

Manila Women's Forum

A Network of Women Professionals

May 2009

The Art of Living

By Maud Franssen



*Existence is a fact –
Living an art*

On Monday April 20 2009, we learned about the “Art of Living.” We had two speakers: Mr. Luigi Manzi, an Art of Living volunteer and teacher, and Mrs. Nameeta Dargani, another volunteer.

*Left: MWF Speakers
Nameeta Dargani (left)
and Luigi Manzi (right).*

The Art of Living is an international non-profit, educational, charitable and humanitarian NGO (nongovernmental organization) that is dedicated to serving society by strengthening the individual. Its founder is Sri Ravi Shankar, a 53 year old man who was born in Papanasam, India. A scholar of Vedic literature, Shankar has studied with many renowned spiritual masters and has introduced his The Art

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Above, left to right: Shamsi, Genevieve, Kaye.



Above, left to right: Ana, Pamposh, Mathilda, Nameeta, Kaye.

May MWF Meeting ■ **When:** 6:30 p.m., Monday, May 18 , 2009. **Where:** Ricco Renzo Galleries and Cafe, GF LRI Design Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia Street, Formerly Reposo, Bel Air II, Makati City. **What:** Jane Walker, C.E.O. of the Philippine Christian Foundation Inc. will speak about “Sustainability through Waste.” PCF, a charity that focuses on ending child labor on Philippine dump sites, is raising funds through reusing and recycling waste. Discover the value of our waste and what a difference it can make to children who are forced to live and work among garbage. **Bring:** Something to share for the potluck dinner. **June Meeting:** Monday, 2009 June 15.

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of Living successfully in more than 140 countries worldwide.

The Art of Living works in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. It implements educational programs and, in partnership with the International Association for Human Values (IAHV, <http://iahv.org>), various humanitarian service projects that:

- *uplift the individual* by offering simple, effective techniques that eliminate stress and increase joy and enthusiasm;
- *make a difference* in community by emphasizing social responsibility and inspiring individuals to give back to their communities;
- *foster global* change catering to the need for moving from limited identifications of nationality, race, religion and culture to a broader understanding of the unity of human life, which can help to bring about a more peaceful world.

This NGO is led by volunteers, offering programs that eliminate stress, create a sense of belongingness, restore human values, and encourage people from all backgrounds, religions and cultural traditions to come together in celebration and service.

Luigi Manzi

Luigi, an Art of Living volunteer and teacher, was born in Italy. He came to the Philippines for his job and got in touch with the “Art of Living” after his wife Eleonora attended the course and recommended it to him. He became so inspired that he joined them in 2007. Now, he is one of the five teachers who conduct the workshops that are held all over the country (from Manila to Boracay).

Luigi described the importance of breathing. According to the philosophy of the “Art of Living” there are four sources of life energy: food, sleep, knowledge and breathing. We could live days or weeks without the first two, a lifetime without the third, but how long could we survive without breathing? So breathing is most important for our life energy.

*Imagine your mind
as a kite, and your breath
as the string.*

*With the string you can
control the kite, so you can
control your mind by using
your breath!*

We hardly notice our breathing. Only when we run out of it (such as by doing sports) do we pay attention. Our mind and our emotions are connected by our breath. You could imagine your mind as a kite, and your breath as the string. With the string you can control the kite, so you can control your mind by using your breath!

This is also what the founder of the “Art of Living” tells us: “It is every human being’s birthright to live in a disease-free body and a stress-free mind. Yet, neither at school nor at home have we been taught how to deal with our negative emotions.” That’s why he created the Art of Living—to teach us how to focus on our breathing so we can change our mind to be stress free.

Luigi went on to describe one of the workshops given by the “Art of Living” called “The Art of Living Part 1 Course.” It is a six-day course, three hours a day, that gives you powerful tools to help you to deal with your mind and negative emotions. On May 18, this workshop will be held in Makati. Course fees are used to support the charitable projects of the organization, including a long-term program to assist inmates at Bilibid prison in Muntinlupa City. (For those

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Consultative Status with ECOSOC

The first avenue by which non-governmental organizations took a role in formal UN deliberations was through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In 1946, 41 NGOs were granted consultative status. By 1992, more than 700 NGOs had attained that status. Today, the total has reached 3,052 organizations—two of which are The Art of Living Foundation and its sister organization, the International Association for Human Values (IAHV).

ECOSOC

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations is a group of UN member countries that assists the General Assembly in promoting international economic and social cooperation and development. It has 54 members, elected by the General Assembly for a three-year term. The president

is elected for a one-year term and chosen among the small or middle powers represented on ECOSOC.

ECOSOC meets once a year in July. Since 1998, it has held another meeting each April with finance ministers heading key committees of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The functions of ECOSOC include information gathering, advising member nations, and making recommendations. In addition, ECOSOC provides policy coherence and coordinates the overlapping functions of the UN’s subsidiary bodies.

IAHV

The International Association for Human Values (IAHV) is an international humanitarian and educational non-governmental organization committed to promote resurgence of human values in all aspects of life across the globe. It has its international headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and regional offices in the United

States, South Africa, United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands, and India. In addition, there are multiple centers and contacts of its sister organization, The Art of Living Foundation, in more than 145 countries worldwide.

IAHV partners with governments, educational institutions, other NGOs, corporations, businesses and individuals, to develop and promote programs of personal development that encourage the practice of human values in everyday life.

Together with The Art of Living Foundation, IAHV has one of the largest volunteer based networks in the world. Because of its “large inspired volunteer base,” IAHV is known for its low overheads and strong organizational capacity. It has reached over 20 million people in over 140 countries from all walks of life with a wide range of social, economic, cultural and spiritual activities.

Breathing, hunger, anger, meditation, a code, a manual.... Here are other takes on "the art of living."



KaWoMeNaN

Selected and edited by
Beaulah Pedregosa Taguiwalo

The art of living

The art of living and breathing

The art of living is found in breathing, an activity so automatic and ethereal as to be beneath or beyond description. (*The Times-Picayune*, April 2, 2007)

The art of living—work and play are one

"The master in the art of living makes little distinction between his work and his play, his labor and his leisure, his mind and his body, his information and his recreation, his love and his religion. He hardly knows which is which. He simply pursues his vision of excellence at whatever he does, leaving others to decide whether he is working or playing. To him he's always doing both."

(James A. Michener, U.S. novelist and short-story writer, 1907?-1997)

The art of living / A code of living

Vipassana, a code of living which respects the peace and harmony of others, is the universal remedy for a universal malady. Anger is anger, and when one becomes agitated as a result of this anger, this agitation is not Christian, or Jewish, or Muslim. The malady is universal and the remedy must also be universal.

(S.N. Goenka, "The Art of Living: Vipassana Meditation")

The art of living: A Chinese manual

Tao Te Ching (The Way) is a classic manual on the art of living, written by the ancient Chinese sage Lao-tzu. Originally written during the 6th century BC, it is considered to be the most translated work in world literature, next to the Bible.

Tao Te Ching consists of 81 short poems. The topics range from political advice for rulers to practical wisdom for people. Because the passages are ambiguous, the variety of interpretation is virtually limitless—not only for different people but for the same person over time. Example:

Emptiness

*We put thirty spokes together and call it a wheel;
But it is on the space where there is nothing that the usefulness of the wheel depends.
We turn clay to make a vessel;
But it is on the space where there is nothing that the usefulness of the vessel depends.
We pierce doors and windows to make a house;
And it is on these spaces where there is nothing that the usefulness of the house depends.
Therefore just as we take advantage of what is, we should recognize the usefulness of what is not.* (chap. 11, tr. Waley)

Living as an art form

In the German language, there's the word *Lebenskunst*, which means the "art of living." There is also another word, *Lebenskünstler*, which means "master of the art of living"—one who makes living an art form.

The Art of Living : The Classic Manual on Virtue, Happiness, and Effectiveness

This is a 128-page book by Epictetus and Sharon Lebell, first published by HarperCollins in paperback format in May 2004. When it came out, it became an international sensation.

Epictetus was an ancient Greek Stoic philosopher. Philosophy, he taught, is a way of life and not just a theoretical discipline. All external events are determined by fate and beyond our control, but we can accept whatever happens calmly and dispassionately.

Suffering arises when we try to control what is uncontrollable, or

neglect what is within our power. As part of the universal city that is the universe, human beings have a duty of care to all fellow humans. The person who follows these precepts achieves happiness.

Sharon Lebell is a philosophical writer and musician who lives in Northern California. She is the author of several inspiring philosophical books which are translated into Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, Greek, and German. Her other books include *That's Funny, You Don't Look Buddhist: On Being a Faithful Jew and a Passionate Buddhist* (co-authored with Sylvia Boorstein and Stephen Mitchell).

The art of living and hunger

In his book, *Hunger*, Raymond Tallis tackles the different levels of our hunger. Out of our primary appetites, a myriad of pleasures and tastes arise that are elaborated in second-level hedonistic hungers creating new values. Appetite evolves into desire and opens the way to social hungers, such as the hunger for acknowledgement. Awareness of death awakens a further level of hunger, for something that lies beyond the pell-mell of successive experiences leading towards extinction. Understanding hunger is the key to understanding ourselves. The art of living is the art of managing our hungers.

(Raymond Tallis was formerly a Professor of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Manchester. In 2006, he left to become a full-time writer.)

The art of living as taught by Buddha

This is what the Buddha taught: an art of living. He never established or taught any religion, any "ism". He never instructed those who came to him to practice any rites or rituals, any empty formalities. Instead, he taught them just to observe nature as it is, by observing the reality inside. Out of ignorance we keep reacting in ways which harm ourselves and others. But when wisdom arises—the wisdom of observing reality as it is—this habit of reacting falls away. When we cease to react blindly, then we are capable of real action—action proceeding from a balanced mind, a mind which sees and understands the truth.

(S.N. Goenka, "The Art of Living: Vipassana Meditation")

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who want more details, the contact information is at the end of this article.)

Nameeta Dargani

For her part, Nameeta offered her insights and described how undergoing the course changed her life. She explained how she got involved in the "Art of Living" in the Philippines. Her mother pushed her to attend the six-day course, and she reluctantly agreed. She found it so beautiful and useful for reducing stress and making it easier to

deal with difficult situations on a day-to-day basis. It has helped her stop worrying and live in the present moment. In 2006, she went to the 25 year anniversary celebration of the "Art of Living" in Bangalore, India, where 2.5 million people from all over the world came together to celebrate life, meditate and pray for world peace. It was an awesome experience!

After hearing about this marvellous organization, we got to try out a short exercise in breathing. It is called Nadi

Shodan, and it is used to calm the mind. It was great to see how many people were energized and refreshed afterwards. Luigi then led us into a short meditation. This was a perfect ending for this very "breathtaking" topic! ■

The Art of Living (Philippines)

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Left to right: Eleonora Bellini (Luigi's wife), Luigi, Lisa Lumbao.

Manila Women's Forum

Manila Women's Forum (MWF) is a cross-cultural network for women. It provides opportunities to build friendships, talk to women of various cultures, and share information about resources. Our meetings are intended to provide intellectual stimulation and lead to personal and professional development. All women are welcome to join.

The current officers are: **Amy Alexander**, Message Board. **Julia Holz**, Treasurer, Membership and Programs. **Cecilia Leung**, Programs. **Lisa Lumbao**, Chair. **Lisa Stuart**, Message Board Moderator. **Beaulah P. Taguiwalo**, Newsletter, Website. **Shari Virjee**, Programs, Message Board.

Cost of membership is P300 per year. Members receive a copy of the current mailing list in addition to the newsletter, which is also sent to non-members. A contribution is collected at each monthly meeting: P20 for members, and P40 for non-members. For more information about MWF, please contact Lisa Lumbao at Tel. 813-0168, or at lumbao@mozcom.com.

Visit our website – a work in progress
www.geocities.com/manilawomensforum

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