



Welcome to issue no. 5.

Please feel free to forward this to anyone who will appreciate it. Anyone can subscribe using the link at the bottom of the page. Why not visit the website, Schoolinsight to see photos of the recent residential weekend in Trinidad, have a look at the new South Africa page, and catch up on back issues.

What's new here ? The gallery, below, shows photos of work from artists in the School, and three more articles by students. If you're having any trouble viewing, click on View Web Version above.

With very best wishes, Christine Lambie

This student is the head of the Spanish School, shown here in front of the beautiful marble fountain he designed for the School building.



Madrid School: a personal journey

Pedro Martin, Madrid

Madrid is a happy and luminous city, open to newcomers who immediately feel at home and this is reflected in the School, where new students find a very fluent communication with tutors and fellow students. At present 75 enthusiastic students attend the School. Here is something of my journey.

1975: The Franco dictatorship is coming to an end after forty years and a general movement in search of truth starts in Spain, beyond the narrow limits established by the dictatorship.

1979: A courageous woman, with an innate desire to find truth and to share her discoveries with others, opens the Escuela de Filosofía Práctica in Madrid, 'for the harmonious development of the human being'.

1983: After more than 10 years studying at University (Aeronautical Engineering and Psychology) I realise that I know nothing at all about what really matters. I hear about a so-called "Escuela de Filosofía Práctica", where the practice of attention is the main work.

In April 1983, I attend a group for the first time. What I hear that very evening produces in my mind a great perplexity, because I had never before heard such simple and truthful words, although I sometimes listen in my mind, during this first term to 'I know better than you, having studied so much'.

In the second term we are invited to attend a second evening 'to work with and for others without reward'. How arduous and how wonderful! Arduous, because it is only knowledge that interests me, not washing cloths or cleaning. Wonderful, because I begin to understand that knowledge only emerges when you surrender everything to fulfil the needs.

1985: We are told about Shri Shantananda Saraswati as a wise man with whom the School has a direct connection. I could not believe it. We were introduced to meditation. At last true communion!

The opportunities to practise service expand. Now we can go not only once a week, but also Saturday

mornings. I shall not miss any, because the practice of centred attention working with wood opens the channels towards a different world. At the end of one of these working sessions, while we are giving observations about the practice of attention, the veil lifts up for an instant, and the experience that everything presented by the senses is a mere play becomes alive. One doesn't see the faces of the others, but the smile behind their faces, the same smile.

And we begin the study of the Sanskrit language, learning to pronounce and to write the alphabet. We get the Monier Williams dictionary (Sanskrit-English only, as there is no Sanskrit-Spanish dictionary) and we begin to study, looking for the roots of the words in the Bhagavad Gita verses. It became very clear that together with meditation, Sanskrit language was the key to enter this real world of which I very seldom had a glimpse.

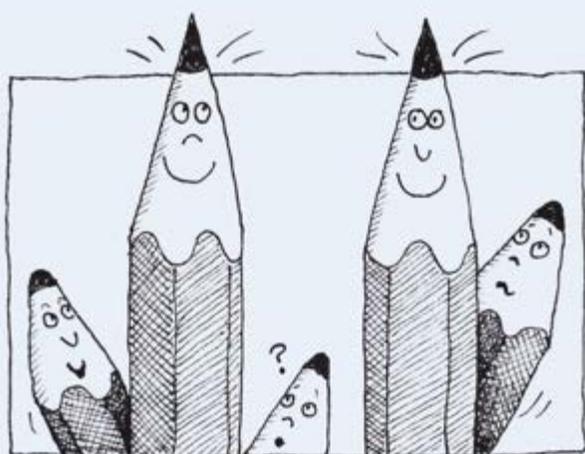
1993: A year for change. We are invited to attend a residential week at Waterperry with students from Cyprus and Malta. The freedom and unity we experienced there transforms everything forever. The following years, senior students attend many different residential weeks: Mediterranean, Sanskrit, art, economics, dance, renaissance, and Plato weeks, in spite of the difficulty with the English language.

1999: We buy a house in a residential area 9 miles from the centre of Madrid. We begin to design a garden on the golden proportion, following the old tradition of the Spanish gardens. The whole pavement is laid brick by brick, according to traditional techniques. A fountain is also designed on the golden proportion and made with beautiful white marble from the south of Spain.

Three people are dedicated to the huge and beautiful work of translating and checking, not only the material, but also the conversations with Shri Shantananda Saraswati. And, after seven years translating, finally in 2009, we are able to publish in Spanish *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino Volume I*, launched in Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid. It was a great success. The next challenge is the translation into Spanish from Sanskrit, of the Isa Upanishad, with the commentaries of Shri Shankara, followed by the other 9 principal Upanishads and the Gita, which was begun some time ago.

After 28 years at School, the journey proceeds, with the support of two guides. First, gratitude to all those who have led us, with their spiritual effort, which is the essence of life. Secondly, the deep longing to transmit all we have inherited to the people and society.

For more information on the School in Spain go to [MadridSchool](#)



Top Tips

Items recommended by readers

1. London School on Facebook. Visit London's Facebook page at [FacebookSES](#).

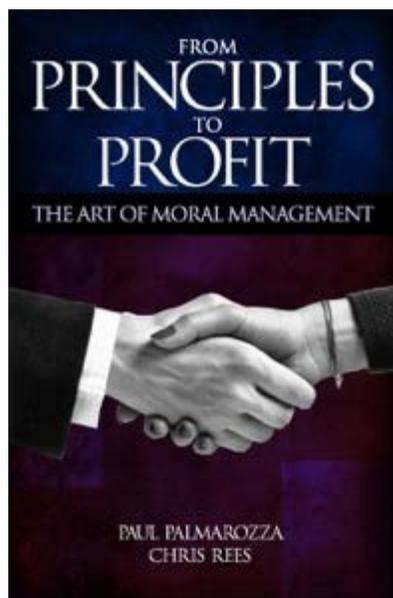
2. Book of Books, by Melvyn Bragg. To mark 400 years of the King James Bible, this book tells of the events which inspired its translation and the prodigious effect it has had ever since.

3. Permaculture This 36 minute video documents the ongoing work of [Permaculture](#) Gurus, Geoff and Nadia Lawton, in the Dead Sea Valley. It begins with the famous original 'Greening the Desert' five minute video clip, and then continues into Part II. Go to [Permaculture](#).

4. Conscious listening: Julian Treasure on TED. In our louder and louder world, "We are losing our listening." In this short, fascinating talk, Treasure shares five ways to re-tune your ears for conscious

listening - to other people and the world around you. Go to [TEDListening](#)

5. Incredible Edibles: A Yorkshire town pioneers an experiment in food self sufficiency. Residents help themselves. Visit their website: [IncredibleEdibles](#)



Philosophy in Business

Chris Rees and Paul Palmarozza, London

'Can I work to fine principles in business and still succeed?'

This was the question from over 50 students in 2003 who attended the first 5-week *Philosophy in Business* course, from small companies and large, entrepreneurs, managers and staff. Over half were from outside the School. Our answer was Yes! Our job was to show them how.

The thing that sparked the continual effort in this field was the growing number of cases of greed and corruption in business. This was affecting public confidence in business. It became clear that in order to serve the growing interest, including that expressed by the overseas schools and the need of the business community, it would be best to gather together members of the school and other individuals and organisations to take principles to the community.

We proposed four guiding principles for businesses and other institutions:

truth, love, justice and freedom.

We believe that these have direct application in business today. For instance truth is essential in business, manifesting as honesty, integrity, ethical decisions and hence trust, the basis of all business transactions. No trust, no business. Love, not a word that is often used in business, is nevertheless vital, particularly in the concept of service which is at the heart of business. Business goes wrong when the primary concern is directed at how I can maximise the return for me and mine.

Justice in business manifests as fairness - giving to each person their due. For instance it means paying your suppliers on time, having fair HR policies, meeting your customers' reasonable expectations, even if that is unprofitable in the short term. Freedom is earned by fulfilling one's duties and responsibilities.

By March 2006 we published *From Principles to Profit*. In 2008 the Philosophy in Business group was formed. The group has prepared material and organised courses and public lectures with guest speakers, including a major public event held at the Tate Modern in London. Lectures and courses have been given in Trinidad, Malta, India, America, Holland, New Zealand, Ireland, Australia, Spain, Belgium as well as locations around the UK.

What next? If the sound of business being conducted to the highest principles is to be heard more widely, we need to offer it to the corporate world. We now intend to deliver courses on business ethics to corporate clients.

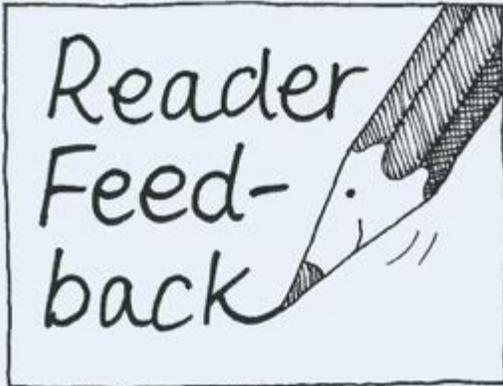
The initial focus will be on the UK Bribery Act, the most stringent such legislation in the world. We will explain the working of the Act, and give participants exercises to help them make ethical decisions in the present moment. We will also present a number of bribery scenarios using professional actors. The audience will be asked to make decisions on the spot and then see the consequences. For wider distribution a professionally filmed version of the scenarios is being prepared.

We both feel that the need for the message that we are offering is becoming more and more pressing, not only here but in the re-emerging economies of India and China which will be dominant in international business within the next 5-10 years.

It would be useful if in the west we were able to show by example how a higher moral standard in business

can be effective. For instance if London was to strengthen its reputation as an honest place to do business, where my word IS my bond, then we believe that it would lead to its being a most attractive place in which to do business. This is a step into the unknown but it seems to be a natural step in taking the teaching to the community.

Watch one of the bribery scenarios at [PiB](#)



Your comments

"I have just read your latest newsletter and feel moved to say how much I value this and previous ones. There seems to be a depth and groundedness in the articles arising from the experience of contributors' spiritual applications. This shines through and I find it very inspiring." **Northwest, UK**

"This newsletter is one email that I do not quickly delete - it is a treasure and great to remember the jewel brilliance of Philosophy, practically applied. I was touched by the

straightforward and living-in-the-present, provocative article by the nurse from New Zealand as well as the verbal human and humorous one by Steve Jobs which my sons watched on our laptop. Thanks to you and all who make it possible to be able to receive this insight in our homes and heart." **Malta**

"Perhaps future issues might have a piece of philosophical wisdom; say a piece from a book someone has read." **Sligo, Ireland**

Great idea – maybe something along the lines of ‘a book that changed my life’. Ed.



Whatever you dream, begin it now

Yolande Hesse, Guildford UK

You asked us to tell a personal story if we had one?

In the early nineties my husband, George, who is not a student in the school, was working with a nationally recognized company as their sales director. He was earning a very good living which enabled me to stay at home and look

after the family. All was going well and we had a very nice 5-bedroom house supported by his ability to service the big mortgage.

In about 1995 his company were taken over by a big corporation, which set about trying to unsettle the newly acquired company with some rather brutal business practices. George, then 50, was very concerned that he was going to be made redundant and started to look for another job, only to find that he was being told by employment agencies he was too old, over-qualified and too expensive.

Simultaneously Mr. MacLaren was advising us to get out of debt, as there were difficult economic times

ahead, which I told George about. He was worried that if he lost his job we would also lose the house so we decided to sell up and look for something much cheaper and reduce our mortgage. This we did and exchanged our very desirable house for an ugly 1960 's house in Farnham.

We set about making some changes to the house to make it more attractive and our house became the talk of our road. Our neighbours were clearly very pleased to have something more attractive to look out onto.

Meanwhile George managed to hold onto his job for a few more years until in 1998 he was finally made redundant. At this stage everything became very tense at home and nerves were on edge. We were having constant non-ending 'what are we going to do?' discussions and going round and round in ever decreasing circles. Despite the fact that neighbours and friends kept suggesting we do professionally what we had done to our own house, we did not believe we could, as we had no qualifications to do so.

One night we had a big argument. I felt dreadful and desperate. I could think of nothing I could do but to deeply pause and really surrender the whole mess to the Absolute. I even apologised for handing over such a mess! But hand over I did.

The next morning for the first time in months my mind was crystal clear and peaceful, with one clear silent instruction (not at all like the numerous noisy thoughts of the day before), which was to send photos of the house we had refurbished to the media, effectively jumping off into the unknown.

We both walked to the post box with our little package and together put the envelope into the box and stood for a while and paused. We had committed ourselves now and it was too late to retrieve the envelope. It was like shooting a bullet and not knowing what would be next.

The next day, the Saturday Telegraph rang to ask if they could publish the photos. Our phone was ringing off the hook with people asking us to help them with their houses. And that is how we started.

We had no company name, business plan or any pricing structure, only potential customers. So we set about meeting that need. We have made many mistakes but each time we make a mistake we reflect on what we can do to prevent making the mistake again, which makes us devise systems and protocols of behaviour.

We have now been going for 12 years and have steadily expanded the company with professional help, give full-time employment to 6 people and have become the main stay for two more associated companies. The job is tailor-made for George as he talks all day long to potential clients and he is extremely good at it! Along the way there have been numerous further 'miracles'.

In 2008 at the beginning of term lecture, we were reminded of 4 principles to follow in economically turbulent times, which were: To get out of debt, only buy what you can pay for with cash, invest and save.

I went home and told George what had been said. By this time we had taken on another mortgage to buy the freehold of our commercial premises. Lehmann Brothers had just gone under in the US and things were looking very unstable.

Our young business had never weathered a recession and as we were working in the property market it seemed certain we would be affected. So once again we considered what we could do to follow the guidance given. It seemed an impossible call. Nevertheless we decided again to leap and be flexible, sell our house and move into the flat above the shop. Our children had all left home so we no longer needed a large house.

So before we had time to change our minds, we sold and moved in over the shop. This enabled us to pay off the commercial mortgage and continue to run the business debt-free. It brings great freedom and has allowed us to expand in this recession. To invest in staff, save, and only buy what we can pay for with cash. What seemed impossible in that beginning of term meeting was really very simple as it has turned out.

The lesson we have learnt is not to try to work things out within your own system but to be willing to jump into the unknown and commit yourself to saying 'Yes!'

Thanks for reading

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Please keep that feedback coming. I need all your suggestions of personal stories, insights, links, articles, cartoons, video clips – anything that will be of interest to our philosophy community. Do you know someone in the School who has an interesting story to tell? E-mail me at: editor@seslondon.org. Thanks again for reading, CL

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