

“To openly think about a problem from different perspectives and world views is the beginning to creating its solution.” – Sophia Stone, founder and president, Wisdom's Edge Foundation, Inc.

“This was my first experience of such kind of a program, and I am eagerly waiting for more such programs. I found all the sessions were highly engaging, thus, I must say that the sessions were quite motivating in itself.”
—testimony from
Breaking Bread
Community Self-Healing
Circle, Winter 2021-2022

Looking back at 2021

In 2021, Wisdom's Edge Foundation has created opportunities for people in transition think about their past and present so that they can better navigate their future.

Using philosophy as a medium to think more critically about deep seated beliefs, values, and life practices, Wisdom's Edge Foundation helps diverse communities gain self-esteem and cultivate self-care habits so that they can help themselves find purpose and meaning in their lives. The communities Dr. Stone served in 2021 were the women at [The Lord's Place](#), the [Nonprofit Women's Coalition](#), clients from [A Better Day Than Yesterday](#), and a select scholarly community from the [School of Sanskrit, Philosophy & Indic Studies](#) at the University of Goa. Dr. Stone facilitated philosophical discussions, meditation sessions and taught mindfulness practices for 18 participants.

Dr. Stone hosted two online reading groups. The Mathematics & Philosophy reading group consisted of scholars and researchers in logic, philosophy, mathematics, engineering, and a neuroscience/inventor, as well as a high school science teacher and a litigator attorney. The other was a reading of Eric Weiner's *The Socrates Express*, whose participants included a grocery clerk from Publix, a mindfulness teacher, and a realtor.

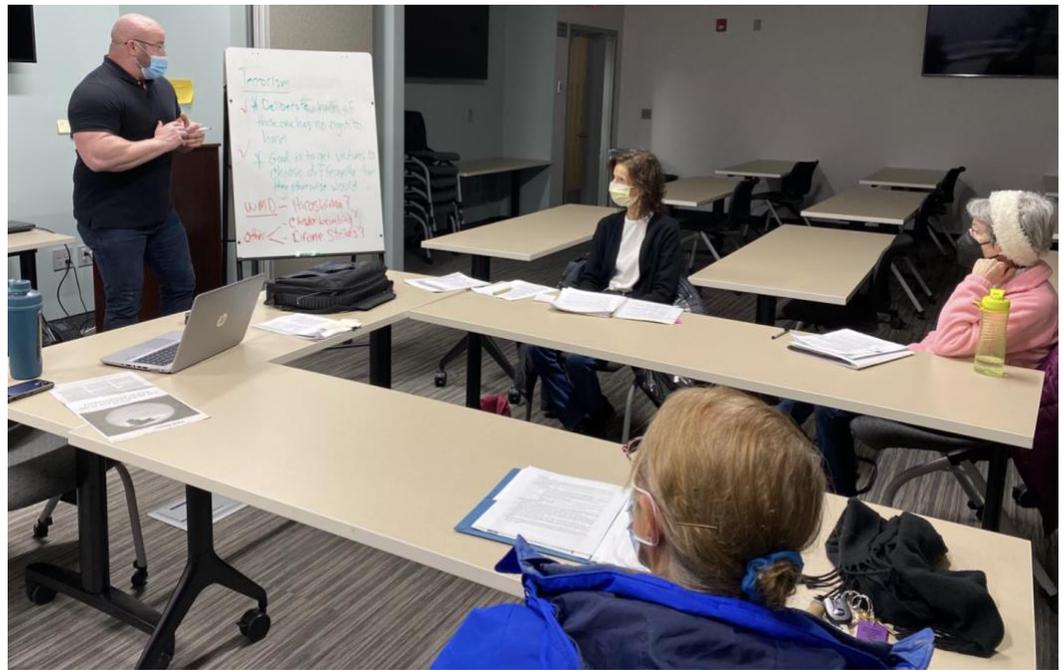
Dr. Stone served as chapter leader for the [South Florida Social Enterprise Alliance](#), a consortium of non-profit and social enterprise leaders collaborating and supporting one another to better serve the South Florida area. It is through networking that Wisdom's Edge can identify communities at the edges of society and find students who are searching for an intellectual community and support circle for achieving self-healing, meaning and purpose in their lives.

Dr. Houston in St. Cloud, Minnesota, has taught three in-person classes to intergenerational students, ranging in age from 12 to 80 years old, teaching a total of 29 students. The courses he designed were titled, “Ancient Wisdom for Modern Times,” “The Pursuit of Happiness,” and “Applied Ethics,” partnering with the [Adult Enrichment Community Education Classes of District 742](#) in Saint Cloud, Minnesota. Currently Dr. Houston is designing a course on “Death & Dying.”

Dr. Stone teaches on a volunteer basis. Wisdom's Edge Foundation supported Dr. Houston's teaching with a total payment of \$3000 for 2021. For the year 2021, we've raised \$5400.00 from donations and fundraising activities. If you have donated to Wisdom's Edge and need an additional receipt for tax purposes, please email: wisdomsedgefoundation@gmail.com.

We have a new [donations page](#), with three levels of donors: craftsman (\$18), guardian (\$180) and philosopher king (\$1800). Our fundraising goal for 2022 is to have 100 craftsmen, 10 guardians, and 1 philosopher king. Funds will support participation at the Summer Symposium at the [Uehiro Academy for Philosophy and Ethics in Education](#). The symposium runs for one week with training in pedagogy and methods for teaching philosophy to diverse communities, focusing on the most vulnerable and yet most flexible thinkers – children. The intended outcome for Wisdom's Edge Dialogue Facilitator participation is for methodological and curriculum development used for programming in future collaborations with pre-K and K-5 public and private institutions.

“I still may not agree with the opposition but at least I can value the patterns of thought that led them to their conclusions.” – participant from St. Cloud, MN



“My late husband had dementia at the end of his life, so I value the brain stimulation required to read the assignments and pull-out pieces of the readings and apply it to the questions in class.

As an older person living alone, the class was a great social outlet!” – participant from St. Cloud, MN

21st Century Applied Ethics – Dr. John Houston

Course Description: What is the right thing to do, and how do we know? This is a course in applied ethics. We will be looking at contemporary ethical problems and their possible solutions. Topics include controversial matters related to racial equality, war & terrorism, gun control, the criminal status of drugs, questions in medical ethics, and more.

The goal of the class is to offer a safe space to discuss controversial topics with a professional philosopher so that participants can come away with having reasoned opinions that were challenged in a group setting. Participants inevitably hear viewpoints that are not aligned with their own. These kinds of discussions are needed in these divisive times. In this way, philosophy is a social and public good.

Philosophy in Nature Series

In South Florida, last two Sundays in February and the first Sunday in March. Meet in person, outdoors, reading & discussing literary passages that focus on bio-centric philosophy from the author Robin Wall Kimmerer.

If you like being outdoors, in nature, under a canopy of trees, or by a lake, or ocean, thinking about your place in this beautiful world of ours, [Philosophy in Nature](#) may just be for you. We gather and reflect about our relationship with nature and to one another. We read and discuss select passages. Then we write, draw or paint with watercolors in our journals.

This year, we are accepting sponsorships for combat veterans who would like to participate but could not afford the extra expense on a fixed income. We are partnering with [Connected Warriors](#) in Boca Raton FL to offer sponsorships for several clients who are retired combat veterans. If you would like to be a sponsor, please email Sophia Stone at wisdomsedgefoundation@gmail.com.

Breaking Bread Community Self-Healing Circle

New this year, in collaboration with LeTeisha Gordon of [A Better Day Than Yesterday](#), Dr. Stone offered two online courses to participants for self-healing. The first focused on philosophical texts from the Eastern philosophical cannon, the second from the Western cannon.

“I loved starting my work week with these sessions. Just showing up and being there with people I love and cherish, and who value me and believe in me and accept me, was therapeutic. It made me feel that we are all in this together, across hemispheres and age groups and titles, and we’re working towards our best self, even if we don’t succeed in being it at all times.” – participant from India.

"Yes, I would [recommend Wisdom's Edge to my friends and family]. Mostly to demystify Philosophy as an academic discipline, but also because the sessions were so therapeutic without being dogmatic. It would really suit those who like to work on themselves on their own at their own pace, but from a perspective different from psychology." – testimony from Breathing Bread Community Self-healing Circle, Winter 2021-2022.

The most important take-away:

"That philosophy has to be a public, collective practice even if its fruits are sometimes quite personal." – participant, Breathing Bread Community Self-Healing Circle, Winter 2021-2022

Word Art from last session is pictured to the right. In a single word or short phrase, what summarizes your experience from this Breathing Bread Community Circle?

Breaking Bread Community Self-Healing Circle: Wisdom's Edge often is asked about a course syllabus. Here is a summary of what we did for our online Circle in the Winter 2021-2022.

Skills/tools acquired: introspection through philosophical texts from the early Western tradition, the value of community support, learned breathing and meditation techniques to help with fear, stress, and anxiety, learned how to conduct participant driven discussions.

We learned the following mindfulness/breathing techniques: Gamma Breathing, Box and Triangle Breathing, 'Take Five', and Lovingkindness Meditation.

Here is a brief summary for each session:

1st session - We read Plato's allegory of the cave and discussed in private breakout rooms the shadows we face every day that limits our thinking & perception of self. We shared with the class ideas about how to break free from those fetters that society, our family, our culture, and our memories of the past bind us from living to our true potential.

2nd session - Discussed what a principle is and then examined Socrates's principles for living. We examined three kinds of ignorance categorized in Plato's *Apology*. Then, in our breakout rooms, participants shared when they made mistakes on a presumption of knowing what they didn't know. Knowing when we don't know is true knowledge.

3rd session - We discussed Plato's *Crito* and focused on the passage where Socrates makes the distinction between the many and the wise. In our breakout rooms we shared about what the many are telling us to do, and what the wise thinker in us tells us to do. We learned what the plain vanilla technique is for democratic discussion and an equal participation in the sharing of ideas.

4th session - We read about Aristotle's "Greatness of Soul" (IV.3) or 'Pride' as it is often translated. In breakout rooms, participants discussed what parts of the text they could apply and use for their own lives. We then practiced the Plain Vanilla technique. Most participants were interested in whether Socrates has greatness of soul.

5th session - We read Musonius Rufus and Seneca, later Stoic philosophers. We practiced the Plain Vanilla technique of discussion. This session inspired me to invite scholar and editor of the Stoic text, Lloyd Gerson to speak to our group.

6th session - The text we read was from the Catholic nun from Sor Juana Inéz de la Cruz and her *Response to Sor Filotea*, defending her intellectual pursuits. We first compared her defense to Socrates in Plato's *Apology*. Our plain vanilla discussion centered around the question whether Sor Juana was a feminist. In our breakout rooms we discussed what it meant to live philosophically. In closing, we ended with a promise to ourselves, a commitment we shared anonymously to the group.

The Breathing Bread Self-Healing Community Circle will begin another series of six sessions in April 2022, focusing on philosophy from the Eastern traditions. To make a reservation for participation, please click [here](#).

If you are on Facebook, please like our [page](#).

self-compassion

virtue
acceptance
self-reflection
wisdom
that i like philosophy
this group is wise
reflection
sharing