenntnis des 20. Jahrhunderts.

Durch einfache Experimente kann ganz klar gezeigt werden, dass die Welt tatsächlich so seltsam ist. Einstein meinte, die Welt kann um Gottes Willen nicht so verrückt sein. Heute wissen wir, sie ist so verrückt.

Es ist ein ungelöstes Dilemma in der Wissenschaft:
'Existiert das Universum nur aufgrund unserer Beobachtung?'

Wir können nie über Wirklichkeit sprechen, ohne tatsächlich die Information zu meinen, die wir über diese Wirklichkeit besitzen. Es gibt keine Möglichkeit zwischen Wirklichkeit und unserem Wissen zu unterscheiden.

Wir stehen erst am Beginn der Naturwissenschaften, am Beginn des Verständnisses für die Welt. Wir müssen etwas bescheiden sein.

Wir können die Dinge mathematisch beschreiben, oder sie in wunderschönen Gleichungen ausdrücken. Aber die Frage nach der Natur der Dinge können wir noch immer nicht beantworten.

Bisher haben wir nicht mehr gemacht, als an der Oberfläche zu kratzen. Die wirklich tiefen Dinge liegen noch vor uns. Die tiefen Fragen sind die nach der Natur der Dinge.

Eleven life stories containing sense

Anton Zeilinger

Conny Bischofberger

As fast as lightning, the crew members of the “Enterprise” were able to beam themselves across time and space directly from their space shuttle to different planets, into the shuttles of hostile enemies and back home again.

“Beam me up, Scotty” became a saying, well-known to everyone. In the meantime reality is quickly catching up with science fiction. This trite saying has inspired an ingenious Austrian. Professor Anton Zeilinger, department head at the Institute of Experimental Physics at the University of Vienna, is simply called “Mr. Beam.” In 1997 he succeeded in performing the world’s first quantum teleportation - the direct transmission of the condition of a light-particle from A to B - surmounting time and space and without covering the distance. The unbelievable thing about it though, as noted by the physicist from Tyrol himself: “There is nothing between A and B, an unbelievable, crazy consequence of the wonder world of quantum physics. This world is so exciting.”

Thus, our concept of space could be completely wrong. To explain his ideas to everyone interested in the topic, Anton Zeilinger has written a book entitled “Einstein’s veil,” giving insight into the universe of quantum physics and the strange laws that govern the world of atoms. He makes clear that he accepts this nickname only as a gag: “I am definitely not Mr. Beam, it’s a term that would be rather restrictive to me”.

The 59-year-old physicist tremendously admires the great achievements of his young, clever and very intelligent team of 30 scientists from around the world. That’s the way experiments like “teleportation” can succeed. He hasn’t made a fortune by it, but says he is quite content with his salary at university. Although he is much sought after as a key-note speaker and lecturer, he keeps firmly to his principle: physics always takes first place. He doesn’t mind letting someone (even if it’s the prime minister) wait outside if there is a scientific problem to discuss. In his lab, time passes at a different pace - and that’s good the way it is.

The professor with a strong team spirit further awed the world with another world-premiere in 1999 - the first encoding of a secret message using quantum cryptography. Quantum physics makes clear that some things are just mere coincidence. The most fascinating implication for

the scientist is the fact that our view of this world isn’t as reliable as we would like to believe. There are questions yet to be asked, and science is merely at the very beginning of many thought-provoking decades.



Professor Zeilinger’s aim is to turn his back on the handicraft of physics in favor of “natural-philosophy” with its focus on intellectual thought, to muse on the fantastic interplay between the earthly laws of nature and divinity - and all of this not just in his lab. The married father of three grown up children loves sailing and “has to climb mountains” in order to revel in his own blissful moments of “flow,” as described by Mihály Csikszentmihályi, expert in the psychological field of research on happiness, and one of the professor’s colleagues amongst all the “smart brains” at the “Waldzell Meeting”. The path leading to finding the meaning of life is different for every individual, but honesty can only be achieved with passion.

With a laughing eye pioneer Zeilinger remembers how two well-known professors tried to talk him out of quantum physics. “I can still hear them saying: Zeilinger, you’re wasting your time!” He has sufficiently proved the contrary and will continue doing so until “I’ll die of a stroke in the lab, which would actually suit me.” Laymen only see the “beaming” part of it, but the physicist is filled with passion - a force that is not teleportable, not up till now anyway...

Alan M. Webber

Alan M. Webber was born in St. Louis, Missouri. His father was a sales manager for a local photographic supply company, but his heart was in the study of history and in collecting books. His mother was ahead of her time - she was a sportswoman as a girl and went to journalism school before women did that kind of thing.

From childhood on he has always been interested in reading, writing, and ideas that matter. When he was little, his mother and father sent him to Sunday school for a religious education - little Alan started out writing articles for the Sunday school newspaper. In grade school and high school he wrote for the weekly newspaper and by the time he was a senior in high school, he was the editor of the paper. In college young Alan was the editor of the college newspaper. After completing his studies his first job was helping an older journalist to start a political newsmagazine in Portland, Oregon. After a short trip into politics Alan Webber was recruited to the Harvard Business School as a senior research associate. Soon he became appointed as an associate editor of the Harvard Business Review, and one year later he was made the managing editor of the magazine. In 1992 he left HBR to start his own magazine. With Bill Taylor, his editorial partner, the journalist by calling launched Fast Company in 1995 and remained at the helm of the magazine until 2002/2003.

Alan Webber always wanted to do work that mattered, work that made a difference, work that had an impact and underlines his rule: "Don't do work that you don't enjoy." He saw his father, who wanted to be a historian and instead was a salesman of photographic supplies, leading two lives: The life he had to lead to make a living, and the life he wanted to live to be himself. "What I learned was that life is too short to try to cram two different lives into it. You should be able to do what you're good at, do what you enjoy, do what makes a difference - and have that be included in your one, single work life. I can honestly say that I've never had a job that I didn't enjoy. And that when I stopped enjoying it - when it wasn't fun anymore and when I therefore became less good at it - I had the courage and the resolve to leave it and move on to something that I did enjoy."

Fast Company was named startup of the year and launch of the year. They won the "National Magazine Award for General Excellence and Excellence in Design". Mr. Webber and his co-founder were named Editors of the Year for their work on the magazine.

Fast Company became the fastest growing business magazine in the history of the United States, but what Alan Webber felt was the greatest impact was on the lives of their readers: "We had an international club of readers - the Company of Friends - that at one point had tens of thousands of members in cities around the world. We stimulated serious discussion about work and life, about meaning and success, about personal growth and professional performance."



Moving on to something new Mr. Webber is now exploring launching a new project: "Blue Letter" - an idea club for business leaders around the world who believe that it is essential to develop new, better answers to questions that must be confronted: "How do we do better in the realm of public education? What would it take to make real progress on preserving and protecting the environment? What can we do to create good jobs around the world in response to increased global competition for the existing jobs? As more scientific breakthroughs find commercial applications, how can we sensibly manage the economic and human implications? What are realistic steps that we can take to address the growing gap between the rich and the poor around the world?" In many ways the questions that the Waldzell Meeting was created to address.

The visionary of passion would like to see a network of thoughtful, committed, intellectually engaged business leaders around the world go after fresh answers to these and other questions - and then agree to try some experiments to test the answers that are developed to discover what really works.

Helen Palmer

Conny Bischofberger

The American psychologist Helen Palmer admits that she failed most of her university exams. The reason: pure and unfounded anxiety. Many great minds and successful visionaries haven't been promising winners right from the start.

Her life took a dramatic change when she met a young Zen-monk, who confronted her with completely different views from the ones her psychologist had taught her - "There is more to you than your thoughts, your emotions or the experiences you have, there is so much more..."

In the time that followed, she managed to control her anxiety and pass her exams. Helen Palmer today is head of the Trifold School of Enneagram Studies in Berkeley, California.

This little "extra" in the message, conveyed to her by the Zen-monk, guided her to insight into the innermost parts of the human soul, leading to further development of the Enneagram-system. The Enneagram (enneá means nine, gramma means written) is a psychological and spiritual system rooted in Sufism, the Jewish Kabala and the seven mortal sins of early Christianity; it is graphically represented by a star inscribed in a circle with nine lines. Anger, envy, pride, avarice, gluttony, lust and sloth are supplemented by two general traits everybody shares - deceit and fear, thus constituting the basis for the nine personality types found in the Enneagram.

Palmer's first book, published in 1988, became an US- best-seller and can be called a standard work in this field. These nine structures are acquired in early childhood and cannot be fled from in later life. "Either they make your life miserable - or you can learn to live with them and try to make the best of it." The psychologist, lecturing at J. F. Kennedy University, is sure that her findings are the key to the soul. The interviews she led throughout her research astonished her, and showed how little people know about themselves.

The inner balance between cognitive and intuitive knowledge seems to be a major difference between Palmer and many others: that is why Palmer teaches how people can find a better understanding of themselves and others.

She grew up in Manhattan, and although her family was not prosperous, her parents managed to give their daughter a decent education.

For the sake of her two sons she has since left New York, and is currently living in California. She still appreciates the public school-system as having contributed to her success - but it is most of all her parents, and especially her father - to whom she is grateful.



Respectfully called the "Master of Intuition," she is sure to have inherited her gift from her father. He dreamed up the "Blue Fairy Story," telling the fairy tale in his "wonderful voice" to his little girl for years. His stories came to life for her in her dark bedroom. "This power, enabling me to sense things, probably was the reason I chose my later profession." Helen Palmer is sure that the key to the meaning of life, to happiness and fulfillment, isn't buried that deep - whoever is able to preserve a certain amount of sensitivity can reach out for this key at any moment.

Kary B. Mullis

Conny Bischofberger

Everyone knows life is chemistry - and some live for it. Chemistry provokes questions and at the same time provides answers to this life. The explanations given by sixty-year-old biochemist Kary B. Mullis were worth 10,000 US dollars, he discovered later - a ridiculous sum, given the revolutionary importance of medical and biological research. Some two decades ago, Mullis, like many of his scientific colleagues, began to explore the significance of a very common but unreliable genetic testing device, only to promptly give up on the project.

Kary B. Mullis will never forget that Friday night he was driving along in his car: "I knew this would be the first day of the rest of my life". He was leaving Berkeley for a small, isolated hut, cut off from civilization and scientific research, located in Mendocino. The idea struck the biochemist at milestone 46.58 like a comet. "Eureka", "Dear Thor" and "Holy Shit!" are some exclamations he is supposed to have uttered, finally having solved the riddle. It wasn't the genetic test that had to be altered, it was the track called DNA that had to be enforced. Mullis developed a technique called Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), which was able to multiply fragments of DNA into almost unlimited numbers. This flash of inspiration enables insights into our ancestry such as the Neanderthals, removes any doubt about the dinosaurs in "Jurassic Park" and creates genetic fingerprints with the help of a single human hair. Hoffmann-LaRoche paid the huge sum of 300 million dollars for a slightly refined version of PCR only 8 years later (Mullis had left by then - left where?).

Mullis was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1993. His technology has turned into a business, dealing in billions of dollars, and its use has become common. Mullis doesn't hide behind his test tubes, though: he was married three times, is father of three children and a passionate surfer. He seems to fit the image of a "beach boy" far better, which he emphasized by posing in swimming trunks, holding a surfboard, for the cover of his autobiography published in 1998. He grew up on his grandparents' farm in North Carolina with his parents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sister and even his great-grandmother, who seemed to have been ahead of her time: a single mom, she took care of the neighbors and their cattle and ran the local post office on top of it all.

Nature and the special people around him helped shape this "man of the century". "I lived a free life, it helps a child in developing independence". The post-mortem

encounter with his grandfather wouldn't be anything unusual, had the story been taken out of a novel by the Columbian author Gabriel Garcia Marquez. As a matter of fact, it is mentioned in Mullis' biography: "Pop" died



at the age of 92 and visited me for a couple of days in California. At night, we would sit in the kitchen, talking to each other and drinking beer. I would have his beer for him, because although he seemed to attend to me - this didn't account for the beer".

Kary Mullis believes in this encounter more than he does in half of current mathematical and scientific research. Apparently, Mullis uses both hemispheres of his brain and loves to provoke. He got into big trouble with some of his colleagues when he questioned the trigger function of the retrovirus HIV in AIDS. "I claim that AIDS and HIV are not one and the same." Both consecutive publications attracted attention: "Inventing the AIDS Virus" published in 1997 and "What would it be like, if everything you thought you knew about AIDS was wrong?" in 2000.

Kary B. Mullis seeks fulfillment by scrutinizing - he does not rest until he finds the meaning of things. "I am very inventive when it comes to searching for an answer." For a small minority this view might be aggravating, for the rest of the world it is most useful.

Thomas Hampson

Hubertus Seidl

His artistic diversity and innovative, creative power on stage have made him one of the most popular and sought-after singers of the day. The American baritone Thomas Hampson is equally skilled in very diverse fields of music. No matter the musical style - be it opera, musical or operetta, his ability to inspire his audience with his compelling voice is amazing. He also follows any scientific research in the field of music very closely.

Born in 1955 in Elkhart, Indiana (US), Hampson grew up in a musical family but studied Political Science - getting involved in music only on the side out of curiosity. He gained his first experience in operas by singing in the choir in his home town. His first voice teacher was a Methodist nun, Sister Marietta Coyle - others like Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Martial Singher and Horst Günther followed; he also received musical training at the Music Academy in Santa Barbara. This solid basis enabled him an international career, leading him through prestigious opera and concert halls all over the world.

Passion is definitely the singer's driving force. His understanding of the roles he interprets on stage is determined by the conviction that "Music has to be felt, entertainment isn't its ultimate goal." It is far more important to "communicate the idea and the symbols the composer had in mind and to interpret the metaphors rather than to perform purely from an aesthetical point of view."

Not only is he successful in operatic roles such as "Doctor Faustus", "Don Giovanni" and many others, he is also a sought-after concert singer. His interpretations are unique in the way he analyses and "feels" a song, and sets new standards in song recitals - for example, at the Salzburg Festival with recitals of songs by Hugo Wolf and Gustav Mahler.

As Thomas Hampson is most devoted to American lyrics, he developed a program on the cultural contexts of American songs for the Salzburg Festival in 2004 - "I hear America Singing". The program included lyrics by Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson set to music. "The Great American Songbook" is devoted to composers such as Kurt Weill and is viewed by Hampson as a patchwork of American lyrics and European music.

There is nothing Hampson enjoys more than a "knowledgeable audience". He established a foundation that researches original scores, and in addition to giving master classes and pursuing research projects, he organises "Hampson-Symposiums" and recital concerts.

Thomas Hampson has received an array of awards including honorary doctorates in music from multiple American universities, membership in London's Royal



Music Academy, the title "Kammersänger" by the Vienna State Opera and a nomination as "Chevalier de L'ordre des arts et des lettres" by the French government. Most of his distinctive recordings have earned awards, including six Grammy nominations, the Grammy Award 2002 for "Tannhäuser" interpretations, two Edison Prizes and in 2004, the Honorary Cross First Class for Science and Arts in Vienna.

His personal search for meaning isn't restricted to the field of music, which he is so familiar with, having found satisfying answers within his domain. The search for the meaning of life exceeds any single field; the driving force is "the question, not the possible answer". Perhaps Thomas Hampson - a poet amongst opera singers - was able to reach some insights on this topic at the Waldzell Meeting 2004.

David J. Goldberg

Gudrun Hollauf

David J. Goldberg is Senior Rabbi at the Liberal Synagogue in London, which is the oldest and largest progressive synagogue in the country. He comes from a long-standing family of rabbis - his father was a rabbi and his mother comes from a long line of European rabbis, one of whom was among the Jewish notables who advised Napoleon Bonaparte on Jewish matters.

David J. Goldberg was born in London in 1939 and was educated at Manchester Grammar School, where he won a scholarship to study English at Oxford. After teaching for four years, the family tradition drew him to Trinity College, Dublin, to study Semitics and serve as a lay minister for the small Progressive Jewish Community. After completing his rabbinic studies, he received his ordination from Leo Baeck College in 1971. Rabbi Goldberg is a former chairman of the Rabbinic Conference of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues and now co-chairman of the London Society of Jews and Christians.

As an influential liberal rabbi, he posed the question of whether it was time for Judaism and Jewish nationalism - Zionism - to go their separate ways: "Loyalty to one's people is a mitsvah. Loyalty to God's demands is a still greater mitsvah." For Goldberg, the choice to be faced is between the loyalty of the Jewish people above all to the people and the land, or the abstract loyalty to Jewish morality and the individual conscience. Rabbi Goldberg is known for his critical view of Ariel Sharon's occupation politics. His contributions in *The Times*, *The Observer* and *The Independent* continually cause a sensation. In *The Guardian* he wrote in 2002 that "we Jews do ourselves a disservice if we cry 'anti-Semite' at every liberal criticism of Israel."

In 1999 Rabbi Goldberg was awarded the Gold Medalion of The International Council of Christians and Jews for his "outstanding contribution to interfaith harmony and understanding". His most distinguishing characteristic is objectivity and courage to express what he believes to be right. "What I generally find among non-Jewish acquaintances is appreciation of Israel's achievements, unhappiness at the obduracy of West Bank settlers, wariness of Arabs and Islam (especially after September 11), an abhorrence of suicide bombers and all fundamentalists, but a natural sympathy for the Palestinians when faced with Israeli tanks and fighter jets. More or less my own sentiments."

Goldberg is married and has two grown-up children. He is fond of his Jack Russell terriers, which he named after characters in Thomas Hardy's novels, and a big fan of his local cricket club.



He is a keen teacher and preacher, and has never been tempted to move from his congregation of 2000, all of whom he treats with equal respect, whether their name is Rothschild or simply Joe Cohen. He enjoys working with his congregation and is firmly convinced that there is no better pulpit elsewhere. His fruitful and thought-provoking sermons are highly praised.

"Rabbi means teacher and in my job I try not to give soft, easy answers but always treat life as it is and not how we would like it to be. My work brings me into close touch with the widest variety of people, taking me through the whole gamut of their lives from birth through marriage to death. It is a privilege and the perennial stimulation of my calling. When I wake up every morning, my great joy is knowing that the day ahead will always be different. I am a very lucky and happy man indeed."

Burkhard F. Ellegast

Susanne Bobek

“The key to finding a purpose in life is paradise” - this statement by the 66th abbot of Melk Abbey, Burkhard Ellegast, is complemented by the following thought: “Although paradise might just be one of those things we are not able to achieve.” A long path through life has led Ellegast to a great wealth of worldly wisdom. He wasn’t born with this wisdom but had to work hard to overcome the doubts he had concerning his vocation - that’s the secret of his mental strength.

Born in 1931 in Melk, Senior Abbot Burkhard Ellegast, son of the former butcher of Melk Abbey, grew up and attended school at the Abbey. His older brother was killed in World War II and young Burkhard witnessed the prisoners being marched to Melk from the concentration camp in Mauthausen, driven barefoot through the snow. His father died while Ellegast was still in school, whereupon the Benedictine monks admitted him to the boarding school in order to take some financial strain off his mother.

Abbot Burkhard joined the monastery as a young novice at the age of 20, “falling” into it - as he puts it - since he had planned on going to university and settling down to get married and have kids. “I really had to struggle with my vocation,” he recalls the hard times he had when he was young. The conservative senior monks didn’t always treat him well. Although he wasn’t at all pleased with the fields of study imposed on him, he has since changed his mind about the time spent at Vienna University studying theology, Latin and Greek. “I often felt torn between the worldly life in Vienna and the seclusion of the monastery - I even fell in love a couple of times, thus understanding well enough what I was renouncing.”

He came to a final decision in favor of the Benedictine way of life when one of the elderly monks explained that in a monastery, time is counted in centuries - a remark hinting that changes to be made in this secluded world took a lifetime. Burkhard Ellegast felt challenged by this remark - it wouldn’t take him his whole life to change things!

He was elected abbot at the age of 44. During his 26 years as abbot, the major changes he had hoped for came about: the costly renovation of the baroque abbey, which now hosts up to 450,000 visitors a year, has turned the abbey into one of the most important sights in Austria.



The theologian and classicist is a renowned expert on the Benedictine rule “ora et labora et lege” (pray and work and read), considered a milestone in European culture. His pastoral care consists of trying to lead by example rather than imposing his views on others, thus becoming one of the few people whom virtually everyone seeks out for advice. Instead of telling someone going through difficult times that God does not fail in His decisions, Abbot Burkhard often just lends a compassionate ear to their sorrows and difficulties. Former students love to visit their teacher in his small, simple flat in the abbey.

He was a little nervous that “all these intelligent and famous people” would be intimidating, but like most doubts he had in the course of his life, this one, too, turned out to be unfounded - Nobel prize winners, artists, executive managers, Christians and those of other religious faiths - everyone present at his moving, authentic and sincere lecture at Melk Abbey entitled “God, Benedict and Melk” - just loved him!

Shirin Ebadi

Conny Bischofberger

A woman's head is made for thinking. No nation should force a woman to wear the veil; rather, women should be encouraged to enhance their mental abilities and skills.

Shirin Ebadi, an Iranian lawyer, is driven by the transformation into reality of utopian dreams. In 2003, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for "Efforts towards Democracy and Human Rights". She was the first Muslim ever awarded this prize. Lech Walesa was the only public figure opposed to her election – but it is unclear whether his criticism was due to her gender or to her religion.

Iran reacted with silence to her nomination, and even two days after the announcement, official media hadn't reacted with even the shortest of reports. President Khatami qualified the prize as "insignificant

The human rights activist, 57, was president of the town court of Teheran and at the same time the first female judge in Iran - but only for four short years, as she was forced to resign in 1979 following the Islamic revolution. Unlike many others who fled the country at the time, she stayed and fought actively for women's and children's rights in spite of constant threats. Prison is well known to her - though not only from visiting her clients - the active lawyer and lecturer at Teheran University spent three weeks in jail herself in July 2000.

"Soiling public opinion" was the flimsy reason given by the authorities for Ebadi's incarceration. The Nobel Peace Prize winner believes strongly in Islam and campaigns for a new interpretation of the religion, which in her opinion is in harmony with human rights. She holds the rigid Islamic laws in Iran responsible for all violations in this field. Her goal is the separation of national and religious interests. She finds it difficult to comply with everyone's expectations of her, facing harsh criticism from some, hate from others: there is too much talk and too little action - and there is always some critic waiting around the corner. In 1994 she founded one of the rare NGOs in Iran - an organization fighting for the rights of minors.

Since the Mullahs have come to power, Shirin Ebadi has been fighting vigorously against the death penalty, mutilations and torture as well as for freedom of opinion, freedom of the press and for more freedom for Iranian women. "Our male dominated society can only be diagnosed as pathological - men do not even respect

their own mothers any more – even though it is these very women who gave birth to them!" She is also not well liked by authorities for her activities in counseling imprisoned intellectuals and defending the rights of family members of murdered opposition members.



Even after 25 years of untiring commitment, she shows no signs of fatigue and her desire for freedom and independence is as strong as ever. She compares it to running a "marathon, carrying the torch" - a torch able to light the fire of freedom. "This lighted torch I am carrying helps me outstrip those who would like to stop me. I have no idea to whom I will pass it on - or when - but for the moment I just feel I have to continue running!"

Carl M. Djerassi

Conny Bischofberger

The name Djerassi has become a synonym for the most popular method of contraception. He has been called “father of the Pill” for the past 53 years – and there is no way of living down that nickname. The chemist, however, prefers to define himself as an “intellectual polygamist”, responsible for changing women’s lives and socio-cultural perceptions in the 20th century.

In search of anti-arthritis medication, Carl Djerassi succeeded in the first synthesis of hormones in a laboratory in Mexico in 1951. In cooperation with two colleagues, he managed to develop the first artificial hormonal contraceptive. Since then, he feels a little bit like a “male feminist”, having given women control over pregnancy and thus more freedom in their sexuality.

What still annoys him is the frequently used term “Anti - Baby Pill”. “My invention isn’t directed against babies, it’s meant to support and back up women’s freedom of choice!” Chemical components have not only changed his own life - leading him to fame and prosperity within a very short time - but have changed women’s lives all over the world as well.

Born into a Jewish family of physicians in pre-war Vienna, his life - like that of many others - didn’t seem promising at the time. When the National Socialist troops invaded Vienna, Carl Djerassi managed to escape to London with his mother, and emigrated to the US shortly afterwards. Just six years later he earned his Ph. D. in organic chemistry at the University of Wisconsin. Today, the former refugee is able to think back without any of his former resentment and even accepted the offer of Austrian citizenship last year - a way of “coming home” to his native country after all.

In 1979, one year after the tragic loss of his daughter, a painter and poet who committed suicide, Carl Djerassi founded the “Djerassi Resident Artists Program”, designed to encourage and inspire artists. Located in the Santa Cruz Mountains, artists in the disciplines of literature, music composition, visual arts or media art are offered a retreat. “Suicide is a message to those who stay behind - I understood the message in a very personal way!” In creating the Program, he paid tribute to his daughter in a special way by converting his grief into hope: “I think the Program would have helped her, that’s why I decided to go ahead with it”.

A master in the field of scientific phenomena, Djerassi is amongst the five most significant chemists world wide and owner of one of the largest Paul Klee collections. He was awarded 18 honorary doctorates, has published more than 1200 scientific works, lives in London and San Francisco and is still restless. “I am ambitious, as are many of my colleagues - but add at least ten percent to that - that’s me!”



His third and current wife, Diane Middlebrook, English professor at Stanford University and an author herself, has had a major influence on his third field of creative work - for the past 18 years, Carl Djerassi has established himself as author and playwright.

Mihály Csikszentmihályi

Conny Bischofberger

“Csik” or “Doktor C.” is how Professor Csikszentmihályi, who has defined a new path to fulfillment, luck and satisfaction, is called back home in the States, since his tongue-twisting Hungarian name poses a major pronunciation problem for many an American.

His family managed to escape from Budapest to Vienna shortly before the train station (which one?) was blown up. After graduating from high school in Rome, he studied at the art academy there, before emigrating to the US and earning his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Chicago in 1965. He has devoted his life to research on human happiness ever since. Due to his European roots, Doctor C. – at heart - leads a double life between the two continents - feeling European in America and American once he travels to Europe.

He has been searching for the answer to a vital question since his early youth: what makes people lead a positive, happy and good life and how can a person make sense of it all? Simply put: What is happiness?

Years of scientific research have led to Mihály Csikszentmihályi’s nickname “Glücksforscher” (‘Researcher of Happiness’), to the title “Thinker of the Year 2000” and to multiple best-selling publications of his thesis. “Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience”, published in 1990, enables even those of us with bleak outlooks on life, to take a look at what is behind unsatisfied desire - although even the explorer of the “effects of flow” himself has unhappy moments, especially when he finds his works in a book store, side by side with other works offering 10-step directions to happiness.

Complete involvement and passion are basic prerequisites for the experience of “Flow” and the enjoyment resulting from this ideal fulfillment. When Csikszentmihályi interviewed monks in Tibet, weavers in Borneo or managers in New York’s business world, he discovered a common denominator in their stories - activities considered enjoyable were those accomplished with a high level of concentration and without effort - like being carried away by a current, forgetting time, space and the ego and getting lost in the activity.

The professor was barely ten years old when he experienced this feeling for the first time himself. Bombs were falling, fear and destruction were everywhere.

Totally absorbed, the young boy played several games of chess, oblivious to the violence around him and feeling happiness despite all the horror. This experience led to recognition and was the key to his purpose in life.



Two decades went by and again ‘flow’ touched the professor’s life: he had noticed how oblivious to the world students became when they were painting. They seemed driven by an inexplicable inner force, so enthralling and fascinating that Mihály Csikszentmihályi decided to devote his life to the research of this phenomenon. Since then he has developed a moral and ethical perspective on ‘flow’ as an evolutionary force. The continual challenge to go beyond oneself is the happiness he points to, allowing more consciousness and thus contributing to the successful evolution of mankind.

Doctor C. has two sons - both are professors today. Watching his happy young children picking ripe oranges from the trees in his garden in California had the effect on “Csik” that it should have had - that there is a purpose in life. The “flow” in the life of “Professor Happiness” is the pleasant tension he experiences in his work filled with passion and curiosity – and being carried away by his “personal” current.

Günter Blobel

Susanne Bobek

Günter Blobel was born the son of a veterinary in Waltersdorf, Germany in 1936. His family fled to West-Germany and witnessed the bombardment of Dresden from a distance of 20 kilometers. Blobel, one of eight children, still remembers the billows of smoke hovering over the destroyed city. In 1999 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine for discovering that proteins have intrinsic signals that govern their transport and localization in a cell.

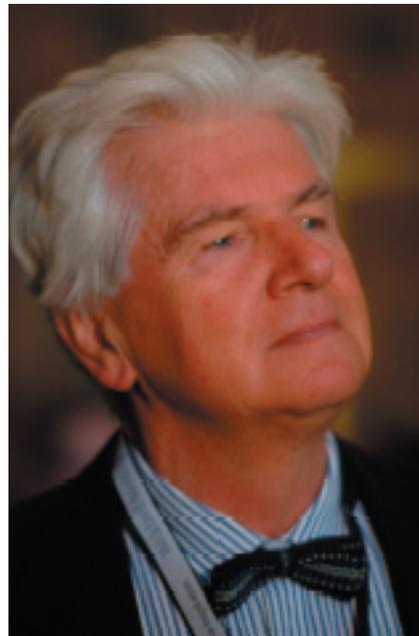
When his family arrived in Freiburg in 1945, they were penniless. He nevertheless managed to complete his studies in medicine and left for the US in 1962 for post-graduate studies. He felt that further scientific education in the US in his field of research would be useful, and after completing a doctoral degree in oncology in 1967 at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, he joined The Rockefeller University in New York. His passion for science was triggered by his mentor George Palade, Nobel Prize laureate in 1974, who spurred his assistant on to great achievements.

Blobel discovered that each newly made protein had a specific address, a string of protein referred to as a signal sequence that is recognized by receptors on an organelle's surface. The "elegant" results of his findings and experiments were highly praised by the Nobel Prize committee but nevertheless disregarded, ignored and derided for decades. He was called the ideologist of his own theories, although these same theories have turned out to be the basis for a number of currently used medical therapies. Since then, genetic engineering has prospered based on precisely these ideas.

Günter Blobel has been called an unconventional thinker for decades, a hard worker never known to give up. In 1971 he formulated a first version of the "signal hypothesis", postulating that proteins that are secreted out of a cell contain an intrinsic signal that transports them to and across membranes. Further research showed that each protein carries in its structure the information needed to specify its proper location in the cell and that specific amino acid sequences determine whether a protein will pass through a membrane into a particular organelle, become integrated into the membrane, or be transported out of the cell. Blobel's research helped to determine the molecular mechanisms behind several genetic diseases. Günter Blobel explains this modestly: "I had the time and the possibilities to do my research in the course of 25 years, without pressure - something

quite rare nowadays in science - that's probably the reason why I was awarded the Nobel Prize as an individual researcher".

His wife, an Italian-born American art historian and owner of Barbetta Restaurant in Manhattan, provides him with the private support and backing he needs. When she inherited the business from her father, she decided to continue her father's life's work out of respect and gratitude - despite the lack of passion she had for it.



Günter Blobel has donated a major part of the money received from the Nobel Prize for the reconstruction of the "Frauenkirche" in Dresden: "In gratitude and respect for those less lucky in life, having had to spend their lives behind the Iron Curtain". "I could have bought a house - in that case, far less people would have been rewarded - the "Frauenkirche" hosts so many seeking help", he explains. Surrounded by up to 20 scientists, he still works hard in his laboratory at the university, as well as owning a small biotechnical business. An American citizen since 1987, he travels to Europe for a month twice a year and still hasn't even considered retiring.

Melk Abbey: 1000 years of sense and spirituality

Burkhard F. Ellegast, 66th Abbot of Melk Abbey

Every Benedictine monastery is a settled place, hosting a confraternity of devout people on their search for God and thus to life - meaning a sense in life. With whatever they do, they want to glorify God. This word - glorification - often used in a worldly context, is the Benedictine's keyword, getting obvious while looking at every chapel, church and dome built by them.

Here two dimensions, imminent for the development of a culture and for human development, meet: a composed place, homely and vivid at the same time, hosting a community of heterogeneous personalities, brought together by the place itself and by their spirited faith.

Benedict of Nursia

Saint Benedict studied in Rome, but decided shortly after to flee this place where a highly developed culture was being degraded to mere civilisation.

On the way

Benedict discovers and realizes that a meaningful life isn't achievable by comfortable resting. Only conscious and devout life sharing opens up your heart and renders meaningful life possible.

The three years he spent in the solitude of the forests of Subiaco - on his own, with just his God for company, must have been happy and contented ones.

It was only when people started visiting him, asking him for directions in life; he became aware of the fact that he couldn't live a satisfactory life just by himself. He soon is elected abbot of a cloistral congregation, imposing his degree of duteous obligations. He has to find out, how impossible it is to impose his standards on others. This teaches him the rule, he further on defines for his confraternity:

Mercifulness is more important than a draconic tribunal, the wrong done by a fellow Christian is condemnable ,the abbot may hate the wrong, but must still love the person; rust should not be scratched out too strenuously, thus harming the container.

He gets to know the strong and the weak and realizes that they all have to live together in peace. In the evening of his life he has to experience that love is more important than the most important system. His sister, feeling her life coming to an end, asked him to stay by her side. The dutiful Benedict didn't think he could break the stringent rules he had set up, for personal reasons. His sister started praying and a thunderstorm arose, keeping him from leaving her. God had shown him that he considered his stay more important than those rules.

A home

Benedict founded a monastery and set up a rule: whilst praying, working and reading the Holy Bible, the fellow monks were to share their time; convinced this was the meaning in life - to be on a mutual search for the will of God.



Fotonachweis: © Stift Melk

Monasteries in the succession of Benedict

He also founded a school, placed into the service of God and joined to the monastery: a school is an institution where people have to learn humanness, faith in God and where they can find the centre of their life.

The monastery is a community, hosting them all: the strong, the weak, the young and the old, the healthy and the sick, even those only coming as visitors - meaning not only his fellow Christians but everyone - the poor and the strangers. They all are to be treated like the Lord. When the abbot talks with his monks, he has to consider their priorities in precise situations. He has to listen even to the youngest ones amongst them because God often discloses the better way to the younger.

A confraternity of seekers for God

Personalities with different abilities integrated in the ensemble of the community. That's the way the monastery grounds arose where they lived; songs and melodies praising God evolved. In trying to find explanations for the Holy Scripture they accomplished works of literature also covering different topics, taken into use by the monks to educate the young pupils having come to the monastery for schooling. Without difficulty the monasteries created cultural works - without end in itself, culture develops easily.

After his death, monasteries arose - taking over his rules.

Monasteries as religious centers

Those monasteries were centers of a certain region. The monks stubbed the fields and cultivated them; within the walls of the monasteries workshops were built.

The significant buildings of Romanticism, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque with their treasures in the libraries were very important for the monasteries, bearing witness of the faith noticeable there and showing the profound spirituality felt by the monks.

Monasteries - towns on mountaintops

The development of Europe can be seen as achievement by Benedict's monks. The monasteries taught the inhabitants to cultivate their fields, handicraft was enhanced and spiritual abilities were stimulated. This is how God's assignment of Creation was fulfilled.

The foundation of Benedict's monastery took place at the time of the migration of peoples. In the agitated surging of those times the founded monastery was able to procure a safe and steady haven, bringing peace in stormy times. Those times required steady locations, permitting the peace and order needed for a healthy evolution. Monasteries of later times changed more and more from a geographical fast haven to places where people could and still can find foothold, direction and meaning, in times of dramatic disorientation.

Melk Abbey

Founded in 1089, Melk Abbey too, went its way of intellectual history.

Monasteries in the swaying of different times

Human life always takes place in times of peace and disturbance, change and upheaval. The trough of the sea is followed by the crest of a wave; upward motion is followed by downward motion. Monks have always been the children of their time: monasteries were equally affected by ups and downs related to the respective spirit of the age. There were times of prosperity and again such of descent.

Decline can always bring forth new forms of life: this becomes evident, keeping in mind the concept of regularity. The principle of seeking for God explicitly demonstrates the following: times of descent and anticlimax give rise to concern, thus encouraging an advancement, leading to basic positive change.



Stift Melk - Fotonachweis: © Stift Melk

The beginnings

At the time of its foundation, the monastery played a major role in constituting a solid geographic basis, thus backing up the efforts by the Babenbergers to ensure the province. The monastery developed increasingly into a religious and cultural center.

New ways in the 15th century

In the aftermath of the downward drift of worldly and churchly life in the 14th century, the council of Constance (1414-1418) was able to save the institution. Reform was achieved only in a few areas though: on initiative of the council and upon the wish of the Austrian duke, a group of reformers came to Melk. Those monks were able to bring about vital renewal to the monastery - the so called "Melk reform", not only lasting all through the 15th century but also spreading widely in the Southern German area. Those reformers, together with the University of Vienna, supported the council's theory, having in mind to keep reforms going, by councils taking place on a regular basis. They thus had thrust their fingers into the churchly deficits of this time. The institution had been redeveloped, without actually achieving a reform.

Institution without Depth

This reform was restricted to formalities like ceremonies or the question of monks being allowed to eat meat etc., which might explain the huge popularity of reform oriented preachers. Anything merely held together by an institution cannot endure on the long run. The monastery was left with only eight monks of dubious orthodoxy.

Melk Abbey

Institution and Depth

Following the provisions of the Augsburg Religious Peace Treaty (1555), the Catholic Habsburgs set off for the counter-reformation. Fresh spirits wafted through the monasteries, newly founded cloistral congregations made an effort to show more Catholicism and went to great lengths, regarding spiritual foundation. The cloistral confraternity in Melk was soon blossoming in spirited revival and though strenuous discipline was reinforced, the atmosphere was filled with devout faith. The outward proof and expression for this life style is the baroque building of the abbey, pointing clearly at the profound faith, despite the baroque magnificence of stone, color and form. The counter-reformation made clear that inwardness needs backing up by a sturdy framework.

Change and Rise

Changes in the field of intellectual history had taken effect. Grounded by a devout belief in God, the Renaissance had positioned the human being to the fore; rationality and reasoning were the unidirectional views that followed: the French revolution, Enlightenment in Germany, Josephicism in Austria. Austrians are a special breed - intellectual changes aren't as radical as elsewhere, take longer to grip but also sustain longer. In altercation with the tight discipline, the Benedictine monks were carried away by the new spirit. During the reign of Joseph II. (1780-90), Melk turned into an enlightened monastery: the intellect expelled folk's religiousness or mystical submersion. The school and pastoral care were well looked after. The organization was right, lacking inner depth though; daily activities functioned well, spirituality was harshly cut back. Nevertheless the performance of assignments was good and positive progression could be achieved in the maintenance and management of the abbey. The prevailing good mood persisted deep into the 20th century.

The Human Being as a Unity

Despite the declared good intention and common-sense organization, the intellectual and theological background was missing. Rational course of action without spirituality misses the essence of humanity.

Humans are complex creatures, there is more to them than their brains. It wasn't till after the Second World War, spirituality started to regain importance in the monastery, thus leading to a drastic change of the situation: the former organizations, although functioning perfectly, weren't upholding anymore. People discovered their individuality and their freedom; authorities were not accepted anymore without questioning them, although the absence of authority has shown negative aspects in the meantime.

Secularization has spread widely; rationalism has thrust God aside and opened the way to increasingly materialistic thoughts. Everything seems practicable, regardless of what it might inflict; perceptions for sane proportions are trailing away.

This is where the monastery, with its possibilities and conditions is trying to place to disposal an oasis for those in search of a unity. Here you can find devout people, trying to live their belief with humanity and faithfulness. They want to affect, using everything available - the history, the location, the building and their personnel resources, all of this addressing not only the mind or the emotions or the body, but the person as a unity.

Melk Today

For centuries, the Secondary School has led to encounter and debate between the young pupils and the cloistral community. Encounter with the young, keeps you up to date and can be highly productive for adults.

The place

The location with its enormous amount of big rooms, long, wide corridors and the beautiful ambient filled with artistic expressiveness, builds a solid basis for lively encounters. It is amazing, the way these assets can provide a homely atmosphere, giving youngsters the possibility to unfold creativity and spontaneity.

Those ancient walls though, are able to host even further activities. Cultural events of diverse kind are enabled by a setting, worthy same wise for distinguished culture and meetings aiming at the possibility of developing personal fantasy thus leading to intellectual dialog. The Waldzell Meeting 2004 offers the best possible example.

Die Gemeinschaft

Offenheit

Ein Benediktinerkloster sah immer schon eine große Aufgabe in der Aufnahme von Gästen, die wie Christus aufgenommen werden sollen: So sollen die Klöster offen sein für Menschen, die kommen und gehen; für echte Begegnung, ein Aufatmen in einer Atmosphäre, die durch bauliche Gegebenheit und durch lebendige Offenheit froh und gut atmen lässt.

Melk als Gesamtkunstwerk

Die Melker Klosteranlage ist ein Gesamtkunstwerk, das den ganzen Menschen ansprechen will. Das Kloster mit der Kirche, als gläubigem Mittelpunkt, und der Bibliothek als geistigem Medium, ist das Zuhause derer, die die klösterliche Gemeinschaft bilden: Hier leben sie miteinander, beten und arbeiten.



Stiftspark - Fotonachweis: © Stift Melk

The monastery is a place to feel at home, a place fit to search for the stand you want to take in your life: the intellectual disorientation of our days makes solid grounds for such ideas valuable.

The counter piece of the building is the park on the other side: the fantastic nature is evidence for the Lord, able to create everything. Art on the one side corresponds to nature on the other side: the person as unity should be able to find, what he is searching for. In Melk the monastery and the park are brought into agreement with each other: the cupola with the representation of the Holy Ghost opposite to the water reservoir in the park: water and spirit, both inspiring life.

At the Waldzell Meeting 2004, I had a formative experience, reflecting what it's all about: at the simple rite that took place in our church, a Moslem, a Jew and a Catholic each inserted a lighted candle into the available sand filled bowl - and then all the others followed and stuck their candles in as well.

The human being as unity can only be reached by openness for others and not by fundamentalist constriction; it isn't the rational discussion either but emotional communication, not disembodied intellectuality but expressive rites are necessary to achieve the goal. This is when sense and meaning can be created.

Dem Kloster als baulichem Teil entspricht der Park auf der anderen Seite: Dort kündigt eine wunderschöne Natur von einem, der alles werden und wachsen lässt. Der Kunst auf der einen Seite, entspricht die Natur auf der anderen: Der ganze Mensch soll finden, was er sucht. In Melk sind der Klosterbau und der Park ganz genau aufeinander abgestimmt: Auf der einen Seite die Kuppel mit der Darstellung des Heiligen Geistes, auf der anderen Seite das Wasserreservoir im Park: Wasser und Geist, die Leben schenken.

Für mich persönlich war beim Waldzell Meeting 2004 ein Erlebnis sehr prägend, das so ganz dem entspricht, worauf es ankommt: In der Kirche fand ein ganz einfacher Ritus statt. Eine Muslime, ein Jude und ein Katholik steckten eine brennende Kerze in bereitstehende Sandschalen. Und dann kamen all die anderen auch und steckten ihre Kerzen hinein.

Nicht fundamentalistische Enge, sondern bewusste Offenheit für die anderen, nicht rein rationale Diskussion, sondern auch emotionaler Austausch, nicht körperlose Geistigkeit, sondern ein ausdrucksstarkes Ritual sprechen den ganzen Menschen an. Und dann kann Sinn werden.

What was left at the end of the day at the Waldzell Meeting 2004 ?

Testimonials of the Keynote Speakers 2004

„Ich hätte nie gedacht, dass mein persönliches Glasperlenspiel in einem katholischen Stift gehalten wird und dass es mir so gefallen würde.“

Carl M. Djerassi

„Für mich war es erstens schön so viele Leute kennen zu lernen, interessante Menschen, nicht nur in diesem Kreis, auch außerhalb. Was mich weiterhin fasziniert hat, ist, dass sich wieder mal bestätigt, dass Gedankengänge in sehr vielen verschiedenen Disziplinen oft sehr ähnlich sind. Ob wir jetzt über Physik sprechen, Theologie oder ob wir auch über die Kunst des Liedes sprechen, um nur drei Beispiele zu zitieren.“

Anton Zeilinger

“I have found myself also very energized by hearing artists, scientists, religious leaders concerned with the same issues that I find myself concerned with in my work. And it was a kind of breath of fresh air to share these concerns with so many different people. At the same time, I think that it would be a shame if you people sitting around this circle would not take these ideas and make them work, because the real proof of whether this meeting is successful or not is whether you will carry out some of the ideas that you heard here. So I hope that that will happen.”

Mihály Csikszentmihályi

“In my 35 years as a rabbi I have attended many, many conferences, some of which were a pleasure, many of which were a pain. Until now, the one which stood out among all of them was an inter-faith conference in Delhi a few years ago, when I first made contact with Eastern religions and fell in love with India. But after the Waldzell Meeting, my wife Carole and I agreed that the Melk Abbey conference will remain in our memory with the same power and joyful recollection. That the speakers, for the most part, got on so well - given that there were some brilliant and difficult egos among us - and entered into the warm and positive spirit of the event, is the surest sign that the venue and the mix of intellectual disciplines were perfectly chosen. Altogether it was an experience that I shall always treasure.”

David J. Goldberg

„Ich bin eine islamische Juristin, ich komme aus dem Land Iran. Die Anwesenden sind weder Moslems, noch stammen sie aus dem Iran, auch sind sie keine Juristen. Es ist für mich interessant, dass ich keinen Unterschied zwischen mir und den Anwesenden empfunden habe. Ich habe fast das Gefühl, wir sind in einer gemeinsamen Kultur aufgewachsen.“

Shirin Ebadi



Schlussrunde der Referenten



Stipendiaten des Waldzell Meeting 2004

Was blieb am Ende des Tages vom Meeting 2004?

Schlussworte der Referenten 2004

"I feel a lot of gladness in being here with people who have articulated the experience both of the outer world of business and science and the inner world as well. Those two worlds are so easily detrained and set against each other instead of being integrated into a complete human being. All the way to the expectation as best as possible of the aspirations for the construction of a higher self within oneself. I am very pleased to be here. I cancelled a week of work in order to come. I could not NOT come, I had to come. Come because of the originality of the idea and the people gathered around those ideas."

Helen Palmer

"I am incredibly grateful for what I have learnt this weekend. I am very honoured to be in the world part of this organisation but even here the circle is an unexpectedness to me and because all our driving belief that fear is mortified by love and only made possible by things or not ignorant and certainly not apathetic. I feel very reached and very loved. My thank to you."

Thomas Hampson

Ich habe Ihnen gestern schon gesagt, dass ich ein Mensch bin, der alles und jedes fürchtet. Ich habe mich gefürchtet als ich erfuhr, dass ich hier mittun soll, in dieser erlauchten Runde. Aber Sie haben das zweite auch gehört, dass ich immer wieder mir selber sage, wenn ich untergehe, gehe ich mit fliegenden Fahnen unter. Also bin ich in das Schiff gestiegen und ich bin bereichert durch die Begegnung mit Ihnen allen. Ich habe so viel spüren dürfen, gestern in der Kirche, heute vormittags und auch nachmittags, so viel spüren müssen was da übergeht, was wir alle einander zu sagen haben. Es ist nie eine einseitige Geschichte, sondern geht immer vom „ich zum du“ und vom „du zum ich“. Ich möchte Ihnen allen danken und denen danken, die mir das Vertrauen geschenkt haben, dass ich hier mittun durfte.

Burkhard F. Ellegast

"With the world in turmoil as it is these days, it was my great pleasure to spend this time in conversation with, and listening to, such interesting thinkers of our time."

Kary B. Mullis

"You never know when you start a journey whether it is going to turn out well or poorly. It's a risk and in this case I think I leave the session and feeling incredibly refreshed and hopeful and the German that the real measure of these 2 days is with us but what are we doing next. And they are happy greatest top of all."

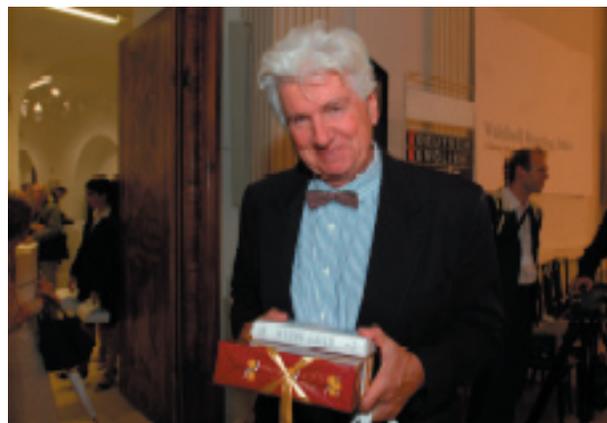
Alan M. Webber



Alan M. Webber und David J. Goldberg mit Teilnehmern

"Our view of the world changes constantly. We think, take to pieces the implicit and the explicit knowledge available and reconstruct our personal world view. This thinking-process has been particularly intense in those last two days in this beautiful abbey and this de-construction and reconstruction was the most rewarding part for me at this meeting."

Günter Blobel



Günter Blobel beim Abschied

This is not the end. This is the beginning.

Next steps for Waldzell

Meaning cannot be measured

There are lists of the 100 most famous people in history, but no list of the 100 people whose lives have contributed the most meaning to humanity. There is the Fortune Top 500 list of the biggest companies in the world, but no ranking of the 500 organizations which make a genuine contribution to life's meaning for their customers and employees. And it is absolutely impossible to measure the annual increase in mankind's spiritual growth. So how can the success of a project on the meaning of human life be assessed?

The Answer to How? is Yes!

This is the title of a forward-looking book by the American visionary Peter Block. It impressively demonstrates that a society which values everything only in terms of feasibility, measurability and profitability can only ever reproduce the past. Thus it may possibly succeed in increasing efficiency, but it will not achieve any genuine progress. He concludes that the most important decision is therefore always to say Yes and to make a start.

Waldzell aims to have an impact.

It aims to help people to find greater meaning in their lives and, in doing so, to support companies in enabling them to make a contribution which provides meaning for customers and employees. Not least, Waldzell aims to contribute to ensuring that humanity has a future with meaning. To achieve these aims, a structure is required, as are rules to provide guidance for those taking part. However, the development of the Project will essentially be driven forward by the speakers and participants.

The seven pillars of the Waldzell architecture

- 1 ***The speakers at the Waldzell Meetings:***
Speakers are distinguished for their exceptional achievements in key areas such as science, art, the economy, spirituality and politics. Their knowledge and their experience of life form the central building block for the entire further development of the Project. As a particular acknowledgement of their importance, the life works of speakers are permanently installed in the world-renowned library of the Stift Melk monastery.
- 2 ***The Waldzell Committee:***
To maintain continuity and ongoing communications, selected speakers are invited to collaborate in the Waldzell Committee. The President of the Waldzell Committee is Albert Rohan, who guides the dialog with his experience and his international network of contacts.
- 3 ***Participants in the Waldzell Meetings:***
They are decision-makers, primarily drawn from the economy, science and the media. They are selected by the Advisory Board, a committee comprising 12 people which takes key decisions of an organizational nature. In addition to this, the Waldzell Institute invites some scholarship students every year who are particularly qualified for the Project.
- 4 ***The Waldzell Fellows:***
Participants who wish to work on the Project permanently can become Waldzell Fellows. They thereby acquire the right to privileged participation in the annual Meetings and to receive the Report, together with all other key findings. Fellows are expected to collaborate actively on the Project.
- 5 ***The Waldzell Community:***
Speakers and participants together form the Community, which meets once a year at the Waldzell Meetings and, if necessary, also keeps up contacts during the year as part of joint activities. Speakers and participants are all united in the desire to create something whose meaning extends beyond their own lifetime.

The seven pillars of the Waldzell architecture

6 *The place:*

For the years 2004 to 2007, the unique atmosphere of Melk Abbey provides the framework for the Waldzell Meetings.

7 *The Glass Bead Game:*

Serves as a model for a special form of dialog and work.

One of the reasons why the ‘Glass Bead Game’ has fascinated so many people since the concept of it appeared in 1943 is undoubtedly the architecture of this inclusive work of art, to which there are repeated allusions in the novel of the same name by Hermann Hesse. It is the interplay of words, music and different cultures in the common spirit of exceptional people, and all this in a quite special place – Waldzell. The outcome of this annual game, apparently so removed from the real world, always has practical effects on people’s continuing development. Two examples from the very real world we inhabit demonstrate how current the desire is to create something which approximates to the glass bead game:

“Fast Company”, established by two former chief editors of the Harvard Business Review, Alan Webber and Bill Taylor, is the fastest-growing business magazine in US history. It has gained a level of importance in just a few years which comes close to that of Fortune magazine. The first book reviewed by “Fast Company” was the “Glass Bead Game”. Incidentally, this was also one of the key reasons why Alan Webber agreed to take part in the adventure of the inaugural Waldzell Meeting.

And it was the father of the pill, Carl Djerassi, who in the two days of the first Meeting repeatedly called for everyone to engage more intensively with the symbolism of the glass bead game in the discussions, because this symbolism is more relevant to today’s situation than ever before.

Waldzell 2004 to 2008: a five-year perspective

The time-frame set out below represents an attempt to link the content architecture of Waldzell with a temporal structure.

2004: Launch – the search for the meaning of life

The aim of the first Meeting was to focus attention on the question of meaning in life, and to create two days which speakers and participants alike feel are important for their own lives. The Waldzell Report 2004 is therefore to be understood not as a report on practical outcomes, but as a report on the start of work on a vision. It is a start which has aroused curiosity.

2005: Planning – important questions for a future with meaning

At the outset, the speakers at the Waldzell Meeting 2005 offer contributions on those questions which they consider important if humanity is to have a meaningful future. The aim of the Meeting is to create a workable network with a structure which on the one hand takes account of the limited time and the spatial distance separating the members of the Waldzell Community, and on the other hand endeavours to make use of their knowledge and influence.

2006: Execution – the first practical outcomes and projects are in evidence

The network of the Waldzell Community starts to take effect. Joint projects are developed, and Waldzell extends its work to include gathering in relevant research outcomes and initial projects.

Waldzell 2004 to 2008: a five-year perspective

2007: Achievement – the elements come together to form a whole

By this time, 36 of the best minds in the world and around 360 decision-makers will have made their contributions to the work. Many new and lasting contacts and links will have been forged. The task of the Waldzell Meeting 2007 will be to condense the findings from the work carried out so far, under the auspices of a further 12 speakers and 120 participants, and to determine those elements from which one might expect the greatest effect.

From 2008 onwards: Manifestation - Waldzell begins to have an effect

Naturally, it is impossible today to envisage the form in which the outcomes of work on an issue as central as the meaning of life will manifest themselves. Nevertheless, the aspiration is to find a form which as a minimum combines the power of the word, of music, of film and of the World Wide Web, so as to appeal to the intellect, the senses and to the imagination. As part of this, the ‘Glass Bead Game’ will at all times be a model which people will attempt to come close to. In doing so, we trust to the quality of the process and the interplay of the special people in the Waldzell Community. From 2008 onwards, it is intended that all interested individuals and organizations should be able to experience Waldzell.

The desire to do something which provides meaning

The Waldzell Meetings are directed at people who have achieved a lot in their lives. Many discussions before, at and following the 2004 Meeting have demonstrated how great the desire is in these people to make a meaningful contribution to the world. This ranges from a donation to fund a water treatment plant in Africa to taking on the sponsorship of an orphan, or to being prepared to commit yourself personally to a project, generally of a social nature. The order of scale of the practical contribution which most people are willing to make to improving the world is surprisingly high: in financial terms, it ranges from EUR 5,000 to EUR 10,000 and, far more importantly, to up to a week of the individual’s personal working time. It is apparent that in their innermost being, people have a deep longing to do something which will outlive them. If you bring a child, an idea, a work of art, a way of thinking or an organization into the world, then positive forces are automatically unleashed which motivate us to think – and to act – beyond the finite nature of our own existence.

People are then also prepared to do things where the effort and expense involved no longer appears to bear any relation to the short-term benefits. The building of a Medieval cathedral took between 150 and 300 years; this meant that anyone who initially planned the building, contributed funds or even worked on the building themselves knew that he or she would not live to see the completion of the cathedral. Nevertheless, people did exactly that – in order to make a contribution by doing so which served the greater glory of God and thus gave meaning. (At that time, the cathedral was always the tallest building in a city. Today, the tallest buildings in the cities are almost always the banks and office blocks, and they have to pay for themselves after seven years at the latest – which is exactly how many of these buildings look.)

To conclude, then, we again ask the most important question in this Report: does it make sense to contribute something for the future of mankind? And does it make sense to attempt this at such a high level of abstraction as the question of the meaning of life, as Waldzell is doing?

The desire to do something which provides meaning

With regard to the stresses on our environment, we have now defined boundaries which have even been set down in international agreements. But are there boundaries for the continuing spiritual development of mankind - minimum limits which, if not met, have as their consequence genocide, the deaths of people across an entire continent, the isolation of people in the cities and the loss of any sense of the meaning of life for whole generations? And, conversely, does not the spiritual growth of as many individuals as possible and of humanity as a whole perhaps offer us the chance of arriving at the questions which are vital to our survival, such as – for example – tolerance between the world’s religions? And should not the education system of the next generation primarily communicate the joy of life, curiosity and the courage to walk one’s own path? Would all that not make sense?

The great writer and world citizen Stefan Zweig once wrote that the greatest achievement of Christopher Columbus was not that he discovered America, but that he had had the courage to set off on his voyage of discovery. It is a sentence with a lot of truth in it. For indeed, it demands great courage to set off and not to know where you will arrive at the end. But nothing less than this is the aim of Waldzell: to give people the courage to set off on that journey.

Andreas Salcher and Gundula Schatz
Founders of the Waldzell Institute

„Jeder von uns ist nur ein Mensch, nur ein Versuch, ein Unterwegs. Er sollte aber dorthin unterwegs sein, wo das Vollkommene ist, er soll ins Zentrum streben, nicht an die Peripherie.“

(Hermann Hesse, “The Glass Bead Game”)



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