

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.

- 2/21 ① Masculine/feminine: How have the stereotypes of gender affected you?
- ② 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?
- 3/1 ⑤ 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?
- 7/10 ⑥ "My Time is Your Time" Is there enough of you to go around. To whom do you owe your time?

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING
SPRING, 1986 TOPICS

Feb. 17 Introductions, Explanations of CR and group decisions regarding topics for series.

Feb. 24. ♂ ♀

Mar. 3 OPENING CEREMONIES FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Meet at 12 Noon at USU Court of Community

March 10 Time

March 17 ♀ & visiter

March 24 ♀ & other ♀

March 31 ♀ and Angel

Throwing Curves at an American Ideal

The Hourglass Figure Is Back—at Least for Some

Tastemakers are sending a message to the American woman who is not overweight but definitely not skinny: Her figure is in again. Bigger, rounder shapes are back. The perfect body is no longer twig-thin, flat-chested and boy-hipped. Rather, it curves in all the places where fashion in the '60s and '70s dictated straight lines.

Popular magazines are blossoming with models whose silhouettes break the super-thin mold. Two of Sports Illustrated's most famous bathing-suit models, Czechoslovakia's Paulina Porizkova and all-American Christie Brinkley, brought womanly cleavage back to the fashion pages, which for years were filled with sundry views of prepubescent-looking girls. And 6-foot-tall, 150-pound Ashley, one of Manhattan's busiest models, "has a real chest and broad shoulders," says Mija Strong of New York's Ford Agency. "She's not like the old Twiggy look. She looks healthy and has an athletic, well-toned body."

This revised standard reintroduces a controversy that is raised whenever one "ideal" body is replaced by another. Just as there was resistance when the lush lines of the Gibson girl were pared down to the boyish outline of the flapper, the return of the fuller figure hasn't been unconditionally accepted by every fashion opinion maker. Designer Bill Blass, for example, says that as far as he's concerned, the ideal is the same as it's been since the '60s: "The perfect body is thin," he says. Slim hips and a small bust—"size 8 in the shoulders, a 6 in the hips."

But Strong maintains that the thin-is-in school of



John Reed Forsman/Dress by H. Lorenzo

thought is out—if the word *thin* is not accompanied by *conditioned, toned, athletic, defined, muscular, strong*. "The size a model wears is irrelevant today," she says. "The emaciated looks of the '60s and '70s has been replaced by a stronger, more robust image."

In the past few years, there have been some changes in the once-immutable measurements for models. Mannequins today can top the 6-foot mark and, like Ashley, have figures measuring about 35-26-37. In the past, models rarely exceeded the rigid 34-23-34 maximum.

Many say that it's Hollywood, rather than Seventh Avenue, that is behind the trend, and that Madonna's retro-Monroe image is a perfect example. But the look can be traced to

trends that first appeared in the early '80s. Jane Fonda in "On Golden Pond," Jennifer Beals in "Flashdance" and Daryl Hannah in "Splash" were among the first to embody the look of the svelte yet curvaceous woman. Then "Witness" and "Top Gun" star Kelly McGillis began turning heads with her statuesque build, and *Vanity Fair* magazine nicknamed actress Kathleen Turner the "queen of curves"—and suddenly a new "perfect" silhouette was introduced.

Motion pictures may be more willing to showcase figures that don't conform to the set-in-stone standards that models usually must meet. Jane Feinberg, vice president of Fenton-Feinberg Casting in Los Angeles, says there is no standard for bodies in the movies. In fact, she says, body

type doesn't factor in motion-picture casting unless "the role demands a perfect body, as in an Arnold Schwarzenegger-type movie. To play opposite a 'Conan,' an actress' physical condition has to be perfect. That's when you have to come up with a muscular dancer/actress like Sandahl Bergman."

Feinberg says that standards of beauty for women in the 1950s required them to have one of two types of figures: the 38D or the 34-24-34. "Now it's the body that has muscle definition. Hollywood expects performers to be in condition. We are buying the whole package—talent, good face, good body."

Designers and Hollywood executives may be tied to fashion, fads and market trends, but painters and sculptors have aesthetic values based on line, form and proportion. Hiro Yamagata, official artist for last year's Statue of Liberty celebration, says that shapely, well-proportioned legs are "critical to the beauty of the body." But he adds that most of a body's grace comes not from its specific attributes but from how it moves. "Beauty is not static," he says.

Robert Graham, the Los Angeles sculptor who created the statues that symbolized the 1984 Summer Olympic Games, chose one male and one female athlete as his models. Their torsos—lean, conditioned, robust and defined—have been viewed as the international standard of physical excellence. But are these superb physiques Graham's personal ideal? Or are rounder forms the new perfect body? The artist quickly dismisses the issue: "No such thing exists."