

Philosophy in Nature



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[Intro music]

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[Theme music]

Weber: Hey everybody. Just as you heard, this is 88.1 FM, WRFL Lexington, and I am Dr. Eric Thomas Weber here with you in the studio. I'm going to play for you a pre-recorded interview that we did, my co-host and I, Dr. Anthony Cashio, on *Philosophy Bakes Bread*, our show that will run until 1PM today. We air every Tuesday from 12 until somewhere in the avenue of 1PM, maybe a little after sometimes. I hope that you are enjoying the show, and that you continue to join us each week. If you have missed any, you can go listen to past episodes and catch up at www.philosophybakesbread.com. We would love any feedback you care to send us. We also mention in today's episode, T-shirts. I wanted you to know that, in fact, while on this show we talk about T-shirts, since we recorded that episode and interview that we did, we now have Philosophy Bakes Bread T-shirts. Go have a look on our website. If you like them, let us know. We may do some sort of competition and giveaway at some point soon. We have an idea that we are exploring. Let us know what you think. Reach out to us. Without further ado, here is episode #28 of *Philosophy Bakes Bread*, on Philosophy in Nature.

[Theme music]

Weber: Hello and welcome to *Philosophy Bakes Bread*: food for thought about life and leadership, a production of the Society of Philosophers in America, AKA SOPHIA. I'm Dr. Eric Thomas Weber.

Cashio: And I'm Dr. Anthony Cashio. A famous phrase says that philosophy bakes no bread, that it's not practical. We in SOPHIA and on this show aim to correct that misperception.

Weber: Philosophy Bakes Bread airs on WRFL Lexington 88.1 FM, and is distributed as a podcast next. Listeners can find us online at philosophybakesbread.com We hope you'll reach out to us on Twitter @PhilosophyBB, on Facebook at Philosophy Bakes Bread, or by email at philosophybakesbread@gmail.com

Cashio: Last but not least, you can call us and leave a short recorded message with a question, or a comment, or, as always, bountiful praise that we may be able to play on the show. You can reach us at 859-257-1849. That's 859-257-1849. On today's show, we are very fortunate to be joined by Dr. Andrea Christelle, who is the co-founder of the Sedona Philosophical Experience. Or is it Philosophy Experience?

Christelle: It's philosophy experience. We just called it SPEX, because it's sexier to say SPEX.

Christelle: We are good with that.

Cashio: Prior to founding Sedona, she was the founding director of the Philosophy and Public Interest Program at Northern Arizona University. That program was recognized in 2013 with an American Philosophical Association and Philosophy Documentation Center Prize for Excellence and Innovation in Philosophy Programs. Can we fit all that on one plaque?

Weber: I think they did, didn't they?

Christelle: I think they did.

Cashio: It's very impressive, and congratulations. That's awesome.

Christelle: Thanks Anthony.

Weber: In Flagstaff and Sedona Arizona, Dr. Christelle built a remarkable philosophical community of open public conversations. The local superintendent of schools in the area said, in nominating the program for the APA's award, that the Philosophy and Public Interest Program had "become a foundation to our vibrant community, and it reOengaging local citizens in authentic and meaningful discourse around democracy, contemporary issues, polemics and philosophy." Dr. Christelle has written for the newspaper, and is a creative and entrepreneurial scholar and thinker. She and a number of philosophers in Arizona created what we just heard about, the Sedona Philosophy Experience, which takes people on outdoor excursions in the beautiful countryside of Arizona. There, they hold deep and rich philosophical conversations and discussions, while surrounded by natural beauty. Andrea, we call this first segment "Know Thyself." So, we want to know whether first of all, if you know thyself. We want to know how you came to philosophy, what it means to you and so on. But before we get there, I understand and we understand, Anthony and I, that you actually did something very interesting, which is to change your name. That until recently, you were Dr. Andrea Christelle- As you tell us about yourself, tell us about this big change that you have decided to make.

Christelle: Sure. Thanks, Eric. I did recently change my name, or you can think of it as truncating my name, because it's just my first name and my given middle name now. I think I was inspired to do that because in Arizona we live around native cultures, and in many native cultures, people, at a certain age, name themselves. I think that is a form of self-authorship, of recognition that we have a great deal of responsibility in creating who we want to become. I was

talking to a friend about this, and talking about considering changing my name, and he said, “Doing that really gives you something to live into. It’s a self-conscious act of deciding who you want to become.” That really resonated with me. I had been thinking about it for a long time. I decided to do it.

Weber: It’s fascinating that you change your name. This is an act of self-creation. Perhaps tell us a little bit about your former self and your new self.

Christelle: I think my former self, I was given a name, and I was living into expectations that had been set for me. I think that even philosophically, perhaps, I have been trying to push against the expectations that have been set for me. I started this when I founded the Philosophy and Public Interest Program and NAU, by taking philosophy out of the classroom and into the community, into various places like movie theaters, private homes, museums, libraries. Taking philosophical dialogues to new sites. I think that was a sort of creation. When I started SPEX, Sedona Philosophy Experience, that was the next logical extension to me, was taking philosophy out into the natural world. That step, creating my own business and taking philosophy outdoors in nature, I felt like I also wanted to be a new person, and a very self-conscious person, who is doing that. I changed my name to Andrea Christelle.

Cashio: Interesting. I am wondering what I would change my name to. What would it be? Andrea, why don’t you tell us a little about yourself and how you became interested in philosophy, and how you became engaged in this endeavor.

Christelle: I have always been equally interested in philosophy and community. I had a philosophy minor when I was in college. I always wanted to study philosophy more. One of my first jobs, when I was out of college was working with the AmeriCorps program, setting up campus service centers for Institution of Higher Learning in Mississippi, the institution of Higher Learning is the governing body for public universities in Mississippi. Since it was an educational institution and I had a bachelor’s degree and I got a promotion, and I was supervising people with master’s degrees, they said, “You really need to move on.” I decided that I wanted to study philosophy. I had always studied philosophy more. I made that transition from doing community outreach work to going back to academia. Originally, I was just going to get a master’s degree, but I was encouraged. I went to Tulane University, and completed my Ph.D. there. But then back in the academic community, I missed community. I feel like those are the two things that I have always been drawn to: philosophy and working with communities. I have experimented with ways to bring those two things together.

Weber: Little plug for SOPHIA. SOPHIA, the Society of Philosophers in America, of which this radio program and podcast is a production, is an organization whose mission is to build communities of philosophical conversation, which is of course one of the reasons we are thrilled to have Dr. Christelle, formerly Dr. Houchard, on the show.

Christelle: Just a little plug for Dr. Eric Thomas Weber too, because the work that I have done in community and in the natural world is not mainstream philosophy. Through SOPHIA and other leadership positions that Eric has had in the public philosophy community, he has really been a source of encouragement and inspiration for me to continue this work. I appreciate that. Organizations like SOPHIA are very important for those of us that are trying to push the boundaries of what philosophy can be, and where philosophy can be done.

Weber: I appreciate that. There is a lot of really good people in this organization, Anthony is one of them, who make it what it is. I would be happy to take all of the credit. Of course, I do need to share quite a bit.

Cashio: We are going to hurt ourselves if we keep patting ourselves on the back.

Weber: I'm getting a little bruise back there. (Laughter).

Cashio: What was it about philosophy when you were minoring in it, and you were studying it? What was it about philosophy that kept drawing you back to it?

Christelle: I think it's really the dialogical nature of philosophy.

Weber: Woah, woah, dialogic? What is that? I think our listeners are thinking 'What are you talking about?'

Christelle: I'm talking about talking. That's what I'm talking about.

Weber: So you are talking about dialogue. Talking. Start again.

Christelle: In particular, David Baum has a conception of dialogue that I think is really powerful. He talks about 'dia', going through something, through the words, 'logos', together, and so when we engage in conversations with one another, we learn. We can have the opportunity to understand terms in new and interesting ways. I guess I will say that philosophy could be practiced almost exclusively these days, in reading and writing philosophy, although dialogue is part of the tradition. It gives us an opportunity to understand other people's conceptions of understanding the world, and to alter our own conceptions based on what we learn from others. They learn from us. We can build a shared understanding as we move through sharing our ideas about ourselves, other people and the world.

Cashio: So we share our ideas, we share ourselves, and we share our conceptions of the world through conversations with others. In doing that, we are doing philosophy. I like that.

Weber: Alright, but let's back up a little bit. When you were studying philosophy, and getting further into it, something in it beyond just the big-picture idea of enjoying dialogue, something in it had to really hook you and thought, "Man, I have got to do more of this." What was it?

Christelle: I think we all go through phases when you feel like you are really interested in a particular topic. Like a lot of people, I think that Mill's *On Liberty* was really compelling to me when I thought about these ideas about why we should listen to every opinion, no matter how outrageous it seems at first, although I really think that right now, we are at a point where we need to re-think Mill's justifications for free speech, if you consider politically what is happening right now. I think Mill could not have imagined the media machines that we have. I think that using free speech as a justification, we often flood the airwaves with just one message. I don't think that is ever what was intended in a defense of free speech. I think what was intended in the defense of free speech was a free hearing of all ideas, but not allowing one idea to receive so much more attention to the exclusion of others just because that idea is the most well-founded.

Weber: For anybody who didn't catch that, Dr. Christelle is referring to John Stuart Mill's famous and important book *On Liberty*. It's so compelling, partly because this guy could write so beautifully clearly.

Cashio: It's a good read.

Weber: Great writer.

Christelle: I think that through that, I became very interested in political philosophy, but unfortunately we are often asked to join a political camp where you accept all of the ideology when our ideas can really be more complicated. You can be a sort of libertarian in terms of personal liberty, but still for example, hold, the view that public lands are very important. Often today, people would say that if you are a libertarian, maybe you wouldn't support public lands. I think it is both are very important for us to have public lands, but I consider myself a libertarian in terms of personal liberties.

Weber: Very interesting. We like to ask people in this first segment, we know a little bit more about you. We want to know now: What do you take philosophy to be?

Christelle: I think I said this earlier, but I really take philosophy to be trying to understand ourselves, each other, and the world and trying to make good decisions with respect to all those things.

Cashio: Very good. The dialogue plays an important part in understanding ourselves too, I find.

Christelle: Yes, and we think of engaging in dialogue with other people, but I think we can also engage with dialogue with ourselves, if we do this self-consciously. You can ask yourself questions in a way that you might ask them of another person. I don't think it is desirable to do it exclusively with ourselves, but sometimes with ourselves.

Weber: Another big question that we like to ask in the first segment is whether there is a particular first text that you think is great for someone who hasn't studied any philosophy to go to to read and try out as an introduction or as a first dabbling with philosophy. Is there a great text that you really love? That you think is a terrific place for people to begin?

Christelle: I think *The Apology* is a great place for people to begin.

Weber: Plato's *Apology*.

Cashio: That is becoming a clear winner. We ask this question to everyone, and *Apology* is almost all of the time...*Apology* or *the Republic* are the two top.

Weber: some people just say Plato's dialogues.

Christelle: I will say, *The Apology*, I actually have recommended that to two people who don't have philosophical backgrounds, and who really enjoyed it and you really developed a respect for the kind of work that Socrates was doing. One was the dean of the business school at NAU, and another was a guy who never went to college who owns a hotel in Sedona, who developed an interest in philosophy through our public programs. Both of these people really enjoyed an introduction to philosophy through Plato's *Apology*.

Cashio: That really speaks to the staying power of that wonderful little piece of work of philosophy.

Weber: That's right. I hope you have been enjoying this first segment of *Philosophy Bakes Bread*. This is Dr. Eric Thomas Weber, with my co-host Dr. Anthony Cashio. We have been talking with Dr. Andrea Christelle. We'll be right back in just a moment.

Cashio: Welcome back to *Philosophy Bakes Bread*. This is Dr. Anthony Cashio and Dr. Eric Weber talking with Dr. Andrea Christelle, the former founding director of Philosophy in the Public Interest Program and Northern Arizona University and the current co-founder and co-owner of the Sedona Philosophy Experience. In this segment, we are going to talk a little bit about both of those, if you don't mind. I think they are both awesome and interesting things that you are doing, to do public philosophy.

Weber: That's right. Andrea, we know, and have mentioned already, that you led and founded an award-winning experimental and exciting philosophy program that was a publicly engaged initiative. I would love to invite you to talk about how you came to create that program. What inspired it? What was the opportunity that led to that? What did you have in mind? What were you doing? How did this happen?

Christelle: It happened by accident. I will say that I was inspired, we have a great film festival in Sedona. The Sedona International Film Festival. They were showing a movie, *Please Give*, and there were so many moral and political issues in that movie. I just knew there was so much to discuss. People got up and were filing out of the theater, and I thought that independent film is a great source of content to engage public philosophy. I talked to the director of the festival and asked him if he would be interested in having conversations after the films. He said absolutely. So it just started organically like that. I was also teaching environmental ethics, and I created an outreach program to high schools. After I had done those two things, my dean at the time, Michael Vincent approached me and said, "I really like the work that you are doing. I think that you could have a program." So it was really with the support and the time that was given to me by my dean and my provost because they saw the value of this, that I was able to create it. It is awesome and it's so important because people from other institutions often ask how I did this, and they say they want to do something similar. I think it is such a powerful thing, such a positive community outreach that it makes sense for universities to have this kind of programming. You have to give people the time to do it. It is very time-consuming. I was very lucky to have the support of the administration at the time, and it wouldn't have been possible without them.

Cashio: Here's to support of the administration. When you get it, it's great. Can you tell us more about the program? What kind of things did you do?

Christelle: Once I had the license with Philosophy in the Public Interest to create other programs, one of the first things we created was called the Hot Topics Café, where we discussed contentious political issues in a civil, rational way. We took issues like climate change or women's reproductive freedom, things that can be difficult or people tend to have heated discussions on, and talked about the importance of calmly, rationally, respectfully and even compassionately listening to other person's point of view, trying to understand the arguments and reasons behind that point of view. Philosophers would facilitate, and they would point out if there were ever formal fallacies or informal fallacies. Philosophers would, in the nicest possible way, just say, "Maybe that seems like it would be a good reason, but it's not. It's actually an appeal to emotion. Let's try to see what you're getting at there." That was the program.

Cashio: Fallacy refs going around, blowing the whistle.

Weber: Yellow card.

Christelle: Again, in the nicest possible way, but yes. Paying attention to the quality of the argument. Paying attention to whether or not somebody is conflating the moral reason with the legal reason. We did have students work as fact-checkers. When we were talking about these issues, if someone came up with some crazy empirical claim, we would just look that up and settle the matter.

Cashio: That is a great idea.

Weber: There is this line from the great philosopher Daniel Dennett, and he talks about some people who want to play tennis without a net. But you have to get your ball over the net. That's a really important part of tennis. You're not playing tennis if you don't play with a net. So your fact-checkers and your logic-checkers were making people follow the rules of tennis.

Cashio: Someone's gotta call foul balls.

Christelle: Some of our programs...so that was a political program. We also did salons in private homes. There, we would talk about issues of general human interest, like happiness, friendship, death, the nature of sensory experience, geological time, any number of topics. We really tried to show how versatile philosophy is, and how it can add to any experience. Like, if you're seeing an independent film, having a philosophical discussion makes that richer. If you're trying to understand a current political issue, philosophy is a resource that can help you understand that. If you're just thinking about your life, then philosophy can be a resource to help you understand that. We really just had a wide range of programs that helped to highlight the diversity and the value of philosophy.

Weber: Alright, so you are talking about programs that showed the value and diversity of philosophy, but let me be the skeptic for a minute, and say, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, how exactly does philosophy work for the public interest, Dr. Christelle?"

Christelle: So, philosophy is really in the public interest, especially in a democratic republic like the one that we have. Our government depends on citizens being able to vote and to act in their own self-interest. They have to be educated and informed and being able to evaluate arguments and positions in order to do that well. In college, people are trained, but after that, what opportunities do we have to critically reflect on different positions to engage with other people that might not agree with us, and to try to learn about different viewpoints? The service the public interest because it gives ordinary people in the community an opportunity to build deliberative skill.

Cashio: That's good. I have a question, kind of along the same lines. I was thinking about these Hot topic Cafés, and the thing that really jumped out to me was that you said you kept it calm and reasonable. How did you go about, it probably wasn't enforcing, but creating a culture where that was celebrated? Maybe it has some advice for our listeners for in their own lives, because these kind of topic are hard.

Christelle: I did that with help. I worked with Heidi Weiman, who was the chair of the Psychology department, and we deliberately introduced compassion as a concept into the hot topics café. We asked people if they could, for the next 90 minutes, really try to listen and understand the other person's point of view. I will say that the program was non-consensus based. It wasn't like a debate where we were trying to say who could present the strongest position. We were not, by any means, trying to get people to agree on a position or see where there was common ground. We were just trying to understand competing positions and asked

people to try to understand where the other person was coming from. Because we weren't looking for the strongest position, and we weren't looking for agreement, that opened people up to the opportunity of really just trying to listen and understand what the arguments for the various positions were.

Cashio: Is there anything someone could do, say me. If I'm talking to someone I know about climate change. It gets heated. Is there anything I can do in the conversation to calm things down and make it more reasonable, for both sides, myself included?

Christelle: When it comes to issues like anthropogenic climate change, which is really not debatable by the scientific community, 97%... this isn't really an issue that is up for debate as far as I am concerned. There are some things that we can reasonably disagree about, but anthropogenic climate change is not one of those things.

Cashio: For our listeners, anthropogenic climate change is man-made, or man-caused climate change.

Christelle: Right. Carbon outputs that are caused by human activity. Let me be clear that there are forums where we need to be civil, but I do think that at times, political protest is a legitimate form of action. It just can't be our only form of action. There are times when it is appropriate for us to calmly and rationally assess competing arguments, but once the case is clear, and the case is clear for anthropogenic climate change, then we can stand behind that position and advocate for it. At some point, political violence may be appropriate. I used to joke around because I used to be known as the Civil Discourse person, "Andrea always thinks we should always be calm..." but that isn't true. I used to joke about the next Philosophy in the Public Interest Program will be grounded in the Aristotelian virtue of indignation. I think it's appropriate to have different responses in different contexts. I think that it is conspicuous in its absence, that we have civil, rational exchanges about contentious political issues. That is a platform that was needed. I do think there are occasions where political protest is absolutely appropriate.

Cashio: Is that what you mean by political violence? Just to be clear?

Weber: Just for the background, Anthony and I have had a colleague who has recently received death threats for saying something similar to what you said. But I very much doubt that you will receive death threats. He happens to be American-American. When he says something like that, people went berserk.

Cashio: Eric was reading my mind here. Let's make sure we are very clear.

Weber: I'm going to invite you to clarify that what you might mean is violence in self-defense? Am I correct?

Christelle: I think I know the case that you are talking about. He is at the University of Texas? Texas A & M. The response that he received was unjust and unfair. I'm not justifying all instances of political violence. But I would say this is some civil rights movement, although Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. advocated peaceful protest, there were also people involved in that clear case of injustice that advocated sometimes for political violence. I think those could have been appropriate in cases where people are clearly treated unjustly.

Weber: So wait a minute. This is actually a big deal, and an area of disagreement in philosophy. There is a lot of theory about civil disobedience, and so I heard you tell me that it is just thought to be violent politically, but I didn't hear you agree that it is limited to self-defense. What are

conditions that make it just? What do you think are those? I'm going to let you off the hook a little bit and say that there are some times when we go and throw tea off of boats and ships, and we commit some violence in our history to pursue liberty, we say. Some people in the Pacific Northwest go with guns into an FBI building and nobody gets shot or death threats for doing so. I just wanted you to expand a little more precisely on what you think are conditions that justify political violence. What do you mean by that, political violence?

Christelle: Sure. I'll give a couple different examples. WE can look at Ferguson, Missouri, and the Michael Brown case, and following that, there was some violence where people were protesting in the street, where storefronts were destroyed, where property was destroyed, where people were rising up, because we clearly have an issue in this country with the way police are treating young African American men. We have seen political violence in response to that. In years prior, the Rodney King incident inspired similar political violence. I think in some of those cases, that it can be justified. I'll give another example that would just give property. Some environmentalists oppose ski resorts, or will attack these buildings. Depending on your position, that sometimes that can be justified when you think what is being done clearly is damaging or harmful to the environment or a certain race or class of people.

Weber: So not just in self-defense. I heard destruction of property, but what about destruction of other people?

Christelle: It's very hard to talk in general terms about this. I certainly don't think it's anything that should be taken lightly, and I don't mean to suggest that it should be taken lightly, or be done casually. I am suggesting that in some cases, I think that it can be appropriate.

Weber: We are out of time for this segment, but we are going to come back with some more questions for Dr. Andrea Christelle. We are not on this program, inciting violence at the moment, as far as I can tell. But we will have more questions for you. Thanks, everybody for listening. This is Dr. Eric Thomas Weber, and my co-host is Anthony Cashio, Dr. Cashio. We have been talking with Dr. Andrea Christelle on *Philosophy Bakes Bread*.

Weber: Hey everyone. You are listening to WRFL Lexington, 88.1 FM. This is Dr. Eric Weber here live in the studio, and I just wanted to make one remark about what we just heard from Dr. Christelle, and that is that we so easily forget that some of these beautiful founding documents we have in American history are declarations about when we think violence might be justified. I say this because essentially what we mentioned earlier was a situation in which a past guest on *Philosophy Bakes Bread*, Dr. Tommy Curry, received death threats and just awful experiences because of some of the statements he made in an interview many years ago, in which he was talking about history and when some people are going to have to die. People being attacked, having their liberties threatened and so forth, they are black. We so easily forget that when we refer to things like documents that say, "When in the course of human events...we need to justify our cause..." we need to explain, either in the case of freedom from the United Kingdom, or when states seceded, people talked about what is enough justification for action? By action they don't just mean we are going to peacefully march outside, they mean we will fight. The difference is that when that colleague and friend of mine, Tommy Curry, who was on a past episode of *Philosophy Bakes Bread*, when he referred to that about African American history, he got death threats and an incredible set of responses from people. It was deeply disturbing. While we talk about this on today's episode, I have little expectation that anyone will send Dr.

Christelle any kind of death threats about this. This demonstrates part of Dr. Curry's point. For what it is worth, Dr. Curry is going to return to *Philosophy Bakes Bread* on an episode that will be upcoming. He is going to join us soon to record that further interview about his experiences, and we will air that in the weeks to come. But for now, I just wanted to say a few words about what we just talked about with Dr. Christelle to help a little bit explain some of the background, as well as to humanize this for everybody to see. When we talk about violence as if nobody can ever commit violence, our sacred founding documents talk about when Americans, or American colonists were fed up, and that was enough. "Keep this up, and we'll be violent." "Don't tread on me," which, so many license plates are everywhere saying, this was about how we didn't want to be tread on by the British any longer, and we will fight. That is part of what Dr. Christelle was getting at, although we didn't spend a lot of time on it, because we had to move on to a new segment, and that segment is about to come now, without further ado. Here is segment three of today's episode of *Philosophy Bakes Bread*.

Cashio: Welcome back everyone, to *Philosophy Bakes Bread*. This is Dr. Anthony Cashio and Dr. Eric Weber and it is our privilege today to be talking with Dr. Andrea Christelle, who is the co-founder of Sedona Philosophy Experience, or SPEX. Let's get SPEX-y with it. For those who don't know, tell us about this. I know a lot about it, and it is a super exciting thing. Our listeners don't know anything about it. Catch us up to speed, Andrea. Tell us about the Sedona philosophy experience.

Christelle: Before, I was talking about philosophy in the public interest, which takes philosophy out of the class room and into the community. To me, this was the next logical extension, was taking philosophy out into the natural world. There is the peripatetic tradition to draw on there. We hear about Aristotle walking with his students, or Thoreau's walking. There are classic examples in philosophy where we draw on the way that walking outside and being in nature encourages us to think about things differently. I think it does. We wanted to create opportunities for people to experience the beautiful landscape on Sedona and to explore philosophical issues.

Weber: Andrea, one of the things that we have heard about in talking in preparation with you about SPEX, is that you have this idea of pushing philosophy out beyond the academy and to open it up to people who don't often get opportunities to do it. Who does philosophy now, in your estimation? And who are you pushing it out to? Who are the kinds of people who want to engage in this and aren't getting access in your eyes? What kinds of opportunities are you opening for them?

Christelle: If you are familiar with Sedona, it has a reputation of being a place where people go when they are looking for meaning or significance in their lives. There are many spiritual approaches, and what I would even call alternative approaches, to looking for meaning or to having spiritual experiences. There often comes a point where people are looking for meaning and something to do, but we wanted to offer an alternative that is a more intellectual, more rational, that drew on both eastern and western traditions, to enable people to think about: what is the meaning in their lives? What relationships are working for them or aren't? How can you reflect on those relationships? What relationships do they have with nature? All of these questions you can really think about rationally, and I think that Sedona is a perfect place to do that. People are often coming to Sedona now, looking for meaning, and they might have something like an aura photo taken.

Cashio: That is a thing?

Christelle: That is a thing in Sedona. We have many alternative approaches to meaning, many healers, many spiritualists, many guides. People come there looking for something, and so we thought we might offer a more intellectual approach to seeking meaning in their life.

Cashio: Wow. Alright, I'm just trying to imagine what an aura photograph looks like. I would definitely get my aura photographed, just because I really want to know what it looks like. What color would it be? Is it in color? Have you had it done?

Christelle: We can set that up. No I have not.

Cashio: You're going out to the beautiful Sedona. I have never been there, but I look at pictures of it and I drool. It's gorgeous. What does it mean to...you are going out of the classroom, out of even the cafes, and you are getting out into nature, out into the environment and ecology. What does it mean to re-think where philosophy is done? Are there spaces that are more philosophical than others?

Christelle: I think Sedona is so beautiful, just being outdoors in the trails by the creek, opens you up to seeing things in a different way. One interesting question, if we think about beauty and the sublime, why are we attracted to beauty in nature? That's something I have been thinking a lot about. Is it because we like what we see, because it is pleasing to the eye? That's a part of it, but I think there is another part of it that inspires our imagination, our sense of wonder, our sense of possibility. We see things we thought we could never imagine, and we can imagine things could be otherwise. The potential for creativity, new approaches, I think beautiful landscapes are important to us, not only because of how they appear aesthetically, but because of the way they inspire our thinking. Typically, we are very compartmentalized in our lives. We tend to do our thinking indoors, at our desks, on computers, or using paper. Even the architecture, the typical geometric architecture that we are in when we do this sort of work constrains our way of thinking and operating about things. There is something about being outside, about all of the variation and the possibility and the beauty in nature. If we are thinking through an issue or a problem, very often we come up with more creative or different solutions when we are in a natural setting.

Weber: Andrea, you have got a couple of different sorts of programs that you put on. I think some are more on the individual level, and other are more of a retreat. Can you talk about the different sorts of programs that you put on?

Christelle: Sure. We work with visitors that come to Sedona, just tourists that are interested in having philosophical conversations on the trails, but we also do corporate retreats. Those are more structured. We work with business faculty from NAU and people from other leadership positions. We are really interested in making philosophy available to people in a way that enriches their personal lives, but also we know that it can be a tool for people in business to think more carefully about background assumptions that they might have, how to identify and challenge those assumptions, how to perspective shift and take on alternative points of view and imagine counter-arguments. There are some really practical applications for philosophy too. In those corporate retreats not only are you engaging in those academic exercises, you are also in Sedona, and it's beautiful and it's rejuvenating. You are going outside, you are spending some time away.

Weber: Let me follow up on that. You have these two different kinds of programs. What are some of the main themes and the questions raised in these get-togethers?

Christelle: On the personal side, for visitors, one of the things we really try to think about is: What does it mean to have a relationship with the natural world? We often can see that nature is something that we go out into, something that is there for us, but we don't often think about how we are connected to it. We are a part of it. One of the things that we will use as a tool is to think about other relationships that we more typically think of as relationships. Your relationship with a partner, or a child or a friend or a co-worker. What are all of the different kinds of relationships we have? Then we can ask, these are different human relationships, and you might think about what makes them good or bad, and what limits them. If we think about parent/child relationship, or a father/son relationship, we know that can either be a great relationship, or a terrible relationship. There are plenty of examples of both. But it is still constrained in some way, even if it is a great parent/child relationship, or a not good one, there is something about that type of relationship that implies something. Once we start to understand different types of relationships, we can start to think about what type of relationship is possible with the natural world, and start to explore that, and what would make a relationship with the natural world better or worse. In many instances, probably some of the same things that make for good human relationships would create a good relationship with the natural world. Non-domination, respect, care, understanding, certain things like that. But we don't often think of ourselves as being in relationship to nature, but of course we are. We could also think about relationships we have with other non-human things. Do you have a relationship with your phone, for example? (Laughter.) Most people do.

Cashio: You laugh, I don't think it's that ridiculous of a question to ask.

Weber: I'm laughing thinking that I have an unhealthy relationship with my phone.

Cashio: Probably. Your phone dominates you.

Christelle: In corporate retreats, we focus on a model of trust space leadership, where we talk about the importance of listening, understanding and persuading. It is informed by philosophical and business thinking, something that we have done cooperatively between philosophy faculty and the business faculty.

Weber: So you go out into nature often, and you engage in these conversations. What are you doing? Are people walking? Are you on a whitewater raft? What are you doing?

Christelle: Most commonly, we are walking in Sedona, and we have a great relationship with Red Rock State Park, and beautiful access to Oak Creek. But we do have a program called the Grand Questions, and it's in the Grand Canyon, where we ask the great questions of life while we are on the Colorado River.

Cashio: That sounds amazing.

Christelle: We are doing that for the first time in a couple of weeks. June 2nd – June 10th. We are really looking forward to it. We have documentary a filmmaker now coming with us on that trip, and we have someone who has joined the group, Carter Brooks, who is a climate artist, and also a philosopher. Not an academically trained philosopher, but someone who worked in Silicon Valley, and the issues of climate change that have moved us all moved him, so he started practicing as a climate artist, but also identified as a philosopher because he thought it was

really important to start thinking about this issue in a new way. We are really delighted to have him. He will be doing some art projects with us as we go through the Grand Canyon.

Cashio: Pardon my ignorance, but what is a climate artist?

Christelle: He creates artwork and art installations that are focused on climate change. Many of them have ice as a component, so a lot of them are performative pieces, where you are watching ice melting as something else is happening, or you are engaging in a conversation. He also has more permanent installations.

Cashio: Sounds like a fantastic trip. Maybe you will come back and tell us about it. We could do a little breadcrumb episode recap of what you guys learned.

Christelle: That sounds fantastic. I learned about breadcrumbs just today.

Weber: Well Andrea. You have used the word 'we' several times. Tell us about your team in the Sedona Philosophy Experience.

Christelle: My partner in life and my partner in this venture, Matt Goodwin, is doing this with me. Matt has a PHD in philosophy, and he is on the faculty at Northern Arizona University. We also have another philosopher, Mike Popshoy, and Mike also ran in the Olympic trials. He is an outdoor runner, really connected to the natural world also, and an advocate for climate justice. He leads tours with us. Then we have another fellow, Robin Weeks, and Robin has a PHD in geophysics, and he worked in the university for seven or eight years, and then he decided that there were many questions about our experience in the world that couldn't be answered by science, and he went back and got a degree in religious studies. He noticed that science was always focused on explaining the world, most often from an outward perspective, like looking out and seeing what is going on, not like looking within. He has a very interesting background in science and religious studies. That's our team.

Weber: Well everybody, I hope you have also been enticed as I have been by the Sedona Philosophy Experience. WE have been talking with Dr. Andrea Christelle. This is Dr. Eric Weber and my co-host is Dr. Anthony Cashio. Thank you everybody, for listening to *Philosophy Bakes Bread*. We will be right back with one more segment.

Cashio: Welcome back, everyone, to *Philosophy Bakes Bread*. We have been talking this afternoon to Dr. Andrea Christelle, and now we have some final big-picture questions, as well as some light-hearted thoughts. We will end with some pressing philosophical questions for our listeners, as well as info about how to get a hold of us with questions, and I guess criticisms if you have some. I'm sure you do. Everyone does. When your inner Eeyore is coming out. Andrea, we want to start this last segment with some last thoughts from you. Any last big-picture thoughts? Any big ideas you want to leave our listeners with?

Christelle: I would just say that part of SPEX, and doing philosophy outside in the natural world can remind us of the natural cycles of the day. Erazim Kohak has a really great book called *The Embers and the Stars*, and he talks about the natural cycles of the day. He talks about the day being the time for techne, or the time we do work. The sun is out, it's bright. He talks about evening being the time for philosophy. That's where we put away our work, we are sitting down

to dinner, and we are reflecting on our day. What went well? What went not so well? What should we do differently? What should we keep the same? What do we value? Following this, evening or nighttime is a time for poetry, dancing, music. It is a time of reverie, looking at the stars and the wonder of the universe. Taking SPEX outside into the natural world, one of the things that I'm trying to do is reconnect with the natural cycles of the day. One thing that Kohak observes is that our culture today is almost all techne. All work. All light. We can keep the light on at all hours, and work on our computers, and that is not natural. That takes us out of the natural rhythm of the day. It isn't even natural to do philosophy all day, or try to practice it all day. It's a way of reflecting on our life, and it also reminds us of the importance of the arts and of reverie in human life.

Weber: Another big-picture question for you, Andrea: Why should people engage in, and go on one of your SPEX trips, the Sedona Philosophy Experience? Why should people do that?

Christelle: That's easy. Because it is fun, and it is beautiful. It is absolutely wonderful and amazing. One of the things I have to tell people all the time is that philosophy is really fun. People often think that philosophy is hard work, or it's dull or it's boring, and nothing could be further from the truth. Thinking about your life, reflecting on what's important to you, trying to get a better understanding of that, sometimes we tell jokes. It's really fun. That's why you should do it. Sedona is a beautiful place – some people say the most beautiful place in the world.

Cashio: How can someone look up more information about SPEX?

Christelle: You can go to sedonaphilosophy.com

Weber: There you go. That was pretty easy. Anthony, we haven't yet mentioned the fact that Andrea and I are both at a workshop in Michigan, and we appreciate being able to have you in on this conversation, with the help of Skype, and the interwebs. We are at an event which is the Public Philosophy Journal's 2017 Collaborative Writing Workshop. Chris Long, who has been on the program, fairly recently, is one of the main people who made this happen. It has been a terrific experience. Have you enjoyed it Andrea?

Christelle: Absolutely. I was here with the Public Philosophy Journal two years ago as well, and I think that it is a really great effort, another effort that we see to bring philosophy to everybody, because it affects our day-to-day lives.

Cashio: That sets us up perfectly for our next question, which is the question we ask everyone. IT has to do with the title of this show, about philosophy baking bread. What do you think, Andrea? Does philosophy bake no bread, as the saying goes? Or do you think it bakes bread, and if it does, what do you say to people who say it's just not useful, that there's no good to it whatsoever?

Christelle: Philosophy bakes bread. I love the title of this show. If people disagree with this, I would say that they probably don't understand what philosophy is, so they should do it more. People often say, "What is your philosophy?" That is a question that I get a lot. I always say, "Do lots of philosophy." My philosophy is: do philosophy. It's an activity and it is an activity that...I haven't found people who actually engage in the activity that don't think it's useful and helpful. I think philosophy suffers from an unfortunate stereotype, so that is why shows like this are so great, because we are helping philosophy to recover from that.

Cashio: You don't think that stereotype has been earned, at least a little bit?

Christelle: In some narrow academic circles, perhaps. There are some folks doing public philosophy that are pretty critical of arcane technical philosophy, but I think arcane technical philosophy has a place. Unfortunately, people who are very accomplished in arcane technical philosophy are also sometimes critical of public philosophy, or trying to make philosophy relevant to all people in their day-to-day lives. I think what we really need, as we need in so many areas, is more tolerance, and opportunities to see the value of all kinds of work. I know that I studied with philosophers who were arcane, technical philosophers that had no interest in doing public philosophy. But I really benefitted from working with them, so I am glad that there are people doing that sort of work. However, I think the potential for philosophy is so much greater than that. It shouldn't be limited to that. It earns that reputation if we see it with this very narrow lens. But the possibilities to see it more broadly are there.

Cashio: Awesome. Do more philosophy. That should be a T-shirt.

Weber: We need to have a *Philosophy Bakes Bread* T-shirt first of all, and maybe on the back of it is, "Do more philosophy."

Cashio: Listeners, let us know if you would be interested in something like that. Maybe we can make that happen.

Christelle: Do I get to be quoted on that?

Weber: You might have to be.

Cashio: "Do more philosophy."- Dr. Andrea Christelle.

Weber: Well Andrea, as you know, we want to make sure that people see both the serious side of philosophy, as well as the lighter side. In our next short mini-segment which we call philosophunnies, we would love to hear if you have got a favorite joke, or a funniest fact or story about philosophy.

Weber: Say 'philosophunnies'

Sam: Philosophunnies!

(laughter)

Weber: Say 'philosophunnies'

Sam: Philosophunnies!

(child's laughter)

Weber: Do you have a joke or a funny story that you can tell us and our listeners, either about philosophy, or about SPEX, or public engagement, or anything that we have been talking about?

Cashio: Nothing but pressure. Nothing but pressure.

Christelle: I know I joke, but it's not a very original joke. I'll put it out there and you guys will...

Weber: Laugh.

Christelle: Immanuel tried, but Immanuel [Kant]. (Laughter).

Weber: I haven't actually heard that one. I like it.

Cashio: That's good. Eric and I always pull out a few one-liners, little silly jokes to tell so that we always have something to giggle about. I think you are right. Philosophy needs to be fun. If it's not fun, it misses out on the full life experience.

Weber: That's right. You want to do the first one, Anthony?

Cashio: I always wanted to be somebody. Now I see that I should have been more specific. (Laughter).

Weber: A grandmother walks down the street. Talk about expectations, and needing to go on vacation in SPEX, by the way. High expectations here. A grandmother walks down the street with her two grandkids and meets up with an old friend. The friend says, "Who is this?" and the grandmother says, "This one is the doctor, and this one is the lawyer."

Cashio: A nurse goes up to the doctor and says, "Doctor! There is an invisible man in the waiting room." The doctor says, "Tell him I can't see him." (Laughter). I'm going to tell that joke to my 5-year old.

Weber: This one is from Demetri Martin: the worst time to have a heart attack is during a game of charades. (Laughter, rimshot, applause)

Cashio: Last but not least, we want to take advantage of the fact that we have powerful social media that does allow two-way communications for programs like radio shows. We want to invite our listeners to send us their thoughts about big questions that we raise on the show.

Weber: Given that, we would love to hear from you, Andrea, about whether or not you have a question we should we ask our listeners for our segment that we call "You Tell Me!" Do you have a question that you propose we ask our listeners?

Christelle: How can philosophy help us restore a healthy democracy in the United States?

Weber: There it is.

Cashio: How can philosophy help us restore a healthy democracy? What would a healthy democracy look like?

Weber: Because it can, right?

Christelle: I think it can. I think we need people engaged in deliberative conversations about the issues that are facing our nation. I think things have been reduced to soundbites worse than ever before. People really need to understand the importance and value of voting and political participation. I don't think that's well-understood. I think people think it is important, and that if they would engage in conversations and explore these themes, it would go a long way towards helping people understand, and therefore participate in our democratic processes.

Cashio: Fantastic. Maybe some more of those hot-topic cafés mixed with a walk in the woo. Thank you, everyone, for listening to this episode of *Philosophy Bakes Bread*. Your hosts Dr.

Anthony Cashio and Dr. Eric Weber, have been very lucky to be joined this afternoon by Dr. Andrea Christelle. Thank you for joining us and taking time out of your workshop to come and chat with us.

Christelle: My pleasure. Thank you Eric. Thanks, Anthony.

Cashio: We have had a great time. We hope you have had a good time too. We hope listeners will join us again. Maybe you will too. Consider sending us your thoughts on anything that you've heard today that you would like to hear about in the future, and about the specific questions we raised for you. How can philosophy help to restore a healthy democracy?

Weber: If you haven't done it yet, go visit sedonaphilosophy.com. You need to check that out. There are some beautiful pictures there, and it sounds like terrific programming. Once again, you can reach us in a number of ways. We're on twitter @PhilosophyBB.

Cashio: What does that stand for?

Weber: Oh, um, err...Philosophy Bakes Bread, I believe. We are also on Facebook at Philosophy Bakes Bread, and check out SOPHIA's Facebook page while you're there, at Philosophers in America.

Cashio: You can of course, email us at philosophybakesbread@gmail.com, and you can also call us and leave a short, recorded message with a question or a comment that we may be able to play on the show. You can reach us at 859-257-1849. Join us again next time on *Philosophy Bakes Bread*: food for thought about life and leadership.

[Outro music]