

Ernstraud Magazine

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happiness sharing as a way to peace

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§1 The Bare Face of Truth

Ernstraudian flagship has for years been the Ernstraud Encounter, a skeletal outline for productive dialog based on genuine interaction. The process is not an exercise in polished prose: using the outline, the conversants build an original structure in real time. They work out the revelations and breakthroughs they encounter along the way.

Memorized platitudes fall away as the parties realize success in their present activity, not in prepared individual goals. The process is revealing, measuring and exposing each participant's adeptness at understanding as dialogue proceeds with slow deliberation before measured speech.

The genuine encounter occurs in present being; it cannot be preprogrammed or commercialized. Let us hope that nobody will attempt to hire a facilitator. Doing so would abdicate the obligation of candid honesty and responsiveness to the dialogue partner.

While some of these encounters involve elaborate formality, others occur regularly in ordinary daily conversations graced by mutual respect. Always, the parties grow together.

Ernstraud Encounter

Two individuals have prepared to meet in friendship--or to learn friendship. They may be diplomats of hostile countries that speak different languages, or they may be next door neighbors practicing the same religion. Something has motivated them to come together: whatever their life stations may be, they follow these steps to greater understanding and common achievement.

Identifying Me -- two sessions

How can I know you if I don't know myself?

I. This is who I am. (Constructive self-image: I bring a talent.)

no false pride, no false humility

understanding why I am on earth, my gift to mankind

perception of myself and of others and our relationships

not a therapy session -- apply my talent to our result

II. My critics say this of me. (I understand how others see me.)

perception, trustworthiness--I am fair

empathetic understanding of other perspectives

accommodation of this external perception

valuation of others, including you

continuation, strength--I proceed thoughtfully

self confidence in the face of doubt

willingness to incorporate and synthesize

On with the Business -- two sessions

Each participant has been awaiting this moment of helping.

III. Your strength serves your concerns.

(I tell you your strengths.)

Accommodating the criticisms seasons your resolution.

I perceive your talents as possibilities for solution.

I formulate queries that deepen your confidence.

You create a new reality which is not a win-lose duality.

We, the conversants, become stronger *with* each other rather than *against* each other.

IV. We proceed to the identified shared issues we have brought into this encounter.

There is no distinction between YOUR concern and MY concern; we are sharing common burdens.

We are collaborators on mankind's concerns.

* * * * *

If the participants have come together from antagonistic positions which they hope to resolve, specific discussion of their differences may begin after stage IV is reached and sufficient bonding has occurred. Up to this point, the encounter has consisted in taking and sharing information for the purpose of forging a team capable of facing substantive issues.

§3 Observations

Dialectic: Thesis + Antithesis => Synthesis
(Bring something into existence that was not there before.)

"We see things not as they are, but as we are."

- H.M. Tomlinson

*When you are not on the same page,
open a new page and write on it together.*

- Kent Busse

In the **Ernstraud Encounter**, each stage is treated in sequence. Issues of disagreement are barred until stage IV; what would have been a battle becomes a collaboration. One stage might be substance for less than an hour, or for a day.

Disengagement periods (rumination breaks, silent reflection) provide time for taking private notes, sharing meals, hearing or making music together. Silent rest time can be more helpful than meaningless banter. The conversants demonstrate their tact and mutual sensitivity in setting the pace.

Using constant application of the Golden Rule, the **Ernstraud Encounter** thoroughly exposes each conversant's capacity for *empathy*. You might try imagining both sides of the encounter in advance as you would play both sides of a chess board; this is one technique of getting into the other person's mind. Remember to be flexible, because in the live encounter the other side is not likely to play out exactly the way you imagined it, just as in a chess exercise. The surprises will be particularly educational.