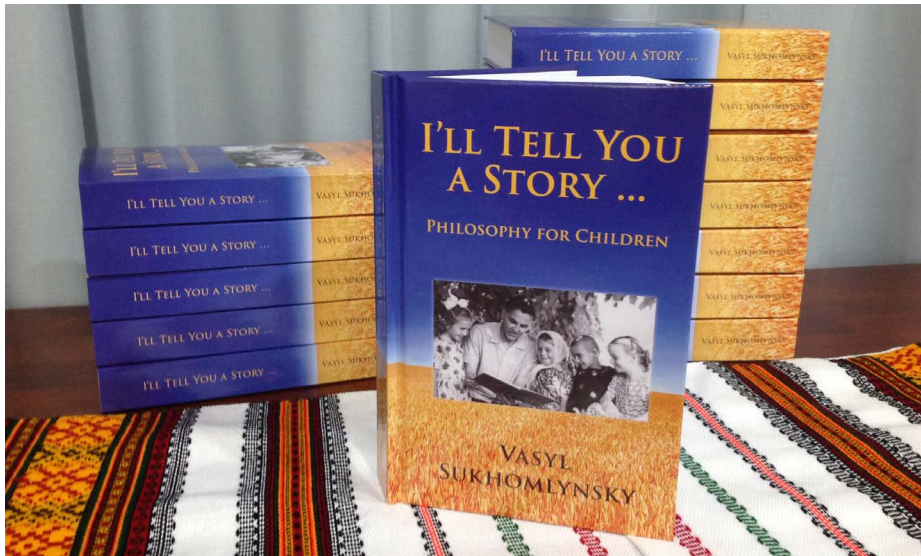


# Sukhomlynsky News



## Thank you

Dear reader,

*I hope you are keeping well.*

*I would like to thank all those who attended either of the online book launches for our new publication **I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children**.*

*I would also like to thank those who have purchased a copy or requested that their library purchase a copy. You never know who will pick up the book and be influenced by it.*

*I recently learnt that Matthew Lipman, the founder of Philosophy for Children, used five of Sukhomlynsky's stories in his resource **Thinking Trees and Laughing Cats: A Thinking Curriculum for Pre-school Education (2002)**. (A link to this resource is included in the article on page one of this newsletter.) Lipman became aware of Sukhomlynsky's work through correspondence with Sukhomlynsky's daughter, Professor Olha Sukhomlynska. At the time, only a handful of Sukhomlynsky's stories had been translated into English.*

*Now over 800 of Sukhomlynsky's stories have been translated into English, and it is hoped that they will find their way into homes and schools as a valuable resource for educating the next generation.*

Best wishes,

Alan Cockerill



## Book launch report

This month there were two online book launches for our new publication *I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children*.

The first launch, on 12 January, was primarily for readers in the same time zone as North America. Some of the attendees were from the Philosophy for Children movement. After the launch, I was interested to learn that, as early as 2002, Matthew Lipman, the founder of Philosophy for Children, used five of Sukhomlynsky's stories in his *Thinking Trees and Laughing Cats: A Thinking Curriculum for Pre-school Education*. This resource can be downloaded at:

[https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/iapc\\_preschool\\_curriculum/](https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/iapc_preschool_curriculum/)

The second launch, on 19 January, was primarily for readers in Europe, Africa, Asia and Australasia. This was attended by guests from Ukraine, including Olha Sukhomlynska and Lesia Sukhomlynska. Among the guests from Australia were Ron and Suwanti Farmer, who run a remarkable school on the Gold Coast that caters to students who struggle to cope with mainstream schooling. It is called the Toogoolawa School, and is based on the values of Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct and Non-violence: <https://www.toogoolawa.com.au/>. In my introductory presentation, I selected stories from Sukhomlynsky's collection that could be used to illustrate these values.

### **I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children**

**Over 800 stories**

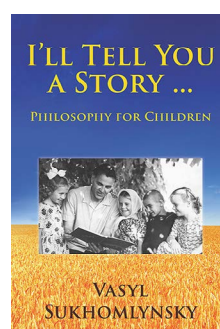
**608 pages**

**Paperback: AU\$44.99**

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## From I'll tell you a story ...

### A hare in a blizzard

It was a cold winter. In the morning, the sun shone, but later, heavy clouds covered the sky. A wind blew up, and it started snowing. The light snow turned into a blizzard. I went out to watch the falling snow and caught some snowflakes in my hand. As I studied them, I wondered who had crafted such beauty? Then I saw a little grey hare crossing the field and a large bird circling above it. The hare hurried to a haystack and hid in it. The bird circled above the haystack for a while and then flew away.

In the meantime, the blizzard worsened: the wind whistled and howled, and the snowdrifts grew higher and higher. I trudged over to the haystack. The hare was there, buried in the hay and covered with snow, so all I could see was his shining eyes. He looked at me as if begging, 'Please don't touch me, boy. I want so much to live. I want to run in a green meadow and to munch on sweet cabbage.'

I felt sorry for the hare and walked back home.

The blizzard howled the whole night long. In the morning, I woke up and looked out the window. The sun was shining once again. I made my way over to the haystack, struggling through the deep snowdrifts. The hare was no longer there. He had left his hiding place and hopped back to the forest. I could see his tracks in the snow. Run free, dear hare! Enjoy your forest! But if you ever need to escape from danger, come running to me.

### Why? Why?

Early one Sunday morning, Andriiko went with his mother to the cemetery. A year earlier they had buried his grandmother. They often went to her grave and watered the flowers there.

It was quiet at the cemetery. Andriiko and his mother sat on a bench by his grandmother's grave. The sun rose, and birds began to sing.

Not far from the grandmother's grave was a new grave. On it lay dried out wreaths, flowers that were now no more than rubbish.

'Mum, why is there rubbish on that grave?' asked Andriiko.

'People have forgotten about it,' said his mother.

'Why have they forgotten about it?'

'Because they have forgotten about the person who is buried there.'

'Why have they forgotten about that person?' persisted Andriiko. 'Why did they bring wreaths here and lay flowers?'

His mother shook her head and said nothing.

And the boy sat and thought.

### Father and son

A mother and father had a son. When the son was only three years old, the father left his son and his wife. He left them and went away, without telling them where he was going or why.

The mother and son remained alone. The little son often asked his mother, 'Why do all the other children have a father, but not me? Why did my father leave us?'

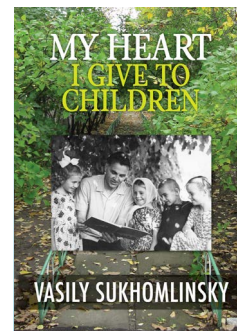
His mother answered, 'He did not love us, and so he left us.'

'Does he love himself?' asked the son.

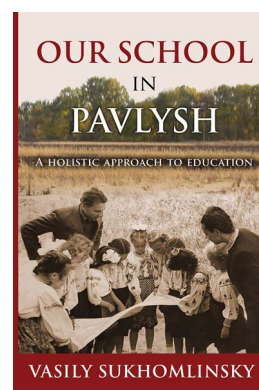
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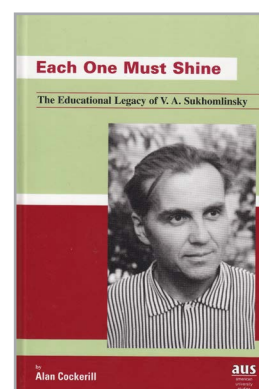
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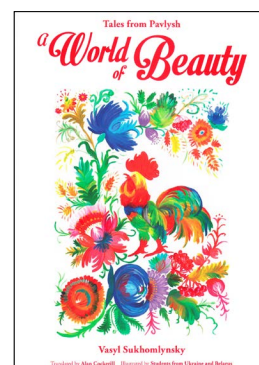
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'He loves himself even less than he loves us. He not only does not love himself; he does not respect himself,' said the mother.

'What does it mean to respect yourself?' asked the son.

'It means to leave something of yourself in your son. If a man cannot leave something of himself in his son, he does not want to be a man.'

'But doesn't Dad understand that?' asked the puzzled son.

'He will only understand it in his old age. He will understand it when he is old and weak.'

The years passed. The son became an adult. He married and had a son. His elderly mother died.

And then, one day, his elderly father came to see him.

'Take me in, son,' he asked. 'I am old and all alone. I am your father, and you should respect your father.'

The son looked at his father, and his heart ached with pity.

'All right, I will take you in,' answered the son. 'But I cannot respect you. The only thing I respect in you is your old age and your loneliness.'

### **The persistent ant**

A little black ant was hurrying home. She was carrying a poppy seed for her babies. Suddenly she spotted a big pumpkin seed right in front of her, and it was sweet and smelt so good! The ant put the tiny poppy seed aside and tried to pick up the pumpkin seed. She managed to heave it onto her back, but it slipped off and fell back to the ground. Again, the ant tried to lift the seed onto her back, but again it slipped off. Again and again, she tried to lift the seed onto her back, but again and again it fell to the ground.

Then the ant noticed that somebody was quietly laughing nearby. She turned around and saw a dragonfly. 'You have lifted that seed a thousand times,' said the dragonfly. 'Why don't you just give up? It's hopeless. You can't succeed. Why don't you just leave the seed where it is?'

'You can't succeed if you count your failures,' replied the ant, and she made one more attempt to pick up the seed. This time, the seed did not fall off her back, and she happily carried it home.

What a persistent ant that was!

### **The lion and the sparrow**

When the lion was young and brave, all the other animals were afraid of him. A fox would often come to his den. She would bow down to him and offer him a fried chicken.

Time passed, and the lion grew old. He lost his teeth and some of his fur. One day, blind and helpless as a kitten, the lion was lying near his den, when he noticed somebody approaching furtively. He recognized the fox. Memories of fried chicken made his mouth water.

'Good afternoon, dearest King of the Beasts,' the fox greeted him in a sweet voice. 'Everybody else has forgotten you, and I alone have thought of you. I have brought you a treat: some soft pickled cucumbers. They are delicious. I pickled them myself.'

The lion was so thin and hungry that he was glad even to see some pickles. He ate them up, but almost immediately felt so thirsty he could not bear it. He felt like running to the brook to drink some water, but he did not have enough strength to move. As he lay by his den, his tongue swollen with thirst, the lion bitterly recalled past times when all the other animals trembled in fear before him.

Meanwhile, a sparrow had been sitting in a tree nearby and had observed the lions' torment. The sparrow settled on a branch above the lion and shook it. Cold drops of dew fell onto the lion's swollen tongue.

'Thank you, sparrow,' said the lion.

The sparrow continued hopping from branch to branch in this way, shaking them, so that refreshing dew drops fell onto the lion's tongue. When the lion had slaked his thirst, he asked the sparrow, 'Tell me, please, sparrow, why did you take pity on me? All the other animals hate me.'

The sparrow did not answer. He just chirped joyfully, because the sun was shining, and his little chicks were waiting for him in his nest.

### **A gentle hand**

Andriiko's grandfather died. For a week the boy did not come to school. When he did come to school, it was with a heavy heart. He could not forget for a minute that his grandfather would never again tell him a story and would never again caress him.

Andriiko sat silent and sad. Andrii Yukhymovych came into the classroom, put his diary and a pile of exercise books on his desk, and began to check the homework. When the teacher reached Andriiko, the boy quietly said, 'I haven't done my homework today.'

Andrii Yukhymovych put his hand on the boy's head—a gentle, tender, kind hand.

'But I will do it all tomorrow, Andrii Yukhymovych,' said Andriiko.

'That's fine,' said the teacher softly.

## The rubbish heap

At the end of the school yard, by the fence, there was a rubbish heap. At first it was only a small rubbish heap, and then it grew into a bigger rubbish heap, and finally it grew into a giant rubbish heap.

Then it did not get any bigger, but it was already huge. People threw wastepaper there, and dry leaves they had raked up.

Everyone saw the rubbish heap, but no-one paid any attention to it. Everyone thought that you had to throw rubbish somewhere, and since there was rubbish, you probably needed a heap for it.

Then, one day in spring, a group of chattering children ran out of their classroom, dug a hole, planted a rose bush, and watered it. Every day they came to the rose bush to water it and were overjoyed to see that it developed buds and little green leaves. At last, one warm spring day, a big red flower opened up on the rose bush. It was so beautiful that all the students and teachers came to admire it. While they were admiring how beautiful the rose was, they suddenly noticed the rubbish heap. Everyone felt ashamed. How could they have a rubbish heap here?

Everyone thought, 'This is my fault. If I had paid attention to the rubbish heap earlier, it would have been removed long ago.'

They brought a big cart. The students and teachers shovelled all the rubbish into the cart and took it far away to a distant ravine.

## Grandpa's watermelons

During the summer, Fedko and Myshko spent a whole month with their grandfather Ostap at the watermelon plantation. That summer was full of joy and happiness: the boys ate many delicious watermelons and rockmelons and saw many picturesque sunrises!

Grandpa Ostap selected the best watermelon seeds and put them in a little bag made of fabric. He asked the boys to put aside the largest seeds for the next spring planting, but Fedko and Myshko were lazy and did not bother.

In winter, Grandpa Ostap became very ill. He summoned his grandsons and told them, 'Take this little bag of seeds and plant them on the watermelon plantation!'

Grandpa Ostap passed away. The boys planted his watermelon seeds in a separate section of the plantation. Huge watermelons grew there.

Every morning Fedko and Myshko would come to the plantation and stand there in awkward silence. As they gazed over the plantation and the enormous watermelons, they felt that in some way they had let Grandpa Ostap down.

## Why a mother ran from the field

A mother was preparing to work in the fields. Her two little children were staying at home. The mother told the older one, 'Katia, look after little Tania. Make sure she doesn't go out on the road—there are cars there. And make sure she doesn't go to the well.'

The mother worked in a field for half a day, but her soul was restless. She suddenly remembered that when she was leaving for work, she left a needle on the table. 'What will happen if Tania sees the needle?' she thought. 'She has a habit of putting everything she lays her hands on in her mouth.'

The mother left her work and ran home.

People were surprised to see the woman running and asked, 'Why are you running? Is the village on fire?'

'Even worse,' the woman answered.

She arrived home. Tania was playing on the floor with her dolls, and there was a little needle on the table.

No one else would have noticed that needle. The mother would not have noticed it either, if not for her mother's heart.

## A hurtful word

A son once lost his temper and, in his anger, he spoke some rude, hurtful words to his mother. His mother burst into tears. The son realised he was in the wrong and felt sorry for his mother. His conscience gave him no peace, and he could not sleep at night. He had insulted his mother.

The years passed. The schoolboy son became a grown adult. The time came for him to travel to a distant region. The son bowed down to his mother and said, 'Forgive me, mother, for the hurtful words I said.'

'I forgive you,' said his mother, and sighed.

'Please forget, mother, that I ever said those words.'

The mother became thoughtful and sad, and tears appeared in her eyes. She said to her son, 'I want to forget it, my son, but I cannot. The wound from a splinter heals, and no trace of it remains. The wound from a hurtful word also heals, but the mark it leaves is deep.'