

Deepening Our Identity in the Common Good

An Integrated Development Process
Offered by the Institute on the Common Good

Executive Summary

For almost 15 years, ICG has been serving communities and organizations dedicated to the common good by providing a safe and effective space for dialogue, communal discernment and public deliberation. More than ever before, we are observing our society and its institutions grappling with increasingly complex and often, seemingly, irreconcilable issues in an environment of escalating polarization and divisiveness. At the same time, we are experiencing a pressing desire on the part of many groups to effectively, meaningfully and courageously meet these challenges in more innovative and creative ways. As such, ICG has discerned a need to both deepen and broaden its services as a way of addressing these trends and desires in our culture.

At the core of this expanded service is a value and belief that asserts effective, sustained and meaningful change happens when we are becoming who we are, who we were created to be, whether that is a community, an organization, a group or an individual, and that it is possible to align and find synergy between and among these layers within a system. Our belief goes on to say that this identity, or alignment of identities, is in fact, an *expression* of the common good and how we might become more fully engaged citizens of the world. And so, to serve the common good, we must explore together:

- how and who I and we are becoming
- discovering what it is that is trying to live through me and us
- what it is that I and we aspire to, which is
- what I and we are willing to be in service to

This forms the basis for ICG's integrated approach to growing, learning, serving and performing. It offers a way of maximizing community and organizational potential as well as sustained, transformational change by cultivating the interplay of specialness and commonness that exists in and between a group and its individual members. Thus, the Institute has expanded its services to include a simultaneous offering of individual development and coaching to our clients' key members as we also continue our work with their groups and communities.

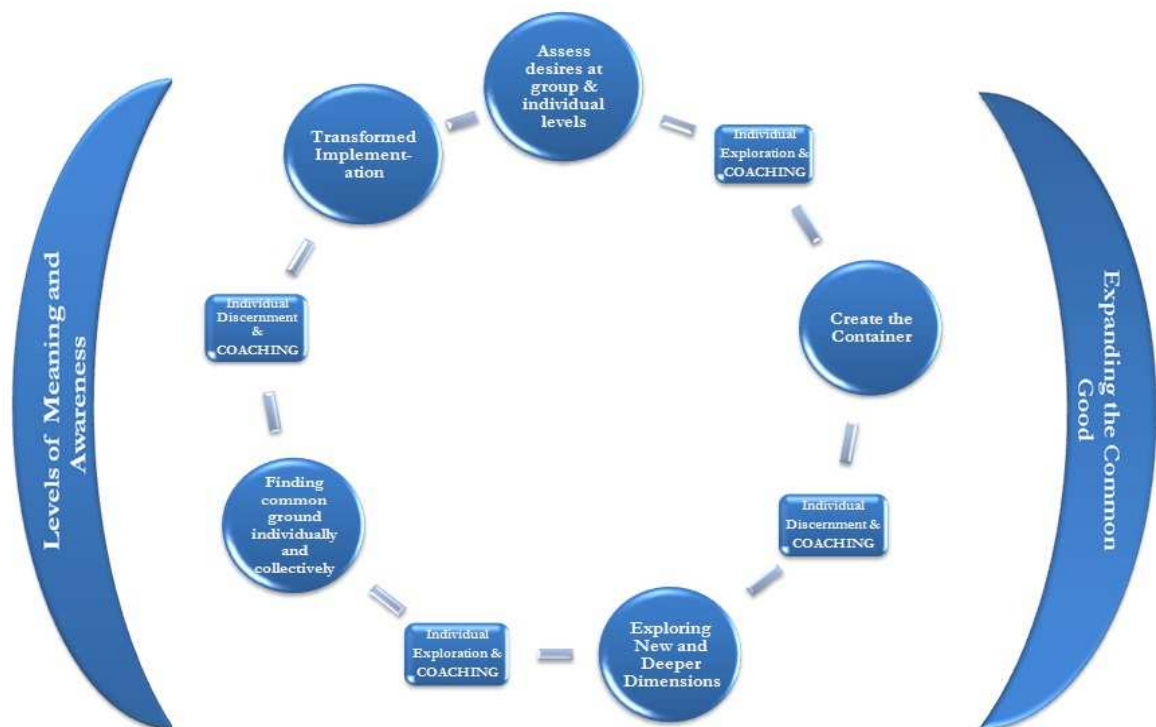
Conditions for the Work

Before describing the enhancements to our services, it is important to articulate, from our own experience, the conditions that most facilitate the possibility for transformational change in individuals and collections of individuals.

ICG has had the good fortune to work with widely diverse segments of our society, with gifted, dedicated and creative people. We have had the opportunity to experience remarkable groups and individuals who have demonstrated:

- true partnerships, a sense of mutuality where people can feel “in it together,”
- an authentic sense of genuine commitment clear of mere compliance or obligation,
- honesty, openness and humble awareness of the need for faith in something beyond themselves in order to be successful in attending to purposes beyond themselves,
- honoring and trusting in other’s contributions and intentions with respect, dignity and hope.
- clarity in their role(s) while at the same time, awareness of the difficulties and complexities that must be faced,
- a level of maturity that can tolerate ambiguity and engage in crisis and uncertainty rather than avoiding it,
- a desire to embrace growth over security and a willingness to disturb complacency, to be pulled out of the comfortable and conventional in order to grow,
- an openness to challenge their own beliefs and positions, imaginatively and creatively.

It is with such groups and individuals that our conviction to the potential for deeper and sustained change finds meaning and where we believe we can help people bring the work of their organizations to richer levels of service in an increasingly complex world. Therefore, in our assessments and interactions with our clients, we look for the presence of these conditions or at the very least, a potential for them to develop.



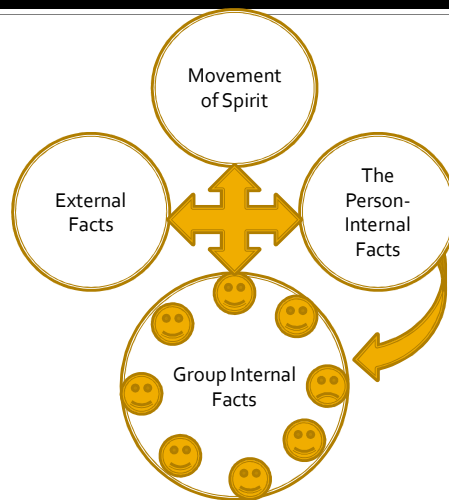
The Integrated Layers

The Institute on the Common Good

The process begins with an acknowledgement of the need for the members of ICG to be at a mature level of personal development, clear about what we believe and committed to how we act out of that. We are an organization with deep Ignatian roots that believes in profound change for our clients and ourselves, in partnership with them and in an environment where Spirit matters. If we are to be more whole and help our clients become more whole, we must:

- model authenticity in our work
- be strong enough, courageous enough and direct enough to be honest about what is working and what is not working
- be aware of whether the conditions are right or not right for going to places of deeper change with our clients and with each other

Processes in a Group



The Client Group

In typical project groups or teams, there is:

1. an attending to external facts (the content or purpose of the group and the factors impinging on it)
2. some degree of attending to internal facts at the personal, individual level (thoughts, moods, emotions, reflections) that are contributing or not contributing to the task at hand.

3. More mature groups also explore the internal, often unexpressed or even unconscious collective processes going on in the group (tension, conflict, fear, scapegoating, synergy)
4. but it is a rare group that is open to the movement of Spirit in the process.

The Institute will continue to offer its services in community dialogue, communal discernment and public deliberation utilizing existing structures, tools and techniques. However, the method of assessment will include exploring the possibility of working with particular groups open to and capable of engaging in levels 3 and 4 above, in ways that can evoke a sense of spirit and deeper levels of engagement by integrating the dimension of coaching and mentoring of people both within and outside the context of the group process.

In Ignatian terms, the purpose of this type of group process and coaching is to catalyze the courage in the group and in individuals to desire and choose only that which leads them 'more' to the end for which they were created. If they are truly dedicated to discerning this, they begin to detach from fear and the needs for security, control and esteem and open to a movement of the Spirit. They begin to move toward becoming "actively indifferent," as St. Ignatius put it, to anything but noticing and examining how the Spirit may be directing the *conscience* of the group and each individual. Within the group, people will learn and engage in mutual, mindful coaching with one another and with ICG facilitators in ways that deepen their discernment and facilitate:

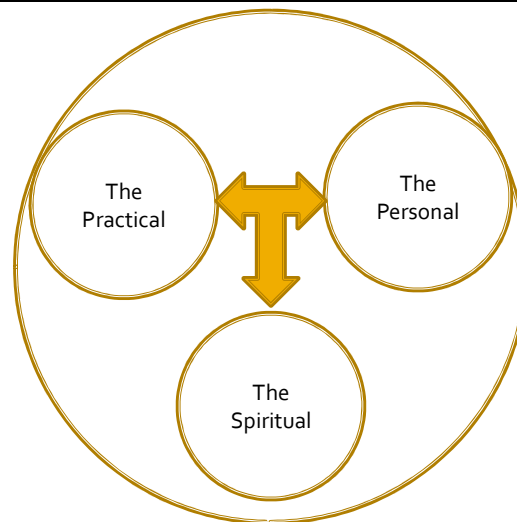
- Surrendering of control over personal agendas or preconceived notions of where the process may lead and acknowledging a trusting deference to the power of the individual, collective and transpersonal spirit that moves in the group.
- Creating an environment where each individual can increase his/her awareness of the often subtle forces which are influencing individual participation and group performance with the data for learning being members' own behavior, feelings and reactions.
- A willingness to explore and express meaningful matter by disclosing oneself in significant, potentially vulnerable and more honest ways.
- Opening a common experience of greater realness and authenticity by learning to accept others and oneself more trustingly, less artificially and in more thoughtful, creative and supportive ways.

The desired outcome of this form of group process is an unfolding of subtler and more creative realms of possibility which lead to a more meaningful, transformed and effective service from the organization to the common good while, at the same time, creating a container for deeper self-awareness and development of individual members, each informing and enhancing the other.

Though there is a definitive structure that underlies this approach, there is also a degree of freedom which must be exercised within that structure in order to help groups move to places they haven't experienced before as they fulfill their missions and purposes. And the place

being sought is what the poet David Whyte calls, the “central conversation,” the core place of identity where “polite conversation becomes generative dialogue,” as William Isaacs puts it.

Emergence of the Whole Person



The Individual

The emergence and expansion of the coaching profession came out of a recognition that the effectiveness of organizational change and group performance is directly correlated with a level of follow-up which includes not only continuous group development but also individual growth and development. In deepening and broadening its services to groups, ICG recognizes the need for support of individuals in the context of its overall mission and work with client organizations. We can conceive of this support within three integrated levels:

- ***The practical- Leadership Coaching***_ This level includes helping individuals address such needs as skill development, leadership development and career planning. It would include coaching a person in the areas of team leadership and membership, active listening, building relationships, facilitating interactions. It is focused on helping both the individual and the group produce more effective results and outcomes. The essence of this type of coaching is to help a person problem solve difficulties and dilemmas in a way that contributes to their own and their organization’s success.
- ***The personal- Personal Growth Coaching*** This level of support is based on the belief that within each one of us there lies an irreducible individuality that will not be defined by the corporation, church, family or community and yet, one that can emerge and successfully thrive more genuinely in any of these settings. It is dedicated to developing a greater sense of what it would mean to be more authentically alive and seeks to bring inner potentiality into outer actuality by narrowing the distance between the real and

the ideal in each person. It explores such questions as; What is it that is trying to live through me? What gives me meaning? What is true for me and how do I live it in the world? Whose life am I living and what is it in service to? This is about helping people embark on a larger journey toward personal wholeness and fulfillment by exploring and acting on the meaning in their lives more consciously and openly.

- **The spiritual- Spiritual Direction** This level is specifically devoted to developing a person's relationship with God through prayer, meditation, reflection and contemplation. It assumes we all are unique expressions of a God who calls us to discover our personal vocation which happens in relationship with him. The role of the spiritual director is to assist people in recognizing and responding to God's presence in their lives, discerning the particular and often subtle path on which God is leading them and to encourage them to courageously and faithfully follow their path. More experienced persons may choose to make The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

Each of these levels, though described separately, is inextricably linked to the others in the context of becoming a whole person. There is also an implicit understanding that individual work is in relationship to the group work, such that, a synergy between the two is consciously and continuously sought. At the same time, we begin and end by meeting people where they are in their lives and their desires for living more fully.



The Qualities and Attributes Expected in our Professionals

Central to the success of this service is a cadre of talented and experienced practitioners who have developed a level of maturity that corresponds with the expectations and possibilities for transformational change in our clients. Following, then, are the attributes we require in our professionals:

Organizational and Group Development Capability- Effective coaching and facilitation requires significant experience within organizational environments and particularly in small group/team settings. A professional offering these services for the Institute needs to know how organizations work and how things get done both through formal and informal channels. As such, the person has developed political savvy, knowing how to navigate and help others navigate smoothly and quietly through political waters. A capable professional also understands why and how groups do what they do and picks up the sense of individuals and groups in terms of positions, intentions, needs, what is important and how to motivate performance. From their experience, they can anticipate future consequences and patterns for individuals and groups in the larger context of the organization and in so doing, be a valuable source of insight for their clients. Mostly, a developed person in this profession knows how to artfully help a group or an individual find their “core conversation” and journey with them in keeping that conversation alive.

Emotional Maturity- A foundational quality for one who offers coaching and spiritual direction for the Institute is the ability to meet the group or persons in their own experience with a minimum of judgment and an abundance of both compassion and acceptance. This being the case, a practitioner has the capacity to listen deeply—with intuition, empathy and emotional understanding. A psychologically mature person is developed in the areas of discretion, common sense, balance and a groundedness in daily reality. The person has an openness to experience, a tolerance for many viewpoints and an ability to hold a tension of opposites whether they be practical, psychological, religious or spiritual. Such a person has a capacity to suffer and patiently endure the suffering of others.

Self-Knowledge- Self knowledge is crucial for offering good facilitation, coaching or spiritual direction, particularly with regard to one’s personality, deepest desires, strengths, gifts woundedness and shadow. Self-knowledge helps us to avoid self-deception, co-dependency, competition, emotional transference and the desire to satisfy unmet needs in the client relationship. It ultimately leads to a sense of self that is adequate enough to let go of the self, secure enough to be insecure.

Spiritual Development- A competent coach or spiritual director knows what it means to have a unique and deeply intimate relationship with the mystery we call God and will know the longing associated with the perceived absence of that relationship. Such a person has experienced a letting go of control, an abiding trust in the ultimate benevolence of Spirit, patience and the capacity to wait, surrender and abandonment of self and an ability to hold together uncertainty and paradox without escaping into easy, prescribed answers.

Consistent with this integrated approach, these qualities and attributes also constitute a “profile of potential” for clients who engage in this work with us.

A. W. Starkey
August 15, 2011

Resource Material:

The Practical

R. Napier, and M. Gershenfeld, ***Groups, Theory and Experience***

L. Bradford, ***Group Development***

Donelson Forsyth, ***Group Dynamics***

Jenny Rogers, ***Coaching Skills***

Mary Beth O'Neill, ***Executive Coaching***

The Personal

James Hollis, Ph. D., ***Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life*** and
--***The Midlife Passage: From Misery to Meaning.***
--***What Matters Most: Living a More Considered Life***

Parker Palmer, ***Let Your Life Speak.***

Paul Tillich, ***The Courage To Be***

C. G. Jung, ***Modern Man in Search of a Soul,***
--***Psychology and Western Religion***

Robert A. Johnson, ***Living Your Unlived Life*** and
--***Transformation: Understanding the Three Levels of Masculine
Consciousness.***

David Whyte, ***The Heart Aroused***

Robert Bly, ***Iron John.*** (for men)

Clarissa Pincola Estes, ***Women Who Run with the Wolves.*** (for women)

Ernest Becker, ***The Denial of Death***

James Bugental, ***The Search for Existential Identity***

Lionel Corbett, ***Psyche and the Sacred***

Victor Frankl, ***Man's Search for Meaning***
--***The Unconscious God***

Rollo May, ***The Discovery of Being***

Otto Rank, *Psychology and the Soul*

June Singer, *Boundaries of the Soul*

Carl Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*
--*On Encounter Groups*

Irvin Yalom, *Love's Executioner*
--*Existential Psychotherapy*

The Spiritual

William Barry, SJ, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*
--*A Friendship Like No Other*
--*Letting God Come Close*

James Martin, SJ, *The Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything*

George Traub, SJ, *An Ignatian Spirituality Reader*

Carolyn Gratton, *The Art of Spiritual Guidance*

Gerald May, *Care of Mind, Care of Spirit*
--*The Dark Night of the Soul*

The Way, vol. 46, no. 4, Oct., 2007, *Spirituality and Social Transformation*

.Richard Rohr, O. F. M., *From Wild Man To Wise Man.*
--*Falling Upward*

Herbert Alphonso, SJ, *Discovering Your Personal Vocation.*

James Fowler, *Stages of Faith*

Gerard Hughs, SJ, *The God of Surprises*

John Sanford, *The Kingdom Within*