

Kathryn Smith, Toronto, Ontario

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In the time I spent at the TI, Wolf became an influential mentor for me. What I learned from him and my TI-related training has shaped my adult life, opinions, decisions, beliefs (e.g., non-violence, sanctity of life), the expressions I use (e.g., “less worse,” “writing stick” and “two things...”), my understanding of the world, my faith (I became a Christian), and even what I drink. (Wolf and Susan insisted that I learn to like tea so that I could fully participate in the daily tea break.)

My strongest memories of the TI all come from the year I spent there are:

Wolf and Susan and I met at the beginning of each day for “morning teachings.” Wolf would have prepared lessons from current newspapers and news magazines, thoughts about material he was currently developing, commentary on what his colleagues were working on, lessons on history, Christianity, etc. So often, I heard the words, “Poor Smith...she doesn’t know.” I certainly lacked a broad general knowledge in those days!

- Trips in the car to workshops—more teachings, driving in reverse, listening to Wolf’s dictations.
- Arriving at the TI as a young student believing that I would be able to convince Wolf to stop using the term “retarded.”
- Dumpster-diving and salvaging various items from the garbage
- Moving the TI twice...so much packing and unpacking...so many boxes of books!
- Learning how to harvest black walnuts so that I wouldn’t starve when the end comes
- Serving at the Unity Kitchen
- Returning from the PASSING workshops I’d attended (without Wolf and Susan) and giving a report on what we’d seen and the major and minor issues we’d identified, only to have Wolf consider all I’d said, and then much more accurately identify the central issues.
- The amazing people I met through the TI—too many to name, and many who became very dear friends

For the past 20 years, I’ve been at home raising and homeschooling my four kids. I became a Christian nearly 20 years ago and have been an active church member and chorister ever since. It’s hard to know what course my life would have taken had I not been involved with the TI. I’m not sure if I would have found the church without the TI; I’m not sure I would have considered homeschooling had I not gone to the TI. Certainly, the kind of lessons that I have passed along to our kids have been shaped by what I learned at the TI. While I haven’t taught at TI workshops for some time, I belong to an SRV study group and continue to see all kinds of things through an SRV lens.

When I arrived at the TI as a student, I had absolutely no idea what to expect. I came out with such admiration for Wolf's work ethic, dedication, principles, analytical capacity, wisdom and intelligence, as well as his great humour, and his kindness and concern for others. Like so many others, I grew to love him. I am enormously grateful for the time I spent at the TI; my experience there has shaped every aspect of my life.