

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

For the next six weeks we will be meeting to share our experiences as women living in a male-dominated or patriarchal society. We will come to understand better, by this process of sharing, that those experiences are not simply unique and personal, but that a commonality exists in our experiences. We will come to understand why the "personal is political." We will develop a feeling of sisterhood that will support our new awareness, our emerging anger, and our resolve to work for both personal and political change.

DEFINITION OF CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING-- New College Edition, American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language:

- 1) A technique whereby one learns to analyze one's own life situation and then to transform it so as to achieve liberation from oppression.
- 2) A technique where one is made aware of discrimination against a particular class of people who have been oppressed.

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING IS NOT...

1. Psychotherapy, group therapy, confrontational.

There are no experts giving advice and we will not attempt to focus on or solve individual personal problems.

2. An academic or lecture class.

There are no correct and incorrect life experiences and each woman's contribution to the group is equally valuable.

3. A radical or unfamiliar experience.

Historically women have met in groups to share their experiences and concerns and to give each other understanding and support.

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING IS...

1. Traditional to woman culture.
2. A tool for personal growth.
3. A commitment to sisterhood and a catalyst for action.

RULES FOR CR MEETINGS

1) Commitment to the Group

Because the participation of each woman is essential to the success of our group we must be willing to commit ourselves to be present and on time for meetings. Attendance is required at all sessions for WS200 students who wish calss credit for this optional assignment. Roll will be called for those students.

2) Absolute Confidentiality

What is discussed in our CR group may never be repeated outside of the group, either with non-members or with individual group members. We will be free to discuss topics openly only if we can trust in absolute confidentiality.

3) No Interrupting, cross-talking, advice-giving, challenging or confronting.

Each woman is entitled to uninterrupted speech during her allotted time. There will be time at the end of each session for general group discussion.

4) No distractions

Smoking is not permitted. Reading, handwork, private conversation and any other activity which is distracting to the group is not permitted. (Exception: Since we meet at lunchtime we'll need to bend these rules a bit for those who need to each lunch.)

SUGGESTED TOPICS

The following lists of topics have been used in previous CR groups. These are offered as suggestions only. We will all select at our first meeting those topics we want to consider during our series. If at any time there is a current or pressing issue that you would like to deal with we can change the topic for that day with group approval. It is helpful, however, to know in advance what the topic is so we can be thinking about it. Keep in mind that any topic used must be broad enough to include all of us and that we cannot focus on or solve specific personal problems.

2/24 ① Masculine/feminine: How have the stereotypes of gender affected you?

Women and Health: Whose body is it?

③ Women and Violence: What kinds of violence affect us just because we are female. What function does violence against women serve in our society?

Significant Others: How do the realities of love and marriage differ from the fantasies and expectations you may have had?

④ Women's Relationships with other women: How has support and love vs. jealousy and resentment come up in your relationships with other women? Do we like and trust women?

3/21 ⑥ Women and Anger: Has CR made you more aware of your anger. What will you do about it? (this is usually left for the final session)

Body Image: "You can never be too young or too thin" How has society's expectations for women's appearance affected you?

Mother Always told me. Did she tell it like it is?

Women and Education: How far can we go...and where?

2/10 ② "My Time is Your Time" Is there enough of you to go around. To whom do you owe your time?