

Council

Listening and speaking from the heart



<https://pixabay.com/en/people-group-crowd-team-isolated-309096/>

*“Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say”
William Shakespeare, King Lear*

Tags: Social, Communication Skills, Community building

Challenge:

When people come together forming a group, a family or even a couple, it can be very difficult to express what is really being felt. People tend to feel insecure or do not express deep feelings and thoughts honestly. Instead they may wait for the right moment that somehow never arrives. However, there are some social techniques that make it easier for people to fully express themselves.

Solution:

“The Way of Council” is an ancient, basic, non-hierarchic and powerful technique that helps people to really express what is in their heart and mind. It elicits new insights, creates understanding and helps people to arrive at common decisions. It always consist of, and emerges, when people commit to:

- Speak from the heart
- Listen from the heart
- Share their own stories
- Try to support themselves, the group and a greater good
- are spontaneous
- and confidential

Put in simple terms it is meeting in a circle (where everybody sees everybody else), around a center (often indicated with a candle) and with a talking piece (which shows who is speaking). The person who wants to talk takes the talking stick and doesn't get interrupted by others during that time. There are different types how to move the talk in the group (basic, web, fishbowl,...).

References:

Book: Zimmermann, J; Coyle, V (1996): *The Way of Council*. Bramble Books

further Recommended Reading: <http://ojaifoundation.org/resources/recommended-readings>

Ojai Foundation: <http://ojaifoundation.org/discover-council>

Submitted by: Pioneers of Change