

MEMO TO: Women Moving Forward Graduates
MEMO FROM: Susan Van Vleet
DATE: February 23, 2005
RE: 2005 Schedule and Culture

In the last two years we have been in China, Korea, Japan, Venezuela and Holland working. Traveling and doing our work in these varied cultures has been a wonderful experience and one that has taught us a lot. We learned that the principles of our workshops are transferable to other cultures. My anthropology professor was right; culture is fluid not static. And that is the point I want to make. As technology and people change and grow, so does the culture within which people live. Culture is not static nor is it etched in stone. Yes, culture varies by country, region, tribe and clan. But no culture has stayed the same from its creation to today.

Changes in most cultures occur as frequently as do new software updates. They are often small imperceptible changes at first and then a mass occurs and they shift. Also, although it is not politically correct to talk about, not everything in a culture is healthy for the people who must live under its tenets and rules.

For example, slavery in this country was a part of the culture. It permeated homes as well as business and the U.S. economy at the time. However, our culture, changed with a lot of work over years from a lot of people and a civil war and we are better for it. Another more current example is women being mutilated by female circumcision in some cultures. This is an example of a cultural practice that has to change whether it is politically correct to say so or not.

So we cannot always look at cultures as static. For two reasons:

1. It ignores the fact that culture is fluid and
2. It permits repressive, inhumane and punitive parts of a culture to exist long after it is clear those parts need to change.

So the next time you go to another culture to observe, remember it's the way it is now but where it will move to in five years, no one can say. Let me know what your experience has been.

ONLY 2 WOMEN MOVING FORWARDS LEFT IN 2005

June 7-9, 2005

October 18-20, 2005

There are only **15** spaces left in these two workshops. So if you want to refer someone we recommend it is done soon. If you are planning to observe we are also running low on space so let us know.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP RETREAT

May 2-4, 2005

FILLED

TRAINING FOR CHANGE AGENTS

June 21-24, 2005

We decided to add a second workshop in 2005. If you want to learn how to be a better, more successful change agent this is the 4-day program to attend.

Anyone at any level is welcome as long as you see yourself as a "Change Agent"

ADVANCED MEN'S COURSE

September 13-15, 2005

John has scheduled the second course. If you want to refer a man to the program it is recommended you speak with John first to see if your referral meets the pre-requisites.

I hope to see you all in 2005!

