



2026 Socratic Dialogues in the Woods

To be true to myself? What does it mean:

Saturday June 12 to Sunday June 13
Kaliwoods, Holton, Halesworth IP19 8NQ

This annual socratic dialogue in Kaliwoods continues last years exploration of truth, in this case true to myself. What does it mean 'to be true to myself'? This raises questions about identity and authenticity: Who am I? What makes me who I am? How do I hold onto my authentic beliefs and values in times of challenge? What if I change my values and views? These are just some of the queries that may be raised as we work together on this topic.

Outline of two days

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.

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	9.00 Chai/Coffee 9.30 Dialogue including summary of previous day 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.

What to bring with you

Please bring an example from your life of when it was you felt you were true to yourself, or the reverse, when you were not true to yourself. You will be invited to share your example and we will choose one persons example to work with. See next page some guidance notes on choosing an example.

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

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.

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.