



TRISH LESSLIE

Serious about change? The Hoffman Process could be the key that helps you turn your life around

I'm not sure what scared me most about the Hoffman Process. The prospect of having no phone or Internet access for seven days was pretty daunting. I wasn't too keen on sharing a room with a complete stranger, either. But what was truly terrifying was the prospect of a whole week exploring exactly what makes me tick.

I needn't have worried. My room-mate was an absolute delight, the lack of connectivity surprisingly enjoyable and, most surprisingly, a forensic examination of my past, present and potential future turned out to be one of the most profound and rewarding experiences of my life.

Often described as ten years' worth of therapy in one week, there's no shortage of celebrities waxing lyrical about Hoffman's transformative effects. From Thandie Newton and Sienna Miller, to rapper Goldie and nutritionist Patrick Holford, Hoffman graduates claim shutting yourself away with 23 other nervous souls for a 'psychological detox' can be life-changing.

As someone who's struggled with abandonment (and a good few other) issues, I finally decided to head to Hoffman last autumn. Although I'd read a fair bit about it over the years, there's an element of secrecy about what the Process actually involves. The Hoffman honchos reckon not knowing exactly

what's in store makes the experience far more powerful and I agree.

What I can say is there's a lot of 'ritual' involved – bashing cushions with a baseball bat, for example, to release negative emotional nasties such as resentment. Visualisation and journaling (shortcuts to self-awareness) also feature heavily.

You don't have to share anything with the other participants unless you want to. Still, I found myself opening up more honestly to this group of strangers – many of them now friends – than I would with even my nearest and dearest.

There are a couple of venues to choose from,

but I plumped for Florence House, a charming boutique B&B on the East Sussex coast serving exceptionally good hearty but healthy fare. Days were long and challenging, but boy, was it worth the effort. I came out the same person, but the shift in my attitude has made a huge difference. I'm less stressed, more patient and forgiving and my relationships are better for it.

As they say at Hoffman, if a ship changes course by just one degree halfway across the ocean, it will end up at a very different destination. Having nudged my helm, I'm a lot happier about where I'm heading. If you're serious about change, check it out.

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