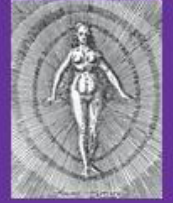


CHARLYNE GELT, PH.D.

Encouraging Self-Discovery and Empowerment



Seasons Change by Charlyne Gelt, Ph.D.

Sometimes our light goes out, but it is blown again into flame by an encounter with another human being. Each of us owes the deepest thanks to those who have rekindled the light.

—Albert Schweitzer



Seasons change which becomes a model for us! Most of us are unaware of how our old "templates"-the old myths and beliefs that we grew up with-may still be shaping our lives, giving us a firm base from which to break free and move on. The challenge is to "turn the page" and actively participate in rewriting your own story.

As an illustration of this, let me tell you that earlier this year, Concordia College officials in Moorhead, Minnesota were forced to confront something about their original intensive language camp — completely unintended by its founders — they never envisioned.

In 1961, that first camp, for the study of German language, named Lager Waldsee, opened near Bemidji, Minnesota. Nearly six decades later, the [Concordia Language Villages](#) include not just German, but Arabic, Finnish, Spanish, and Russian — [fifteen languages total](#).

There was another Waldsee. But this Waldsee was not a peaceful place of rest. It wasn't even a real place. Steve Hunegs, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas (JCRC), put it starkly. "Waldsee was," he says, "a horrible euphemism for Auschwitz.," the notorious Nazi death camp. Many of the doomed Jews of Hungary were told when they boarded the trains that they were going to the beautiful and serene Waldsee, with its forest and lake. Upon arrival, under the watchful eye of the SS, thousands of deported Jews were ordered to write upbeat postcards to their loved ones. The postcards were postmarked that they came from Waldsee. This diabolical deception was meant to give the impression that they were at a peaceful place, were okay, and that their relatives should look forward to coming to the resort at Waldsee. However, there was no Waldsee. Waldsee was Auschwitz. After writing the postcards, the Jews were sent to the gas chambers.

For decades, no one with Concordia realized the connection. Once alerted about it, language village officials were dumbfounded: "Frankly, we were just not aware," said Dan Hamilton, dean of the Waldsee village. "I'm a professor of international relations, so we were a bit embarrassed."

Concordia College officials deliberated about what to do next. The horrors attached to what was supposed to be such a bucolic name could not be denied. As *Fargo Forum* columnist Jim Shaw noted in a recent piece. Concordia officials moved forward by assembling a twenty-one person committee to study the matter. While this might seem like a typical higher-ed move to try and wait out a controversy, those who made up the commission took their duties quite seriously: "We went into it with heavy hearts." [Concordia Language Villages executive director Christine] Schulze said. "As educators we were obligated to act on it."

In the end, the consensus was to keep the name, but turn it into a learning situation and added context to help better explain what the name means, both good and bad. A display was put up of the Waldsee postcards, other postcards

won't be sold anymore, a space of remembrance for Holocaust victims will be created, and Holocaust survivors will speak at the village.

Although we can't change the past, we can learn from it, break old patterns, and create change and rewrite our own story!

Schedule an appointment to work on your own struggles in individual, couples, or group therapy. Please call:
Charlyne Gelt, Ph.D.; www.drgelt.com; 818.501.4123

Thank you for your support!

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