

**Wisdom Speaker Series at Centro de Ideas  
with *Andrew Cohen* and  
[The Integral Heart Foundation](#)**

Education is the heart of the work of the Integral Heart Foundation in Guatemala. The Critical-Thinking Program for teenagers is about changing culture from the inside out. We are working towards this goal, not by teaching our students *what to think*, but by teaching them *how to think for themselves*.

On April 10, 2013, the Integral Heart Foundation organized a special event as part of our Wisdom Speaker Series. This guest lecturer was Andrew Cohen and the event was hosted by Derek Steele at the *Centro de Ideas* in Antigua Guatemala. The depth of the teachings that were delivered made for a great evolution of consciousness and culture in Guatemala and it really felt as if we were in Plato's Academia.



Andrew spoke to our Critical-Thinking / Philosophy Program teen students for an hour and a half by video-Skype from his home and international headquarters in Massachusetts. It was truly a

brilliant and illuminating morning in Antigua Guatemala. His talk on spirituality was brought to light with the help of the teenagers' questions and answers and it was of great value for them. Some of the themes discussed during the morning included: Who am I? How shall I live? and, What is the purpose of life?

Andrew was skillful in answering the student's questions and addressing their doubts by bringing his deep philosophical and evolutionary wisdom to a level at which each one of the students could understand the content without missing any of the depth.



The teenagers learned a great deal and were mostly interested in the how they should live. They learned from Andrew that the first step in living a fulfilled life begins by taking care of oneself: to evolve, to study, to read, to deepen philosophical questioning and to meditate. But, not as an end, but as a means to do something greater, and something that will be of benefit to other human beings.

They also learned how leading a selfish life will never bring about happiness or fulfill their expectations, since they will always want something more. Living a more spiritual and open life, from a bigger picture than just myself was shown to be a wiser way to walk this beautiful journey called life.

There were also many questions about what does the ‘self’ mean, and what is the deepest part of myself. They were shown by Andrew how at the deepest level we are One and how different life could be if we all worked a little bit more towards getting to know that part of ourselves better. The questions also led to purpose and how to find it, and how to discover our own special gifts and talents.



The Integral Heart Foundation offers an opportunity for children to expand their minds and greatly increase their chances of breaking free from the cycle of poverty. The goal of this program, which began in 2010, is to create conscious leaders through an advanced educational program, which includes the development of mind, body, spirit, and emotions to deliver long-term sustainable solutions in the resource-poor environments in which they work. Research shows that children who are taught morals, ethics, and philosophy retain these valuable beliefs and ideas through adulthood, leading to a life of greater awareness, tolerance, and overall success. In Guatemala, most teenagers are not given the opportunity to learn about these mind-expanding concepts, as the circumstances they were born into force them into a life of menial labor and extreme hardship.

The *Centro de Ideas* is so inviting for this kind of inquiry that it was really easy for the students to focus on the teachings instead of in their own thoughts. We really do appreciate Derek's space and heart for allowing us to use it as a safe container for wisdom to unfold.



**Andrew Cohen** is an internationally respected spiritual teacher, cultural visionary, and founder of the global nonprofit EnlightenNext and its award-winning publication EnlightenNext magazine. Since 1986, Cohen has been traveling the world giving public lectures and leading intensive retreats. Through his writings, teachings, and ongoing dialogues with leading philosophers, scientists, and mystics, he has become known as one of the defining voices of the new evolutionary spirituality.

**Mick Quinn** is the Irish-born author of *The Uncommon Path* which was published by O-Books UK/USA and reached # 1 in several Amazon categories upon release in July 2009. Mick is also a teacher and he was the founder of several multi-million dollar New York City based technology companies. Along with his wife, Debora Prieto, he co-founded *The Integral Heart Foundation*, which is working on several humanitarian projects based in Antigua Guatemala.

**Debora Prieto** graduated from the University of Madrid as an educator of mentally handicapped children. She spent the following 10 years working with her skills in the Spanish healthcare system.

She has also studied philosophy for three years at the University of Madrid. Debora Prieto is a formal student of Western Zen Master, Genpo Roshi. She is a translator of spiritual and philosophical books and texts and she has co-authored two books on the topics of individual and cultural development.

**Both Mick and Debora** are the heads of the *Philosophy/Critical Thinking program* run by the Integral Heart Foundation.