

Read This First!

Welcome to the Christopherus Self Study Course! We hope that each of you walking this path of self-development as a parent, a teacher, a homeschooler, find what you need to make your journey fruitful and fulfilling for you and for your child.

***Just a humble plea...this Course was created for individuals and its price reflects that. If you are intending to work on this Course with others or share in any way, please contact the Christopherus office to arrange to make a donation to support our work. Groups can of course buy multiple copies so people can work on their own and together: that could be a really wonderful thing to do! Thank you for honoring our work and keeping Christopherus sustainable.***

Before we go any further, I feel a need to address the burning question that many of you will have: **How on earth do I do all of this whilst also looking after my home, my children, myself, my partner....and perhaps also am trying to make a living.**

The intention of this Course is to help, not to overwhelm. Because different people will come to the Course with different expectations and needs—and different stress levels—the ball really is in your court. There is no compulsion here, there is no guilt allowed! But I want to challenge each of you, as a first step on either becoming a Christopherus homeschooler or renewing your path as a Christopherus homeschooler, to consider yourself as an autonomous, self-directed learner. No one is going to tell you what to do. Christopherus is here to guide and suggest and I, Donna, will make my opinions clear about numerous things...but ultimately, everything offered is yours to take or reject or set aside for the moment.

So in terms of this Course, that means you need to find your own boundaries. Being a parent and being a homeschooler necessitates learning where your boundaries are. This requires a degree of self-knowledge: what can I reasonably expect from myself? You can practice that right now as you figure out how you wish to proceed with this Course! How will you ensure that it nourishes and supports you and does not push you into overwhelm? Only you can say—everyone will have different needs, different boundaries.

Homeschoolers come in every shape, size, color, race, religion, disability, economic and social background...they have a partner or spouse or are single parents...they work shifts, they work from home, they leave the home to work...and over more than 25 years of working with homeschoolers, I have seen people not only survive as homeschoolers, but flourish in the most adverse situations. This is not to make anyone feel guilty—it is to help people be open to the fact that home is not school—and each homeschool looks different from every other homeschool. Your job, as you have chosen to work with Christopherus, is to figure out how you can get what you need—knowledge, skills, support—from Christopherus AND adapt this to your unique situation.

We have purposefully created this Course to not be a series of lessons whereby one starts with Lesson One and ends with Lesson whatever. That would not be in the spirit of anthroposophical self-education and therefore not in the spirit of Christopherus. I make suggestions throughout but am always careful to ensure that folks realize that ultimately it is up to them—that the point of independent education is for each of you to figure out for yourself how best to make this work. You can readily find scripted and neatly laid-out self-development courses on the internet. But I feel that a huge part of being a homeschooler is being self-directed so to me it makes little sense for a homeschooler to follow someone else's plan for how to reach that goal. And, as I say over and over again throughout this

Course, it is the *path* that matters, much less so the end goal. Self-development is not a series of steps one completes: it is a never ending process of continual renewal and deepening of one's individual path as a human being.

However, we did take some modicum of pity on you all and have at least arranged the content of this Course into sections so you can more or less easily figure out what is given here.

Introduction

Section I Understanding Waldorf Education

Section II Being a Homeschooler

Section III The Arts

Each Section has an outline of the components of that Section as well as notes and explanations of the material.

**Please note that you need a journal** or two for most of the exercises suggested throughout this Course. There are also, of course, also artistic exercises as well as observation exercises sprinkled here and there throughout the Course.

Please also note that the intention is that you print out the various documents and not read them on your phone or computer. Suffice to say that in order to listen deeply within, one needs the peace, stillness and focus not possible on the computer or on a phone. Reading on a screen is such a different experience from reading a printed document—this could be a good time for you to develop a sensitivity to this difference if you don't have it already.

You will, of course, need to watch videos and listen to recordings but I also ask that people not watch the videos on their phones if possible but use a larger screen, not only for the health of their eyes but to get a much better view and perspective of what is being shown. There is just no way that a 4-inch screen can do justice to the artistic videos, for example.

Obviously, journaling work should definitely be in a physical bound journal and not in a Word document or similar.

As you figure out how to make this Course work for you, it could be this means you only watch the videos on painting and form drawing, for instance, so you can teach your child specific lessons. That's fine—but I strongly suggest that you have the intention (the guilt-free intention) of getting back to this Course. The point of the Course is not merely to follow instructions for particular skills, but to develop your own orientation to what you bring to your children.

Maybe in your first year of homeschooling it simply isn't possible for whatever reason to devote the time to working seriously with this Course. But then maybe a year later, you find that your in-laws take the children on vacation for a week and you decide to devote a couple hours a day to this Course.

And just to be clear, the idea is not that you do only one part of the Course per week (unless that seriously is all you can manage). Rather, take a few components and work with those: listen to the talks on child development and study your curriculum materials AND set yourself to learn one skill (such as

the handwork exercises in that video). The next week you carry on with child development and take on some of the short talks on self development and do some journaling and at night you watch the moon for that week as part of your Goethean exercises. And so on. Just don't cram or overdo and create your own path of self-study that makes sense for you.

Do watch the introductory video.

Next step...read through Starting Your Year.

Get a good idea of what is in this Course and how you can work between learning what you need to teach your child and what deeper things you need so you can educate your child.

Lastly....when that horrible couple of days come—which they inevitably will—listen to the talk 'When It All Goes Wrong' and take a breather.