

To talk or not to talk

Your invitation to an Act for Change forum

Facilitated by Arlene and Jean-Claude Audergon of CFOR

10:00 –16:00, 24th April 2009

Imperial War Museum

How can Act for Change and society more broadly, facilitate a process where people can speak about a traumatic past to a younger generation in a way that supports them to create a different future? That is the Question we are faced with each day – by survivors, by teachers, by students, by our facilitators when we are in the uncomfortable place of talking about such difficult issues.

Survivors: to talk about and relive moments of horror in their lives – or not to talk. (What for? Others had it worse. It cannot take away what happened. No one listens. How to talk in a way that doesn't make more pain in myself or in others.)

Teachers: to talk – again about their students' feelings, and issues of bullying and conflict – or not to talk (been there, done that; it's too basic, it's too difficult; it could upset them; do I have the skills to support the young people I work with in their emotions? Have we considered follow up?)

Facilitators: to facilitate feeling interactions, and talk about much that is 'taboo' or uncomfortable, or not to talk about feelings [just focus on talk that leads to actions and choice.]

Students: to talk about their curiosity, upset, and other feeling reactions about the issues they care about – or not to talk (it's too difficult, sensitive, or it's better to just 'not care').

Purpose

Act for Change facilitates a process where people with unique qualities can speak about a traumatic past (Survivors) and about current day traumas and hardships. It's about talking between one another, and being heard, and so connecting. Often, as we have learned from the experience of our Survivors, talk comes after a prolonged silence. To talk about memories or current difficult situations touches on 'hot spots' – points of sensitivity, which often get shut down before they can be explored. The teacher and young person, the survivor and facilitator all need support to know what to do next. If we want to avoid the repeat of suffering, we need to find ways to go further when we meet these 'hot spots', that supports choice about when, with whom and how to talk and in a way that supports change. If we cannot share and learn from our own and others' experience, we grow isolated. Each 'to talk or not to talk' moment is full of potential learning and hope of transformation. By focussing on this theme: 'to talk or not to talk', we hope to learn from one another as we find new pathways forward as an organisation and as a society.

Continues overleaf

Act for Change Events engage participants in talking across and between generations. This brings up in participants multiple challenges. This forum is an unusual and very important opportunity for us to be able to talk together about the feelings and challenges we face within Acts for Change, in order to learn from one another and our interaction, to find pathways forward.

Aim / Outcome

To gain a common understanding of Act for Change by experiencing a process that reflects the relationship between inner and outer acts, between older and younger generations, between low and high dreams:

- To include and listen to all voices that are interested in Act for Change
- To experience the forum process as a way of structuring our collaborative efforts as an organisation
- To increase our awareness of what process is initiated when we go into a school and model 'best practice' to implement with students

To attend 'To talk or not to talk' the Act for Change forum, 24th April 2009

Please register by 10th April 2009.

Places are limited.

Register now to secure your place at:

<http://actforchange.typepad.com/afc/register-for-the-forum.html>