

Essential Elements of Yeoman Organized Egalitarian Peer-Group Circles to Enhance Resilience by Focused Discussions of Readings

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This essay's title connects together a Boolean string of terms that represent essential elements of an effective study group comprised of peers assembled to promote their personal resilience. The material presented in [Guidebooks for Cognitive Self-Help to Enhance Resilience](#) provide several topics in a way that is suitable for self-study. Nonetheless, as with any written piece, how we interpret its content is influenced by our personal history (psychoanalysts call it countertransference, herein we use schema and perception). To broaden our perspective, it helps to participate in an uninhibited discussion of concepts that have no specific answer, suitable for everyone. The ungraded sharing process provides the means to broaden and enhance our perceptions of how to think and act in various situations. This is not accomplished in groups where a "leader" tells us the correct answer.

Hence, we have to get away from the expectation of a "leader," whether that he or she is called a teacher, facilitator, moderator, guide, or a host of other words that single one person out, or two in co-led groups. As such, yeoman is selected from the Navy term for enlisted clerks who do all the administrative work, needed to keep a vessel shipshape. A word was needed because somebody generally has to schedule meetings, notify participants, organize facilities, and possibly arrange for refreshments – *but, who does not direct the meeting process*. This function can be difficult when a pastor, professor, police chief, HR representative, initiates as a boss and participates in the sessions. Nevertheless, they must refrain from exerting authority and the group must accept them as equals, not special. As there is no right answer, each participant reflects upon everyone's opinion – provided it is addressing the material *pre-read* by each before assembling – respecting but not necessarily agreeing with the point of view presented – while being open to reconsidering one's own viewpoints.

These are not unbounded groups where participants can introduce unbridled subjects. The intent is learning and broadening yourself by considering other viewpoints on specific subjects. It is not therapy, per se. Our experiencing of events is determined by how we cognitively process the experience. To accept each person's input equitably, they have to be considered worthy peers. At least in this situation, an egalitarian attitude must prevail. Even where there is no formal peage system, some people have jobs, education, attitude, whatever, that may set them apart outside of the group. Regardless of positions that exist beyond the group or assertive personality types within the group, an egalitarian attitude must be maintained. Therefore, without an overseer who maintains control, it is the collective duty of the group as a whole to monitor unruly behavior. This is not impossible as democratic book discussion groups have given pleasure to readers for many decades.

Besides the description of principles covered above, I felt a need for descriptive material that described the groups in a more palatable way with examples of successes. Searching the literature found reams that dealt with how to "lead" groups of many types. Eventually, a solution was found in an excellent article by Tracy A. Thompson, "Circles of Change," published in and copyrighted by the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2011. A summary (www.HOUD.info/circles.pdf) by me is posted. A possible free [Web link to her paper](#) may be found, by using an Internet search engine.

Contact me at rabstejnek@HOUD.info for arranging to print inexpensive personalized [Guidebooks](#), for your organization; they provide a roadmap to success. Relevant free material on my website first needs to be read by all participants, to appreciate the ways and means of developing resilience.

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