

Interesting systems (models) of common activities for community building with explanation how the system works. Mechanisms or procedures of conflict resolution

What is the ZEGG – Forum?

ZEGG developed its own form of transparent communication, which is now being adopted worldwide by various social networks and communities: the ZEGG Forum.

ZEGG-FORUM is a ritualized form of transparent communication for larger groups. It offers a stage upon which people's thoughts, feelings or anything that moves them can become visible to others. One person, "the presenter" steps into the middle of the circle of the group and presents herself. It is like an existential stage for the whole person which includes the physical and verbal expressions, the mind, creativity and feelings. The aim is to reveal whatever is authentic, alive and true and to share the inner motivation behind actions. By this sharing it creates a space of trust and openness between people and supports a healthy transparency when it comes to the issues of love, power and decision structures. It helps to maintain a clear distinction between factual discussion and emotional processes. The forum is thus a significant building block in the development of self-knowledge and trust within the community. Participants experience freedom and a permission to be who they are and allow others to witness themselves.

The ZEGG Forum benefits from more than 30 years of experience in group dynamics and conflict resolution. We developed the Forum in 1978 to make all processes within a group in a longterm social experiment transparent and understandable for all involved. Since then we keep changing and expanding it. It was born from a desire for truth and healing, both personal and global. Forum creates an empathic social environment that supports us to stay present with all that is inside, however it may feel like. A guiding principle is: "there is nothing wrong inside of me".

Here is how it works:

(It should be clear that you cannot just do it without experience just by reading the description. But it should give you an idea. If you decide to get to know or study it, please visit our web-page: www.zegg-forum.org)

Transparency creates trust

People who get involved in Forum generally take one of three vital roles; the **presenter** or protagonist, the **facilitators** and the "**mirrors**". The group gathers in a circle. The protagonist enters the middle to share what is inside and what moves him or her. He is invited to use the whole space in the middle, feel free to move around, to speak, act and to connect with her feelings. The presenter then shares about her or his experience of a situation. The only goal is to be or become authentic.

The **circle** supports the presenter with their full loving awareness and presence. Their role is to perceive and to witness the process. It can be very powerful and touching to witness a presenter going deeper. Often topics touch issues for many in the group and their own processes are triggered. We can learn that our emotional processes are similar and whatever happens in the center is an example for all around.

Facilitators play a central role and need a profound prior training. The training is to become more authentic in themselves and learn to be with emotions when they arise in

the circle. They are “midwives” to assist the authentic process of the presenter. Ideally a person of each gender facilitates the Forum. The facilitators alone guide the process and they may intervene at any moment. They are given the trust of the group to guide the process following their experience and intuition. The purpose of the facilitator is to reveal the personal truth of a person, her power, his highest potential in order that he or she and the group can feel it.

Social feedback

When the presenter has finished, others can step into the middle to share what they perceived. We call this a “**mirror**”. It means participants offer their perspective of what they have seen. It is a gift for the presenter to learn what others think or feel about her and what they have to say, to supplement, broaden and sharpen the issue he or she brought forward. On the path to grow in self experience, this form of social feedback is indispensable. It is the presenter who carries the responsibility to accept or decline a mirror's insight depending on whether it makes sense to her or him or not. Even the best mirror is just a signpost on our path; it doesn't save us from walking the path on our own.

An effective and skillful Forum will bring out our feared shadows with humor, or in some theatrical and unidentified way so that it can be perceived without judgment. Sometimes the energy shift can be very subtle, as when the facilitator invites the presenter to move faster, or to exaggerate gestures, or to put a sound to the feeling. Trying out different ways of behavior and theatrically acting out emotional processes supports the presenter to detach from his emotional states. He learns that he is more than his changing emotions.

This is part of our continuous journey at ZEGG towards a lively space of fluid relationships, conflicts, feelings and friendships. It is both an inner and an outer work fed by the fertile soil of trust and transparency that Forum creates. Living in community helps as it forms a supportive environment for growth and provides ongoing continuity. We see this as our contribution for the world we want to see - a world that forms from deep within the hearts of the people. Transparent communication and Forum is part of the glue that keeps our community alive and together, it lies at the heart of the community.

How do we use Forum in our daily communal life?

Everybody who lives at ZEGG learns the basic guidelines of Forum. So everybody here is familiar with the format.

We have different Forum groups which happen every week and run for about 90 min. Specially for becoming community members there is a continuous Forum group which meets once a week for about two hours. As the community is too big now there is not one Forum group for all. Forum works best with 15 – 35 participants. So we have different small Forum groups who have a commitment with each other to attend the Forum group.

One challenge with Forum is that it only makes sense when you practice it continuously within the context of a group that is more or less stable. It is important for building trust to have a continuous space and be able to keep working with the same people on the same issues. This then creates a communal experience and more understanding and connection between people. Because we live in a community where many members are either busy or traveling due to their work situation and it is difficult to have a Forum for everybody every week.

For the whole community we sometimes invite for a thematic Forum, where we share our personal and non-personal opinions on a certain issue. We organize three “community intensive times” throughout the year, which are well attended and run for two or three full days. There we share changes in our lives and perspectives on community issues. And we

use the time to plan and share around specific issues like “how do we each deal with money”, “how do we want to build houses” or how to design the next year and our big events.

In addition to the Forum the community members meet regularly in a variety of ways: in men and women groups for more intimate sharings, the Sunday 'Matinee' to share ideas on a spiritual and mental level; the Plenary for matters of information and decision-making; sharing meals, festivals to mark the seasons; making music; art actions; dance; the sauna; and for communal work.

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