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# Men's Circle

## Meetings

Tentatively, twice per month on Tuesdays from 7:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. Come a little early so we can start on time.

## Limits

Once a circle reaches ten people, it will be closed.

## Commitment

It is preferred that each member of the circle be committed to attending each meeting.

## Fees

The quarterly fee is \$300 payable in advance for six sessions (18 hours at \$16.67 per hour). Monthly payments can be made at a rate of \$120 per month (6 hours @ \$20 per hour). The full monthly or quarterly amount is due regardless of attendance. There are no per session payment options, unless prearranged.

## Rules

This is not a therapeutic group. It is a personal development and support group for men. The following rules apply to everyone:

- » No drugs (except prescriptions) or alcoholic beverages before or during the sessions.
- » Allow differences to be a learning opportunity by making space for more than our personal beliefs.
- » Be respectful of self and others.
- » Show up physically and otherwise for each meeting.

## Focus

The meetings will provide an opportunity for the following:

- » A coming together of men from different walks of life that share the burdens and blessings of being men.
- » Learning how to be in the world in a different way that is based in the moment and that allows a wider range of responses.
- » Learning how to share the deeper parts of ourselves with other men without shame or guilt.
- » Learning how to clarify and state our wants

and needs as men.

- » Opening to the possibilities of life versus miming the social and familial roles and rules assigned to us as male children, adolescents or adults.

## Structure

Each session will be loosely structured to ensure continuity and consistency. For example:

- » Opening comments from each person stating what's upper most in their minds and a statement of a want for the evening; e.g. I want.....(two to three minutes for each person)
- » After all have made an opening comment, each person may provide an opening statement about the circle.... phrased as..... We Need.....
- » A topic can be the theme for the group initially, such as shame. What it means, how it occurs to men. This will be done through an introduction of the topic by the facilitator, unless someone else in the circle prefers to do so, followed by a dialogue.
- » Deep personal work can be done in the group. However, such work needs to be agreed by the circle. Such work can be postponed until another session, if it is determined that the group needs more time.

## Core Values of Present-Centered Groups Adapted from Joseph Zinker

We value the following group behaviors:

- » Address yourself to a specific person (try not to speak into an empty space in the middle of the room). Make eye contact if possible.
- » If you speak to someone, look at him/her and try to use the person's name.
- » Attend to and express what you experienced here and now.
- » Attend to your physical experience of the situation and learn to observe and respond to other people's body language.
- » Make an effort to be direct with others (i.e., don't speak about Jack to Mary; address yourself directly to Jack.
- » Respect each other's needs, individual boundaries, space, privacy; at the same time, learn how to nudge each other into growthful action.

- » When other people are in the middle of their work, do not intrude; bracket off your feelings and/or actions for the time being. (After all, this is what we often need to do in the real world; it does not mean, of course, that you should be a passive, compliant observer).
- » Use your observations, responses and feelings to enhance ownership of your feelings and observations. Describe your reaction, instead of prescribe what the other person should do.
- » Speak in the first person: First person statements enhance ownership of your feelings and observations; e.g. "I" statements instead of "you" statements
- » Convert your questions into statements; often questions are safe ways of not owning feelings: "Mary, did you feel that was fair to do to Bill?" may mean, "Mary, I feel you are cruel!"
- » Avoid giving advice; it is easily ignored and often mobilizes resistance. Instead, support the person to become his or her own internal authority.
- » Achieve a balance between your words and actions:
  - » Act instead of over-philosophizing, especially if you tend to ramble;
  - » on the other hand, learn to verbalize and explain yourself if you tend to constantly act out.

### Goals & Aspirations

Adapted from Joseph Zinker

Each of us—

- » moves toward greater awareness of himself—his body, his feelings, his environment;
- » learns to take ownership of his experience, rather than projecting them on to other;
- » learns to be aware of his needs and to develop skills to satisfy himself without violating others;
- » moves toward a fuller contact with his sensations, learning to smell, touch, hear, and see—to savor all aspects of himself;
- » moves toward the experience of his power and the ability to support himself, rather than relying on whining, blaming or guilt-making in order to mobilize support from the environment;
- » becomes sensitive to his surroundings, yet at the same time wears a coat of armor for situations which are potentially destructive or poisonous;

- » learns to take responsibility for his actions and their consequences;
- » feels comfortable with the awareness of his fantasy life and its expression.

### Group Goals

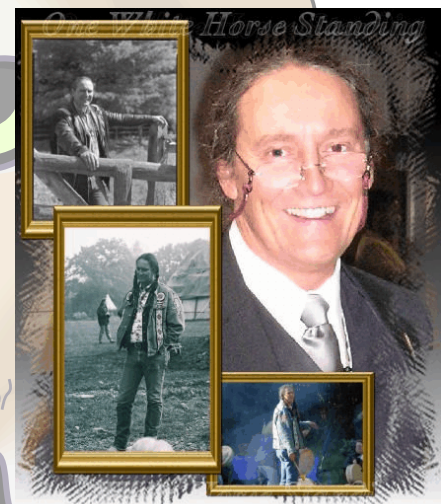
Adapted from Joseph Zinker

In Gestalt terms, individuals struggle to:

- » integrate conflicting intrapsychic polarities;
- » become more aware of their sensory life;
- » enrich and expand awareness;
- » stretch awareness into excitement and action'
- » achieve contact with themselves and others;
- » learn a comfortable way of withdrawing, of nourishing and renewing themselves;
- » learn to support themselves with their whole beings;
- » learn to flow smoothly through the awareness-excitement-contact cycle without serious blockage.

### Facilitator

*Herb Stevenson* is the founder of the Medicine of Men program. He is President/CEO of the Cleveland Consulting Group, Inc., where he specializes in executive and leadership development. He is listed in eight Who's Who lists, including Who's Who in American Law, Who's Who in Finance and Industry, and Who's who in American Education. Herb is on the faculty at the *Gestalt Institute of Cleveland* where he teaches in clinical and organizational programs and Cleveland State University where he teaches in the diversity management graduate school program. He facilitates Men's Circles in the Cleveland area. He is on the Board of Trustees of The American Indian Education Center in Cleveland, Ohio. Herb has spent that last decade reclaiming his Cherokee and Shawnee Indian heritage. He can be reached at 440.247.2673 or 440.247.2863 Fax. Email: [therbstevenson@aol.com](mailto:therbstevenson@aol.com) Website: [www.medicineofmen.com](http://www.medicineofmen.com) or [www.onewhitehorsestanding.com](http://www.onewhitehorsestanding.com) or [www.ClevelandConsultingGroup.com](http://www.ClevelandConsultingGroup.com)



## Therapy versus Male Maturation

Therapy	Male Maturation
<p>Aims for enhanced coping and social adjustment based on modification of one's behavior to the external authority in one's life...social, cultural, parental, employer, etc.</p> <p>Work is done in and about the middle world of day-to-day life, where emotional wounds, development of personal bonds, the cultivation of physical grace and emotional expression, and the blossoming of empathy, intimacy, and personality authenticity are addressed.</p> <p>It can be focused towards saving marriages, facilitating divorces, cultivating social skills or friendships, enhancing performance or enjoyment in our current careers, raising economic standing, ending depressions, helping us understand or express feelings, gaining insight into our personalities or personal histories, or being happier.</p> <p>Descent into the underworld is often avoided or bypassed by initiating coping or reframing techniques. Discomfort and/or suffering is eased as quickly as possible. The elimination of the symptoms is foremost.</p> <p>Male maturation means assuming socially and culturally defined adult responsibilities such as economic and employment sustainability, family and relational stability, and/or personality congruence.</p>	<p>Aims for initiation and cultural change that can lead to the re-establishment of internal authority as a vessel for how to live one's life.</p> <p>Work is done in the under world, home of the soul, where embodiment of the soul deepens individuality through the discovery of our particular place in the world and the embodiment of our unique form of service, and brought into the middle world, home of day to day life and personalities.</p> <p>The focus is to cultivate a relationship between the ego and the four parts of the soul.</p> <p><b>It is not</b> focused towards saving marriages, facilitating divorces, cultivating social skills or friendships, enhancing performance or enjoyment in our current careers, raising economic standing, ending depressions, helping us understand or express feelings, gaining insight into our personalities or personal histories, or being happier, even though it might occur as a side effect.</p> <p>The initial descent into the underworld may make life more difficult or lonely or less comfortable, secure, or happy as social stability and psychological composure can be lost while internal authority is restored so that the active, mature adult male of the soul can surface.</p> <p>Male maturation means moving closer to the soul. This can be done by returning to nature and experiencing the elements, exploring the symbols that give meaning to your life, discovering the vision that has been waiting for you to claim.</p>

Adapted from Bill Plotkin, *Soulcraft: Crossing into the Mysteries of Nature and Psyche*, 2003

Zinker, Joseph. 1977. *Creative process in Gestalt therapy*. New York: Vintage Books.