

**PHILOSOPHICAL DIARY AND ONLINE MARATHON AS  
CONTEMPORARY FORMATS OF PHILOSOPHICAL  
PRACTICE: CARE OF THE SELF IN THE MODERN WORLD**

DIARIO FILOSÓFICO Y MARATÓN EN LÍNEA COMO  
FORMATOS CONTEMPORÁNEOS DE PRÁCTICA FILOSÓFICA:  
EL CUIDADO DEL YO EN EL MUNDO MODERNO

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**Abstract:** The article presents two relatively new formats of philosophical practice: a philosophical diary and an online marathon. The authors of the article were developers of both formats; we have tested these forms at the university with a student audience and outside university. As a result of the study, we came

to the conclusion that the philosophical diary can be an effective form of a person's work with the self; along with the psychotherapeutic diary, this is a modern format of practice of care of the self. The online marathon is a format of group practice when you analyze and reflect on various existentials together with the facilitator of the marathon and other participants. Both formats fit into the Internet environment. The final result of our study was the formulation of an original method of philosophical practice, which we called philosophical meditations.

**Keywords:** philosophy, philosophical counseling, care of the self, modern man, Internet, philosophical diary, online marathon, philosophical meditations.

**Resumen:** El artículo presenta dos formatos relativamente nuevos de práctica filosófica: un diario filosófico y un maratón en línea. Los autores del artículo fueron desarrolladores de ambos formatos; Hemos probado estos formularios en la universidad con una audiencia de estudiantes y fuera de la universidad. Como resultado del estudio, llegamos a la conclusión de que el diario filosófico puede ser una forma efectiva del trabajo de una persona con uno mismo; junto con el diario psicoterapéutico, este es un formato moderno de práctica de cuidado del self. El maratón en línea es un formato de práctica grupal cuando analiza y reflexiona sobre varios existenciales junto con el facilitador del maratón y otros participantes. Ambos formatos se ajustan al entorno de Internet. El resultado final de nuestro estudio fue la formulación de un método original de práctica filosófica, que llamamos meditaciones filosóficas.

**Palabras clave:** filosofía, asesoramiento filosófico, cuidado de uno mismo, hombre moderno, Internet, diario filosófico, maratón en línea, meditaciones filosóficas.

## Introduction

The French philosopher René Descartes made a fundamental distinction between the world and man, the result of which was a growing confidence in the possibility of an objective description of the world. The Cartesian view of reality has become the ideal of modern science, which is inherited and continues to be reproduced by modern culture in various spheres of human life. Increasingly, in a modern university, the educational process is turning into

activities for the transfer of metered ready-made knowledge, from which subjective elements and inner meanings have been removed. The faith in the power of knowledge is strengthened, it is considered as the only factor in the spiritual formation of the individual. As a result, prerequisites are created for the formation of a mass person, overloaded with information, but separated from himself and spiritual culture. Since training aimed only at the development of intellectual abilities leads to a disruption in the connections between the cognitive, value and emotional-volitional spheres of the personality, which causes the person to be estranged from himself and culture.

The scientific approach indirectly influenced the formation of a person's passive position regarding his being. The attitude to think world without subject leads to the inhumanization of existence, where the subject becomes one of the versions of the thinking object, its existential thinking is replaced by unauthentic, machine. One of the possibilities of opposing the objectivist approach is the background of existential experience and work with it. No matter how a person gets lost in the information flows, he must find the spiritual strength in himself in order to become a shepherd of being (M. Heidegger). In this regard, philosophy can help him. The help is based on a comprehension of the existential experience of man. This comprehension is the process of gathering oneself in parts, in which the individual simultaneously acts as an artist and a work of art, as a gardener and a flower<sup>1</sup>.

Philosophy as discipline taught in schools and universities is designed not only to shape the worldview, but also to help students find ways to solve life-meaning issues. In reality, the course of philosophy increasingly resembles the history of the development

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<sup>1</sup> APUKHTINA, Nina, MILYAEVA, Ekaterina, PENNER, Regina: "Methods of philosophical practice (philosophical consulting and companionship) for students: an educational experiment. Part I", in *Socium i Vlast*, no. 6 (74), Moscow, 2018. Págs.68-78; 76.

of philosophical thought or a superficial acquaintance with personalities and their individual ideas. Being in the grip of a scientific approach, philosophy is turning into a set of objectified knowledge, based on which it is difficult to build a fruitful relationship with the world. The principle “knowledge exists for the sake of knowledge” preached by such a philosophy only leads one away from the realization of one’s own existence. Today, philosophers, both within the walls of universities and among free thinkers, have a need to return philosophy to its roots, setting an important existential task for it: to lead a person to the comprehension of his own existence, the realization of personal values, the choice of which determines the path of life. Otherwise, we risk losing the spirit of philosophy, leaving only its letter.

Thus, the problem is the return of philosophy to the existential dimension. This can be done through the use of philosophical practices, which, due to their flexibility, are applicable both in institutional education and non-institutional settings. In this study, philosophical diary and philosophical online marathon, carried out in a diary form, as practices of self-awareness and self-care, will be considered as methods of philosophical practice.

The aim of the research is to study the potential of philosophical diary and online marathon as practices of self-awareness and self-care.

Research objectives:

- to describe the technology for maintaining philosophical diary and conducting philosophical online marathon,
- to justify the convenience and effectiveness of using philosophical diary and online marathon for the process of self-awareness and self-cultivation.

## **Opportunities and prospects of the Internet for practice philosophical practices**

The world of modern man is a world filled with a continuous race for the ghost of success, the need to survive in conditions of fierce social competition and an incredible amount of information noise. Among this, there is virtually no way for a person to find himself; the answer to the question “who am I?” is lost. The everyday world may lead to protracted existential crises, the loss of life-meaningful landmarks and the dissolution of man as a whole person in fluid modernity and total consumption. Without value guidelines, a person is immersed in a state of self-forgetfulness, while he may feel longing for a meaningful, eventful life, but does not know how to work with this feeling. One of the ways out of the existential crisis is philosophical practice, which act as a means of self-awareness and self-care. Let us analyze which form of philosophical practice will be more convenient for modern man?

Conventionally, two conceptual approaches can be distinguished that combine numerous philosophical practices: the therapeutic approach and the developmental approach. The therapeutic approach focuses on working with a particular psychological and existential problem. The developmental approach is aimed at reaching an understanding and completing ideas about life, testing them for participation with the help of various intellectual means and building a trajectory of further spiritual growth<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> BORISOV, Sergey: “Theory and Practice of Philosophical Counseling: a Comparative Approach”, in *The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art and Communication*, 2018. Págs.149-154.

**Table 1. Philosophical practices**

<b>Therapeutic approach</b>	<b>Developmental approach</b>
Philosophical counseling, G. Achenbach	Philosophical counseling, O. Brenifier
Various forms of art therapy and coaching	Socratic Method, A. Makarov
Deep philosophy, R. Lahav	Philosophical companionship, R. Lahav
Philosophical counseling, L. Marinoff	Philosophical counseling, J. Barrientos

The division into these approaches is very conditional, since the listed practices can solve different problems. They can serve as a tool for preparing thinking for an independent solution of worldview issues and at the same time contribute to solving the psychological and existential problems of the subject.

In the presented practices, direct face-to-face communication, implemented by *hic et nunc*, is mainly used. However, face-to-face communication has spatial and temporal limitations. Is it possible to build a philosophical practice using virtual communication, which does not imply the simultaneous presence of communicants in the Internet space, where the subjects are protected from outside view by certain symbolic barriers? How effective is this practice for a modern person?

Modern man does not think his life without the Internet. If before the network acted as a huge library that helped in finding the right information, now it is turning into a universal tool for organizing the interaction of a wide range of users. The boundaries between the physical and virtual worlds are completely blurred, reality goes into online mode<sup>3</sup>. Due to the fact that virtual space creates the

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<sup>3</sup> STILLMAN, David, STILLMAN, Jonah: *Gen Z Work: How the Next Generation Is Transforming the Workplace*, HarperCollins, Glasgow, 2017.

conditions for permanent inclusion, it is used everywhere for communication, entertainment, educational and work tasks, the psychological needs of the individual. If external reality has many limitations, in the virtual space there are favorable conditions for liberation from the prescribed identity, the discovery of new aspects of the personality, and for self-awareness in general. As D. Walter noted, communication in the virtual space often exceeds face-to-face communication, becoming hyperpersonal<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the virtual space provides a unique opportunity for self-knowledge and self-expression. People are sometimes able to better express and perceive the various aspects of their I online than offline, since the very quality of the virtual environment helps to ease the tension in the disclosure of the sides of the personality. Y. Amichai-Hamburger identifies several characteristics of the Internet that contribute to the construction of emotionally safe communication: a sense of anonymity, limitation of physical impact, a high degree of control, ease of access to people with similar interests, accessibility at any time and at any time location, a sense of equality of communicants<sup>5</sup>.

These specific properties of the network contribute to openness, the removal of psychological barriers. According to J. Wiśniewski, online space can even serve as a therapeutic couch or confession, where it is not scary to show weakness and emotional sensitivity<sup>6</sup>. Virtual space is an informal and welcoming environment that is free in nature, which contributes to openness, the convergence of people. In addition, the interaction of people on the network is not limited by spatial and time frames, it provides more opportunities

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<sup>4</sup> WALTHER, J.B. "Computer-mediated communication: Impersonal, interpersonal, and hyperpersonal interaction", *Communication Research*, 1996. Págs.3-43.

<sup>5</sup> AMICHAH-HAMBURGER, Y. *Technology and Psychological Well-being*, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> WIŚNIEWSKI, J.L.: *Loneliness On The Net*, Prószyński I S-ka, Warsaw, 2007.

for its implementation, and serves as the basis for choosing a philosophical diary and an online marathon as ways of conducting philosophical practice.

### **Philosophical diary as an actual format of care of the self**

One of the ancient, but still popular formats of human activities for understanding the self is the use of written practice. A diary is usually understood as a set of fragmentary entries that are entered regularly and are most often accompanied by an indication of the date. The diary is a chronicle of external or internal events, which is conducted in the first person. A diary feature is its fragmentation, non-linearity, violation of cause-effect relationships, intertextuality, self-reflection, fundamental incompleteness and the absence of a single concept<sup>7</sup>. Daily notes may contain thoughts about life. They contribute to the comprehension of personal experiences and their attitude to the world. Often keeping diaries is dictated by a person's desire to follow his own spiritual (intellectual) development. In this case, the diary acts as a projection of the author's internal states, on the basis of which self-analysis is carried out for further self-care. Keeping diary entries not only makes a person more susceptible to his own existential experience, but also develops the ability to express his thoughts, feelings in verbal form. In general, the diary helps organize individual experience, leads to the development of self-discipline, which is important for the development of the I. Ancient thinkers were the first to use the diary as a way of self-awareness and self-care. The letters of Seneca, the thoughts of Marcus Aurelius can serve as examples of care of the self, which was aimed at transforming one's own life through comprehension

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<sup>7</sup> ROMASHKINA, M.: "Aspects of the diary genre", in *Bulletin of Bashkir State University*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2015. Págs. 997-1001.



of the self. M. Foucault noted that keeping letters and diaries not only allows the author to understand himself, but also shows how much his actions are consistent with his thoughts, how planned is consistent with what was done. He called the letters and diary entries a “transcript of the trial of conscience”. If in ancient philosophy the emphasis is on the actions that a person should do, in medieval philosophy diary entries take the form of confession, which is aimed at reflective work and spiritual struggle with the baser manifestations of one’s nature<sup>8</sup>. Through confession, a person clarifies for himself his inner state, discovers new truths about the self, and realizes his passions and sins. Confession had a unique communicative situation in which admonition was combined with internal interviewing and self-awareness. Not every diary acquires the features of confession, honesty with oneself does not always imply a prayer reflection and condemnation of one’s own mistakes, but one can see self-realization in every diary. Keeping diary entries allows being more attentive to the inner world. When working with a diary, a person brings up observation about the self, learns to more consciously perceive feelings and emotions and understand the causes of their occurrence. Continuous keeping of a diary allows looking at existential experience from the side, to discover inconsistency of thoughts with reality or to see internal contradictions in views.

In psychotherapy, the diary as a way of self-awareness and self-help was used by the American psychotherapist I. Proffoff. The therapist has proposed a structured diary method that allows to realize the past experience of a person and evaluate future prospects for existence. What is the specificity of a structured diary? A regular diary reflects the external or internal events of a person’s life, which are most often systematized by date; it does not

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<sup>8</sup> FOUCAULT, Michel: “Technologies of the Self”, in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988. Págs.16-49.

have a clear structure, therefore, describing events and related experiences, a person can not always detect patterns of his own thinking and behavior, which often make a person less sensitive to reality and prevent him from living a fulfilled life. I. Progoff's structured diary has a clear structure that facilitates introspection.

I. Progoff's diary is non-linear, divided into several sections. The first section of the diary, "Life Time": a person describes his present in the context of a past and a possible future. He daily records his internal events and conditions and performs an exercise to reconstruct a life story, saturating it with meaning. The second section, "Dialogues", is devoted to human interaction with the world and with his own phenomenological experience. In everyday life, it is difficult to build a full-fledged dialogue. Often one of the participants in the dialogue turns into an object that obeys the will of others. As the second participant in the dialogue, not only another individual can act, but also any aspect of being. Through spontaneous dialogue, the individual reveals something new and meaningful about his own life. In the third section, "The Stream of Symbols", a person makes sense of his dreams and fantasies, as a result of which he discovers existence on a deeper level. His life is becoming multidimensional. In the fourth section "Impersonal Meanings", work is carried out to establish contact with external sources of meaning, which are any expressed cultural experience: art, social movements, spiritual teachings and practices, etc. A person makes sense of himself as part of society; he creates a sense of existence, based on the cultural experience of generations<sup>9</sup>.

Since human problems are solved in philosophy and psychology at different theoretical and methodological levels, it should be determined in what form the practice of philosophical diary can be used, on what principles of keeping a personal diary it can be based

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<sup>9</sup> PROGOFF, Ira: *At a Journal Workshop*, Dialogue House, NY, 1977.

on, how it will differ from a personal diary in psychotherapeutic work.

Firstly, a philosophical diary as well as a personal diary should have a clear structure that facilitates the process of self-awareness. However, this structure should be harmoniously integrated into the natural flow of human life and should not take much time. In the philosophical diary, the structure is created by thematic blocks devoted to various phenomena of being. Each block consists of quotes of the month, week and day, which must be comprehended based on the life experience. In this regard, diary exercises can be compared with the surface of a mirror on which the movements of thought are reflected. Watching them, a person clarifies his own values, intentions, desires.

Secondly, a philosophical diary must be kept every day. Of course, the daily filling of the diary requires patience, self-discipline, but only in this way, the habit of reflexive activity is formed and observation, sensitivity to the realities of existence develops. Developing these qualities and skills helps to establish contact with the guidelines in the life. All this allows a person to know himself better.

Thirdly, the philosophical diary as a way of care of the self sets up a person for the interactive dimension of life. Through diary entries, a person talks to himself, penetrating into the deep layers of his consciousness, better understands himself. This helps a person to get out of the closed world of his own world, to try to look at himself through the eyes of the Other. Having observed himself, he can understand how he builds relationships with himself, with people around him, with the world as a whole. It should be noted that sometimes own existential experience is revealed to the subject through an appeal to cultural experience. This principle of dialogue was laid in the basis of the philosophical diary. The philosophical diary is aimed at establishing contact with one's own experience for the recognition of values and meaning-forming principles of

existence. Based on the acquired knowledge, a person will try to build fruitful relations with the world.

It is worth emphasizing that the occupation of philosophy in a diary format has a serious difference from the introduction of a personal diary during psychotherapeutic work. Any psychotherapeutic practice is aimed at solving specific psychological problems of the client. Philosophical practice involves an appeal to the categorical apparatus of philosophy, to comprehension of individual existential experience from a philosophical position, appeal to the ultimate abstractions, the result of which is the formation, development or strengthening of a person's worldview. Let us explain with a specific example. Philosophy cannot answer the private practical question “Why does no one love me”, but comprehends concepts, “love”, “me”, “Other”. It lays the foundation for constructing a picture of the subject's world, where a person acts as an integral being, who feels his involvement in the world.

The philosophical diary focuses on the study of the inner world, the worldview of the subject. It pays attention to understanding the phenomena of being (love, friendship, loneliness, etc.), without the need to describe the chronicle of life events. The philosophical diary involves working with categories, in the light of which there is an understanding of certain philosophical problems of man. In working with diary entries, the dialectic unity of two principles is realized: on the one hand, the subject, turning to philosophical reflection, is distracted from what is happening in life, correlates emerging thoughts and ideas with one or another intellectual tradition. On the other hand, he always returns to the starting point, to himself. Since the existential problems raised by philosophers are closely related to the worldview of any person, to solve them, everyone should turn to himself, study his worldview principles, values, ideals, which make up a person's personal philosophy and, ultimately, determine his fate. Thus, the peculiarity of maintaining a philosophical diary is the focus on the awareness of one's own

belief system and values, on the formation of a worldview, the development of reflection and self-discipline skills. Often in the process of self-reflection, an individual reveals contradictions in worldview principles or their inconsistency with desires. The individual can also detect inconsistencies in thinking of being. In this case, an inventory of value landmarks should be carried out, determining how much they correspond to the personal worldview. Through maintaining a philosophical diary, a person learns to analyze his mental operations, to observe himself, which cannot but affect the individual's lifestyle. Keeping a philosophical diary is a practice of self-observation, which makes it possible to develop a holistic worldview and come to a conscious life.

The sources of information in the personal diary are observations and experiences of events occurring in life. In the philosophical diary, philosophical aphorisms (quotes), excerpts from texts or philosophical questions of an existential nature act as a material for exercises, which help a person to carry out the necessary reflection on his individual existence. One can know the self through familiarizing with the spiritual experience of other people. Understanding the experience of the Other helps to discover the still unknown depths of own personality. K. Jaspers called this reflexive procedure transcending thoughtful reflection. In this act of thinking, a person goes beyond the boundaries of his I, expanding his ideas about himself, about others, about the world as a whole. In thoughtful reflection, a person leaves from everyday life, plunging into the spiritual realm. He reads the codes of being with the help of poetry, art, religion, philosophy, joining eternal truths, feels his complicity in the work of other people<sup>10</sup>. Thus, the philosophical diary is an effective way of self-awareness; it allows to build a deep dialogue on two levels, physical and metaphysical.

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<sup>10</sup> JASPERS, Karl: *Way to Wisdom: An Introduction to Philosophy*, Yale University Press, 2003.

## **“Philosophical Practice for Every Day”: a philosophical diary, between paper and digit**

In 2018-2019, together with a group of colleagues and students, we conducted an educational experiment at the university, dedicated to the implementation of philosophical practices in the educational process, the result of which was not only a series of articles<sup>11</sup>, but also the creative diary “Philosophical practice for every day”<sup>12</sup>.

Because today there are already many collections of aphorisms and quotes by philosophers and many are available online, the team of authors decided to move away from a simple set of quotes. Twelve professors of philosophy took part in the preparation of the diary: from professors to assistants who had only recently embarked on the path of teaching. The diary creation hypothesis was the assumption that a modern person living a rich daily life in a metropolis can find time for daily philosophical introspection, if he can find a right form for this.

In the process of working, it turned out that in the youth environment such a daily practice can be done in an accessible mobile form. We were lucky to find initiative young people who helped to realize the idea in a digital format<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> APUKHTINA, Nina, MILYAEVA, Ekaterina, PENNER, Regina: “Methods of philosophical practice (philosophical consulting and companionship) for students: an educational experiment. Part I”, *Socium i Vlast*, no. 6 (74), Moscow (Russia), 2018. Págs.68-78; MILYAEVA, Ekaterina, PENNER, Regina, SIDOROVA, Ulyana: “Methods of philosophical practice (philosophical counseling and companionship) in the student audience: an educational experiment. Part II. Existential experience”, *Socium i Vlast*, no. 2 (76), Moscow (Russia), 2019. Págs.118-131.

<sup>12</sup> *Philosophical Practice for Every Day*, Publishing Center of South Ural State University, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Triple Cube : Philosophical Practice for Every Day (mobile application). URL: [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FostERROR.Phil\\_midis](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FostERROR.Phil_midis)

The diary is an author's selection of texts from 12 topics – love, philosophizing, choice, integrity, etc. – distributed by months of the year. Each topic consists of a piece of text specifying thinking for a month. At the beginning of each week, texts for reflection for a week are presented. Each day begins with a short quote defining the thought of the day. For the reader, several work algorithms are presented. The first is based on the method of E. Fromm, introspection. In this method, the sequence and development of the habit of self-reflection are important. The work begins with the very first text and goes sequentially to the last, the reader does not skip fragments and does not run ahead. One day is equal to one piece of text. It is needed to allocate a certain amount of time (from 15 to 60 minutes), which the contemplative should spend alone with himself. This may be the time before bedtime and a lunch break or a journey in public transport on the way to work or home. The reader is advised to use the most appropriate method of concentration: meditation, deep breathing, affirmations, etc. After that, he should focus on the presented fragment of the month, week, day. If possible, read it aloud, slowly, uttering each word. Read a few more times. Listen to the self. Then answer the questions: “How do the words of the philosopher respond in me? (What harmony can be found between the fragment of the day, week and month?) What do I see behind the words of the philosopher? What do I feel? Can my personal experience, memories of which these words evoked, become important for others? Or become something bigger, more important?” It is recommended to read the fragment again. If a desire arises, the reader can record his thoughts, use a consonant photo or picture, and mark the title of the film or a song. At the end of each week and month, reader can summarize the thoughts, his daily experiences of philosophical practice. According to our idea, with the help of a diary in any format – in paper or digital form – everyone is able to go the philosophical path

on his or her own; and for each, this path will be his own, individual, unique, personified.

Diary “Philosophical practice for every day” in Russian is available on Google Play (TripleCube, 2019). Today this is the only application in philosophical practice available for free to everyone; in the future we hope to prepare an option in English together with those who are interested in this project.

### **Alone with the self and the world: the experience of philosophical online marathons**

The test of the diary “Philosophical practice for every day” led us to the assumption that the practice of philosophy in the format of an online marathon may be interesting to the general public. In this form, various events are held: in a closed or open community on a social network, a key topic is announced, tasks are posted every day and the marathon participants must submit their answers to tasks in the form indicated in it (text, video, photo, audio materials).

We held two philosophical online marathons – in September 2019 and in February 2020 – different in goals, content, composition of participants and duration. Also at the end of the marathon was a session of philosophical meditation via Skype.

#### *Online Marathon “Autumn Watch”, September 2019*

The goal of the marathon “Autumn Watch” was a deep acquaintance with the self for further self-cultivation, as well as preparing for the long winter, ontological and spiritual. The duration of the marathon was 15 days, from September 5 to September 19, 2019. The marathon was held in a closed group on the social network VKontakte.ru. Each day, participants were



offered one task, which includes a quote from a philosopher or a fragment of a philosophical text, affecting existentials and philosophical categories. Participants had to leave their answer to the question in the commentary on the post with the task. Discussion of tasks was offered both in a groups chat and in the private chat between the participant and the facilitator.

At the beginning, the number of participants was 15 people, male – 2, female – 13. Age of participants is varied from 21 to 50 years. All participants have higher education, 2 – PhDs.

The format and tasks of the marathon were developed on the basis of work with philosophical diaries, in particular, with the text of Augustine “Confession”, Marcus Aurelius “Meditations”, Michel de Montaigne “Of Experience”, as well as the method of self-analysis by Erich Fromm. The importance of diary can hardly be overestimated, because the personality can appear as a kind of integrity, reflecting and experiencing in this writing practice. The systematic nature of philosophical reflection allows us to develop a constant habit for it, which makes a person more resistant to the chaos of modernity, giving him a supporting rod in the self.

Tasks of the marathon: Acquaintance; Dialectics; Grunt; Stroll; Personality House; Identity; Freedom; Care of the Self; Irony; Practice; Route; Fear; Physicality; Love. The tasks reflected the need to familiarize themselves with the theoretical principles of philosophical studies, as well as appeal to self-reflection carried out by the participant through reading and writing the text, reflection on the basis of what he read and wrote, as well as through communication with other participants in the marathon who have different points of view.

Participants were offered the methodology for working with philosophical quotes: “Read the quote (aloud or to yourself, but as aloud, as if reading to someone else), repeatedly. Try to remember and pronounce the quote, closing your eyes or taking a walk to the window, pouring tea for yourself, leaving the office, walking along

the corridor. What is the most important thing left of this quote in your head? Write down this word or phrase. In the next break after a cup of hot tea or coffee, think about what the phrase or word you read means to you, how they reflect in your mind. Record your conclusion whenever possible”. This method allowed participants to focus on philosophical ideas, taking into account everyday practice.

The format of the article does not allow submitting the full tasks. Therefore, we restrict ourselves to one example.

### Figure 1. An example of the task of the online marathon “Autumn Watch”

#### ОСЕННИЙ ДОЗОР

День 15 Задание 15 Любовь

*Любовь – не высшая сила, нисходящая на человека, и не возложенный на него долг: это его собственная сила, благодаря которой он рождается с миром и делает мир понастоящему своим. Подлинная любовь – это проявление плодотворности, и она предполагает заботу, уважение, ответственность и знание. Это не “аффект”, не увлеченность, а активное содействие росту и счастью любимого человека, коренящееся в собственной способности любить. Эрих Фромм «Искусство любить»*  
*Каждый из нас имел опыт любви, любил, был любимым. Каждый из нас может рассказать что такое любовь. И все эти рассказы будут непохожи друг на друга, но в них будет нечто общее – то, что определяет любовь для всех нас. Попробуем найти это.*

*Задание: поразмышлять над своим пониманием любви. Свой ответ можно основывать на словах философа. Можно сопроводить свои слова цитатой из стихотворения или песни (и даже прикрепить их к ответу). Можно подобрать фотографию или иллюстрацию, которые для вас символизируют любовь. Запишите результат размышления в нескольких предложениях. Ответ оставьте в комментарии к заданию.*

#### SELF. ПРАКТИКА ЗАБОТЫ О СЕБЕ



\*Translation of the task

Day 15, Task 15 Love

Mature love is union under the condition of preserving one's integrity, one's individuality. Love is an active power in man; a power which breaks through the walls which separate man from his fellow men, which unites him with others; love makes him overcome the sense of isolation and separateness, yet it permits him to be himself, to retain his integrity. In love the paradox occurs that two beings become one and yet remain two.

Erich Fromm "The Art of Loving"

Each of us had the experience of love, is loved. Each of us can tell what love is. All these stories will be different from each other, but they will have something in common – that which defines love for all of us. Let's try to find it.

Task: reflect on your understanding of love. Your answer can be based on the words of the philosopher. You can accompany your words with a quote from a poem or song (and even add them to the answer). You can choose a photo or illustration that symbolizes love for you. Record the result of reflection in several sentences. Leave the answer in the comment to the task.

It is worth noting that the answers of most participants were filled with both rational reasoning, based on the available baggage of knowledge, and existential experiences caused by both previous life experiences and current day events. We present examples of answers to task 10 about irony:

Participant T: *A fool, according to Diderot, is a person who considers possible only what it is. A man whose world is small and limited by his not too developed perception ... It is difficult to answer the question whether such people are familiar to me. Usually, I divide people into happy and unhappy, interesting (to me) and not. On smart and stupid (in my reading Diderot) I do not share. Perhaps, the fool is I.*

Participant O: *It seems to me that both gullibility and unbelief can be at least attributed to personality flaws. Because of what the world is seething now, what is from real news, what is from fake news. And it is treated only with healthy skepticism. On the other hand, I recall another quote from the famous film that the truth is somewhere nearby. You can spend your whole life and not find it.*

Participant R: *Yes, we are all fools, philosophers and skeptics. Only in different situations – with different fillings. Probably, from time to time it is necessary to have the courage to recognize a fool in yourself, and only then hang labels on the Other*

On the third day of the marathon, one of the participants left (male, 24 years old), motivating it by looking for active discussions on various interesting topics, rather than philosophical reflection. Several participants simply did not complete the assignment, explaining this by workload of daily activities. We were forced to ask them to leave the group, since from an ethical point of view, trying to provide a friendly and comfortable atmosphere for the active participants. Only 6 people (all female) out of 15 successfully reached the end of the marathon, completing the tasks of all 15 days. Those who left the marathon have called “illness”, “forgot”, “there was not enough time” among the reasons that prevented every day from 15 to 60 minutes to philosophically contemplate and reflect.

Here are a few feedbacks from participants who have reached the end of the marathon:

*Thanks to the facilitators, I asked some new questions for myself; and thanks to the participants, I looked at my answers from a new angle. I thought about it. I don't know yet what of what I have received, I'll apply for living in the warmth of this fall further, but these fifteen days have already passed noticeably warmer.*

*Thanks a lot. Think about everything. It's even boring without tasks*

Analysis of the participants' feedback allowed us to conclude that the hypothesis – the possibility of philosophizing for a person who does not have special education – was confirmed. We took into account the experience of the first marathon in order to prepare for the next one.

*Online Marathon “To Have or to Be”, February 2020*

Our main error of the first marathon was its considerable duration, 15 days of continuous philosophical work with the self for an unprepared person torn between everyday worries turned out to be too much. We have reduced the duration to 7 days. Perhaps, with a certain amount of research humor, it can be assumed that if God was able to create the world in seven days in a biblical legend, then a person created in the image and likeness of God will be able to answer complex questions about himself, his place in the world and determine the coordinates for the future. Our second mistake was a large group. In the second marathon we reduced the number of participants. Everyone was presented with a training task: Task No. 0 “Acquaintance”: “Think what is more important for you: to know deeper or to know more? Write your answer in a few short sentences.” Only those who confirmed their desire with a real answer were accepted into the marathon. As well as for the first time, the closed group of the most popular Russian social network VKontakte.ru was chosen. Participants were offered one task daily. The goal of the marathon “To Have or to Be” was a deep acquaintance for participants with their life-meaning foundations and a formed fulcrum in order to be happy today and in the future. The number of participants was 6, male – 2, female – 4. Age of participants varied from 20 to 40 years. All participants have higher education, two – PhDs.

The basis for daily tasks was chosen by the work of the philosopher and psychologist Erich Fromm “To have or to be”. Tasks of the marathon: Acquaintance; Friendship; Flower; Reading; Faith; Authority; Love; Memories.

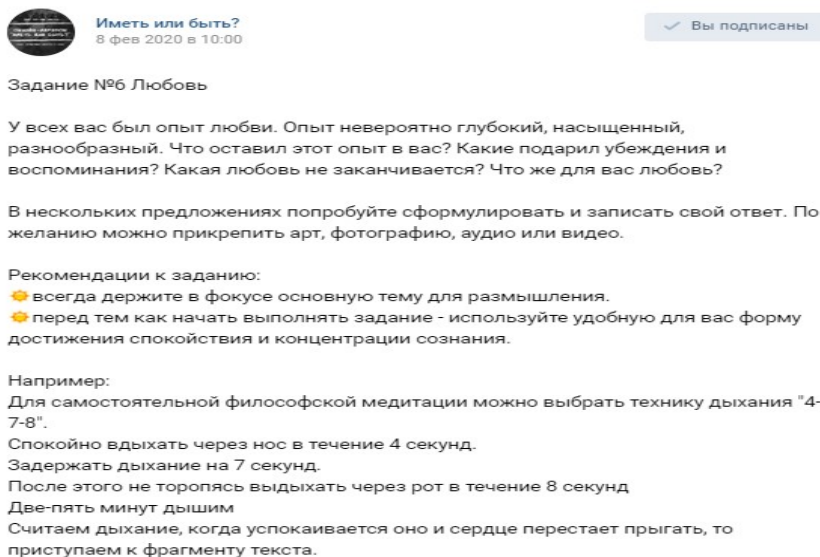
Participants of the marathon should, within 24 hours from the appearance of the task, present the result of their reflection in the form of a comment on the task. Comments were visible to all participants. It was possible to ask each other questions and present

their position in group chat in a gentle manner, but not give advice and not impose their opinions on the interlocutor. Not a discussion, but a live polylogue. It is worth noting that this time the facilitator of the marathon did not present his answers on an equal footing with all the participants. The facilitator summed up each assignment, inviting participants to familiarize themselves with fragments of Erich Fromm's text, which revealed the theme of the day's assignment.

Completing tasks participant needed to find the mode, which is more significant for him – the “have” mode or the “be” mode. It is worth noting that the participants of the marathon, who defined themselves in conversations with the facilitator as “unhappy”, “disappointed in people”, in their answers reflected precisely in the “have” mode, which was especially pronounced in the Acquaintance, Friendship, Authority, Love tasks.

For example, in the task “Love”, the participant M noted that “Love is a painful topic for me. I still endure the lack of parental love; as a result, I don't know how to give and present my feelings” In the task “Faith” the participant M added “I often pray, ask, thank the bright forces for my gift of life”. It is worth emphasizing that at the end of the marathon, the participant M independently noted her orientation to “have” and expressed the position that this is precisely what prevents her from living a full life, feeling whole and belonging to the world. For contrast, a fragment of the response of the participant R to the task “Love”: “This is not attitude to specific people, but attitude to the world in general”.

## Figure 2. An example of the task of the online marathon “To Have or to Be”



**Иметь или быть?**  
8 фев 2020 в 10:00

✓ Вы подписаны

**Задание №6 Любовь**

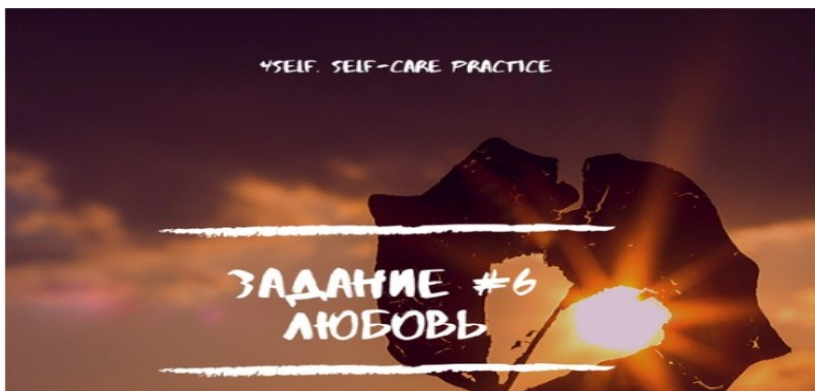
У всех вас был опыт любви. Опыт невероятно глубокий, насыщенный, разнообразный. Что оставил этот опыт в вас? Какие подарил убеждения и воспоминания? Какая любовь не заканчивается? Что же для вас любовь?

В нескольких предложениях попробуйте сформулировать и записать свой ответ. По желанию можно прикрепить арт, фотографию, аудио или видео.

**Рекомендации к заданию:**

- ☀ всегда держите в фокусе основную тему для размышления.
- ☀ перед тем как начать выполнять задание - используйте удобную для вас форму достижения спокойствия и концентрации сознания.

**Например:**  
Для самостоятельной философской медитации можно выбрать технику дыхания "4-7-8".  
Спокойно вдыхать через нос в течение 4 секунд.  
Задержать дыхание на 7 секунд.  
После этого не торопясь выдохнуть через рот в течение 8 секунд  
Две-пять минут дышим  
Считаем дыхание, когда успокаивается оно и сердце перестает прыгать, то приступаем к фрагменту текста.



*\*Translation of the task*  
To Have or to Be?  
Feb 8, 10 am

### Day 6, Task 6 Love

All of us have an experience of love. The experience is incredibly deep, rich, varied. What left this experience in you? What beliefs and memories gave? What love does not end? What is love for you?

In a few sentences, try to formulate and write down your answer. Optionally, you can attach art, photo, audio or video.

Recommendations for the task:

- Always keep focus on the main topic.
- Before you begin to complete the task, use the form that is convenient for you to achieve calm and concentration of consciousness.

For example, for independent philosophical meditation, you can choose the breathing technique “4-7-8”. Inhale gently through the nose for 4 seconds. Hold your breath for 7 seconds. After this, slowly exhale through the mouth for 8 seconds. Breathe for two to five minutes. During meditation your breath calms down and the heart stops jumping, then proceed the task.

Here are a few feedbacks from participants who have reached the end of the marathon:

It was interesting to me. I have not yet fully realized and the days passed so quickly. And every morning I woke up waiting for new assignments. It was a pleasure to spend time with smart, pretty, open-minded people. Learn the opinions of others on the topics of the day. The world is not so aggressive, people are not so dangerous, you can find a common language if you wish.

The marathon was very lively, a lot of interesting tasks. Topics have an immersion in the self, it is interesting to correlate your vision with the participants' vision and, as a result, with E. Fromm's vision. A new depth opens up which needs to be comprehended. What I would like to bring to the marathon is group work, joint work in creating something important and valuable for everyone.

We, as coordinators of the online marathon, made sure that participants overcame persistent psychologisms and moved to a more abstract level, where philosophical categories and principles are applied to the individual existence of a person. The online



marathon allowed participants not only to get acquainted with the practice of care of the self, but to engage in dialogue with each other, to get acquainted with ideas about the world of the Other, who was unknown before. Each participant revealed himself through communication with others using words, signs or things. In everyday life, such an external dialogue is the first stage in a person's acquaintance with himself as a multidimensional being. An internal dialogue in which a person, performing special exercises, determines his life-meaningful guidelines and values attended the online marathon.

Moreover, in the format of entries on a social network, it has become for participants a special means of comprehending the universal in individual experience, that which unites all people. This allowed both the writer and the people reading these notes to find similarities in the understanding of the phenomena of being, and made it possible to look at the existential problem from a different perspective. The value of the philosophical online marathon lies in the friendly and comfortable presence of other people who are also immersed in the process of self-awareness, which creates a special atmosphere of mutual respect and acceptance of the experience.

## **Conclusion**

Personal diary of philosophers allows their followers to touch the author's living thoughts, his perception of the world. The experiences recorded on paper, the lively sound of thought help not only understand the ideas of the philosopher, but see him as a living person with a unique life path; literally, apply his experience to his own, asking himself the same questions and formulating answers to them. The existential experience of the philosopher, presented in the form of diary, is not just a kind of philosophical

knowledge, but represents a real experience of oneself and one's connection with being.

Philosophical practice in the diary and online marathon formats is a movement towards the self with the help of reflection, in a polylogue with others and in a constant internal dialogue with the self. Our experience in conducting marathons and online meetings has helped us formulate an original method of philosophical practice – philosophical meditation.

Philosophical meditation is the combination of 2 key elements: immersion in the self through meditative exercises and going beyond the self with the help of a philosophical text. This method is an original version of philosophical practice in the modern world. World that, in our opinion, needs philosophy.

Currently, we are working on testing philosophical meditations, studying its strengths and weaknesses, finding the possibility of its implementation both in the educational process at the university and in everyday life. But this is a topic for a future study.

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