

# TRANSFORMING SOCIETY: SEEDS FOR A NEW SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING

A Course by Seth Jordan

## Introduction and Study Guide



**EduCareDo**  
International Research and Learning Centre  
based on the work of Rudolf Steiner

## INTRODUCTION

Social life is a diverse realm of activities. Everything we do together — eating, studying, working, shopping — has a social dimension, from the most subtle, unspoken feelings that weave between you and another person, to the transportation of multi-ton shipping containers on a freighter across the ocean. In this course we will look at all these different activities and how they can be transformed in healthy ways, from the level of the individual to the whole of society.

We need to look at all these different dimensions because they're interdependent — transforming society requires transforming ourselves. The ground of all our outer laws and institutions is simply us — it's the agreements we make, how we see each other, our thoughts and feelings.

On the other hand, transforming ourselves also requires transforming society. Ultimately, our inner work must find a home in the world. It must live in our actions. Society is the field where this can happen — where we can bring to fruition what lives in us as seed. But only if society is accessible to us. If everywhere we turn we see signs saying “No Trespassing” and “Leave It To The Experts,” then we simply can't do the work we've come here to do.

It's important that we change this situation. The world needs us to — our life together has become unsustainable for the earth and for ourselves. We have to find another way.

This other way will not be implemented by a few experts in ivory towers while the rest of us eat and are entertained. This, too, is unsustainable. We cannot live on “bread and circuses” — our souls require true nourishment including that we feed others. Although a part of us desperately wants to sleep, our true self wants to wake up, to find meaning, to grow, to work, to give what it has to give.

Rudolf Steiner's insights are invaluable on this path of transformation. A lifetime of spiritual research into the nature of the human being — a lifetime of observing all aspects of society through spiritual perception — offer us a wealth of inspiration for the work ahead.

This course is about understanding social life and developing the capacities to work creatively within it. It is about self-actualization and it is about societal-actualization.

Thank you for your interest in this course and in this work,

Seth Jordan

## STUDY GUIDE

### *Who the Course is For*

This course is meant for anyone with a sincere interest in social transformation. *Anyone* can take up these thoughts and practices and anyone can make them fruitful, wherever they are placed in life.

### *The Presentation*

The ideas in this course touch on all aspects of social life and so are, of necessity, presented with a light touch. I try to present all the thoughts needed to understand an idea, but I am not exhaustive. I am trying to plant seeds that, if you find meaningful, you can nurture and take up for yourself.

### *The Language*

One thing to be aware of is that, while I generally use gender-neutral terms in my own writing, many of the quotes that I've shared retain their original masculine-heavy terminology.

Another thing to be aware of is that Steiner often didn't name the exercises or social laws he described. When he does give a name, I will quote him directly (using quotation marks), and when he doesn't, I will sometimes supply my own (without quotation marks). I will try to make this as clear as possible within the text. But please note: this means that I have given names to a number of Steiner's social insights. I have tried to do this sparingly, but also wherever it aids understanding. Surprisingly, I've found that it's helpful for keeping my own relationship to the material flexible and creative. These ideas are not a closed book; my hope is that this course will help open them up so that many, many more people can participate in writing their future.

### *The Form*

The lessons are monthly. They begin with a short *Introduction* and then move into an *Exercise* (a meditation, contemplation, or practice). After the exercise comes the *General Theme* of the lesson. Because the theme often dives into a specific social law or dynamic, I often follow it with a *Big Picture* section where we will look with more of a bird's eye view at the whole of society.

Besides working with the exercise and studying the lesson content, I recommend you also try to find ways to work with the ideas as actively as possible for yourself, to test them and try to bring them into the realm of your own experience. Towards this end, you will find *Suggested Activities* throughout the lessons.

At the end of each lesson there is an *Assignment* section where you will be asked to share how the work is unfolding for you. This sharing will often take the form of written reflections on a few simple questions, as well as your own summary of the lesson. Shortly after you send these to your tutor you should receive feedback. The tutor's role is not to answer all of a student's questions — these will often need to be lived with for some time — but to help the student as they walk the path by offering occasional pointers, suggestions, and feedback. (That said, please do share any pressing questions that you have with your tutor and they will especially try to respond to any basic clarifying questions about the content.)

### *Studying*

I have two suggestions for study. One is that you read the introduction and exercise *immediately* upon receiving the lesson. In this way you will be able to work with the exercise throughout the month. The other is that you also read the whole lesson within the first week, and then reread it over the following weeks to dig deeper into the individual sections and activities. In the first reading, try to grasp the overall purpose of the lesson; in the second reading, try to work through any places where you find you have questions or a strong interest.

In addition, if you can find someone to join you, it can often be very helpful to study with others, both for understanding as well as for working into the world. It is worth taking a moment at the outset to think if any of your friends or colleagues might also be interested in this work.

### *Journaling*

I recommend that you get a notepad before beginning and then journal as you go. What questions arise? What strikes you and why? How does an idea touch on your own experience?

### *References and Further Study and Research*

If you would like to take the lesson further there will always be additional reading as well as suggested research topics listed in the *Appendices*. You will also find that the sources of quotes are briefly referenced in the footnotes and then more extensively referenced at the end of each lesson in the *Works Cited* section.

### *General Questions*

EduCareDo is happy to help you with your questions concerning the course. Please contact them as needed at [study@educaredo.org](mailto:study@educaredo.org).