

## **The Practice of Hospitality™**

### **Learning to Welcome Ourselves and Others Again**

#### **Insights and Reflections for The Second Formation™**

Many successful men become highly skilled at managing life.

Managing responsibilities.

Managing organizations.

Managing expectations.

Managing conflict.

Managing performance.

Managing outcomes.

Over time, management becomes second nature.

The challenge is that what serves us professionally can sometimes begin shaping how we relate to ourselves.

Questions become problems to solve.

Emotions become inconveniences to manage.

Uncertainty becomes something to eliminate.

Grief becomes something to move beyond.

Vulnerability becomes something to contain.

The inner life gradually becomes another project.

Another responsibility.

Another thing to optimize.

Yet there is another way of relating to experience.

A different posture.

An ancient posture.

The posture of hospitality.

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## **More Than Courtesy**

When most people hear the word hospitality, they think of welcoming guests.

Generosity.

Warmth.

Kindness.

These are certainly forms of hospitality.

But hospitality extends much deeper.

At its core, hospitality is the willingness to receive.

To make room.

To welcome what is present before deciding what to do with it.

Hospitality does not mean agreement.

It does not mean passivity.

It does not mean abandoning discernment.

It simply means receiving before reacting.

Listening before judging.

Understanding before evaluating.

Hospitality creates space for truth to emerge.

## **The Loss of Hospitality**

One of the hidden consequences of achievement is that many people gradually lose hospitality toward themselves.

Not intentionally.

Not maliciously.

But practically.

Life becomes busy.

Responsibilities accumulate.

Expectations multiply.

Reflection becomes secondary.

The inner world receives less attention.

Many people become more productive while becoming less available to themselves.

Questions are dismissed.

Fatigue is ignored.

Disappointment is minimized.

Longings are postponed.

Grief is deferred.

Wonder is crowded out.

The result is often subtle.

A person remains successful while becoming increasingly unfamiliar with his own experience.

### **Hospitality Toward the Self**

The work of The Second Formation™ begins with a simple invitation:

Become curious again.

Not curious about the market.

Not curious about the organization.

Not curious about everyone else's life.

Curious about your own.

Hospitality toward the self begins when we become willing to notice.

What am I feeling?

What am I avoiding?

What am I carrying?

What am I longing for?

What am I grieving?

What feels alive?

What feels neglected?

These are not productivity questions.

They are human questions.

And they cannot be answered honestly without first creating room for them.

Hospitality is that room.

### **Receiving One's Own Story**

Many adults carry complicated relationships with their own stories.

Some memories are treasured.

Others are ignored.

Others remain confusing.

Others continue shaping life from the background.

The temptation is often to judge our stories before understanding them.

To explain them.

Control them.

Move beyond them.

The practice of hospitality invites a different approach.

Before asking whether a story should be changed, interpreted, or resolved, we first learn to receive it.

To acknowledge it.

To listen to it.

To understand its influence.

The goal is not to relive the past.

The goal is to develop a more honest relationship with it.

### **Hospitality and Truth**

Hospitality is not sentimentality.

It is not avoidance.

It is not endless self-acceptance disconnected from growth.

Hospitality creates conditions where truth becomes possible.

Many people cannot hear truth because they are busy defending against it.

Explaining it.

Avoiding it.

Managing it.

Hospitality allows a person to remain present long enough to hear what reality is trying to reveal.

The individual who can welcome truth is often more capable of growth than the individual who is constantly trying to control appearances.

### **Hospitality Toward Others**

Something remarkable often occurs when people become more hospitable toward themselves.

They become more hospitable toward others.

They listen differently.

Judge less quickly.

Interrupt less frequently.

Become less compelled to fix.

Less compelled to advise.

Less compelled to perform expertise.

More capable of genuine curiosity.

More capable of presence.

More capable of seeing another person as a human being rather than a problem to solve.

The return to self often creates a renewed capacity for relationship.

### **The Circle of Return™**

One of the reasons The Circle of Return™ matters is that hospitality is difficult to practice alone.

Many people have never experienced being deeply listened to.

Many have spent years in environments organized around performance, efficiency, and judgment.

The Circle of Return™ creates a different environment.

A place where stories are welcomed.

Questions are welcomed.

Complexity is welcomed.

Reflection is welcomed.

The goal is not to produce perfect answers.

The goal is to create conditions where deeper truths can emerge.

The group becomes a community of hospitality.

Individuals gradually learning how to extend toward themselves what they so often extend toward others.

Patience.

Curiosity.

Compassion.

Understanding.

Attention.

### **The Courage to Welcome**

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Hospitality requires courage.

It is often easier to stay busy.

To remain productive.

To keep moving.

To avoid difficult questions.

Hospitality asks something different.

Pause.

Notice.

Listen.

Receive.

Stay present.

Many of the most important discoveries of adulthood emerge not through force, but through attention.

Not through striving, but through awareness.

Not through control, but through presence.

### **The Work of The Second Formation™**

The Second Formation™ is not simply a process of reflection.

It is also a practice of hospitality.

Hospitality toward one's own story.

Hospitality toward one's own humanity.

Hospitality toward questions that have waited years for attention.

Hospitality toward truth.

Hospitality toward others who are walking similar paths.

Because before a person can become more fully himself, he must first become willing to welcome himself.

And before he can truly receive another person, he must learn how to receive his own experience.

The journey begins there.

With a simple act of attention.

And the willingness to make room.

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### **Reflection Questions**

- What parts of your experience currently receive the least attention?
  - What questions have you been postponing?
  - What emotions are easiest for you to welcome?
  - Which emotions are most difficult?
  - What part of your story have you not fully received?
  - How do you know when you are genuinely listening?
  - What would greater hospitality toward yourself look like?
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### **A Foundational Principle**

We cannot offer to others what we are unwilling to offer ourselves.

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### **About The Second Formation™**

The Second Formation™ is a structured developmental process for successful men in the second half of life who are exploring identity, purpose, contribution, and legacy beyond role and achievement.

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What strikes me is that the first five papers now form a coherent developmental progression:

**Drift → Role Fusion → Return → Awakening → Hospitality**

Only after those foundations are established do I think you arrive at White Paper #6:

### **The Recovery of Story™**

Because once a man has become aware, begun returning, and learned a more hospitable posture toward himself, he is finally ready to revisit and reinterpret the story that formed him. That is where autobiography, life review, and the deeper work of The Second Formation™ naturally begin.