

## **Reflections on POD Project: Moderators of Forum 2.0**

By Cathy, Zara, and Kim (aka CaZaKi): Cohort 5

### **Kim: Embodiment through words ...**

When I reflect on the past nine months I'm aware of how much I've carried. I guess it's an apt metaphor. Gestation. "Carrying", like a pregnant woman carries a fetus. But unlike a new mother, I've made some choices around my willingness to carry certain things. And I dropped the ball. I dropped the ball because I had too. I couldn't hold it all. I couldn't fit everything on my proverbial plate. But there were also times when I chose to let it go. Or not pick it up in the first place.

I don't mean to mix metaphors but that's where the juice is, for words that carry the heft and the scale and the force to affect us viscerally – in our guts, in our hearts. Poetry, in my opinion, is the closest art form to dance. The images create a direct pathway from mind to body. They harken the flow of blood, the movement of muscle and bone.

I realized when I landed in the "recreate the forum" Pod (That POD), it was exactly where I belonged. Truth told, I would have liked to have participated more, asked more questions, maybe even provoked debate. But I also realized that there was a 24/7 holding that I was doing whether or not I was tapping out prose on a keyboard. I held, in my awareness, the space for our cohort to express, to reach out, to be heard and seen.

I checked Slack several times a day. I read every post. I was moved. I cried. I felt my inadequacies sometimes as my peers articulated their experiences so eloquently. And I found the mana of embodiment when folks began to write about their physical experiences of skiing, biking, shaking, dancing. The descriptions weren't written as poetry but, oh, the flow – the energy – the absolute motion! And it was a metaphor. They could have been describing moves in a facilitation.

Cathy, Zara, and I will be friends for life. Our weekly meetings were food for my heart, my head, and my soul. We checked in, we vented, we shared our hopes for the forum; some were grandiose, some were reasonable. All came from a place of love and a desire for connection.

It would have been great to witness connections for and from everyone in our cohort. We often talked about the tension between a mandatory participation and a free flow, come as you are, don't come, whatever. What we gained in depth we lost in breadth. Less people showing up but those that did went deep. I don't know what the solution is. We were just getting started.

**That Pod Rap, June 5, 2018**

IF Forum vs. Slack  
Cause at first glance the forum was whack  
Like Whitney Houston's crack  
We just couldn't get the knack  
Of aborted sessions  
We had to hold our confessions  
Prompting us to ask for secessions...  
We'll do it no more  
We all took the floor  
To admit to madness, sadness, and more

CAZAKI made of 3  
Cathy, Zara, and Me  
That pod  
Our Task  
To unmask  
The potential, the passion  
That encourages a hash  
Tag

We're not soothsayers we're players  
In this integral game  
Wantin to know about your difference  
Your same  
There's such a thrill when you @ my name  
Call me out  
Give a shout of love  
Or even disdain.

The prolific  
Are more specific  
And seen  
Others are not so keen  
On sitting in front of a computing machine  
To glean  
The keen  
messages  
And the things in between

Embodiment Channel  
Wordless  
Literally some have not written words  
Transformation Topics

Is not for turds  
It's for me and you to sleuth  
The mystery of our individual truth  
Who Do You Love  
Is not a spoof  
It's a proclamation of appreciation  
And props  
Watercooler  
You could provide for anything that drops  
A nugget of joy  
Don't be coy  
Integral Concepts  
Holy boy  
Our entire program is built on this  
To contribute you don't have to be in a state of bliss  
Throw a kiss from your kosmic address  
Don't miss  
Slack tips and tricks  
You technology hicks  
Found out how to post  
And get the most  
While we host  
Let's make a toast

The end is nigh  
Don't cry  
This doesn't have to be goodbye  
IF cohort five  
Let us continue to jive  
Our hive  
Lives online in Slack  
What a beautiful life hack  
To stay and keep track  
Of each other's stages and states  
We won't hesitate

We'll negotiate  
And meditate  
Anything but perpetuate  
The status quo  
Don'tcha know

We will infiltrate  
Seduce and penetrate

We won't hate  
Let's clean the slate  
And start fresh

I digress  
Cause I don't want to end this mess

I offer mad respect  
As I reflect  
On all of us right here  
It's clear  
Regardless of the distance  
To each other's hearts  
We're near

So let's have and hold this we-space dance  
As our last chance  
To cohere

My darling "self as instrument" peers.

### **Zara: Personal Development vs. Professional Development**

My focus on the forum, in our POD, as peers to Cathy and Kim in this work, and my particular life journey in this process of integral facilitation training was very heavily tilted to the "personal" realm of development over the professional. I'm accepting that as what I needed, since that's "what is"- and I'm curious how a greater focus on professional development would have shaped how I showed up to facilitate conversations on the forum. That is the part that feels a little unsatisfying to me now and that I would focus on moving forward. However, I'm happy that my social nature was supportive for creating connections online and that I could use this space more readily given our new format to share from a personal development voice, which for me was in need of less structure and more creativity.

My belief is that the level of unwinding that is required for truly transformational growth is in part fostered by having a community of committed and supportive people to hold space for the often confusing, occasionally messy, and potentially immensely beautiful process that is required to really let go to the point that something truly new can emerge.

I cannot impress enough how grateful I am to have been in a POD with Cathy and Kim. I was lucky to get to connect with these women around our project, and even more lucky that our POD commitment meant I got to see them regularly and include their perspectives and support through my ongoing learning in this transformational process. I hope that others have had similar experiences from their POD's and coaching groups,

and even on Forum 2.0! I also hope that this energy we created together of deep support, curiosity, interest, and fruitful feedback was reflected on the forum to those who shared and received our replies.

Early on in this program I tapped the polarity of professional development vs. personal and found it challenging and separating. I noticed how many gravitated toward one side and resisted the other offerings that were opposite of their comfort zone. I also see how the difference of the first forum and the second reflect these polarities. Moving forward I would want to weave them together more, and explore how to create an online learning community that fosters and is fully supporting both. And I would also want to challenge myself to step further into what professional development looks like for me, and embrace that with the same willingness and depth that I experienced the personal development process.

### **Cathy: Building Culture Online**

Taking on the task of facilitating the forum for the second half of our cohort was a good challenge from the outset. From deciding whether or not to risk changing platforms to experimenting with how best to engage our classmates, it was an exploration into building culture and community in an online world.

In other online classes courses I've taken, I've often felt there is much to be desired and opportunity missed in the online component in terms of depth of conversation and connection. While there was opportunity in these classes to explore my own perspectives and deepen my learning by completing my required posts for the program, it seems that the juicy learning conversations are more difficult to foster in an online space. I do think that part of the reason for this is a general reluctance to take the risk of putting thoughts into words and recording them (in semi-permanence) for the whole class to judge and give feedback on. In a classroom setting, comments made in class can be discussed, clarified and perhaps the risk of misinterpretation is less. Or at the very least a conversation can pass in a few moments, whereas my written words live on for the duration of the course.

Perhaps this is still a shadow at work in our IFP cohort.

I have appreciated the experience and the new vantage point this has given me on how my skills as a facilitator can be used, and how they function in a group setting.

I do believe that if we'd had more time to work with this platform, we could have made more progress in terms of engagement from the "wall-flowers" of the group and deepening our discussion of integral concepts.

Working in this POD has been a lovely experience for several reasons. Both Kim and Zara are a pleasure to work with. Our group met near weekly, to reflect on the week's discussions, and to brainstorm new ways to support and engage our cohort. Despite the

challenges we've faced, I am immensely grateful to have worked on this with them both. In addition to that, I've enjoyed the opportunity to really explore how online communities work, how we can at times relate to each other differently online (than we would in person) and had a glimpse at how the concepts we've talked about during this course run parallel in an online world.

On the personal side, this was a much larger undertaking than I first imagined. I now understand the preference of a structured approach to posting (i.e. mandatory posting every two weeks with 2 responses to your fellow students posts). Having a free form conversation, that spans months required a lot of time and attention. If I could take the lessons learned over the last few months, go back in time and start again, I think a hybrid approach would be a nice thing to explore. There is much more that I would have liked to dig in to and offer to this project.