

SOCRATIC DIALOGUE UK, Programme of Socratic Dialogues & Workshops for 2026

Highlights: This year we are delighted to offer a three-day dialogue in March facilitated by our German colleague, Wolfgang Dinges. We are also pleased to announce that we will offer two short workshops on 8 Feb. and 25 Oct. reflecting on what happens in a Socratic Dialogue and exploring the role of the facilitator. Anyone interested in finding out more is welcome to come along to these workshops, which we hope may lead to a facilitator training programme for interested people in the UK.

Booking is essential as numbers are limited. We do not charge for attendance at the events, but participants are invited to make an optional cash donation on the day of £20 as a contribution towards refreshments and room hire. If anyone needs support for travel expenses, it is possible to apply for a bursary. Please contact sduknetwork@outlook.com

London Dialogues & Workshops Lancaster Hall Hotel, 35 Craven Terrace, W2 3EL

Sat 7 February – 10.00 am to 4.30 pm, Choice of one of two dialogues:

1. *What does it mean to really encounter someone?* facilitated by Anna Bromley
2. *Manners make humanity*, facilitated by Julie-Marie ffrench-Devitt

Sun 8 February - 9.30 am to 1.00 pm, Workshop on Facilitating Socratic Dialogues

Booking essential, please use [this form](#) for the February dialogues and/or workshop

Fri 13 – Sun 15 March, A three-day dialogue:

What does it mean to 'manage' oneself? facilitated by Wolfgang Dinges

Fri 13 March – 4.00 pm to 6.30 pm; **Sat 14 March** – 10.00 am to 4.30 pm;
Sun 15 March – 10.00 am to 1.00 pm.

Booking essential, please use [this form](#) for the March dialogue. Participants must commit to attend all three dates.

Sat 24 Oct – 10.00 am to 4.30 pm, Choice of one of two dialogues (topics to be announced)

Sun 25 Oct – 10.00 am to 1.00 pm, Workshop on Facilitating Socratic Dialogues

If you are interested in attending on either date, please send an expression of interest to sduknetwork@outlook.com. Booking will be opened when the topics are confirmed.

Durham and Suffolk Dialogues

Sat 6th June, Durham, a one-day dialogue on *Why does truth matter?* facilitated by Sarah Banks at Alington House, 4 North Bailey, Durham, DH1 3ET, 10.00-4.30 pm.

Booking essential, please use [this form](#) for the Durham dialogue.

Sat 13th and Sun 14th June, Kaliwoods (near Halesworth, Suffolk) a two-day dialogue, on the topic of: ***To be true to myself***, facilitated by Rachel Kellett.

To book and inquire about accommodation, please contact: rachelkellett@gmail.com

For further information please contact: sduknetwork@outlook.com

Further details of the themes of the dialogues & workshops are given overleaf.

Further details of dialogue themes and workshops

What does it mean to really encounter someone? facilitated by Anna Bromley. We encounter many people throughout our day and our lives. But not every meeting feels the same. Some encounters could be superficial, mundane and go by without us noticing anything special. Other times, encounters can stick in our memory because there was something out of the ordinary about them. You could say that something deeper was going on. Based on personal memories, we will share such situations with one another and try to gain more clarity about what we think and how we speak about such experiences.

Manners make humanity, facilitated by Julie-Marie ffrench-Devitt. This is an updated version of the saying: 'Manners maketh man', often attributed to William of Wykeham (a C14th English Bishop). In today's fast-paced world, where many of us are constantly busy and often focused on digital interactions, it could be questioned whether manners still matter. Are they simply old-fashioned customs, or should they play a vital role in our lives and relationships, and if so, why? During this Socratic dialogue we will explore the concept of manners and consider whether for example, simple acts of courtesy, like saying 'please' and 'thank you', listening attentively, or apologising are an essential feature of what it means to be human, and if so, why?

What does it mean to 'manage' oneself? facilitated by Wolfgang Dinges. There are countless books and seminars on the subject of 'self-management'. Quite a market! And don't we have a deep need to shape our lives consciously and according to our own guidelines, in order to be successful and/or happy? What about our values and even identity? How to deal with obstacles, both external and internal ones? What is good for us and what is not? And how to act accordingly? Based on our own attempts and experiences with this topic, we will try to gain a little more clarity.

Why does truth matter? facilitated by Sarah Banks. According to some commentators we are living in a 'post-truth' era, confronted with fake news, alternative facts, disregard for evidence and dismissal of inconvenient truths as lies (such as human-caused climate change). What counts as 'truth', does it still matter and why?

To be true to myself, facilitated by Rachel Kellett. What does it mean 'to be true to myself'? This raises further questions about identity and authenticity: 'who am I?' and 'what makes me who I am?' How do I hold onto my cherished beliefs and values in times of challenge? In what circumstances is it right to compromise; and 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.

Workshops on Facilitating Socratic Dialogues

In the first workshop we will offer a brief introduction to the history, principles and practice of the Nelson-Heckmann tradition of neo-Socratic Dialogue. We will outline the stages of the dialogue and explore the role of the facilitator in guiding the group through a fruitful process of collaborative philosophising. We will consider what questions and prompts from the facilitator are useful for opening-up the dialogue, encouraging participants to dig deeper, focus on the question and work together in a consensus seeking approach. In the second workshop we may pay particular attention to group dynamics, including handling issues of dominance, disagreement, conflict and emotional responses. Each workshop will use the previous day's dialogues to illustrate and prompt our learning. It will be helpful to have attended one of the dialogues the day before, but not essential.

For further details of what is involved in a Socratic Dialogue, see overleaf.

What is Socratic Dialogue?

Socratic Dialogue is a means of exploring complex philosophical concepts or questions with a group of people. The UK facilitators promote and support what is often called 'neo-Socratic Dialogue' in the tradition of German philosophers Leonard Nelson (1882-1927) and Gustav Heckmann (1898-1996) (see <https://www.socraticdialogue.org/en/neo-socratic-dialogue/>). It is a method by which a group works together with a facilitator to find an answer to a well-formed philosophical question (such as: 'What is justice?', 'On what occasions is it right to lie' or 'What is my responsibility for the future?'). The process involves collecting concrete examples relevant to the question from participants, choosing one example to work on, analysing and exploring the chosen example, articulating its core statement and then moving to consider more general principles in answer to the question. It can be very hard to answer an abstract question easily, which is why we start by examining a concrete example, before moving on to consider general principles. Participants usually find the process of exploring ideas and lines of reasoning together in a group is challenging and exciting, encouraging skills in listening, patience and collaborative working.

Who are the dialogues for?

These dialogues are aimed at people interested in pursuing a philosophical question in some depth in a small group. They are suitable for people who have not experienced a Socratic Dialogue before, as well as those who have participated previously. We ask that you attend the whole day and commit to engaging in constructive conversations with others