

The Institute for Development of Human Potential



The IDHP diploma 1999-2001 The group members' perspective

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The group

The current IDHP Diploma course began in July 1999. It will finish in July 2001. We are a learning community of eleven group members and two primary facilitators, and represent a diversity of age, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle and profession. Sadly we do not have a wide racial representation.

Our reasons for committing to the course were many, our expectations even more. What we all agree is that the depth and extent of the growth we have experienced - and continue to sustain and develop - have been much greater than we had ever anticipated.

The process

The process has been both gentle and rigorous: often the change is so gradual we are aware of it only in the course of reflection and retrospection. However, a continuous scheme of self and peer assessment within a structure of personal, interpersonal,

group, and transpersonal work, leading to final self accreditation, ensures that reflection on and evaluation of our own development - in relation to ourselves and not to each other - is ongoing.

Our learning is entirely experiential. Yes, we have read and shared books. Yes, we have taken turns to scribe detailed notes for the group. Yes we have internalised many models on which to draw. But we have not felt encumbered by them. They are a metaphor, not the method; *a way, not the way*. In this, as in everything, our experience has embodied the contrast between doing and being, between acquiring and becoming. We have experienced profound and sustainable transformation, rather than merely researched it. And how else can we hope to facilitate such learning in others?

Indeed the whole process of facilitation has been demystified. We *are* facilitators; we have not learnt *how to facilitate*. And yet, on another level, we will never cease learning how to

facilitate. For what else is facilitation other than having the courage to say, 'Here I am,' and to create a space where others are empowered to say it? It is no more - and certainly no less - than this.

Changes

The professional changes undergone within the group are significant. At, or shortly before the start of the course, three members were self-employed, eight worked for public sector and not-for-profit organisations: the health service, the police, the Church, education. Now the three still working within those organisations have other visions, and are meanwhile bringing their integrity and authenticity to those organisations. The five who have left are working as freelance facilitators and consultants, individually and together, experiencing a sense of ownership of and integration with their work in many cases for the first time in their lives. The three who were self-employed before the course have chosen to remain so and are exploring different and wider avenues, and achieving a more satisfying life/work balance.

These moves are an outward manifestation and an integral part - not separate from - the enormous, yet sometimes less tangible, personal metamorphoses experienced on every level: physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual.

A quality of the course which makes it so different from many has been the seemingly limitless range of creative learning methodologies. We have used words, we have used music and voice, we have used dance and movement, we have used art of many kinds.

A visual representation

So aware now of the end of the course, one of our group members recently facilitated a short opportunity to reflect on the 20 months we have been working together. We created a time-line sculpture, with no preparation, little verbal communication, and using only the resources available to us in the room in which we were working. The result was a beautiful, dynamic and vivid representation of the journey we have travelled both individually and as a group. It was both a reflection and a celebration - of who we were, who we are, and who we are becoming - and is appropriate to refer to here.

We remembered how we came through the solid door on that first day laden with baggage, bringing our visions and our dreams, our defences and our armour.

We reflected on the stages along the first year of our journey: regression and integration - the focus of our work for two days - raising our awareness of our own regressive patterns; our encounter, and the fear and the honesty that brought to our group experience.

Our first residential was in the Spring - March, and it was freezing. Five of us camped and woke up each morning to a covering of ice on the tents: an appropriate physical awareness for two days of bodywork. But it wasn't just the ice on the tents that melted and transformed during that week.

As we approached the end of the first year there were choices to be made: we as a group took responsibility for choosing and inviting the external facilitators for the second year. We chose to work with Psychodrama, the

Medicine Wheel, Sexuality, Deep Ecology and Dance. Our primary facilitators and our group member-facilitators have offered a rich range of their own particular skills and wisdoms: Myth, Dreamwork, Voicework, Imagework, Change....

Towards the end of our sculpture an empty glass bowl once contained stones and beads. They are now symbolically scattered and individualised, but still inter-related and - in some way - connected to each other. The road of purple cloth appears to end at the open glass door. But of course it never ends. It continues outside - outside through the open door.

Endings - and Beginnings

As we stand near that open door, and look back at that journey, we notice how cluttered and heavy it looks at the beginning, where we dumped our baggage by the door we closed after we came in. We notice how uncluttered and light, how free and natural it becomes.

And as we look back we realise, too, that - synchronistically (and of course the journey's been full of synchronicities) - this is the first time we have worked in this particular room, and so we have felt unfamiliar with the resources we had available, and have thus used them more creatively and intuitively. Indeed we are even now looking at this road we have created and travelled with a sense of renewal and a freshness of vision. And we anticipate the roads we have not yet travelled with a sense of trust, freedom and wonder.

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

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On behalf of Christine Bowles, Ruth Bradbrook, Jenny Cook, Peter Coats, John Garland, Mica Goddard, Anna Hughes, Mairi MacLean, Joanna Percival, David Pritchard, Sue Richards, Brian Watts and herself.

