

President Gerald R. Ford's handwritten reflections, 1977 or 1978

Scanned from the collection **Gerald R. Ford: Materials from the writing of *A Time To Heal*** at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

While writing his autobiography, *A Time to Heal* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), President Gerald R. Ford composed a series of personal reflections on twenty-seven topics. What makes these documents so unusual is not only their introspection but also their form. President Ford recorded these observations by hand, writing in blue ball point on his favored yellow writing tablets. He did not expend time and energy to polish and edit his writing, apparently planning to do so when incorporating them into the book. Therefore occasional spelling or grammatical errors or incomplete thoughts appear.

For each reflection the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library has scanned President Ford's handwritten document and added a Library-produced transcription below to aid in reading the reflection.

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How to deal with experts.

In This complicated, controversial, technical world experts are vitally important, especially to the ultimate decision makers. Self appointed experts are a dime - a dozen. The basic problem is finding real experts in any given field and spreading the viewpoints so a diversity of opinion is available. A panel all with the same views is not productive but a panel with diversity is invaluable.

Having assembled a broad gauged group they must understand each one has an obligation to speak freely without reservation but with respect for the views of others. The President must be a good listener, maintain order, ask penetrating questions, push for fuller explanations & justifications and disguise his own views in order to encourage total frankness. It is vital that ^{the} expert knows the President respects his knowledge & his integrity even though the final decision may be contrary to his recommendations.

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