

Particularly for 5-7 Jan 73 MIDCAREER EXPLORATION

You may or may not want to fold the following comments into your meditation:

1. **LOUD SILENCE.** For you, which is "unbearable," sound or silence? An opinion: the richer your inner life, the more (to use the Chinese gnome) sound seems an intrusion on silence. If on the retreat you want group silence, test for it: do the others? If so, when? We have heavy sound-work, talk, to do together, both that we may become more "together" and that we be responsible to the multiplex educational objectives of the MidCareer Exploration program; but, too, we have need to be silent together.
2. **CREATIVE CONFUSION.** When you got around to insisting on sharing why you are in the program, you came up with 17 reasons, enough to guarantee agenda-confusion without a Big Daddy hand, which guarantees artificial clarity at the cost of the oh-so-human-painful process of self-and-group discovery. I am neither a demon who designed your present condition of multiple impasses, nor an incompetent who couldn't keep you from falling apart—though I am neither free from evil nor a group-process genius. I am a complex human being who does things sometimes brighter than you think and sometimes dumber.
3. **"READING" EACH OTHER.** Reveal your readings! It's the only way to reality-test them. I tell you just what I think of you, and often I'm "off" and you-and-the-group are then able to correct my impression. I've one more reason for getting wrong impressions than the rest of you have: I'm carrying in the group and for a group a heavier agenda, the institutional-educational responsibility. I have a tender heart, a tough mind, and a thick skin: what've you got? If you've got a thin skin, I and the group have some time for you, but not much: grow up, it's a rough life, and thin-skins ain't much good for God or man or nature or history. If you're soft-minded, shape up: we have sharp, keen, clear thinking to do about everything involved in what you contracted for (as in the leaflet) as "MidCareer Exploration," and you should want me to press your brains into hard labor. As for your heart, may the Spirit more tenderize us all through our being together on this retreat and throughout this schoolyear.
4. As a higher primate you have from the Creator the gift of **CURIOSITY.** Use this group to nurture it. What, here and now, turns you on? What would you like to try, like the group to try? Don't let my curiosity, which is boundless, overwhelm yours; but expect me to be rough on you if you are incurious: as a higher primate you do not have that right. Hypercuriosity lost us Eden, but hypocuriosity loses us life itself.
5. **TOUCHINESS** is the sharpest sand in the machinery of human relations. Care how you feel, but not much. Care how the other person feels, but not too much—we have work to do, and the world goes on before and after our funerals.
6. Pray to be, and that the rest of us be, **EAGER AND OPEN** to the Spirit, the Future, the Kingdom of God on this retreat; and don't go spastic on terms: it's only language, and language is only a means.

*By 7pm, please be in silence in the Lower Chapel.*