

## Transforming Organizational Systems



## Consciousness, Authority, Leadership, and Life

*The Fall Group Relations Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University*

**November 5-7, 2010**

**CONSCIOUSNESS, AUTHORITY, LEADERSHIP, and LIFE** is a group relations conference. Our focus will be on the study of our own behavior as it happens—shadow and light, embattlement and embrace, suffering and healing—in terms of a fuller encounter with LIFE itself.

### **Primary Task:**

The primary task is to study our own behavior in the “here and now” as it relates to the exercise of authority and emergence of leadership. This task is extended to invite consciousness about our individual and collective accountability for our actions that influence life—our own and that of other sentient beings.

### **Central Inquiry:**

What kind of leadership and consciousness is needed to act with authority to influence the current challenges and complexities of life?

*"The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience." - Eleanor Roosevelt*

### **How we will learn:**

Group relations conferences are primarily experiential learning events. Brief introductions will be offered to describe the different processes that are used. The rest of what happens is created by how we interact with one another.

While we will explore the deeper unconscious processes that impact our capacity to work effectively in open systems, this conference will also offer reflective spaces for application of our learning.

### **What you will learn:**

- Who we become in groups
- What happens when different people take authority in a group
- When we take action and not
- Where we are more passionate about life
- How our own behavior shifts when we assume leadership or not

*A human being is part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. The true value of a human being is determined by the measure and the sense in which they have obtained liberation from the self. We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humanity is to survive. -Albert Einstein*

## Conference Design

**The conference is designed as a single entity offered in a series of inter-related events to create a system of learning.** This model of learning about leadership, followership and group dynamics evolved from the work of pioneers of the Tavistock Institute for the Study of Human Relations in London in the 1950's. These ideas for how to learn about leadership, as well as a considerable body of theory and application, have grown out of this tradition and have found positive reception in many parts of the world.

The task of each of the events flows from the primary task through which the central inquiry is available to be explored.

### ***“Here and Now” Events***

**Small Study Group:** We study what we are doing as we are doing it with consultant(s) in face-to-face groups. We remain with this group for the duration of the small study group event.

**Large Study Group:** Once more we study what is happening as it is happening, accompanied by a team of consultants. All members are present in a configuration that invites inquiry, study, and opportunities for learning.

### ***Reflection Events***

**Conference Dialogues:** We gather as a whole conference, staff and members, and reflect on what we are learning. How these sessions are conducted is open for exploration.

**Open Meditations:** These shorter sessions are offered to allow us to sit in collective reflection. Following a brief introduction, the remaining time is devoted to what can be learned in silence.

**Reflection Groups:** Traditionally known as review and application groups, these events are smaller face-to-face groups. With the support of a consultant, the focus is on the individual harvesting of learning.

### ***System Events***

**Openings and Closings:** These sessions are held to give context to the learning. The openings introduce what is to come and the closings mark where we have been. All staff and members are invited to be present.

**World Event:** This event is designed to have staff and members share in a co-creative process of learning. The aim of the event is to bring to consciousness collective action that reflects the conference as a system and addresses the central inquiry.

## **Administration and Logistics**

### **Conference Times**

*Begins* 10:00 AM, Friday, November 5, 2010

*Ends* 5:00 PM, Sunday, November 7, 2010

*Events end at 9:00 PM Friday and Saturday evenings.*

**Conference registration begins at 9:15, Friday, November 5, 2010.**

### **Location**

Teachers College-Columbia University

525 W. 120<sup>th</sup> Street

New York, New York 10027

Use the main entrance (Zankel Hall) of Teachers College, Columbia University, on 120<sup>th</sup> Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue. You will need to show photo identification to enter the building. Signs will be posted directing you to the registration area for the conference.

### **Meals**

Light refreshments will be available at each break of the conference. Continental breakfast will be offered Saturday and Sunday at 8:30. Lunch and dinner breaks are the responsibility of members.

### **Lodging**

The conference is nonresidential. Those who require assistance in securing local overnight accommodations should contact conference administration.

## **REGISTRATION**

**The fee for the conference is \$495, which includes a \$100 registration fee.**

**Fees are due in full no later than Monday, November 1, 2010.**

SPACE IS LIMITED. In past years this conference has been fully enrolled and not all who sought to attend were able to do so. Please register as soon as possible to reserve your space.

**Registration Deadline:** The Administration Director must receive the Registration Form **no later than November 1, 2010\*\*\***. The Registration Form must be accompanied by check, money order or credit card information for payment in full except in the case of enrolled Teachers College, Columbia University students, as noted below. Completed applications will be accepted in the order received until all spaces are filled. Should the conference be oversubscribed, a waiting list will be maintained.

**\*\*\*\*Special Note for Students currently enrolled in ORL 5362 at Teachers College, Columbia University:** In order to be guaranteed membership in the conference, registration must be received **no later than Monday, October 11, 2010 at midnight**. Thereafter, they will be accepted in the order received, as will other applications, until all spaces are filled.

**Discounted fees** are available to employees of non-profit and governmental agencies and to full-time students. In addition, discounts are available when three or more individuals from one work organization attend together.

**Special fee arrangements** can be made for those who are from underrepresented populations and others who may need financial assistances during this economic period. Please make requests to the conference administrator. Such decisions will be made on or before November 1.

**Registration Procedures for All Registrants:** Send the completed Conference Registration Form and fee via **conventional mail** or **scanned and emailed** to:

CONVENTIONAL MAIL OPTION

**Robert (RC) Whitehouse**  
**Administration Director**  
**Group Relations Conference Box 6**  
**525 West 120<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**New York, NY 10027-6696**

SCAN AND EMAIL OPTION

**2010LifeConference@gmail.com**

**Withdrawal Policy:** Withdrawals after October 15, 2010 will not be refunded. The registration fee of \$100 will be withheld to cover administrative costs.

**For more information or inquiries please contact the Administration Director:**

**Robert (RC) Whitehouse**  
[2010LifeConference@gmail.com](mailto:2010LifeConference@gmail.com)  
**Conference voicemail: 212-678-3824**

## CONFERENCE STAFF

The members of this staff were invited for their demonstrated individual and collective capacity to work with the central inquiry and consult with groups to deepen this exploration.

Staff, who are termed consultants, act as guides and co-learners in the experience. How participants respond to the way staff take their roles, especially in terms of authority, is a subject for study.

Should enrollment require it, additional consultants may be added. The staff members who have accepted invitation include:

*Conference Director*

**Zachary Green**

*Managing Director*

**Matthew Tye**

*Administration Director*

**Robert (RC) Whitehouse**

*Administrators*

**Neaka Balloge**

**Stephanie Biernbaum**

*Consultant Team*

**Para Ambardar**

**Leila Djemal**

**Ronald David**

**David McCallum**

**Kevin Presley**

**Flora Taylor**

**Anjet van Linge**

*Consultant Candidates*

**Avina Gupta**

**Samar Habl**

## **Sponsorship**

This group relation conference is a part of the Transforming Open System series at Teachers College, Columbia University. As such, the majority of members at this conference historically have been enrolled in *Group Dynamics: A Systems Perspective* (ORL 5362). Conference participation is among options given to students for partial fulfillment of course requirements.

This event is authorized by the Social-Organizational Psychology Program at Teachers College, Columbia University and also sponsored by the New York Center for the Study of Groups, Organization and Social Systems, the A. K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems, and Group Relations International. All staff invited as consultants are members of recognized group relations organizations.



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November 5-7, 2010*

### Conference Registration

Name\*:

Age:                      Personal Gender Designation:

Address (only city and state will be indicated on member list):\*

Email:

Phone:

Teachers College-Columbia University students please indicate program and year\*

Public Members please indicate primary occupation/vocation and organization/affiliation\*

\*indicates information that will be included on membership lists provided to all participants

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***THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS COLLECTED TO HELP STAFF FORM GROUPS WITH ATTENTION TO SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY. THESE DATA WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STAFF OF THE CONFERENCE BUT WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE INFORMATION REPRODUCED FOR THE FULL CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP.***

Identity characteristics your wish to offer (including but not limited to sexual orientation, nationality, ability, social class, military rank, ethnicity, languages, faith, etc.)

What is your purpose for registering for this conference (TC students please indicate one purpose in addition to “fulfill a course requirement option.”)

The conference theme is “Consciousness, Authority, Leadership, and Life.” Which word resonates with you the most?

Is this your first time attending any kind of group relations conference? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If yes, what is an expectation you have for the learning...

If no, how many conferences have you attended... \_\_\_1 \_\_\_2 \_\_\_3 \_\_\_4 or more  
and what brings you again to this kind of experience...

*The following offer different ways of accessing knowing that may be used to form groups and experiences in the conference...*

What is one of your favorite songs, quotes, films, videos, or images?

Which one or two of these archetypes do you think most describes how you view yourself right now?

\_\_\_ Innocent     \_\_\_ Orphan     \_\_\_ Caregiver     \_\_\_ Seeker

\_\_\_ Warrior     \_\_\_ Creator     \_\_\_ Destroyer     \_\_\_ Lover

\_\_\_ Ruler     \_\_\_ Magician     \_\_\_ Jester     \_\_\_ Sage

\_\_\_ Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**Is there anything else you would like to add to your responses for those who will organize the conference and co-create this experience with you to consider?**

**PLEASE NOTE: As participation in the conference as one single experience is considered key to learning by the organizers, those who know in advance that they may miss any significant portion of the conference are asked to forego attendance at this time. Some past participants have experienced similar conferences as particularly personally intense. As the conference is not designed as a substitute for psychotherapy, those going through a period of extreme personal difficulty are advised to defer attendance.**

**FEES**

- ORL 5362 Students (NO PAYMENT/FEE COVERED BY COURSE ENROLLMENT AND FEES)
- \$250 Full-Time Students, please indicate institution \_\_\_\_\_
- \$295 Part-Time Students, please indicate institution \_\_\_\_\_
- \$395 Public Members—Government, Nonprofit, Educators, Arts, Entertainment
- \$495 Public Members—Private Sector--including Consultants, Psychotherapists
- \$495 Public Members---Other, please indicate\_\_\_\_\_

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 \$50 Discount (per applicant)/3 or more members from the same organization  
 Name of organization \_\_\_\_\_

**\$\_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT DUE**

**Checks are made payable to** The New York Center for the Study of Groups, Organizations and Social Systems

**Credit card payments**

Charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to:

VISA # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

MasterCard# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



- I have read the brochure and understand that I am participating in a group relations conference where intense experiential learning may be expected.

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Signature

Date

For more information or inquiries please contact the Administration Director:

Robert (RC) Whitehouse  
2010LifeConference@gmail.com