



2025 Socratic Dialogues in the Woods

Does truth matter?

Saturday July 26 & Sunday 27.

Kaliwoods, Holton, Halesworth IP19 8NQ

This annual socratic dialogue in Kaliwoods explores the subject of truth: "Truth is one of the central subjects in philosophy. It is also one of the largest." [Stanford <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth/>] In our contemporary life, we are

often challenged by truth and if it matters with so much 'fact' created by AI, so much political speak 'untrue'. No doubt much of our exploration will be around what we mean by truth - "the property of being in accord with fact or reality" - but whose reality? Truth has been a topic of discussion in its own right for thousands of years, and we will become part of that discussion in July.

What to bring with you

Please bring an example from your life of when truth mattered, or not mattered. You will be invited to share your example and we will choose one to work with. See next page some guidance notes on choosing an example.

Please arrive on time so we can all start together. The woods are cool, so wear layers of clothes to protect and keep warm, and sensible footwear.

Outline of two days

Saturday 9.30 Gather in the wood chai/coffee etc
 10.00 -1.00 Dialogue
 1.00 - 2.00 lunch
 2.00 -4.30 Dialogue
 5.00 Meta Dialogue / End / Walk

Sunday 9.30 Chai/Coffee
 10-12.30 Dialogue
 12.30 Lunch
 1.30 End

A donation is welcome, with a suggestion of £20 to cover both days food and facilitation.

Information about Socratic Dialogue, previous dialogues in the wood and about the wood can be found here <https://kaliwood.wordpress.com/socratic-dialogue/>

A night in between works well allowing the chatter and dust to settle, after the first day (Saturday) working from 10am to 4pm. Sunday we meet just for the morning from 10 to 12.30, then share some lunch before leaving at 2pm.

There is a cabin to find shelter within should the weather turn. The natural element of nature informs us, body and mind. The trees (mainly oaks and hornbeam) around us were there

long before us and will exist long after, so give a time perspective. Bird song, earth, water, fire, prevail as we engage in our mind yoga, balancing out.

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A bit about Socratic Dialogue

The Socratic method encourages reflection and independent, critical thinking. On one level, a Socratic Dialogue is a collaborative attempt to find the answer to a fundamental question. It is a form of co-operative philosophical enquiry. On another level it is entirely individual, rooted in concrete personal experience, and contributing to the formation of one's own personal philosophy.

It is accessible to all, and no prior philosophical training is needed to participate.

The process involves clarifying thoughts and ideas so that members of the group can understand each other exactly. The dialogue aims at consensus, which is neither easy nor imperative.

The Socratic method is ancient. In his dialogues, Plato describes Socrates (470-399 BC) conducting extended conversations. Through logical questioning, Socrates destroys his pupils' illusions that they understand the world perfectly and know their own minds. In dialogue, Socrates leads his pupils to confess their ignorance and challenges them to confront their own dogmatism.

The attempt to reconnect practical philosophical philosophy with its Socratic roots began with the German philosopher and teacher, Leonard Nelson. Launched in 1922, Socratic Dialogue grew out an era of dogmatism. Nelson believed that through active and regressive abstraction, we come to know the basis of our own personal and guiding philosophy. Nelson considered that this process could only start by addressing concrete examples from actual experience, rather than from abstract or hypothetical situations. Thus, the underlying aim of the Socratic method is to awaken philosophical questioning.

The Socratic Form

A Socratic dialogue can last for many hours, or days. First we explore the question. Then through finding our personal experience we explore our understanding of the underlying presuppositions.

Choosing the Example

Critical to independent and critical thinking in Socratic Dialogue practice is to draw on our own concrete experience. To take part in this exploration, you are invited to provide a concrete example, an example from your own life which illustrates the question. Here are some simple guidelines for finding an example:

Lived – an experience lived by you.

Simple – the simpler the example the better, the fewer the avenues the example goes down the more focused the central avenue will be.

Interesting / Fruitful – an interesting example, challenging, fruitful for us to explore.

Relevant and Closed – relevant to the question, and the issues that it raises should be closed, so as not to be emotionally disturbing or distracting.