

Transformation and Healing

'A Servite Experience'

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Introduction: The Concept

- This programme “**What do you know?** –The Ten Postcards” is another way forward in the process of transformation and healing.
- It prioritizes *how individuals can transform their daily lives in communication with other agents despite the strength of past prejudices and structures.*

How does this model work?

It invites all who struggle with racism,

- **to use the postcards to examine their beliefs and practices on the matter,**
- **to do this in the company of at least one other person (preferably of diverse background),**
- **in a context of 'open reciprocity' (free give and take),**
- **where participants are regarded as equal contributors without threat of intimidation or fear, that is, circumstances of 'ideal speech'**
- **and where the goal is to reach consensus**

(An African practice that illuminates this model is 'indaba' which means 'meeting').

What attributes must participants bring to the discussion?

- **the willingness to be reflective,**
- **the capacity to speak or understand the language of the other,**
- **the willingness to be subject to the better argument of the other**
- **and a desire to be understood and reach consensus**

(This new model asks the participants to work hard internally at solutions of mind and heart.)

What personal challenges will this model of action bring?

- **it challenges participants to subject their ethical and moral values to the validity claims or reasons of their peers**
- **it holds out the prospect of real and realistic change amongst a few participants who know each other**
- **it calls for incremental steps towards transformation and healing**

The Process

- **Two or more participants engage in dialogue and reflect honestly about the issues presented in each or some of the Ten Postcards.**
- **Each participant must be allowed the time to clarify their validity claims.**
- **If a participant in the dialogue is willing to be open to the claims of 'the other' then understanding can emerge: 'open reciprocity' has been achieved.**

Process continued

- **If a participant is not willing, then no change or transformation can be anticipated and they are back to where they started.**
- **When 'open reciprocity' is achieved on an issue, judgments can be made.**
- **It is at the point of 'judgment' that ethical and moral values, personal and communal, can come into question: it is here that risks and opportunities are identified and taken.**
- **Now opportunity for transformation and healing is available.**
- **Consensus amongst the participants will further strengthen and embed it.**

How can we predict this change and transformation?

- **When 'open reciprocity' on an issue is not accepted then things stay as they are.**
- **When 'open reciprocity' on an issue is accepted in conditions of 'ideal speech' and consensus is upheld, then transformation of self and of society will follow.**

How much is new here?

Many South Africans would see the parallels between the old Indaba model and this new one.

They would recognize the process of discussion, of common understanding and consensus.

The difference with the new model is that it makes room for critique and change to prevailing values and attitudes.

The key concern with this model is to change values and hearts: a task well suited to dismantling a racist past.

This model is idealistic and carries no guarantees

It maintains its energy through the hope that drives it. It places greater weight in faith in humanity (ubuntu) rather than the power of despair.

How do the Postcards work?

- Read each card one at a time: it will relate a particular event drawn from daily life in contemporary South Africa.
- As you read it note the emotional or subjective response that has been evoked in you.
- Now reflect upon the questions below each card. Be objective.
- Decide what each event says to your personal beliefs and practices.
- When this is done, now use the process for transformation and healing set out in 1.5.

How do the Postcards work? (continued)

- **By following these exercises readers will 'witness' how sociological phenomena operate in shaping daily life in the new society and its vexed struggle with racism.**
- **Phenomena excavated through the Cards include violence, gender, human rights, multiculturalism, citizenship, family, religion, conflict resolution, sport, economy, risk society, identity and democracy.**

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