**Worthy-leisure: Lessons without Outcomes**

1. Schools of open-liberal tradition view human freedom as a central educational value. But the unwavering commitment of schools to theoretical learning does not seem to relate to this value. As a result, an apparent split is created between the moral tradition of schools and their main activities. This split is not a factual reality, but an inadequate cultural state of mind. Yet this is the prevalent state of mind. As a result, there is no clear connection between the activity of learning and the value of freedom. This article offers a perspective that gives more presence to the connection between the activities of schools and their contextual meaning. I do so by viewing schools in the context of what I call worthy-leisure. From this perspective, the learning activity in school would be identified as a leisure activity, i.e. an activity of inherent value, which serves no desirable outcomes. I do not suggest giving up freedom as the central value, but to be more concrete in the context of schools and to use the idea of worthy-leisure, which is included in the idea of freedom, in order to clarify the value and reasoning of schools’ main activity.

# The Limitation of Freedom as a Meaningful Context for School Learning

1. In this part I will show the limitations of the idea of freedom as a meaningful context for school learning; its limitations in uniting school activity and learning, and give it a close firmly rationale and meaning. I will briefly present Berlin's classic distinction between two concepts of freedom and then show that both the negative concept of freedom and the positive one are inadequate as a meaningful context.
2. By the negative sense of freedom, we mean that a person is free as long as she is not blocked by any human factor from doing, thinking or expressing whatever she wants. Therefore, one's freedom in the negative sense does not depend on the person herself but on others’ willingness (society, government, other humans) to restrain themselves. Freedom in the positive sense emphasizes that the motive of the person will be autonomous and independent of external circumstances. So the actions, opinions and decisions would arise from the person herself and not mechanistically as a result of external factors, like a puppet on a string (Berlin, 1987; Christman, 2015).
3. Regarding freedom in the negative sense, since it does not depend on the individual person but on her human surroundings, it seems that there is no self-responsibility, no educational challenge that she should face. Negative freedom does not broaden horizons for personal development beyond the demand not to violate the freedom of others.
4. Secondly, freedom in the negative sense seems not to be connected to the content that is being learned and the activity of learning. Learning geometry, geography or literature is not, prima facie, connected to negative freedom, or not being blocked by others to do what one wants. Moreover, there is tension between the idea of negative freedom and school regulations, in which parents, by law, have to send their daughters and sons to school and the kids have no control over their time. In fact, analogies between schools and jails have dominant presence in our language. In such a sphere understanding, school activity in the meaningful context of negative freedom may be justly conceived as an empty slogan.
5. Nevertheless, if we insist upon understanding school learning in the context of negative freedom, we would not be able to avoid expecting students to be independent, creative, enterprisers, i.e. autonomous. Such expectations come from the positive aspects of freedom. Thus, the idea of negative freedom could not alone provide a meaningful context for schools, and would have to rely on at least the positive sense of freedom.
6. As a meaningful context, freedom in the positive sense values virtues such as autonomy, self-regulation, constructive social interactions, independence, authenticity, and creativity. Despite the abundant value of such virtues, freedom in this sense has its own limitations as a meaningful context for school activity. Firstly, there is serious doubt as to whether all choices that are carried out through an autonomous person have moral value just because they are autonomous. Raz (1986) distinguishes between 1) an existential autonomous choice, which gains its morality as a choice from the autonomous process of choosing itself, and 2) an autonomous choice that in being taken within a previous sphere of moral choices (Raz 1986, 154-155).

Here we see the tension between the value that we give **to the process** of choosing, the autonomous choice itself, and the value that we give to the **content** of the choice. Such a tension can be expressed in an autonomous process of choice leading to cruelty and evil deeds. This tension is not resolved when putting positive freedom as a meaningful context of school learning. Let's assume the child and/or his parents choose autonomously not to learn reading, writing, or algebra. Such a choice is contrary to the main activity of the school. Raz deals with this tension in possessing the moral optional sphere as a precursor to the act of choosing itself (Raz, 1986, 265). Hence, the positive sense of freedom cannot function as a meaningful context for school, either.

1. A second argument against freedom as autonomy is that, unlike leisure, it is often **taken for granted**. We believe that our desires and choices are **self-determined**, and we have trouble identifying external factors and their influence on us. Therefore, the advancement of freedom—in the sense of autonomy—is accorded low priority. Below I will elaborate on the process that leads to this conclusion. In this process, I will briefly compare the idea of freedom to that of leisure.

# Relevance of the Concept of Freedom versus Leisure

1. In a survey from 2013 on the topic, conducted each year by Gallup, the participants, all American, were asked to what degree they are satisfied with their **freedom** to choose what they do with their lives. The question refers to freedom in the positive sense. In 2006, 91% of the participants in the same survey responded that they were satisfied with their degree of freedom, while the remaining 9% were dissatisfied. Ignoring the study’s specific purpose, it is clear that the vast majority of Americans—over 80%—are satisfied with their freedom to choose what they do with their lives (Clifton, 2014).
2. On the other hand, findings from Argyle (1992, 105) on the issue of satisfaction with leisure suggest that 36.5% of participants are dissatisfied to varying degrees with the amount of time they have available do what they want. Further data strengthening this point can be found in an annual survey that measures the level of satisfaction of American employees with their work. This data shows a continuing decline in the level of satisfaction of employees with their work. In 2014, over 52% of employees reported that they were dissatisfied with their work in all the important categories, among them: security at work, salary, promotion policy, vacation policy, sick leave, health care programs and various retirement plans (Adams, 2014). The combination of these three pieces of data, the first referring to a positive sense of freedom and the second and third to leisure, represent self-contradictory mentalities. The first piece of data shows that the vast majority of American experiences generally positive feelings towards their ability to do what they wish with their lives (their degree of freedom or autonomy) on one hand, and on the other hand, their satisfaction is low when it comes to the amount of time available to them for leisure activities.
3. Additional data supports the claim that people are dissatisfied with the amount of leisure in their lives, revealing rising stress levels among Americans. Studies conducted by the American Institute of Stress (AIS), indicate that 44% of Americans experience greater levels of stress as opposed to five years ago.[[1]](#footnote-1) Similar data on the rise in time-pressure in modern societies are also noted by Garhammer (2002). General stress, or stress at work, are not perceived as contradictory to freedom and autonomy, and not even to happiness (Garhammer, 2002). People believe that the feeling of stress is a result of a freely chosen, but challenging lifestyle. As stated in the first piece of data, 80% or more do not feel that their freedom to choose what they do with their lives is restricted. However, the data suggests a correlation between people’s stress levels and their satisfaction with the amount of leisure they have. Again, while freedom and stress are not perceived as contradictory emotions, leisure and stress are.
4. These data paradoxically show that freedom is perceived as taken for granted while leisure is not. We will see that leisure is included in the definition of freedom. Furthermore, the sense of leisure is more concrete and more closely linked with the daily lives of students and their families. Therefore, pedagogically speaking, leisure may be the suitable connection that gives meaning to educational activity in the context of schools of open-liberal tradition, which seek to gain a new understanding of the meaning of the central educational activity within their structure—i.e. theoretical studies. Leisure is valued from a cultural point of view. Therefore, fruitful thinking about it will open-up new understandings of our lifestyles, and perhaps assist in improving our quality of life and levels of happiness.

# Perceptions of Leisure

1. In their discussions on leisure, Godbey & Mack (2006), rely on the perception of leisure as a specific **activity**. They claim that despite the subjective nature of the terms “free time” and “leisure,” empirical studies in which leisure is measured, refer to leisure as a specific activity. Here they include a long list of leisure activities such as playing, reading, going out to cultural events, volunteering, religious activity and more (Godbey & Mack, 2006, 49-50).
2. Stebbins (2005) criticizes attempts to view leisure as an array of culturally determined activities, for instance, reading, vacation and tourism, or hobbies. He claims that the perception of leisure as a certain activity strips the term of its essence. A more precise definition of leisure, he argues, will emphasize uncoerced behavior. In his words: “Behavior is uncoerced when people create their own leisure” (Stebbins, 2005, 350). This approach broadens the definition of leisure and is similar to the concept of negative freedom.
3. The perception of leisure according to Stebbins, as well as Esteve et al (1999), and Joudrey and Wallace (2009), draw upon studies that were conducted on the subject in the mid-20th century, such as Dumazedier and Latouche (1963). These researchers also emphasized elements of freedom or non-coercion, defining leisure as an activity that an individual engages in by her own will, when she is free from work or other social or family obligations (Joudrey & Wallace, 2009; Esteve et al. 1999).
4. In their original study, Dumazedier and Latouche included an additional category to their leisure/non-leisure dichotomy: semi-leisure. This refers to activities that are not work but still require commitment and responsibility, such as familial responsibilities (Dumazedier and Latouche, 1962, 21). For our purposes, we will suffice with the general reading of Esteve et al (1999) and Joudrey & Wallance (2009).

“Leisure refers to activities in which a person voluntarily engages when they are free from any work, social or familial responsibilities” (Esteve et al., 1999, in Joudrey & Wallace, 2009).

# My Definition

1. I accept these criticisms against the perception of leisure as a certain activity, and would like to emphasize the element of **non-benefit** found in leisure (Jalbert, 2009, Plato [[Stephanus -]], 1974). This element clearly exists in Aristotle’s distinction between an activity that is done for a purpose that is greater than themselves, and activities done for their own sake (Aristotle, 1985, 15-16). This quality establishes leisure not only as an activity resulting from a choice that is free of any commitment or coercion (Stebbins, 2005), but also as an activity or life moments (weeks, days, hours, minutes) where the activity is not a means to a different end. Reskin defines this as a state in which “an individual ‘forgets himself’ in the process. The activity is done for its own sake” (Reskin, 1999, 11). However, while Reskin is of the opinion that the leading cause of this state is the individual’s good feeling, my opinion is that we should **not** seek a motivation for these periods of time. In defining leisure it is better to stay with the lack of functionality of the time and avoid searching for its **causes**. This is because we paradoxically describe a certain period of time as valuable in and of itself, while placing the value on pleasure or on a different matter. **Therefore, I would like to understand leisure as a description of individual-life time, with content—be it activity, or non-activity—not intended for any purpose beyond it.** For example, to fill a need, or to play a certain role (professional, social or other) that she took on or was given to her; not for the sake of finding a romantic partner, not to feed the children or support their education, not for work, not for professional training or errands. This is the **state which is disconnected from all our different functions, obligations or needs**. It is important to emphasize that these moments are not to be identified with moments of rest or “breaks.” A rest or break refers to moments intended to serve other moments or result from moments of fulfilling a preceding role.
2. Adopting this logic will allow us to reach the opposite conclusion: from our choices and actions during our leisure time, to what constitutes for us the meanings of our life. What we do with these leisure moments (that is, after we have rested, eaten, reproduced and cared for our offspring), reflects the central content of our lives, their purpose and meaning. During these moments there is no element of obligation. They are a complete, pure expression of our free choice, directed to the here and now.
3. These properties of leisure are parallel to the two aspects of freedom, mentioned above. Leisure overlaps with the negative sense of freedom, since leisure also requires non-coercion of activities that the individual is not interested in, or which will prevent him from doing what he wants. By contrast, and much like the positive sense of freedom, leisure moments do not serve any matter beyond the moments themselves. Their value is internal. In terms of positive freedom, autonomy is a force that gives an individual’s choices or a certain activity he does, an independent value (Young, 1982; Raz, 1986)[[2]](#footnote-2).

# Leisure and Education

1. How do these aspects of leisure provide meaning and explanation to school activity? The discourse on the practice of leisure in education seems to be primarily influenced by the perception of leisure as a particular activity—linking the practice of leisure to what is typically understood as a leisure activity. This may include 1) education that includes outdoor activity, sports and different kinds of games 2) education that deals with pleasant activities such as cooking, sailing, watching a movie or going to a concert, or 3) education that includes activity of a personal-social nature. The last option would be intended for group bonding, or for the personal development and enrichment of every participant, such as a lecture on a popular subject, a tour of an archaeological excavation, or a group project.
2. Behind this view is an assumption that the method of education or practicing leisure in education must be unconventional and cannot take place within a conventional classroom. Mashiah (2004) contributes to this view by moving leisure as an educational objective from schools to the community. He writes: “In the framework of school, the student’s time is controlled by the school system and curriculum. In order to find leisure, the view on it must be assimilated as a lifestyle within the community structures, and tools and services for applying this view must be created” (Mashiah, Spektor, Koren 2004, 44 in free translation from Hebrew). This view applies not only to the nature of the activity but also to the nature of teacher-student relations. In the same article, Spektor and Cohen Jevoir (2004) describe education, and not standard classroom instruction, as the way to establish an empowering educational connection, which better corresponds to the nature of leisure. But school was not always considered a space that contradicts leisure.
3. The term school is historically derived from the Ancient Greek word *scholē*, meaning leisure (Aloni, 1998, 21; Rojek, 210, 189; Education 2016). The combination of the meanings is based on the idea that students came to school for their own leisure, and made a completely free choice to dedicate their energies to cultivating their higher attributes in the educational institution. This connection between freedom or leisure on one hand and education and personal development toward human wholeness on the other, was founded under the influence of Plato, Aristotle and the various schools that were influenced by them (for example (Plato, 1974, 54)) [Pass to Stephanus].
4. In the Middle Ages, this attitude was tied to the educational tradition of liberal arts and paideia. The Greek meaning of paideia is learning or education, and was related to classical approaches to education. These approaches drew from the founding fathers (Socrates, Plato and Aristotle) of the classical tradition and passed it on to the highest schools in the Christian world, in Alexandria and so forth (Paideia, 2016). The curriculum of the paideia tradition included physical education, logic, syntax, music, rhetoric, geometry, and astronomy (Aviram 1999; Aloni, N., Avishar, A., Hop, D., and Yogev, A., 2007). These subjects are called Liberal Arts, or Liberal Arts Education, following the Roman terminology, that is, areas of knowledge that liberate from the absurdity of reality, to its origins and nobility (Aloni, N., Avishar, A., Hop, D., Yogev, A., 2007; Plato, 450-426, 1999; Willmann, 1907; Education 2016). The objective of the studies was not to train learners for a particular role, but to develop their fine unique qualities to human wholeness (Aviram, 1999; Aloni, 1998; Thiessen, 1989; Peters, 1970). These areas of knowledge also constitute the educational foundation of the modern age, and remain to this day, even though they have become instrumental in nature (Aviram, 1999). It is important to remember that the process in which learning has become instrumental is a distortion of its original role of developing a whole person who directs his spirit to the exalted aspects of reality and its origins.
5. That being the case, at the heart of the tradition that ties education to leisure is the aspiration to understand reality and its origins, the values of good, truth, justice and wholeness. How do these ideas relate to the concept of leisure, which we defined as time that does not serve a purpose beyond itself? How does the educational leisure of the *scholē* relate to leisure in general?
6. Stebbins (1982; 2016) draws a distinction between serious leisure, unserious or casual leisure, and project-based leisure. Serious leisure serves as a basis for people who want to express their skills, fulfill and empower themselves outside of work, which becomes dense and reduced. Serious leisure, as opposed to unserious leisure, demands investment and involves a dimension of deep identification, effort, importance, care, and integrity. It can also include, though not necessarily, unpleasant emotions and situations, lack of joy, heavy headedness, remorse and even anxiety. This is opposed to the sense of lightness and attraction characteristic of unserious, casual leisure, which, by definition, should include immediate satisfaction, and does not require—or exclusively require—training and skill (Stebbins 1982, 258). Project based leisure can, like serious leisure, demand effort, be unpleasant and/or pleasant and even require special knowledge and skill. However, unlike serious leisure, it is directed at the execution of a single, discrete event—for example, time dedicated to preparing a fundraiser for a certain cause, or a big birthday party for a friend (Davidson and Stebbins 2011; Stebbins, 2016).
7. Here, I would like to focus on one of the qualities of serious leisure referred to by Stebbins. Serious leisure is characterized in part as culturally valuable activity or time (Stebbins, 1982, 254). If we focus on this property of leisure—its cultural value—we find it necessary to narrow and sharpen the scope of the word “serious,” which Stebbins uses to describe leisure, and designate it as worthy, or worthy leisure. That is, leisure that is worthy or valuable from a cultural point of view. Whereas “serious” can be true with regards to matters that are not culturally valuable, unlike the term “worthy.”
8. I also disagree with Stebbins (2016) regarding his view on the practice of leisure in education. Stebbins is of the opinion that education to leisure requires the parties involved (consultants, volunteers, coaches, counselors) to teach his theory, which distinguishes between the three types of leisure, and encourage the learners to see the value in serious and project-based leisure. In attributing an exaggerated value to his own model, he believes that this is “important information for anyone who seeks an optimal lifestyle of leisure” (Stebbins, 2016, 879-880). I disagree with him for three reasons. First of all, this information was not needed for many whose lifestyle was optimal in terms of their seriousness and the definitions of leisure identified by Stebbins. Nonetheless, they did not know anything about his distinction, nor were they concerned with leisure. Second, there is no guarantee that anyone who studies the theory (the instruction itself will probably be entirely instrumental) will know how to develop a lifestyle that includes serious leisure. Above all, an individual cannot achieve the worthy seriousness Stebbins refers to, if his or her motivation is to achieve a lifestyle of leisure. This is because devotion to a matter that he or she takes seriously, must, in Reskin’s words, “make him forget himself,” that is, be unrelated to models of leisure or to their gains/losses as a result of the activity (as he suggests). For this purpose, the activity must involve **cultural emphasis of the subject of study or activity**. The **content** of the subject of study or activity must itself 1) be the motivation for putting energy into it, and 2) the person putting energy into the subject of study or activity must define the extent to which the time dedicated to it is, indeed, worthy.

# Leisure and Worthy-leisure

1. But how can we distinguish between worthy-leisure and some other leisure, that is, between the subjects and activities of high cultural value, and those of lesser cultural value? It seems impossible to determine what a worthy leisure activity is as opposed to a worthier leisure activity or an unworthy leisure activity. In fact, the idea of “worthy leisure” seems paradoxical, since, if these are free moments, which do not serve any necessary matter or fulfill an obligation, then it is not possible to claim that they “must” include a certain activity or specific content. Some people like to travel, others enjoy dining at restaurants; some like to play with their children, others enjoy hosting their large family for meals; some like to help refugees, others like to watch sports—each person chooses what she wants to do with her free time. It would seem that the idea of “worthy leisure” is a paradox.
2. But is it true that each activity and each subject of study is equally worthy?; theoretically, no, even if we try to be very politically correct, stating that leisure dedicated to, say, gambling and drug use is equally valuable to leisure dedicated to yoga and volunteering at the local community center. The distinctions become clearer if we think of leisure in the educational sense. Is there moral-educational equality between a teacher who takes her students on a tour to the safari and shows them extraordinary animals, and a teacher who takes her students to a shopping center and gives them free time to walk around between the stores? In both cases, there are no outcomes beyond the activity. In this sense, they equally belong to the category of practicing leisure in education. However, they hold different values. We value the time in which the children go on a tour of the safari with an adult, more than the time where the adult determines a meeting time and place and dismisses the students to the shopping center. If this intuition is correct, the fact that we believe that the individual must aspire to a life which includes leisure—times that are valuable in and of themselves and do not serve purposes beyond themselves—means that the **content** of the time, or the specific character of the activity that takes place, are not negligible considerations.
3. We mistakenly tend to see a contradiction between the idea of leisure and a certain perception of worthiness that ranks the internal value of the activities and their quality. One of the most common reasons for this tendency is derived from a subjectivist-relativist ethical perception (McIntire, 2006; Huemer, 2005). We assume that worth and value are relative and depend on individuals or their culture. Therefore, many of us believe that the idea of worthy-leisure—that is, that there is a preferable way to fill life moments which do not serve any purpose beyond themselves—is a paradox.
4. On the other hand, it is difficult to ignore our strong intuition that there exist activities with higher value than others, and which make our leisure worthwhile. This intuition may be related to the moral center of gravity of our culture. Surely, even if we are liberal and believe in freedom of the individual and equality among all people, this belief by itself and everything it involves (the political structure of a liberal democracy, the philosophical-conceptual canon, literature, science, history, art, architecture, the character of the modern metropolis, relations between the authorities and the individual, and more) is rich with content and activities that are **closer** to the spirit of a liberal culture than other content and activities. They **better correspond** to its values than, say, bullfights and rhinoceros hunting. Although liberals who support equality are repulsed by these values, it is they themselves who create the well-known fear of descent into relativism without standards—“everything goes” and everything is equally legitimate (McIntire 2006; Boghossian 2006). This concern is also expressed in the recent, familiar attempt to return meaning and internal logic to school instruction and learning, or to the discourse on the authority of teachers, parents, and adults in general.
5. According to this concept, the different qualities of pleasure or happiness familiar to us throughout the history of thought, are ranked. Aristotle made a distinction between different types of pleasure, “those whose origins are noble differ from the others, derived from the indecent, and those who are not righteous cannot enjoy the joy of the righteous…” (Aristotle, 1954, 242). A similar principle is found in the writings of G.S. Mill. In order to show the utilitarian refinement and balance of the principle, which identifies happiness with pleasure and lack of pain, he points to different levels and qualities of pleasure, from “animal pleasure” (Mill, 18, 1972) to “disappearing pleasures” (Mill, 24, 1972). It does not concern him here to describe the method for distinguishing between different qualities of pleasure. My emphasis here is on the distinction and ranking itself. Matthew Arnold also distinguishes between different qualities of pleasure and happiness. In his essay “Culture and Anarchy,” he calls for the creation of educational systems which will deepen culture and instill it among people of all classes so that society will not deteriorate into a state of anarchy (Arnold, 1993; Meller, 2013; Aloni, N., Avishar, A., Hop, D. and Yogev, A. 2007).
6. These three philosophers illustrate an internal tension within the liberal tradition, which views freedom as a necessary condition. But since it is insufficient, tension arises between what is sufficient for the tradition to exist and what is necessary—freedom and equality. Either way, the idea of worthy leisure, is part of this tension and attempts to deal with it while preserving necessity.
7. Traditionally, the objective of a liberal education was not to free the individual and release him to engage in any type of leisure he “feels like.” Liberal education was directed at worthy-leisure, that is, the personal and social development of a life of contemplation that elevates beyond functional daily life; education for the purpose of arousing attention, astonishment and wonder in the individual and society toward their surrounding reality (Gary, 2006, 121; Wise, 2014, 17). The tradition of a liberal culture provides a variety of activities and subjects of study. These largely overlap with the different subjects in the fields of science, art and humanities, found today in school curricula, and which can stimulate and develop the ability to study and observe. This way, for instance, when practicing leisure in education, we will prefer to engage in a subject of study from the world of Euclidean geometry than to watch a television series as a class; we will prefer a walk along a river over a walk in a shopping center; we will prefer to read Dostoevsky over participating in a car race.
8. Therefore, the suggested view of worthy-leisure is derived from a moral-traditional approach, classical in nature, which maintains that, even considering Stebbin’s distinction (1982; 2011) between serious and unserious leisure, whether the experience of subjective pleasure occurs or not; whether there is a desire or not—if a certain activity expresses the cultural ethos, then there is an inherent value to its existence in a classroom; again, even if it does not include a subjective sense of pleasure. However, a potential for deep fulfillment and a sense of value which could not be reached through a different kind of activity, is necessary.

# Properties of Education to Worthy-leisure

1. It follows that a central condition for practicing leisure in education is that the meaning of leisure manifest in the educational meeting and instruction methods themselves. The main property of leisure is time which does not serve any matter beyond itself and which has no instrumental aspects. Therefore, practice of leisure cannot serve outcomes beyond the educational meeting itself. Just as education does not serve any matter beyond itself, the guiding principle for practicing leisure is that a lesson for the purpose of leisure should be a purpose in and of itself. The practice of worthy-leisure must observe an educational state of the “here and now,” an activity that occurs entirely for its own sake, that is, free of any purpose beyond itself, and not directed toward a matter beyond it, such as an exam, evaluation, acquired skill, and so on. The educational meeting will take place in the same way: as a recognized leisure activity such as hiking, spending time with friends or acting, which all have no purpose beyond the activities themselves. Any outcome, response or matter beyond the event itself is irrelevant.
2. This condition for the practice of leisure in education fosters its perception as a **state**, or **experience**, and not as a process (as is the customary view of the educational act, or teaching). The word “process” indicates a change toward a particular outcome, which gives it a direction, meaning, and is itself secondary to the purpose. The meaning of the word also implies processing and a transformation which serves an outcome. Therefore, “process” is less adequate for describing the practice of leisure, than “state” or “experience,” which are not necessarily directed toward external matters, and can be valuable in and of themselves. We can understand teaching as a state or experience in terms of a scene or occasion, that is, a framework where unity of time and space exists. Unity of time and space forces us to refer to “here and now” as an educational meeting and draw meaning from it, rather than from future events. The practice of leisure, then, is not directed toward outcomes beyond it, and should be viewed and designed as a state, scene or occasion, which observes the unity of time and space, and not as a process.
3. An additional property is the selection of objectives for the lessons. The fact that the practice of leisure is not directed toward outcomes beyond it, does not mean that there are no objectives involved. These objectives are inherent to the meeting. The objective of practicing leisure can be one of the following: 1) Theoretical activity that includes a culturally valuable subject of study, for example, one that expresses values of morality, truth, justice or aesthetics 2) Non-theoretical activity that is culturally valuable and is probably connected to reality in general, truth, good, justice, or aesthetics. For example, going for a hike, reading, acting, helping the needy, solving social problems, etc.
4. The objectives of the meetings will be framed according to the following structure: “In the educational meeting, we will study a circle and its properties”; “we will study the phenomenon of autumn”; “we will study the Book of Samuel”; “we will study the structure of matter, the term molecule and the phenomenon it is supposed to represent”; “we will study the forces operating on bridges”; “we will study the play Uncle Venya by Chekhov.” Alternatively, there can be an outcome that is not a theoretical activity but a different activity. For example: “In our educational meeting, we will read the play Uncle Venya by Chekhov”; “we will hike together along a stream”; “we will play basketball”; “we will sing songs while playing guitar”; “we will write an essay”; “we will dissect frogs”; “we will analyze Hebrew sentences and their elements”; “we will paint with oil paints”; “we will deepen our relationship with each other” and so forth. These phrases differ from phrases that focus on outcomes, which are mostly directed toward the students’ consciousness, and are more widely accepted today. The following formulations are common teaching objectives which are directed toward outcomes: “The student will become familiar with”, “the student will understand”, “the student will learn how…”, “the student will develop a skill” and so forth (Guri-Rosenblit, 2014, 173). In the practice of leisure, the objectives will be phrased in such a way that they will not continue beyond the meeting itself. In fact, the objective of the meeting will always be practical; the **study** of a culturally valuable object or **other culturally valuable activity**. Therefore, the object and activity themselves give the meeting its inherent value.
5. The previous section places a number of central requirements on the teachers and thus their training. First, in terms of their knowledge, values and identity, the teacher must be familiar with their tradition—the liberal tradition (Segev, 2016). They must be familiar with its core principles, as well as the core issues it is concerned with in the particular time period in which they are operating (for an extensive survey on this issue see Aloni, Avishar, Hop, and Yogev, 2007). Of course, they must know the materials and skills of their area of knowledge very well. They must know the material in the context of the general tradition of knowledge. The teachers must be as familiar as possible with the peaks of this tradition; the philosophical, scientific, technological, historical, social, and political contexts of their particular area of knowledge (Anonymous, 2014; Segev, 2016). They must recognize the value of study for its own sake. For example, an issue that manifests in this way is the act of studying and its tradition, also known as philosophy. This is at least introduced in almost every curriculum in educational departments, through the introductory class “Introduction to Philosophy of Education.” Teachers must view their field of expertise (mathematics, history, physics or literature; special education, preschool, or language) as one that expresses the principles and values of culture and the liberal tradition. Their rationale for the occupation of teaching and education must be drawn from them.
6. In terms of preparing the lesson or educational meeting, the teachers must make sure they identify the subject of study (again), and see the greater values it expresses (again). It does not matter whether the teachers planned the lesson or course, or whether they execute an existing lesson plan. Nor does it matter if they have past experience in identifying the subject and the values it expresses. Even if they identified these in the past (a year, semester, or week ago), they must observe the subject of study in question (again) before **each** meeting, and make sure it is clear to them; that they identify the values it expresses. This is comparable to the stage of “defining the objective” of the educational meeting. However, when practicing worthy-leisure in education, identifying the “objective” means **choosing the subject that constitutes the purpose for the meeting, the planned study action**. This kind of preparation is at times referred to as “connecting” to the subject. However, “connecting” is evasive by nature, and the fact that things were clear and conscious in the past, does not mean that the “connection” will occur in the present, or in the current lesson. The teachers must be fully “awake” to the subject, because the present, or current lesson is an event which is valuable in and of itself, the moment of truth, and therefore must be meaningful by its own virtue. They cannot arrive to an educational meeting with just a vague memory of the subject of study, its elements and qualities. In other words, the teachers’ responsibility is to arrive at each educational session awake to the subject of study and recognizing the aesthetic, virtues and truths it expresses. They must remember that the lesson—the educational meeting—is the moment of truth. Not the exam, the paper, the project, nor the homework.
7. What if, during a certain lesson, the students do not see the subjects or values it reflects? In any case, the teachers must always do everything they can so the students will study the subject. If they do not manage to study it, they will at least see and identify it. If they do not identify it, at least they will believe that there is an attempt to show them an aesthetic, and that with more effort, experience, and investment of time, it will be possible to see it. If they do not believe this, they will at least believe that there is value in the effort to see, or value in seeing, or they will at least believe the teachers, who themselves believe, and so on.
8. An additional, third requirement placed on the teachers and their training for the practice of worthy-leisure is that the teachers should serve as an example of the values, knowledge and skills that they teach. Therefore, they themselves must view the educational meeting as a leisure event, that is, as an activity that they find value in performing, that they would be happy to do regardless of its future outcomes, even if they would not be externally compensated for it. Just as an artist, racecar driver, or basketball player would continue doing their activities without compensation, the teacher must sense that they would fundamentally find value, pleasure and appeal in gathering with thirty children or youth to show them the aesthetics of overlapping triangles or the justice in returning a lost item, or the sophistication and beauty of King Oedipus. In other words, if we expect the students to experience the educational meeting as a time and place that is meaningful by its own virtue, not as a means to another end, then (given the condition of setting an example), the teachers must embody and express the unique virtue that they attribute to the study of the particular subject which they have placed at the heart of the meeting, or any other chosen activity.
9. To those raising an eyebrow at this matter, I will mention that there are educational institutions that do not administer exams and evaluations beyond the activities themselves. For example, in the Hebron and Tifrah yeshivas of the Lithuanian Haredi tradition, Gemara studies are very slow paced, with no exam or greater purpose. In general, the Haredi world created, due to its value of learning for its own sake, a socioeconomic structure that allows individuals with families to continue as Yeshiva students, to learn for the sake of their own interest. Without getting into the heated debate on religion and belief or religion and state, the Ultra-Orthodox world certainly demonstrates the possibility of worthy leisure within complex life circumstances of large families and sectors. In many ways, the values of liberal subjects of study in the secular world, is parallel to Torah study in the Ultra-Orthodox world. We shall remember, for example, the interest retirees show in academic study; and ultimately, our natural interest in knowledge and learning, regardless of outcomes, as expressed by the billions of entrees into knowledge—and study-based websites such as Wikipedia and Ted.

# Conclusion

1. In conclusion, in order to connect school instruction with education on values in general, and practicing freedom in education in particular, I suggested a model for the practice of worthy-leisure. I have shown that leisure and freedom are largely overlapping ideas. However, while freedom and liberty are viewed as taken for granted, leisure is viewed as lacking, and is not taken for granted. I have shown that at the heart of the meaning of leisure are life-moments which do not serve any purpose beyond themselves, but rather include an activity that is valuable on its own. We have seen that our liberal culture, which appreciates freedom and leisure, has a hierarchy of leisure activities, implying that not all leisure activities are of equal value. I have shown that this does not contradict liberal values or require coercion. In this way, we defined worthy-leisure in a liberal culture as instruction based on creating an educational state which 1) constitutes the moment of truth, 2) is not directed at outcomes beyond it, and 3) is given meaning through a valuable subject of study or another activity that is valued in a liberal culture. From there, I went on to describe a number of main requirements for teachers practicing worthy leisure and their training, both in terms of required knowledge and skills, and in terms of the mindset with which they should arrive to the lesson.
1. Taken from <http://www.stress.org/stress-is-killing-you>, 1/7/16 12:25PM. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Raz and Young individually refer to the issue of the origin of the value of autonomous choice: does its value come from the choice being autonomous or does it also have to do with the relative value of the chosen content? [↑](#footnote-ref-2)