

# The Landmark Forum

## *Syllabus*

## DAY ONE

### I. **Orientation and Overview: How *The Landmark Forum*® Works**

Participants are given an overview—a sense of what they might expect, as well as tips and ideas for how to get the most value. The daily schedule is reviewed, and there is an opportunity to ask questions.

The stage is set for people to engage powerfully with the material, maximize the value of their participation, and produce unprecedented results in a short period of time.

### II. ***Already Always Listening*™**

In the *Already Always Listening*™ segment, we visit the notion that while we think of ourselves as open-minded and objective, in fact our approach to ourselves, our circumstances and others is often filtered and even obscured by pre-existing notions and ideas—by our upbringing, our values, our past experiences.

In this session, we see those filters for what they are—an all-pervasive influence that profoundly colors our relationships with people,

circumstances and even ourselves. An awareness of these filters, and a recognition of the striking limits that they impose, allows for a refreshing freedom. People, situations and our approach to life alter dramatically.

### III. **The Hidden Power of Context**

Here we propose the view that in all human endeavors, context is decisive. That is, the hidden contexts from which we live determine what we see and what we don't see; what we consider and what we fail to notice; what we are able to do and what seems beyond our reach. In this view, all behavior—all ways of being and acting—are correlated to the context(s) from which we live our lives.

When these contexts become apparent and known, we can begin to see the unwitting process by which they were assembled and the degree to which they govern our everyday lives. We are left, possibly for the first time, with a choice about who we are and who we can be, separate from these contexts. There is a freedom and ability to take action that was unavailable before—even familiar actions produce a whole new level of effectiveness.

# *continued, DAY ONE*

## **IV. The Vicious Circle™**

In the Vicious Circle™ segment, we suggest that it is a human tendency to collapse what happened, with the story we tell about what happened. This collapsing happens so fast it becomes hard to separate the two, and we think of them as one and the same. Almost immediately, and certainly over time, the story we tell ourselves becomes the way it is—the reality we know. It limits what is possible in our lives, robbing us of much of our joy and effectiveness.

When we are able to separate what happened from our story or interpretation, we discover that much of what we considered already determined, given and fixed, may in fact not be that way. Situations that may have been challenging or difficult become fluid and open to change. We find ourselves no longer limited by a finite set of options, and able to achieve what we want with new ease and enjoyment.

## **V. Rackets™: The Payoff and the Cost**

In the Rackets™ segment, we discuss the idea of a Racket™ as an unproductive way of being or acting that includes a complaint that something shouldn't be the way it is. Often, we don't notice that while our complaints may seem justified, even legitimate, there is a certain payoff—some advantage or benefit we are receiving that reinforces the cycle of behavior. At the same time, this way of being has steep costs, whether in our vitality, affinity, self-expression or sense of fulfillment.

By recognizing this pattern, its costs, and how we have been keeping the pattern in place, we have the choice to interrupt the cycle and discover new ways of interacting that lead to new levels of happiness, satisfaction and fulfillment in areas that are most important to us.

# DAY TWO

## I. The Illusion of Someday: Rethinking Possibility

If someone says to us, “X is possible,” we would normally understand them to mean that X does not now exist, and that its existence, even someday, is not certain. Our use of the word possibility is different from this ordinary usage. We are not speaking about something remote or something that may happen out in the future. In this session, we look at the notion of possibility in a whole new light.

This new view of possibility has an immediate and powerful impact on who we are, how we live our lives, and how we see things—now, in the present. It has the power to move, touch, and inspire us; to shape our actions; and to shift the way we are being right now.

## II. The Myth of Is and I

In this section, we explore the nature of what we think of as reality, which includes an objective world that exists independent of us, where cause and effect are key operative factors; where I, as an identity, is a collection of characteristics, attributes, and experiences from the past. In exploring the nature of reality and taking apart these myths, something else becomes possible.

Here, we observe not so much the particulars of the realities we construct, but that it is human to construct such realities and then forget that we are the

ones who constructed them. As a result, we see that we no longer need to be confined to living within this limited range, and we gain the freedom to express ourselves fully.

## III. Distinguishing: Opening New Worlds

To distinguish something means to take something from an undifferentiated background and bring it to the foreground. Just as learning a new language builds a bridge to a new culture, or the capacity to balance makes riding a bicycle possible, drawing distinctions gives us a facility to navigate in areas that were previously inaccessible.

Distinctions give power and breadth to the ability to live creatively and successfully. With this ability to distinguish, we are left with new worlds and opportunities for action.

# *continued, DAY TWO*

## **IV. Freedom from Anxiety**

Consider that one of the primary obstacles to effectiveness is fear. No matter how accomplished, successful, or courageous we are, fear and anxiety seem to play a role at some point in all of our lives. Often, we allow our fears and anxieties to stop us—to determine how much we'll risk, and to limit the range in which we live—assigning them an unwarranted power and magnitude in our lives. When we see that our relationship to our anxieties and fears inadvertently gives them a life of their own, something else becomes possible. We find ourselves being powerful in the face of what has stopped us before, and free to rediscover and pursue our passions in life.

## **V. How Identities Get Constructed**

In this session, we inquire into how our identity—who we consider ourselves to be—got created. The process began in childhood, as we gradually adopted ways of being and acting to deal successfully with things that didn't quite go the way we thought they should. By the time we reach adulthood, we have assembled a set of practices and approaches, attributes and characteristics, that seem to give us a certain measure of success—that make up our personality, our style, who we consider ourselves to be.

When we begin to see that our identity was put together in response to something that we had determined shouldn't be, the result is a new freedom in saying who we are—a fundamental shift in what we see and know as possible.

# DAY THREE

## I. The Pervasive Influence of the Past

Much of what makes up today and even tomorrow seems to be an extension or variation of what has come before. What we see as possible—what we are working toward—is essentially a more, better, or different version of the past.

In this section, we are given a technology for putting the past where it belongs—in the past. We begin to design our lives as a free and authentic expression—from what is possible, rather than what has been. Unencumbered by the past, we experience a greater level of vitality, well-being and fun, and are able to enjoy a newfound sense of connection and intimacy with the people in our lives.

## II. Change vs. Transformation

We take for granted that things “are” a particular way. To effect change, we go to work on altering circumstances, the people around us, even ourselves. In this session, we explore the difference between change and transformation. Change is essentially a comparison to something that previously existed. By its very nature, change is past-based. Essentially, change yields more, better, or different from what came before. Transformation, on the other hand, is an act of bringing forth or inventing. It is something created, and is inherently expansive and infinite.

It is here in this section of The Forum that the shift, or transformation, occurs for people. This dramatic shift enables us to think and act outside existing views and limits, and to redefine ourselves and the reality we have known.

## III. Language as an Access to Power

Language is commonly thought of as a bridge to the world. Even the way we learn language implies that first there is a world. Then, in order to connect and deal with that world, we learn language. We seldom, if ever, consider that language may in fact be what brings that world into being.

In this session, we explore a new view of language that alters the very nature of what is possible. Language comes to be seen as a creative act. Listening and speaking—actions we would normally see as commonplace—take on new dimensions and unexpected power. They become instruments of creation.

## IV. The Nature of Choice

The power to choose is uniquely human. We all have a high interest in shaping the course of our lives—making the right choices and pursuing what is important to us. One commonly held view regards choice as merely reacting to, or selecting among, the existing options. Here we take another view.

In this section, we explore choice as a profoundly human ability to create. When choice is understood and known in this way, what had previously seemed simply part of “the way things are”—inevitable or impervious to change—appears in a new light. We find ourselves able to choose—to have a say—about who we are and who we will be, as the author of our lives in any and all situations.

# EVENING SESSION

## I. New Possibilities, Breakthrough Results, and a Quick Review

In this last three-hour session, participants share with each other and with the guests they've invited to join them, the new possibilities they've created for themselves. Key discussions and critical insights are revisited, deepening our understanding of the distinctions of The Landmark Forum and their relevance in our lives.

Guests get an experience of what The Landmark Forum is and its benefits, and they have a unique opportunity to see how it works by directly participating in a portion of the technology.

## II. Transformation as a Way of Living

In The Landmark Forum, the notion of possibility moves from an abstract ideal to a day-to-day living reality. Life becomes framed in a new way. The way we approach the world, and the way the world approaches us, changes.

The Landmark Forum leaves you with an ability to relate to life with new freedom and power. The abilities you learn never leave you, and are yours forever. The Landmark Forum is not a one-time event. It is a moment-by-moment approach to being alive.

## III. Dealing Powerfully with Breakdowns

Here, we explore a technology for handling breakdowns effectively. By breakdowns, we mean something that we say shouldn't be or something that stops us from achieving what we want to achieve. Instead of seeing breakdowns in that familiar way, we begin to view breakdowns as a pathway—an actual access—to fulfilling what's possible.

As a result, we are left with the confidence to step beyond our comfort zone, and to welcome breakdowns as an occasion for leadership and accomplishment.

