

# Trying the Forum at ZEGG

As observed by a British participant

The experience of forum is like timeless theatre, the drama of the soul, the great black bleak despairing pits turned over to reveal the bright autumnal reds of leaves which seem to be rotten and are only expressing life's cycle. Forum has been developed by the community to encourage transparency, to look together at everything that the soul is, without drawing back from pain or reacting in line with fear. All look, and all learn the universal lessons that each individual expresses. Life reveals its many faces, thoughts, feelings, expressions - with humour, with colour, with grace and



beauty. A safe space in which all that is present is welcomed to show itself fully, as everything it is, and in being seen, to release the energy that is caught up in pretending, in covering things over.

In forum each person who enters the circle is invited to exaggerate their feelings so that they might be clearly and truly seen. Everyone is invited to observe and share them together so that the feelings become a group experience, almost as though they should become the group's responsibility instead of being owned by an individual. The way it is done is to sit in a circle. Anyone who wishes to go into the centre of the circle may do so, and they can express whatever they wish to express. They may be helped to bring out whatever they are feeling by the facilitator - be encouraged to move or whatever is needed. The facilitator is an experienced member of the community. All members of the circle are addressed equally. If the person in the centre is talking about someone in the circle they are spoken of in the third person and not given any extra attention or treated differently to anyone else in the circle. This gives the opportunity for everyone to take part in being observers of the experience: it is not so much personal as universal. Learning is contained there for all.

All those sitting in the circle do not respond or comment, only listen and hold the space. When the person in the centre has finished they sit down again and after a short pause any other member of the circle may get up and reflect what they have just seen. This is called being a mirror. This might be to say 'I disagree with...' or it might be to say 'their comments about [whatever] made me feel...' Again they do not address the person directly but talk in the third person, it is as though everyone is examining the situation/ experience together. The facilitator advised us that all points of view are valid, all interpretations are 'true' - as though each mirror were showing a true reflection of the whole, and yet was only ever a part of the whole. The analogy of looking upon a mountain was used: that it is all the same mountain, but from different angles or perspectives it will look different. No one mirror will show the whole.

During forum there may be a number of mirrors. As a guide we were told that all the mirrors added together usually take up approximately the same amount of time as the original speaker. The facilitator works to try and draw out all that is going on, encouraging exaggeration of all movements, facial expressions. So it is a theatrical, dramatic experience, where there is an explicit invitation for true honesty. Very powerful.