



# The Threshing Floor

February 2020

Newsletter of the Guild for Psychological Studies

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**Guild Vision:** The Guild envisions a world in which the significance of each person's truth, authority, and inspired purpose finds fulfillment in life and community.

**Guild Mission:** Guild seminars offer a way of psychological and spiritual transformation that inspires individuals to live their purpose, expand consciousness, and discover and create meaning in their lives and community.

## Twenty Twenty

*(for Katherine, on her 11th birthday)*

By George Stenger (Grandpa)

January 5, 2020

Twenty twenty  
It is the new year, of course  
And, like anything new  
It stretches out before us  
Like a path through dense forests  
Like a highway over gently rolling plains

When we look into that distant unknown  
Are we fearful,  
Full of dread of monsters lurking behind trees  
As in some of the many books Katherine reads  
Or energized by a world of possibility?  
It could go either way, as Katherine knows

Twenty twenty  
Is also how we describe good, clear vision  
If only we could see into that dense forest  
If only we could spy out  
What lay ahead  
Over the far horizon

Now, only five days into twenty twenty  
We will celebrate our granddaughter, Katherine Rachel  
Smart she is, and capable  
Aware of what goes on around her, and full of hope  
What we do today may very well inform her  
How to maneuver through forests

What we do today  
May make possible  
Her dreams, over the far horizon

## Ending and Ending

By Hal Childs

I am pondering a strange synchronicity. Here we are, historically and culturally, at the end of Meaning (the end of God and Myth). Homo sapiens as a whole has been born out of the all-containing mythologies that were once our home. We now stand in the cosmos, mythologically and metaphysically naked, alone. At the same time, apparently, we face the Anthropocene, the Sixth extinction, and as a species we are not exempt.

The climate crisis, which according to many thoughtful people is now a runaway catastrophe, will conceivably lead to human extinction, or at least, the extinction of civilization. The climate is heating up, and with an unlikely metaphor, it is now like a large ball of snow rolling downhill, gathering mass and speed as it goes, already out of our control. Then, of course, the question looms, What am I to do? What can I do? That wonderful (perhaps, though, fallacious) question, "What is the meaning of life?" takes on a whole new meaning in the face of Ending and Ending.

Perhaps it is not a matter of what can I do, but what does the event of Ending and Ending have to teach consciousness? What initiation is taking place and inviting me (and us) to learn something unheard of? Is the Inconceivable a Teacher? Do I have the courage to sit in the terror, allow it to strip and purge me of assumptions and preconceptions, and listen?

See the description of our June seminar, "Integrity: The Human Side of Soul," in this issue, will focus on the challenge of truth and integrity in the face of Ending and Ending.

## February Birthdays

Rob Gibbons	Feb 2
Hal Milton	Feb 2
Rita McGowan	Feb 9
Carl Sutter	Feb 9
John Roedel	Feb 11
Susan Hice	Feb 12
Nancy Anderson	Feb 14
Linda Davidge	Feb 15
Joanna Bramble	Feb 21
Charles Siegfried	Feb 21
David Dugan	Feb 22
Ann Elsbach	Feb 22
Bob Barram	Feb 27
Joanie Misrack	Feb 28



## March Birthdays

Sylvia Light	Mar 3
Tricia Schexnaydre	Mar 3
Charles Pfeifer	Mar 4
Rosalie Lambrose	Mar 7
Matthew Black	Mar 8
Andrea English	Mar 11
Laurie Mathers	Mar 15
Isabella DiBari	Mar 17
John Gallagher	Mar 18
Beth Harrison	Mar 18
Sally Pugsley	Mar 18
Carol Gaab	Mar 21
Mary Duvall	Mar 22
Gail Priestley	Mar 25
Mary Louise Metz	Mar 26
Teresa Sylvester	Mar 27
Susanna Singer	Mar 29

## Clarifying “Integrity: The Human Side of Soul”

By Hal Childs

This issue of the Threshing Floor includes a description of a 9-day seminar planned for June this year. It is a lengthy write-up, but even then, we could not say everything. However, it seemed important to try and make another clarification of our approach to soul, integrity and truth. For this seminar, soul is the taken-for-granted ground of consciousness that informs different historical epochs. Throughout history, soul, as the general background of consciousness that is usually not noticed and not questioned, changes and develops, and thus the general orientation of our human world changes and we are changed along with it. The biggest and most obvious historical change of soul has been the shift from the truth and reality of gods/goddesses and God of the ancient world to our modern secular world of science and materialism, and the modern general public’s interest is drawn more to the insights of the new physics than to what theology is thinking.

For this seminar, we make a distinction between human-integrity and soul-integrity. Human integrity serves important human-centered values (such as justice, equality, fairness) and soul-integrity serves the purposes of the development of consciousness at large (soul). Another way to think of this is that human-integrity leads one to do the “right” thing in relation to other persons and society, while soul-integrity leads one to do the “wrong” thing in relation to society’s point of view because it is about the change of the syntax, the form, of the prevailing consciousness.

Both forms of integrity require the individual to take a stand for a value against other values, and it involves suffering for what is “right.” But, soul-integrity is a special kind of affliction because the truth at stake may not be clear nor understood, and yet, the individual is compelled to stand for that truth without knowing whether or not it will be recognized as true.





The Guild for Psychological  
Studies presents:

Awakening Our Stories

April 6-9, 2020

“You're going to feel like hell if you wake up someday and you never wrote the stuff that is tugging on the sleeves of your heart: your stories, memories, visions and songs -- your truth, your version of things -- in your own voice. That's really all you have to offer us, and that's also why you were born. “

– Anne Lamott

The events and experiences of our lives can become something more than just things that have happened to us. By awakening an inner author we will bring out the images, threads, themes, and living ideas that animate us. From this “authority” our stories can be told, flow into an anthology of what it means to be human, and even tap into the deeper currents of soul.

We will explore the value that our stories can have at this time in our lives and in the world and discover our most compelling events and images. We will use writing suggestions, expressive arts, movement, and other processes where you can find the tools that work best for you. There will be ample time for your work and our sharing.

**Location:** Bishop’s Ranch, Healdsburg, CA

**Leaders:** Faith Mason, Harry Henderson and Lisa Yount (Art Resource)

**Cost:** \$600 plus \$50.00 registration fee

Scholarships are available.

Register at <https://guildsf.org/online-seminar-registration/>

For more information, call Faith Mason 707-599-5962 or Harry Henderson 510-230-7255

# Integrity: The Human Side of Soul

June 13 - 21, 2020

A seminar presented by the Guild for Psychological Studies

In this seminar, we will examine the role of integrity and the human person in the historical development of soul and its call to truth. Truth is the intent of soul and our lives are entangled with the desire of truth to become real. When soul grips us, we have a choice: to respond to the call of integrity or not.

The invitation from soul is to lay one's totality on the line for the sake of truth, in order to find that you are not who you thought you were, but rather an embodiment of truth, seeking to be known and to become real. Staying true to truth is hazardous and dangerous, but leads to profound transformation of us and our world.

We will examine the confrontations of several human characters with the demand of truth. Our exemplars are biblical and historical, including Jacob wrestling with Esau, Job struggling with Yahweh, Francis Bacon advancing science against the cosmology of Medieval Christian Europe, and Carl Jung reframing the scientific rationality of late Modernity after the death of God. *These historical figures are our entry point to explore where our lives are confronted by soul, our integrity is on the line, and where, in turn, we shape soul through the process of truth wrestling with truth.*

What do truth and integrity demand of us today? The possibility of impending climate catastrophe portends not just the end of metaphysical "Meaning" but also the end of all secular meaning!

Many reasonable and thoughtful people are contemplating the very real possibility that climate change is now on a runaway course, beyond our best interventions to prevent climate catastrophe. Of course, we desperately want to prevent a climate tragedy and social collapse. But, if we cannot prevent the inevitable, is it possible to adapt to a new way of being? Is it possible to allow our identity to undergo an initiation and transformation in the face of utterly new realities? We cannot face the new realities of loss unless we find a way to undergo the transformation of the very basis of consciousness.

Two essays regarding the climate crisis are: "[Facing Extinction](https://www.catherineingram.com/facingextinction/)" by Catherine Ingram (<https://www.catherineingram.com/facingextinction/>) and "[Deep Adaptation](https://www.lifeworth.com/deepadaptation.pdf)" by Jem Bendell (<https://www.lifeworth.com/deepadaptation.pdf>).

In this seminar, we do not offer any soothing answers, but a willingness to sit with and face uncomfortable truths and explore the implications for integrity. If you are called to explore a new consciousness, welcome.

The seminar process uses a modified Socratic method to guide group discussion. We honor the dignity of each individual to express themselves honestly and move at their own pace. Mutual respect will support us as we engage difficult truths and new perspectives. Our work together will be enriched by the use of non-verbal approaches: meditation, expressive arts, music, body movement and awareness, and silence.

**Special Note: All applicants, please include a letter stating your interest in attending this seminar.** If you are new to the Guild's work, please tell us a little about yourself and your psychological and spiritual journey.

**Location:** Four Springs, Middletown CA

**Leaders:** Hal Childs, PhD, MFT and Patricia Calcagno Stenger, MA, MFT

**Fee:** \$1,645, plus a non-refundable registration fee of \$50. Scholarships and payment plans are available.

Contact for more information: Hal Childs, 415-573-2469; [halchilds@gmail.com](mailto:halchilds@gmail.com)

Register at <https://guildsf.org/online-seminar-registration/>

THE GUILD FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL STUDIES  
SPRING RETREAT: The Stories We Tell  
APRIL 4-9, 2020  
Roslyn Retreat Center - Richmond, VA



There are stories that reside within each of us. Perhaps they come into conversation as an anecdote or are retold around the holiday dinner table. They may be awakened by an image, song or movie character. Often linked to experiences in the past, they seem to carry within them an indelible “truth” about who we are.

What are the stories that have formed our sense of self? How have they influenced us? Who authors our history? Do these stories have their own intention? If so, do those intentions support or stifle the becoming of your true self?

In this seminar we will become our own listeners, allowing the stories to tell their own tales. Welcoming what has become history, we will invite *Knowing* to unfold itself through reflection, imagining, art, body awareness and sharing. Through this process space may be discovered that allows new and different stories, along with insights to emerge. We listen for answers to the question: Who do I think I am?

In this seminar, we will use discussion, writing/journaling, art expression, play dialogues, music, silence and above all our own experience and self-reflection to explore what life/self has to teach us about the stories we tell about ourselves. Participation in any of these activities is voluntary. There will be ample free time to explore, hike, and gather with other participants.

All applicants new to Guild seminars are asked to accompany their application with a letter stating why they wish to attend and any pertinent information about prior study and experience around your spiritual and religious life. No prior experience is needed to attend. You are asked only to bring yourself to a circle of seekers to come to a fuller expression of your own truth.

For a registration form and additional information, please contact Susan Thompson at [susanlynthompson@gmail.com](mailto:susanlynthompson@gmail.com). **The cost to attend is \$1098. Every participant will receive a \$200 scholarship (the cost without scholarship is \$1260). A deposit of \$500 is due no later than the end of December 2019 and the remainder is due no later than February 1, 2020. Additional scholarships – full or partial are available.** SPACE IS LIMITED. Please indicate your interest in a scholarship to both Betty Foster ([bettywesfoster@earthlink.net](mailto:bettywesfoster@earthlink.net)) and Susan Thompson ([susanlynthompson@gmail.com](mailto:susanlynthompson@gmail.com)).

Contact: Susan Thompson: [susanlynthompson@gmail.com](mailto:susanlynthompson@gmail.com)  
Leaders: Hal Childs (PhD, MDiv, MFT) and Patricia Stenger (M.A., LMFT)

## Stay Connected

Bob Ridder, Administrative Coordinator, is available for all inquiries by phone at (415) 561-2385, or by email at [office@guildsf.org](mailto:office@guildsf.org).

Send your email address to [office@guildsf.org](mailto:office@guildsf.org) so that we can keep you connected and up-to-date on Guild events. Also be sure that we have your current mailing address so that we are able to send you this yearly edition of the newsletter. Please keep us updated with your address changes.

## Mailing Address

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## Guild Website

Visit [www.guildsf.org](http://www.guildsf.org) for information about seminars and events, and to register for seminars. The website also has general information about the Guild, past issues of the Threshing Floor, relevant news, and links to resources. If you would like to post information of interest to the Guild community, please email [harryhenderson51@gmail.com](mailto:harryhenderson51@gmail.com), our web administrator.

## Guild FacebookPage

<https://www.facebook.com/guildsf>, launched in January! If you haven't yet, please "friend" and "like" us!

## Newsletter

To receive 12 issues of *The Threshing Floor* a year, please contact the Guild office. There is no charge for an e-mail subscription. For a print subscription, please send a check for \$25 to the Guild office.

Items for inclusion in the Threshing Floor should be mailed to the Guild Office, Attn. Threshing Floor Editor, or emailed to [office@guildsf.org](mailto:office@guildsf.org). The deadline for each issue is the 20th of the month. Items received after that date will be published the following month.

Production & Layout Editor: Wilene Chang  
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Distribution: Bob Ridder

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter (by contributors other than staff and directors) are the writers' and not necessarily an official position of the Guild.

## Publishing House sales -- books and CDs

Order publications on the Guild website, or contact Carina Ravelly at [guildpublishing@yahoo.com](mailto:guildpublishing@yahoo.com).

## Donations

Many thanks to our donors! Your financial support in any amount helps the Guild with seminars and other events, with the training of leaders, with outreach, and with other new and ongoing efforts. Because the Guild is a registered nonprofit organization, with 501(c)(3) status, your contribution may be tax deductible. Donations should be directed to the Guild office address, or you may donate online using the PayPal link you'll find by selecting the Make a Donation link on the main page of our website.

## Volunteers

There are several people who fill necessary volunteer roles in the Guild. If you would like to be a Guild volunteer, please contact the Guild office at [office@guildsf.org](mailto:office@guildsf.org) and let us know particular volunteer roles that appeal to you. Currently volunteers are members of the editorial staff for the Threshing Floor; members of the Board of Directors; serve as continuing education coordinator; train to serve as seminar coordinator, committee person or cook; provide transportation to/from seminars for attendees; help to catalog or research Guild archive materials; write reviews for Guild books and other publications; etc.

## Friends and Members

Friends of the Guild are donors and others interested in receiving Guild information who are not Voting Members. Voting membership requires active participation in some form of leadership or committee role, or other volunteer effort, and the payment of annual dues. Voting members may receive a print subscription to the Threshing Floor upon request.

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