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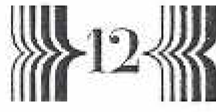
Ruth C. Cohn



Living-Learning Encounters: The Theme-Centered Interactional Method

COMMENTARY

Ruth Cohn suggests that what we learn and the way we learn it are too frequently irrelevant to actual human situations. What tends to happen in traditional learning situations is that material presented may remain emotionally unassimilated, i.e., not relevant in depth.

The theme-centered interactional method is defined and illustrated in an effort to demonstrate that learning, psychotherapy, and encounters all have in common an opportunity to provide a *live experience* for people. This opportunity can be realized when the leader respects and is responsible to the resources within the group so that confrontation techniques then become the vehicle rather than the limitation to personal growth.

BIOGRAPHY

Ruth C. Cohn's professional background is that of psychology, philosophy, and psychoanalysis. Her living space includes pre-Nazi Germany, Switzerland, and the United States. Her interest has grown to include a variety of therapeutic approaches with individuals and groups, which include ex-

perientialism and Gestalt therapy and the initiation of the theme-centered interactional method. This approach is geared to use knowledge of group therapy and group process for the improvement of group leading and group communication.

Ruth C. Cohn has been on the faculties of National Psychological Association of Psychoanalysis (N.P.A.P.) and the Group Therapy Department of the Post Graduate Center for Mental Health. She is the founder/director of the Workshop Institute for Living-Learning. Publications include a variety of papers on countertransference training of therapists and supervisors and on training intuition and various articles on the theme-centered interactional method.

Scope

When lively people communicate with each other about a thing, a task, or a theme they are in a living-learning situation. When people strive for awareness of each other beyond their functional roles (such as being the bus driver or the salesman), they are in a living-learning encounter. Living-learning encounters are our daily privilege of being alive and in touch with each other.

Living-learning is the celebration of being a human being who can take in and change around and create something new. Living-learning means enjoying pictures, perceptions, new feelings, new relationships, thoughts, motions, and skills—and never having to be bored. Living-learning is the joy of freedom and mastery and leisure and adventure alone or with another—the surprise of the unexpected, and the curious expectation of what now and what next and never being still for long.

The term "living-learning" was coined by Norman Liberman on the occasion of our founding the Workshop Institute for Living-Learning in 1966. We searched for a term that would express the process of learning as exciting, alive, and with-it. This concept implies the contrast to dead-learning that most people endure in their acceptance of splitting life into hours of learning (or having a job) and hours of being free and living. Students are asked to "learn" so they can "live and make a living later on in life." This separation of living *and* learning is a sad cultural fact and not a biologic necessity. The baby reaches out for his toes, watches a colorful windblown pinwheel, gurgles sounds toward articulated words, kicks and wiggles and coos—or, if he fails, may rage and cry. His learning is his living. Our culture pushes children and adults to learn and work faster and encourages competitive rather than cooperative games and schooling. What could be a living-learning growing process becomes a competitive rat race—planting ulterior motivation and ultimately defeating itself destructively.

The theme-centered interactional method[1] is a systematic attempt to bring living-learning encounters and their excitement into working groups—such as academic classrooms, staff meetings, conventions, research teams, and social action groups. The method is a derivative of group therapy, teaching, and communication approaches. Like group therapy, it offers respect for the individual's growth and promotes the group's awareness for each person's participation within the flow of the group members' concerns. Group therapy has, however, one theme and one theme only: "I want to feel and function better." The W.I.L.L. method shifts the emphasis from this one theme of developing an individual's growth potential to any and all tasks or themes that individuals can be concerned with—without losing the focus of each person's uniqueness. Themes may, for instance, refer to police trainees as "trouble shooting without a gun," to high school students as "turning on with mathematics," to staff relationships as "being myself—being black or being white," to therapeutic research groups as "using different methods in different therapeutic situations," and so on.

The number of possible themes in interactional groups is unlimited. The participants may be children, adolescents, or adults. The themes may be concerned with educational, scientific, artistic, and organizational themes and also family, commune, and community living. The optimal size of a group ranges from about 12 to 20 people. However, the principles of the method are also applicable for large meetings and are helpful in private life and smaller groups.

This chapter will give a survey of how the theme-centered interactional method is being used in working groups.

Historically, the theme-centered interactional approach evolved spontaneously in one of my psychoanalytic training groups in 1955. As I conceptualized the method, ideas and techniques from other sources were integrated. I learned most from the Atlanta Psychiatric Clinic (especially from Carl Whitaker and John Warkentin) and from Gestalt therapy (especially from Fritz Perls and James Simkin). Progress in techniques followed by using the theme-centered interactional method in the Workshop Institutes for Living-Learning—our staffs working in the community and training professional and paraprofessional group leaders. The method, despite its firm structure, can embrace an unlimited number of techniques or games. These may include those derived from psychodrama (Moreno) and behaviorism, or the video techniques of Ian Alger and Peter Hogan, or the personal and interactional games of Dan Malamud, or the encounter techniques of Elizabeth Mintz and Virginia Satir. (Hogan, Malamud, and Mintz are mem-

[1] Sometimes referred to as the W.I.L.L. method taught at the Workshop Institutes for Living-Learning in New York City and Atlanta, Ga.

bers of W.I.L.L.; they and other creative people have shared in improving the method with their ideas, work, and friendship.)

Living-Learning—A Holistic Approach

I encounter you means I meet you; it means I want to know you. It means I open my senses, my feelings, and my mind to you. It also means I want you to know me and open myself up to be known. We encounter each other if you too want to encounter me and know me. I might want to know all of you that can be known or just a very little bit, and vice versa. The fuller the encounter, the richer we become.

To learn something from my encounter with you means to keep something of you in my existence. I can never take into me what is inside of you—because your perceptions, data, thoughts, and, of course, feelings are always yours. The message from you to me changes on its way from your sending to my receiving. If both of us were to watch a painter painting a picture, there would be at least three images of this picture in the room: the painter's, yours, and mine. (Yet there *is* a picture in the room. You—I—We center our learning in each other *and* the picture.)

I can accept the simple fact of our being psychobiologic islands as a beautiful adventure. I can playfully enjoy chance and choice of an infinite number of encounters and learning adventures. I can accept that we live in this world as separate and autonomous individuals, yet that bridges, ferryboats, jets, and rockets bring us into close proximity —and so can songs, words, smiles, and touch. Or I can fight our separateness and communion by trying to establish fantasy symbiosis or establish autistic isolation, thereby losing the perspective that all islands meet under the ocean and that galaxies are bonded in space.

Whenever a person tries to deny the island quality of human existence—the quality that keeps human beings separate and connected—his communication to the other becomes unrealistic and in a deeper sense comical. When I try to convince you of something that is self-evident to me (because of my particular background and characteristics), I act like a mother who tries to force-feed a child. The child swallowing the unwanted has his own self-propelled living force and may not digest the food—he may vomit, get ulcers, and hate his mother.

By the same token, if a teacher tries to "make" students learn data or opinions from him *his* way and expects students to learn what he knows, he does not take into account people's uniqueness of perceiving, feeling, and thinking and their framework of background and motivation; these differences change every fact, every concept, theory, and method into individual particles of personal systems. Force-feeding of food corresponds to force-feeding in teaching and communication. The food may disappear in the child's body as the teachers' words, data, and utterings may disappear in the student's learning apparatus, but such forced learning, lacking vital involvement, is dead-learning. It is likely to come out undigested or it may poison the student into lethargy or rage, or—most frequently—into lifeless conformity. The most important music, words, or formulas—Bach's, Shakespeare's or Einstein's —have no bearing on students whose receptive and integrative organs are preoccupied with other scholarly or mundane matters, or are pained or fatigued.

Writing down these thoughts, I feel foolish. The statements in this last paragraph seem self-evident to me. Yet the facts show that schools and schoolbooks, organizational meetings, and round-table discussions go on with dead-learning programs and methods as if people were data-processing machines with input, integration, and output mechanisms that can be fed and forced to function with a little bit of repair (reward and punishment) and refinement of procedures. The facts that what you say is not what I hear and what I know for sure is opposed by you —and may be opposed by myself tomorrow—are hard facts to learn; they may have to be stated and restated over and over again from generation to generation—like the commands of "Thou shalt not kill" and "Gnoti Sau Ton."

Living-learning is a concept within a holistic philosophy of man. It encompasses the wholeness of sensing, feeling, thinking, and believing in the wholeness of being a creature who integrates past and future in his present somatopsychic, mindful existence. And this philosophy encompasses man's bondage in causality as well as his freedom of choice and his being a separate individual and a participant in the social and material universe. The seeming paradox of being a separate biologic unit *and* being a social participant presents each individual with conflicts, unfulfilled wishes, and dynamic strivings to balance the never-balanced.

Living-learning encounters occur between two, three, or more people. Living-learning encounters can be spoken, danced, kissed, fought, or cried. They can even be—with more difficulty—written or read. I, writer, and you, reader, right now are in such a difficult encounter. The writer-reader unit is a nonfeedback encounter. I, writer, want to influence you, flow into you, make a difference to you, have an impact on you—with my written-down feelings, thoughts, experiences. Yet I must take the risk of not being heard. I must accept and confirm the existential writer's situation of loneliness-by-no-immediate-response; I must ride on the wings of a fantasy encounter—and you??? (Point 8 in this

book's Editors' "Instructions to Contributors": "Above all—involve and interest the reader.") What methods are there to bridge the gap from my sending to your receiving?[2]

Living-learning can occur in solitude and in interchange with other people. Living-learning may be experienced in reading or in lonely ecstasy of seeing a sunset over the ocean, or understanding a mathematical formula. Yet even in solitude most people relate their feelings and fantasies to an absent person or group—the parent, the lover, the teacher, the class, the staff ("if only they were here, I could tell them"). And in absence of such fantasy there still is the participation with others by the mere fact of shared language, shared symbols, and a shared conceptual world. No one is ever alone inside himself—he contains his partnerships with the past, present, and future environment within himself. It is only in participant autonomy that we exist. This participant autonomous I-We relationship in living can be promoted constructively in humanistic communication groups and can be dehumanized in dictatorial and dead-learning settings.

Our schools and boards are as yet resistive or ignorant of the useful role of interactional groups. Classes and meetings are primarily theme-and-leader-directed. The experience of students and group members is therefore that their inner needs or wants, abilities and interpersonal interests, preoccupations and conflicts are ignored or negated. Living-learning energy is converted into dead-learning. Boredom, sleepiness, rebellion, and resignation ensue. *The international uprising of students* and workers, I believe, is not only a phenomenon of economic and racial origin or rejection of nuclear world destruction but *also an expression of a desire to be respectfully heard, to be counted as creative individuals, an antidote against anonymity within an overpopulated world.*

The W.I.L.L. method represents an approach to personalize the impersonalized world of mass education and mass communication. It encourages the individual's self-realization of his sensing *and* feeling *and* thinking potential and his relating intimately and usefully with people who can become important to him. The method is built on faith that a task can be accomplished both more meaningfully for each individual and more successfully in accomplishment if the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual uniqueness of each person is respected and enhanced within the group's involvement with the theme. Therefore, the method promotes awareness of the I and of the You as individuals as well as the We of the group as a whole, cohesion results from the awareness of all I's of each other and the theme. *The theme-centered*

[2] The common writer's block can be better understood by realizing the inherent difficulty of communication by memory and fantasy.

interactional group strives for awareness and furthering of each I-potential and We-cohesion and the accomplishment of penetrating a theme or fulfilling a task. Thus, the I-We-It triangle is the structural image of the theme-centered interactional method: the connection of three points of equal importance—the individual, the group, and the theme.

GROUPS

The interactional group is a lively place in which learning takes place. I first became aware of its unique living-learning potential when I compared the deadness of most classrooms, staff meetings, and especially lecture halls with the passion and enthusiasm engendered in therapy groups; and the repeated statements of group therapy patients that the group has been their most important learning experience in life. The interaction in group therapy centers around the participants' personal difficulties and growth potential. The interaction in such groups is concerned with your and my problems and achievements and with living with each other in the space and time of the therapy sessions. However, you and I may add other themes to our interaction than those concerning our personal lives. A group is a group is a group (and not a cluster, crowd, or mass) if all persons within a given time and space share concern for themselves, for each other, and for a theme or task.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Father, mother, and child may be together in the kitchen. They are a family by definition; whether this family is a group depends on their concern with each other and their relatedness to a theme (task). Father may fix a gadget, mother cook dinner, child draw a picture. They may be isolated individuals or they may have concern for each other's feelings and activities. They may share implicitly or explicitly a theme such as "doing things for family living," "making our house nice," "getting things done together," or even "spiting each other." Such themes would be expressed in verbal and/or nonverbal communication.

The triple concern for each (I), for the group as a whole (We), and for the activity and/or theme (It) makes father-mother-child in the kitchen a group rather than a cluster of people. *The rationale of a group thus is the I-We-It triangle. This triangle symbolizes the importance of the respect for the individual with his psychosomatic and spiritual needs, wants, and beliefs, the group as a cohesive team, and the subject matter as the concern of all participants.* The degree of

group cohesion depends on the dynamic balance of these I-We-It factors. If for any length of time one or two of these factors are neglected or dominant, group cohesion dissolves and the people in the room become a cluster or a mass.

Cocktail Party. People mill around the room. I meet another "I" and another one. Each "I" has his own pursuits: meeting friends from old times, meeting new people, showing off clothes, getting money for a cause, enjoying food or drinks or conversation, looking at pictures on the wall. There are meetings from "I" to "I" but no common theme. No "We" evolves (beyond possibly some fleeting subgroups with private themes). *This is a microlab of isolation within a mass.*

Lecture Hall. A professor or minister speaks about a theme to many people. If the speaker has good thoughts, lively manners, and clear and convincing ways of speaking, and if he is aware of or at least in tune with the interests of his audience, he creates a multiple theme-to-I relationship between himself and the audience. Many isolated I's thus relate to the speech and the speaker. A "We" is not created because there is little communication from the listener to the speaker and from the listener to his peer listeners. Many lines lead from the I's to the speaker and to the It: the We is represented only by nonverbal and unchecked "thin" lines drawn between peers. I call this the "star relationship" in which all lines go from participants to the speaker and the theme. Under the I-We-It perspective, the We falls short. No group ensues. (*This is a microlab of cultural indoctrination.*)

Academic Seminar. In an academic seminar teacher and students are concerned with themes. The overt theme may be Plato, trigonometry, forestry, or cubism. Covert themes are the teacher's status and the students' grades. Teacher and students may or may not be involved in the overt theme. Their passion may or may not be elsewhere. The "It" (the theme) is in the foreground; the I-involvement may include a thin intellectual layer and exclude all other living-learning energy; the We-cohesion may be spotty. No group has been created. (*This is a microlab of competitive civilization.*)

Family. A family trims a Christmas tree. Father puts up the tree and the lights. The big children put on decorations. Grandmother fixes broken hangers. Mother helps little children to cut out paper trimmings. If the activities are an expression of the family's feelings and the desire to do this together, a group has been formed. The parents, ideally, function as "coleaders" of this group and are concerned not only with trimming the tree but also with helping the family develop manual, esthetic, and interpersonal skills and with supporting the grandparents' emotional and useful position in the family. (*This can be a living-learning group.*)

Group Therapy Group. A group therapy group is involved in the theme "I want to feel and function better." The participants may be interested in one man's difficulties in getting along with his employer. The patient exposes his feelings toward his boss and toward the therapist. The group members relate their perceptions and interpretations to the copatient. They also talk about their own feelings toward this man as well as their involvements with authority figures. The group therapist relates in personal ways to the one patient, the group, and himself. The people in this session are a group concerned with the I-We-It. (*This too can be a living-learning group.*)

THE THEME-CENTERED INTERACTIONAL GROUP (THE I-WE-IT APPROACH)

In initiating and practicing the theme-centered interactional method I have endeavored systematically to create a group structure that promotes living-learning in classrooms, research groups, round-table conferences, and any place where people meet for educational, organizational, research, or other community purposes. Such models that occur spontaneously in families and in group therapy have rarely come forth in educational and organizational settings, which have been concerned with either theme-centered programs or personal care for growth and health.

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophic basis for the theme-centered interactional method is holistic.

The wholeness of man has a multitude of aspects: He is a psychobiologic entity who senses *and* feels, *and* thinks, *and* believes. He is a being, determined by and determining his past, present, and future. His vantage point is his here-and-now. His past, present, and future contain chance and choice. Man is a participant partner of the universe. His partnership is determined by all and determines all others.

From the basis of these axiomatic assumptions it follows that man, as a psychobiologic unit in time and space and as participant partner in the universe, is both autonomous and interdependent: An individual, an I, functions and lives well in the flowing process of his existence if he lives within the awareness and consideration of his self-reliance and

partnership; he becomes a burden to himself (sick) and to mankind (asocial) if he distorts his autonomy into the practice of autism and his interdependence into the illusion of grandiose independence or helpless dependency.

Promoting the living-learning spirit of each person in an interactional group means to accept each individual's inalienable right and reality to be autonomous and interdependent.

Only the I, only the individual, is in the position of inward knowledge of his sensation, feelings, desires, and aspirations. No outside perception equals intrapsychic self-knowledge. The outsider, on the other hand, can perceive and intuit much about the other person if he functions with awareness of and sensitivity to reality rather than to his own projections. Such perceptions and intuitions can be helpful to the other's inward recognition and self-realization.

The existential condition of the self being in the center of his own world gives each person the responsibility for his own experience and activities. (Nobody can substitute for me as the core of my own existence.)

THE "GLOBE"

The theme-centered interactional method relies on awareness of what constitutes an interactional group and use of these constituents dynamically. The group is the meeting of people who are concerned with each other and a theme. The method encourages free-flowing awareness of all structural factors.

The I-We-It factors designate the group's balance at any given moment. A group, however, does not exist unto itself but is embedded in the larger circle of environmental circumstances. These circumstances include the givens of time, space, motivational, hierarchic, and functional auspices of the human environment in which the workshop takes place. These data include strict or flexible time schedules—such as hours per week, week ends, and evening or day series. The space may be set within classroom organizational quarters, a rented house, a retreat, offices, or any other (preferably secluded) space. Flexibility in the widest sense is possible—one can make group arrangements at street corners, conventions, bars, and so on (but these are rather minimal operational conditions for the method).

The globe includes the purpose of the workshop meeting. The purpose may be set by the group; a group may contract a leader; or people may respond to an advertisement. The purpose or goal may, however, also be set by people who have power over others—such as prison officials over prisoners, teachers over children, administrators and employers over employees.

The globe includes the constellation of the group membership. Are they all strangers at the beginning or do some people know each other? Are they hostile or friendly to new people? It is vital to know the constellation of group participants. Once I led a group of ministers for a week end, knowing that they came from different churches and places. I did not realize, however, that half of the group had met weekly for half a year but the others were strangers. There was an undercurrent of hostility between these subgroups of various kinds, which could be worked through only after the globe factors were known.

Sometimes a "captive" group receives the group leader as a spy and perceives the workshop as a planned brainwashing procedure that is to be resisted. Only when such globe factors are cleared up can living-learning encounters take place. Most difficulties in interactional workshops arise not from overt interactions, but from opaque interfering constellations, or from real or suspected manipulations by outside forces.

As soon as these are recognized, they become workable challenges for group interaction.

Examples. I was asked to give a workshop on staff relationships in a western psychiatric clinic. The work seemed easy. People were eager and cooperative. Only after a relatively long time, did I become aware of the fact that those staff members who were unfriendly to the medical director (who had arranged for this workshop) had not come to participate! The two-party system showed up by nonparticipation.

I was invited to lead a workshop in a southern growth center. A few months later I received a letter from another not-too-distant organization stating that they had agreed to join this series. This was confirmed. A few days prior to the meeting I was informed by the representative of the first organization that there were more registrants than I had stated as my maximum. I said that this would be alright if I were allowed to bring a coleader. This was acceptable to the person I spoke to. On my arrival—a few hours prior to that of my coleader—the representative of the second organization greeted me in great anger. *He* had not agreed to accept a coleader and he would therefore advise his group to leave if they so chose. My young coleader (who just happened to be black—a fact not previously known to the organizational representatives) and I went through a miserable period of clearing the air before anything else could be accomplished. This was a typical "globe" error.

I had been invited to go to England after giving a speech at a convention in Vienna about the theme-centered interactional method. The invitation was for me to be the "consultant for the staff" of a group therapy association for a two-week training session for mental health

workers and teachers. I assumed that I was consulted to introduce the W.I.L.L. method. It took the staff and me four days of agony until we recognized that they wanted me to help them improve their own method rather than acquaint them with mine. Because I was on theoretic and practical issues in opposition to their credo (group leaders as observers rather than as participants), we found ourselves in a difficult position. The misjudgment of the globe here put the staff and me in conflict.

The environmental globe in which each interactional triangle takes place does not exist unto itself but, like all stellar globes, is embedded in the universe and influenced and coguided by all other globes and the universal condition. Thus, *an interactional workshop takes on characteristics of its individual members as well as their connectedness to their societal relationships.*

In a theme-centered interactional workshop the group leader functions as the guardian of the method. He guards a multiplicity of factors: the "globe" triangle (space-time-environmental condition) and the interactional triangle of the multifaceted "I," the intricate "We," and the establishment and pursuit of the "It." The first and most important task is the setting of the scene in cooperation with the person(s) who shares in the responsibility of establishing the workshop series. Time, space, environment, and themes must be optimally geared to the purpose of the group meetings. Following are some examples of corelating the purpose of the program with an experiential theme-centered design.

Examples. (for experientially relating the theme to the globe).

Purpose. Training group therapists as group leaders and staff members of the Workshop Institute for Living-Learning.

Time. Fall, 1966. A week end.

Place. Renee Nell's country place (a halfway house in Connecticut). The halfway-house residents participated (as community representatives in the program), Renee Nell as guest member of the staff-in-training.

Theme. Multiple groups: Segregation-collision-coexistence-integration.

One of the *built-in theme experiences* of that training week end was the inclusion of various forms of segregational experiences. These were to be in four of eight complementary groups: *residents (of the country place) and professionals,* blacks and whites, men and women, Jews and Christians. Each participant belonged to one category of each of these pairs. Each section worked together in such a segregated state for one-half hour. *Each person* therefore *had four different experiences—of*

being segregated with "his own kind." Each subgroup had a group leader belonging to the category he led.

SCHEDULE

Friday Evening

On arrival	Buffet supper (professionals and residents)	
9:30–11:00 P.M.	Principles and techniques of the theme-centered interactional method, Ruth C. Cohn	

Saturday

9:00– 9:30 A.M.	Breakfast	
9:30–11:30 A.M.	Theme: segregation (rotating half-hour groups)	
	Segregated groups	Group leaders
Living room	Residents only	Renee Nell
Library	Professionals only	Ruth C. Cohn
Living room	Blacks only	Win Adams
Library	Whites only	Norman Liberman
Living room	Men only	Stanley Hayden
Library	Women only	Vivian Guze
Living room	Jews only	Leonard Schwartz
Library	Christians only	Hans Priester
11:45– 1:15 P.M.	The theme-centered interactional method Theme: *multiple groups: segregation-collision-coexistence-integration* (professionals only), Ruth C. Cohn	
1:15– 4:00 P.M.	Lunch and leisure (including indoor and outdoor sports)	
4:00– 5:30 P.M.	Theme: *segregation and collision* Various group members and leaders Professionals and residents	
5:30– 7:00 P.M.	Theme: *Coexistence and integration* Small heterogeneous groups Professionals and residents	
7:30 P.M.	Dinner	
Evening	"Happenings" led by Renee Nell and residents	

Sunday

9:00– 9:30 A.M.	Breakfast
9:30–11:00 A.M.	Practicing theme-centered interactional workshop techniques with small heterogeneous groups on themes such as "freeing

Sunday

	creativity," "freedom and bondage," "non-verbal communication," selected by residents and professionals
11:15– 1:00 P.M.	Workshop on leadership of theme-centered interactional workshops and creating the workshop institute Professionals only
1:00 P.M.	Lunch; end of program

Notes Referring to One Experiential Part of Dealing with the "Segregation." At breakfast I assigned two rooms, library and living room, to the various paired groups, truly by size or at random. I stated the theme as, "How does it feel to be in this group, not permitted to go to the other room, to the other people?" (Each group had a trained theme-centered interactional workshop leader, except the black group whose leader happened to be ill.)

The *resident group* felt the segregation as a hostile act. Why were they "condemned" to the library while the "head-shrinkers had 'their' living room?" Hostility prevailed and cautiousness to strangers was recommended.

The complementary *group of professionals* felt relatively at home. No feelings of discriminating or feeling discriminated against were expressed. "It feels like always." "We know this situation so well." "I have never been in a room with three Negro colleagues." The group, whose theme was meant to lead to experiencing segregation as professionals, related instead questions of interracial segregation. The in-group experience of being together, blacks and whites, in one professional group, was emotionally prevalent. (Therefore, more than a half-hour's time would have been needed before the theme-imposed experience could have come into productive awareness.)

After half an hour the schedule called for separation of *blacks and whites.* The black therapist walked out of the living room to join the one black resident guest in the library. The three empty seats of our black colleagues were filled by white residents. This was painful to some of us. The room became overcrowded with the influx of about 18 residents added to the 12 white professionals. "This is not a group." "We are too many to communicate." The residents expressed their antagonism about our intrusion into *their* living room. We felt the same way about *their* coming in. We were emotionally divided into "us" as a familiar group of New York professionals and "them" as country place residents, and vice versa. After some expressions of hostility, our interest in meeting each other became predominant. Yet the immediate experience of the deserted and filled-up chairs remained a visceral undercurrent in some of us.

The black group felt their small size as disturbing. Having one black resident among three black professionals became the theme. The thinness of the report emphasized hesitancy to explore our prejudices. (This changed radically in the following theme-centered workshops.)

The clock sent the men into the library. The *women* stayed in the living room and were joined by the one female black therapist. We were comfortable in group size, giggly in spirit. Knitting needles tap-danced. Chatting was easy. "'Why don't we miss the men?" "It is only a half-hour—it is so nice to feel like we are back in college—feet up and not care." The fact that a female black therapist was present mentioned by one white colleague. This statement hurt the group spirit. The lightness was lost. We worked on this.

The *men* reported an unhappy group spirit. They felt put upon. "Let me get out of here." "We are heading for a collision." There was great interest about what might go on in the women's group. Small subgroup discussions ensued. Breaking the closed door open was imminent when the clock struck for the last paired segregation group: Jews and Christians.

There were rampant hostility and fractionalism in the *Jewish* group. "I hate German Jews; they feel superior." "American Jews discriminate." "Every person I like is a Jew to me—I don't care whether he is or not." "I don't *feel* that I'm Jewish—I just *know* I am." "How can you say you are Jewish if you don't care that your child marries a *goy?*"—Again the intragroup split was dominant. Some comfort and discomfort about the absent Christians were expressed.

The *Christians* did not feel like a group. They felt discriminated against. "*They* must have a good time." "*They* are a closely knit real family; *they* always are." "We are not a group at all—we are a non-group of non-Jews."

The segregation experience stayed on. There was self-consciousness about who would sit with whom at the lunch tables. We talked about this too. *In most groups self-segregatory experiences had overshadowed those of being discriminated against.*

Another Example (for programming and building relevant experiences into the here-and-now of the theme to be explored).

THE GLOBE

Advertised workshop; developing growth potential (general public) and group leadership training for W.I.L.L. staff (25 participants).

Time. Week end, 1967.
Place. A group leader's office apartment; use of two rooms.
Theme. "The Challenge of Change" (exploring participants' attitudes toward major and minor changes in living; changes that have to be accepted and changes that the person initiates; bringing up individual's general attitudes and imminent changes in their living, including marriage and divorce, job changes, family changes, aging, moving).

GROUP LEADERS
Ruth C. Cohn and Vivian S. Guze.

PROGRAM
Friday Evening. Total group meets for a few minutes, then divides into two rooms with one leader each.
Saturday Morning. First half: splitting up the groups of Friday night.
Second half: groups stay, leaders rotate to the other group.
Lunch together, informal.
Saturday Afternoon. First half: groups divided into married couples (who came together) and single participants; each group with one leader.
Second half: total group together with both leaders.
Saturday Evening. "Come-as-you-change" party.
Sunday Morning. First part: two W.I.L.L. staff leaders-in-training lead groups (the initial Friday evening group; leaders are now participants).
Sunday Afternoon. Training session with group leaders-in-training only; practice-centered discussion.

In the "challenge-of-change" workshop experiences of changes outside the group are explored within a setting that imposes changes in rapid order onto the group members. Surprisingly, in the various challenge-of-change workshops I have led, the swift change of group members and group leaders and rooms has not ever led to withdrawal and hesitation of the participants but rather to an acceleration of self-and-other involvement around the theme. The challenge of meeting new people and new situations and dealing with this theme has propelled the urgency of living-learning rather than delayed it.

Another Example. At the convention of the Art Directors of New York in 1967 Peter Hogan was to show his video tape of my workshop with eight art directors on the theme "The Art of Perceiving," and I was to discuss this video tape. Before the tape was shown, I asked the audience (approximately 200 people) to follow for a moment the (same) instructions I had given to the workshop group of art directors: to be silent for a few minutes and to be open to that which came easily into their awareness. After a few minutes I asked the reverse: to try to perceive something they had not and would not ordinarily perceive spontaneously—to perceive something in this room and situation that had escaped their attention before. Peter Hogan then showed the video tape. We both discussed in free interchange with the total audience whatever experiences or questions came up. The focal point of every single statement from the audience was their own experience rather than the observed video-taped workshop, which had dealt with the same phenomena. "How do I perceive? What do I perceive? What do I leave out? How do I deprive myself? How do my blind spots in perception handicap my work? How can I improve my visual, tactile, auditory, olfactory, kinesthetic senses?"

THEME-SETTING

As is apparent in the above three examples, theme-setting is an important facet of the theme-centered interactional workshop. The theme has to be in tune with the participants' interests and motivations. The wording of the theme is of great importance. The more stimulating, personalized, and positive the wording, the more likely cohesion around the theme can be achieved. Words have a hypnotic impact. "Toward a Team Approach in Our Agency" is a better title than "Faulty Communication with Our Staff"; "Being Myself and Being at Work" is more challenging than "The Impersonalized Job World," and so on. The ". . . ing" of the verb and the "noun "I" in the theme-setting are helpful aids.

Introduction to a Workshop. The introduction to a workshop series serves to promote awareness of personal, interpersonal, and thematic connections. Whatever introduction the group leader chooses, his purpose is to promote I-We-It awareness, a constructive spirit, and each person's awareness of his autonomy and interdependence.

In the above example of introducing the art director's workshop on "The Art of Perceiving," both in the small group and at the convention my introduction was spoken slowly with words like these: "Please be silent for a little while; sink back into yourself and think about ways you usually perceive things in your daily living—in your work, at home, in the street—which senses are you aware of using most? How do you remember taking things into you—so you can feel them, use them, have them at your disposal?"

And after a few minutes of silence another suggestion: "Please re-

main silent but shift your attention from your thinking and your memories to where you are now. How does it feel to be in this special group here, perceiving whatever you perceive—of yourself, of your body, of others, of the environment? What are you aware of here and now, without pushing yourself to perceive anything special? Just let things come into you as they always do." After another few minutes: "Now try to switch again and try to perceive something you did not perceive before—something you usually don't perceive but can make yourself perceive right now."

Such suggestions bring to the fore thoughts about the given theme and previous experiences and concepts—connections of thoughts and memories with the here-and-now and with the immediate experience of the self, the group, and the environment. Personal experience is emphasized by the request for silence and awareness of feelings and perceptions in the here-and-now. The final suggestion puts a theme-centered task into the foreground.

The introduction of silence in the beginning is opportune in many, by no means all, circumstances. It promotes an atmosphere in which the "I" can communicate with himself, a situation that is frequently repeated during the workshop series. Alternating between being by myself and reaching out appears to be a fundamental living-learning rhythm often neglected in our living ways except for the grace of having to sleep!

Although initially silences are often rejected by group members as "religious stuff," as "Quaker meetings," or as anxiety-producing, silences are usually cherished later on. The ebb and tide of being within myself and being with others *and the permission to be really with myself while being with others become a new and beautiful experience.*

It is important to estimate the levels of anxiety and hostility in advance planning. The introductory procedure is gauged to reduce rather than increase anticipated negative feelings. In "captive groups" such as parolees or staff members of organizations and agencies, the main point of order in the introduction is the attempt to establish a working relationship with the group leader. This may be achieved by short lectures and explanations, by very cautious exposition of what the group leader intuits of the anxiety and anger in the group, or by inquiries concerning what the group would like to do with this time if they had free choice (other than leaving the room). The principle behind the variety of chosen techniques requires that the introduction promote awareness and communication between each I, the group interaction, and the theme.

As soon as possible, but only in response to the ongoing process, ground rules are stated.

Ground Rules for the Participants. "*Let each one of us try to give to this session and to get from it whatever each one of us wants to give to and to get from this situation, from this group and the theme.*" This ground rule clearly states that each individual is responsible for himself. It cuts through the usual expectation of group members that the group leader carries sole responsibility for the well-being and achievements of the group. This group rule states that each person is responsible for getting and giving in the interaction with all others.

"*Be your own chairman. Speak or be silent as you want to and be aware of your own agenda.*" People in traditional groups, be it in schools or committees, raise their hands and wait to be asked by the chairman or teacher. The pendulum of history now seems to swing to the extreme of the other side: each person must do what he feels like, that is, "do his own thing." The encouragement to "be your own chairman" does not promote dependency on the group leader nor does it give up responsibility toward the group and the task. "Doing what I feel like—my own thing" promotes self-expression of feelings, whenever, wherever—with little foresight or planning for myself and others. (I may feel like smashing my television set because I see a hated face on the screen with no consideration for my own future loss or consideration for the other television users.) "*To be my own chairman*" *means to include what I feel like doing into the givens of the reality situation:* other people, time-space factors, aids and obstacles, and my own contradictory needs, wishes, goals, and so on. A good chairman has the outline of an agenda—a flexible idea of purpose, and an awareness of the fact that *he functions with responsibility toward a task and toward people.*

The participant as "his own chairman" has a multiple job: he is primarily the "chairman of himself" (in fact, this was my initial formulation later replaced by the more popular guidewords of "be your own chairman"). He is the only person who can achieve awareness of "his *inside* committee members": his own desires, tensions, pains and pleasures, conflicts, and goals. His contribution to the workshop includes his offering of experiences, his self's awareness, his relationship to others, and his personal connections to the theme. He is truly "egocentric," i.e., each person's center is within himself. All other people are peripheral to this center, even though each person as partner of the universe transcends simultaneously his selfness. *Each person transcends his egocentricity in two ways: through his communications to others and through being part of this world.*

The "be your own chairman" formulation of the autonomy-interdependence principle has had a profound effect on people within the group process as well as thereafter. "I am a theme-centered interactional workshop," said a sophisticated colleague. "I regard all my needs

clamoring for attention as my 'committee members' who have to tell important things, but I have the right and obligation as my own chairman to weigh their voices with regard to my own intent and agenda. What do I, as the total self, want to do—after listening to 'my own group inside': to stay in bed, to wash my hair, to read a book, to take care of many other chores, to be with my friends?" Or, another person's statement: "In any group I was inclined to be silent and to listen to others always waiting to be drawn out. When you said, "Be your own chairman," I was very angry at you and felt you just wanted to shirk your responsibility. Then I started to understand that nobody can ever substitute for myself. I have been more independent ever since." Another statement: "I did not want to go to my sister-in-law's party. I don't care for parties but my wife likes them. She also does not want to offend her sister by not going. So I thought: 'What have I learned in the living-learning workshop?' 'To be my own chairman.' She wants to go to the party; I want to paint the bookcase. I will try to convince her to go without me. It really worked after she understood. The whole family talks about 'being my own chairman.' Strange as it seems, we seem to enjoy ourselves much better since we know that each person is his own chairman—even our little ones. We as parents are also the cochairmen of the family group—as you are in the workshop."

Another ground rule in the workshop is: "*Disturbances take precedence.* State when you are bored, angry, preoccupied, in pain, excited about something else—state when you are out-of-it for whatever reasons and can't get back on your own steam."

Passionate involvements with issues not belonging to the theme, emotional preoccupation, outside problems, conflicts with other group members, physical discomfort, and so on may be "disturbances" that take precedence. The participants are advised to take the responsibility of telling the group when they do not concentrate. Stating discomforts or involvements is likely to help a member re-enter the group fully. This happens whether the disturbance or involvement has been fully explored or has just been stated and recognized.

The disturbance, however, is kept in the center of the group discussion only until the "missing group member" has been helped to come back to the group. This rule, like all others, has to be applied flexibly and handled delicately. In cases of deep-seated disturbances such as psychotic preoccupations or conflicts between married partners, or the grief of a mourning person, *tactful decisions are necessary between pursuing the person's disturbance or just sharing and recognizing it as existent and acceptable.*

It is a strange and beautiful fact that time spent on disturbances or passionate interferences invariably pays off. The rule is effective, human, and expedient. If, in a conference or classroom of 45 minutes' duration, 30 minutes or more is used to clear up interferences, the remainder of the time is open for important living-learning encounters. To learn this "economic" lesson over and over again is hard even for an experienced leader. (This rule is most clearly a derivative of psychoanalytic knowledge: In psychoanalysis, awareness is directed on defenses that work against the patient's goals. Work on resistance takes precedence over work on content.)

Examples. An academic seminar of economics was scheduled within the context of teaching the theme-centered interactional approach. The theme under discussion was "Stock Market and Money Market." The inspiring teacher gave a spontaneous lecture of about 15 minutes, exposing in simple and factual ways the difference between these two markets. The adult class of about 17 group leader students listened quietly and with interest. I functioned as a "participant supervisor." After 15 minutes I interrupted the teacher (as we had agreed). I said that two women seemed not to be with it. Several participants got angry; the lecture was interesting, and it would not be fair to stop the teacher because of a small minority. The teacher was frustrated but agreed with the experiment. The two women stated that they were not concentrating on the lecture. They never had been interested in economics, but did not mind sitting through this class. I suggested to them that they talk three minutes with each other about this lecture. Had they remembered anything—maybe one or two words? One of the two women, a Swiss citizen, explained that she had never seen any reason to be concerned with economic and political issues because in her country women had no right to vote; why aggravate herself over something she had no control over anyway? The other woman said she had heard the words "money market" and "stock market." For some reason the words "mountains of money" had occurred to her. These two different mountains had amused her, and she continued with a fantasy of one mountain of money and one mountain of ware. The two women's conversation was lively and impish, and the listeners as well as the speakers related to its humor. Within a few minutes the two outsiders felt included and the theme-centered discussion proceeded, with the "deviant members" genuinely expressing the wish to be able to widen their horizon in money matters.

In contrast to group therapy *the theme-centered interactional workshop does not venture to work through people's individual problems, desires, and preoccupations.* Sharing concern about them is meant to relieve the acute blocking and to enable the group to return to the theme as soon as possible. A psychotherapist group leader may use some short-therapeutic techniques such as role-playing, Gestalt interview, or encounter games. However, his emphasis remains on the

process that centers around the given theme. In the above example, for instance, no attempt was made to go into any interpretation of the meaning of the money disturbances. Catharsis and group acceptance were sufficient to re-establish group cohesion.

Another ground rule is: "*Speak for yourself, state yourself, speak per I.*" This rule puts a damper on hiding one's own opinion behind other people's. Whatever I feel is my feeling, not yours. To state myself as "I" means to take responsibility and to risk personal commitment. In the extreme, a suggestive "we" spoken by a group leader or a strong group member may lead individuals to give up their responsible judgment. This "we" is a great danger, for it enables people to lose conscience and conscientiousness.

In this context I had an interesting experience on my first return to my birthland, Germany, after 36 years, on the occasion of the D.A.G.G. (Deutsche Association fuer Gruppentherapie and Gruppendynamik) convention in Bonn, 1969. I was the chairman of a panel, and included the several hundred people of the audience in the discussion. I gave some directions by explaining the theme-centered interactional method and giving some ground rules. At the end of the meeting, which succeeded in establishing a living-learning encounter between the audience and the panel, a participant approached me enthusiastically: "I know why you had us be silent and think and speak 'per I': this way you avoid mass suggestion and mass hysteria." This was a thought that struck me deeply coming from a German colleague—a thought that had not entered my mind in this negative perspective: "to avoid mass hysteria" rather than "to promote the individual's autonomy"!

Other ground rules concerning technique rather than principle are interjected whenever necessary.

Group Leadership

(Editors' instructions: "Above all—involve and interest the reader.") In writing the previous paragraphs I may have gotten too involved in my own thinking, having you, reader, only dimly in the back of my mind. I have, however, the hope that you have followed me with your own thoughts or—like listening to a story or folksong—without a direct bridge from the writer to the reader.

But now, writing about group leadership I feel like talking more directly to you. I want to interest you in group leading with this method by telling you about my own experiences. I want to use one of the ground rules of the method and speak to you "per I." Of course, you will understand that although principles and rules belong to the method, the style of each group leader is uniquely his own.

In my writing style I will speak to you about my leading style. You as the reading partner of this nonfeedback dyad will be stimulated (or not) to receive and to assimilate (or not) in your own way what I try to say to a distant (oh so distant!) living-learning partner.

I stated before that I believe that the most important single element of group leading is the discerning of the globe: the time-space-human-situational environment. In my 15 years of trial and error and of conceptualizing the method, I have learned that the prework—the preparation for a workshop series—determines to a large extent its success or failure. I spend several hours of preparation before every beginning workshop series. During the workshop things flow easily if I have been correct in my prework. My simile is that of giving a party. I am careful in choosing the guests. I arrange food, furniture, candles, and flowers carefully. Thereafter I feel as "irresponsible" as my guests. The theme is friendship, sharing, and fun. The external structure invites success. I am my own guest.

The *prework* consists of several facets: (1) I establish all pertinent data, such as who wants the workshop, and who does not; who pays for it, and what is the financial situation? What are the dynamic forces that make such a workshop desirable in the minds of those who want it and undesirable for others? Why should I or why should I not be the group leader if this workshop comes to pass? How many leaders would be adequate for the situation? What are the room conditions—can we have a circle and comfortable seating? How much time is necessary to accomplish what can optimally be done? What compromises may have to be made in time, money, and so on? (2) I use my fantasy (or meditating ability) to imagine what kind of situation I will encounter. (I always assume that the collected data will be partly correct, partly biased, and always incomplete.) With these fantasies in mind, I play around with themes and subthemes that may stimulate me and others to achieve what we are out to achieve. (3) I contemplate an introductory procedure that will fit the situation. All introductory procedures aim at setting a positive living-learning encounter atmosphere and awareness of the I-We-It factors. In prethinking the introductory procedure, the estimated level of anxiety, sophistication, anticipation from previous experiences, intensity of needs, and so on all play a role, as well as the question of whether I am to lead a group alone or with a coleader. (4) The prethinking also includes the question of how many groups and group leaders will be necessary if the project includes many people and subgroups (schools, hospitals, business, and so on).

Match-or-miss fantasies in the prework highly help or hamper any interactional group work thereafter.

These and other preconsiderations occur either in lone meditation or as teamwork with coleaders in interactional workshop fashion. We

do not plan the theme-setting beyond a few sessions [illegible] any series but work out later grouping and theme-setting with the participants.

In the beginning of a workshop I try to promote an accepting, non-hostile climate. I believe that a negative atmosphere is not conducive to free communication and learning. The participants are not treated on the basis of "patienthood" or of "encountering brothers" but as people who come together for the penetration of a theme. Thus *the emphasis is not on curing pathology or meeting people or getting something done but on being myself with you while doing something together.*

My way of promoting a sensitive climate includes an accepting attitude to anything that is being said, especially in the beginning of the first session. I may reflect what is being said in a rogerian way, or recognize the value of the proposed statement. Or I may shift an inadequate remark slightly toward becoming useful or tell a suitable anecdote. In writing this down there seems to be more manipulation of content than actually occurs; *there is rarely any statement that does not contain a useful component, and it is this useful component that I seek to stress.*

Participant leadership starts at the very beginning. *As a group leader I am not only the chairman of the group but also the chairman of myself* with the same privileges and responsibilities as all other group members. In the introductory period, until a free and workable atmosphere has been established, I accept and even promote the "star relationship" by responding to everything that is being said.

I respond with my own feelings and experiences, propelling the group's interaction as well as establishing myself as a member of the group. Usually after 10 or 20 minutes some genuinely constructive direct statement is made from one participant to another. From then on I promote interaction mainly by taking a less dominant role. The rules and norms of group interaction that support awareness of autonomy and interdependence replace active leadership. However, the need for "dynamic balancing" of the I-We-It approach emphasizes the importance of leadership function as important throughout. I alternate between being the conductor of an orchestra, being the leading violinist, and being just any player. Yet very early in my theme-centered workshop experiences I found that groups do not stay centered around a theme when no one takes personal responsibility for the dynamic balancing. In advanced groups leadership can be established in rotation. Yet, without an appointed or declared leader the simultaneous emphasis on all triangular points gets lost. Groups tend to become (I-We) therapy or sensitivity groups or (It) academic discussion seminars. The dynamic-balancing task between the three factors demands consciousness of function as well as special skills.

As chairman of the group I use the fantasy of riding a bicycle with three pedals, labeled "I," "We," and "It." If the group, for instance, stays excessively with one participant for longer than he needs, to return to the theme I may step on the We or on the It pedal. I may do this by a direct request, such as taking a "snapshot" (concerning the We): "In a snapshot way would you please hold on to whatever you experienced at the moment when I stopped you. Make the rounds and say very briefly where you were at when I took the snapshot." This leads to knowing where each person's attention was. Such interruption leads to the "We." Everybody knows where everybody else is, and the group can decide whether to shift attention or to stay with the previous subtheme. *There are innumerable verbal and nonverbal techniques for shifting from one "pedal" to the other. More than anything else this shifting of pedals promotes the dynamic interaction and propelling force in W.I.L.L.'s living-learning encounters.*

As participant leader, I am chairman of the group—the chairman of myself—the person with inside awareness. *Being my own chairman as the group leader includes the awareness of myself as well as that of my job.* Thus I choose from all conscious images, thoughts, and feelings what I want to reveal as relevant for myself and for the process of the group. This conscious and careful choosing process I have called "*selective authenticity.*" It means that *whatever I say shall be authentic, but not everything that is authentic will be said.* To be authentic does not mean to be indiscriminate. *It is ethical and functional to gear my overt expressions to the estimated receptivity and sensitivity of the people around me.* What psychoanalysis has labeled "timing" and "dosing" is valid for any group leader's interventions. It is sometimes difficult to decide whether I forestall communication because I am anxious or because I am authentically selective. I believe, however, that being aware of this question and trying to answer it in every situation is more helpful than indiscriminate withholding of the therapist's personal feelings as in orthodox psychoanalytic technique, or indiscriminate exposing as in radical experientialist encounter groups. I like my concept of "selective authenticity" as being helpful for both experiential psychotherapy and group leading. *The hippocratic oath of "nihil nocere"—never to harm—is applicable to group leaders' ethics as well as physicians' and therapists'.* Excluding rare cases of group leaders' sadism, the most frequent way participants are harmed is by indolence or ignorance. I consider it neglect if I do not put my attention on every workshop member individually. Although I ask each person to be his own chairman, I am aware of the fact that nobody is capable of using himself fully autonomously, and that the fact of interdependence demands me to (yes) "be my brother's keeper." To be my brother's keeper means a dual statement: to give him what he needs if I have it

and not to interfere with his autonomy if he can make his own choices. *To give less than needed is theft; to give more is murder.*

I regard knowledge of *psychopathology* as a requisite for group leading in the community. I must have a feel for people's depressions, paranoid behavior, organic handicaps, and murderous tendencies. I do not try to "cure" people in theme-centered interaction workshops beyond aiding group members' participation. Yet rarely do I try to exclude a sick person from a workshop, partly because I feel that under good leadership such persons do not get harmed but may get help with regard to the thematic concerns and their relatedness to people; partly because most workshop groups are organizational or otherwise constituted through job or interest affiliations.

I may deal wtih deeper pathology by intentional and careful nonlabeled recognition of the person's depression, anxiety, or confusion. I may take several minutes or longer to give full attention and recognition to that person's present experience. I may concentrate on bodily awareness, comforting empathic reactions, or promote a cathartic expression. Or I may turn the group's attention and my own away from the disturbed person for a while trying to give him privacy and comfort in that way. I try to use and train my intuition so that I feel whether turning toward or turning away is what the sick person needs in this situation. Comforting, not curing; understanding, not interpreting; turning toward reality, not fantasy—these are my most frequent attitudes. However, even here there are no absolutes. I remember a participant who was highly observant of his dreams, which he faithfully brought into every session. This participant was paranoid. I needed to help forestall psychosis and also to lead the group back to the established theme. I decided to let the person tell his dreams but to immediately relate the dream content to the theme and to occurrences in the group. This was helpful to the dreamer, who became more related to the group. Group members in turn related to each other and the purpose of the theme rather than to the individual dream interpretation.

I often spend some private minutes with persons in need in intermissions. Such personal attention tends to keep ill persons group-and-theme-related. I sometimes recommend outside help if this is possible and acceptable to the person.

Occasionally I use short therapeutic techniques such as role-playing, Gestalt encounters, catharsis, or psychoanalytic interpretations if this seems to be in the interest of the situation. However, in training group leaders, I discourage everyone from using techniques he is not fully acquainted with. Selective authenticity is also important in choosing according to skills and needs.

Toward the end of a workshop session as well as of a series I try to

encourage the ventilation of feelings and thoughts that people may not want to take home. "What would you resent not having said or not having asked if we broke up now—30 minutes before we will separate? Imagine you were in the bus or car on your way home—what would you regret not having said or asked?"

This writing comes to an end. I know that I want to tell you much more. Yet there will be another workshop, another chapter, and some day a book—I do not have to continue now. I have said what I wanted to say here within this specific "globe": the purpose of this book, you, me, the editors, the space of this chapter.

(Point 8 of the editors' instructions "Above all: involve and interest the readers.") I would be delighted if I did. I would be more delighted if you would relieve the lonely writer-reader nonfeedback dyad and give me your reactions.