

NEW FEMINISTS

P.O. Box 597, Station "A", Toronto 116, Ontario, Canada.

Welcome Sister,

Attached you will find a copy of A STRUCTURE FOR RADICAL FEMINISM, our MANIFESTO, a page containing suggestions on how to go about consciousness-raising in a cell and a bibliography of relevant books.

The following is an extract from a letter by a radical feminist which has, in fact, come out of more than a year's experience in a consciousness-raising cell:

In essence, what it is is a session where a basic topic, such as childhood, intercourse or what have you, is discussed by way of each person talking about her particular experiences. What happens is a build-up of a feminist pattern through the specific contributions, as well as a greater closeness and understanding of other women. Plus, realizing that what once was thought to be uniquely "you", was in fact a social and political pattern.

Just keep in mind that the focus must always be kept on experiences dealing with one's role as a woman - some consciousness-raising sessions can drift when people are evading, or genuinely don't understand it. And, it's so easy to talk about one's life in general. It's good to have someone there in the beginning who can say - "this is going off course".

...just try to pinpoint the basic, common female experiences we face throughout our lives, and then phrase them in conversational language that invites discussion and talking about oneself. And stay away, at this point, from immediate analysis after someone has contributed an experience. Also don't let anyone challenge anyone's experience, in the sense of saying, "that's not true". Even if you feel someone may be not telling a whole truth, I think it is wrong to challenge it. And it breeds fear of exposing oneself, too. A sisterliness and genuine compassion is the ideal.

As additional reading material, we would suggest that you look at, or buy, NOTES FROM THE SECOND YEAR which is a collection of radical feminist writings stemming directly from involvement in consciousness-raising cells. We feel that it emphasizes the real problems confronting women, which problems underlay the living crust of our day-to-day lives. NOTES is obtainable from New Feminists and through Book Centre, Book Cellar, Vanguard Bookstore, L.S.A. Bookstore, and other bookstores.

CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING

Consciousness-raising, in which you will talk about personal experience without broad analysis, will accomplish the following:

- clean out your head,
- uncork and redirect your anger,
- learn to understand other women,
- discover that your personal problem is not only yours.



Suggested order of consciousness-raising:

Month 1, Week 1 - Discuss your relationships with men as they have evolved. Have you noticed any recurring patterns?

Week 2 - Have you ever felt that men have pressured you into having sexual relationships? Have you ever lied about orgasm?

Week 3 - Discuss your parents and their relationship to each other and to you.

Week 4 - How do you feel about marriage, having children, pregnancy, etc.?

Month 2, Week 1 - Discuss your relationships with other women. Have you ever felt competition for men?

Week 2 - Discuss your relationships with women in your family.

Week 3 - Problems of growing up as a girl - socialization: were you treated differently from your brother?

Week 4 - How do you feel about getting old (and your mother getting old)? What do you fear most?

Month 3, Week 1 - Sex objects: do you feel like one? If so, how? Do you ever feel invisible?

**Week 2 - Are you a nice girl?
Is your smile like a nervous tic?**

Week 3 - What would you most like to do in life and what has stopped you?

Week 4 - What do you most want this movement to accomplish?