



Transforming Hierarchy to Circles

EIGHT STEPS FOR CO-CREATING CIRCLES

Sacred Space

Circle is life giving; hierarchy is life managing. Circle is both ancient and modern. It is the new model for bringing peace and justice for all. **Create and honor sacred space** by arranging the room so that everyone is seated in a circle. If a large gathering, there will be many circles of 8 or less. One large circle is ideal if the room size will allow it. The center of the circle or circles is honored with symbols such as a candle, flowers and other sacred objects. Provide rituals such as a time of silence that enables everyone to be fully engaged from beginning to end. The sacred center is where diversity meets as equals. **'Check-ins' at the beginning of the circle and 'check-outs' at the end give equal time to everyone present.**

Power

Power comes from a higher power and is plentiful. We are bringing forth a 'power-with' model transforming the 'power-over' model of oppression. **Information, resources and time are shared.** Sharing information, money, expertise, time and talents empowers individuals and the whole creating a synergy that is much greater than the individual parts. **Decisions are made by consensus whenever possible.** All go along with the decisions without undermining. **Start and end on time** unless everyone agrees to a different time.

Peaceful (*nonviolent*) Communication

One person speaks at a time. **Speak and listen from the heart** without judgment. The Native American 'talking stick' creates a deep level of sharing from the heart. Use any object as a talking piece when needed. Use **'I' statements** instead of 'we' unless speaking for a group. Use assertive (nonviolent) communication "I'm OK you're OK". **When confrontation occurs allow for silence to hold differences in the circle's center,** seeking a non-dualist solution instead of polarization. **Speak from experience instead of giving advice. Decide together what is to be held in confidence.**

Intention

Organizing around the vision keeps the energy positive. Co-create a shared vision/intention. Attention is given by all to making the intention a reality. The Law of Attraction is a powerful force in making dreams come true. If individuals or the group sends out fear and doubts, they will receive fear and failure. If they send out positive thoughts for success, they will attract success. Tasks are chosen by individuals based on their passion and accountability for carrying them out. All stay true to the shared intention receiving support from the whole group. Passion is the positive energy that fuels the task being accomplished. Mutual accountability is the insurance that tasks will be completed. Cooperation and collaboration among all members allows for everyone's skills and talents to be utilized. When we dream it together and work and play in this cooperative and positive manner, the dream becomes reality. The vision is the navigational chart for sailing into the unknown waters of the future. The vision/intention helps organizations and sacred circles stay on course.

Creativity

Everyone is valued and everyone shares in creating new ideas, products, life-giving actions, solutions to problems, insights, healing, vision, etc. Brainstorming a 'shower of ideas' is invaluable in allowing all ideas to be counted without judgment or ranking one better than another. Right brain, fun activities including the arts (music, dance, art, meditation, visioning, etc.) allows for new thinking and behaviors to make the dream a reality. Creativity transforms established organizations and develops new structures. Creativity empowers all members to be a vital part of a living system that constantly changes in relationship to the environment.

Shared Leadership

Leadership is bestowed on those who are congruent with the vision and have the skills and passion to carry out responsibilities. The designated leaders represent the group/organization to the outside. They are entrusted to speak for the whole and are accountable to the members. As well, the members are accountable to the leader in providing mutual support. Inside the circle **leadership is shared**. Authentic leadership develops when passion, clear vision and skills are in alignment with the whole. Personal growth and healthy creative group dynamics are shared responsibilities by all involved.

Reflection and Evaluation

Reflection, both individual and group, leads to analyzing what works and doesn't work, and if it is congruent with the greater vision and greater good. Evaluating what to do next, to bring forth all that is positive, supports new thinking and actions that will be productive in the life of the group. All that is life giving is kept; all that is negative is left behind. Best practices are shared within the circle and beyond.

Action

Action without vision is a nightmare; vision without action is a pipedream. This Japanese saying rings so true. Action with vision using Circle Principles and matched with passions will change the world. **Circle Principles are found in Bold.**

Join Circle Connections where you will receive hands-on help from circle experts to start, nurture and connect circles and be part of a network of mutual support and collaboration that is making a positive difference locally and globally. www.circleconnections.com