Translucent Community Governance Proposal

Sociocracy
A new power structure for ethical governance

History of Sociocracy

Sociocracy originated in the Netherlands. Originally envisioned in 1945 by Kees Boeke, a Dutch educator and pacifist, as a way to adapt Quaker egalitarian principles to secular organizations, sociocracy allows us to give and receive effective leadership while remaining peers.

Just before WW II, Boeke started a school in The Netherlands where he began experimenting with consensus in what soon became a community of 400 students and teachers. Boeke's sociocracy was based on three fundamental rules:

- The interests of all members must be considered, the individual bowing to the interests of the whole.
- No action can be taken if there are no solutions found that everyone can accept.
- All members must be ready to act according to these unanimous decisions."

After World War II, Gerard Endenburg developed the Sociocratic Method into a body of well tested principles which is now used in more than a hundred different organizations: schools, businesses, various institutions, a local police department, a police academy and a number of businesses in the USA, Canada, Italy, Switzerland and Brazil.

What is Sociocracy?

A theoretical system of government in which the interests of all members of society are served equally.

Sociocracy is a form of governance. It models an organization that can function and function well with the least levels of hierarchy possible. It cannot be owned because ownership indicates who has the ultimate decision-making power. As power is shared, ownership is shared too.

Sociocracy is a method of governing organizations that produces more effective and harmonious decision-making, both in businesses and associations. It ensures inclusiveness, accountability, and transparency while it increases productivity. It creates a structure that both involves all members of the organization in policy decision making and produces a strong and efficient decision-making structure.

Sociocracy is rule of an organization by the "socii," that is, people who regularly interact with each other and have a common aim. (The prefix socio- comes from "socius," the Latin term for companion or colleague.) Each socius has a voice that cannot be ignored in the managing of the organization. In contrast, democracy is rule by the "demos," that is, a collection of people who may or may not know each other and have only general aims in common -- such as the running of a country. An autocracy is rule by an "auto" or single person. The typical business is an autocracy. The majority of the "demos" can ignore the minority of the "demos" as they make their decisions. An "auto" can choose to ignore the rest of the organization.

Sociocracy can be regarded as a fractal structure. That is why, once the basics are understood, the procedures at the highest level are as clear as the procedures at the grassroots level. It also doesn't require very many levels to include a great number of people.

Creating More Perfect Organizations

One of the struggles in building effective organizations is finding an efficient and reliable method of making good and timely decisions. In democratic organizations, majority vote is the accepted standard. Majority rule, however, automatically creates a minority. This

encourages factions and divisiveness rather than harmony. Majority rule encourages people to build alliances, to trade favors, and think politically rather than scientifically and in terms of the best direction for the organization.

In business, decisions are generally made autocratically by the owner or manager or by a Board on behalf of investors. This can lead to poor decisions because those who execute them may not be free to express their views and thus critical information is not available in the decision-making process. As in majority vote, those who are not included in the decision making may also feel less committed and thus will not enthusiastically support the organization. Autocratic decision-making also does not encourage leadership.
Sociocracy was developed to correct the deficiencies in both these methods.

The Four Main Principles

The sociocratic method can be applied to every kind of organization. It starts from the concept that people are unequal, unique persons who should be equivalent in decision-making.

1. Governance by Consent

Consent governs policy decision-making. Consent means there are no argued and paramount objections to a proposed decision.
The consent principle says that a decision can only be made when none of the circle members present has a reasoned, substantial objection to making the decision *(see Appendix V – Objections and Aims)*.

The consent principle is different than "consensus" and "veto." With consensus the participants must be "for" the decision. With consent decision-making they must be not against. With consensus a veto blocks the decision without an argument. With consent decision-making, opposition must always be supported with an argument.

Every decision doesn't require consent, but consent must exist concerning an agreement to make decisions regularly through another method. Thus, many decisions are not made by consent. Rather, with consent, persons or groups are given the authority to make independent decisions. *(see Appendix I – Consent & Consensus)*

When you amend a proposal based on everyone's input, you can come up with something that no one has an objection to. The members of the circle decide if an objection fits the criteria or not. Usually the matter can be cleared up by the facilitator asking how the objector would amend the proposal.

2. Circle Organization structure

Circles are the primary governance unit. Circles are semi-autonomous and self-organizing. Within their domain, they make policy decisions; set aims; delegate the functions of leading, doing, and measuring to their own members; and maintain their own memory system and program of ongoing development.

Each circle has its own aim, performs the three functions of **directing**, **operating** and **measuring** (feedback), and maintains its own memory system by means of integral education. A good way to evaluate how well a circle is functioning is to use 9-block charting. (*see Appendix II – Circle Process*)

Every circle formulates its own vision, "mission statement" and aim/objective (which must fit in with the vision, mission and aim of the organization as a whole and with the vision, mission and aim of all the other circles in the organization). (*see Appendix III – Vision, Mission, Aim*)

3. Double-Linking

Circles are connected by a double-link consisting of the functional leader elected by the next higher circle, and two or more representatives elected by the circle, all of whom participate fully in both circles.

Coupling a circle with the next higher circle is handled through a double link. That is, at least two persons, (usually) the supervisor of the circle and at least one representative of the circle, belong to the next higher circle.

Sociocratic organizations are connected to outside organizations by external double links. The top circle has outside "experts" as members. These experts sometimes come from other circles within the organization.

4. Elections by consent

People are elected to functions and tasks by consent after open discussion.
Choosing people for functions and/or responsibilities is done by consent after an open discussion. The discussion is very important because it uncovers pertinent information about the members of the circle. *(see Appendix IV – Elections by consent)*

Additional agreements

Besides the four main principles Endenburg has come up with some agreements that help "maintain equivalence" between participating members:

- **Everyone has a right to be part of a decision that affects them.**

- **Every decision may be reexamined at any time.**
- **No secrets may be kept.**
- **Everything is open to discussion without limits.**
- **Also the top circle has outside "experts" as members. These experts sometimes come from other circles within the organization.**

Resources:
http://www.ecovil.com/Pages/governance.html
http://www.sociocracy.info/
http://worldteacher.faithweb.com/sociocracy.htm
http://www.masternewmedia.org/2004/11/29/taking_back_our_decisionmaking_power.htm
http://www.twinoaks.org/clubs/sociocracy/index.html
http://www.sociocracyinaction.ca/

SOCIOCRACY

Democracy as it might be; first published in May 1945
by Kees Boeke (1884-1966)

The fact is that we have taken the present system for granted for so long that many people do not realise that the party system and majority rule are not an essential part of democracy. If we really wish to see the whole population united, like a big family, in which the members care for each other's welfare as much as for their own, we must set aside the quantitative principle of the right of the greatest number and find another way of organising ourselves. This solution must be really democratic in the sense that it must enable each one of us to share in organising the community. But this kind of democracy will not depend on power, not even the power of the majority. It will have to be a real community-democracy, an organisation of the community by the community itself.

For more than three hundred years the Quakers have used a method of self-government that rejects majority voting, group action being possible only when unanimity has been reached. I too have found by trying out this method in my school that it really does work, provided there is a recognition that the interests of others are as real and as important as one's own. If we start with this fundamental idea, a spirit of goodwill is engendered which can bind together people from all levels of society and with the most varied points of view.

Many will be highly sceptical about this possibility. They are so accustomed to a social order in which decisions are made by the majority or by a single person, that they do not realise that, if a group provides its own leadership and everyone knows that only when common agreement is reached can any action be taken, quite a different atmosphere is created from that arising from majority rule.

Before describing how the system could be made to work, we must first see what the problem really is. We want a group of persons to establish a common arrangement of their affairs which all will respect and obey. There will be no executive committee chosen by the majority, having the power to command the individual. The group itself must reach a decision and enter into an agreement on the understanding that every individual in the group will act on this decision and honour this agreement. I have called this the self-discipline of the group. It can be compared to the self-discipline of the individual who has learnt to set certain demands for himself which he obeys.

There are three fundamental rules underlying the system:

The first is that the interests of all members must be considered, the individual bowing to the interests of the whole.

Secondly, solutions must be sought which everyone can accept: otherwise no action can be taken.

Thirdly, all members must be ready to act according to these decisions when unanimously made.

The spirit which underlies the first rule is really nothing else but concern for one's neighbour, and where this exists, where there is sympathy for other people's interests, where love is, there will be a spirit in which real harmony is possible.

The second point must be considered in more detail. If a group in any particular instance is unable to decide upon a plan of action acceptable to every member, it is condemned to inactivity; it can do nothing. This may happen even today where the majority is so small that efficient action is not possible. But in the case of sociocracy there is a way out, since such a situation stimulates its members to seek for a solution, that everyone can accept, perhaps ending in a new proposal, which had not occurred to anyone before. While under the party system disagreement accentuates the differences and the division becomes sharper than ever, under a sociocratic system, so long as it is realised that *agreement* must be reached, it activates a common search that brings the whole group nearer together. Something must be added here. If no agreement is possible, this usually means that the present situation must continue for the time being. It might seem that in this way

conservatism and reaction would reign, and no progress would be possible. But experience has shown that the contrary is true. The mutual trust that is accepted as the basis of a sociocratic society leads inevitably to progress, and this is noticeably greater when all go forward together with something everyone has agreed to. Again it is clear that there will have to be "higher-level" meetings of chosen representatives, and if a group is to be represented in such a meeting, it will have to be by someone in whom everyone has confidence. If this does not prove possible, then the group will not be represented at all in the higher-level meeting, and its interests will have to be cared for by the representatives of other groups. But experience has shown that where representation is not a question of power but of trust, the choice of a suitable person can be made fairly easily and without unpleasantness.

The third principle means that when agreement is reached the decision is binding on all who have made it. This also holds of the higher-level meeting for all who have sent representatives to it. There is a danger in the fact that each must keep decisions made in a meeting over which he has only an indirect influence. This danger is common to all such decisions, not least in the party system. But it is much less dangerous where the representatives are chosen by common consent and are therefore much more likely to be trusted.

A group that works in this way should be of particular size. It must be big enough for personal matters to give way to an objective approach to the subject under discussion, but small enough not to be unwieldy, so that the quiet atmosphere needed can be secured. For meetings concerned with general aims and methods a group of about forty has been found the most suitable. But when detailed decisions have to be made, a small committee will be needed of three to six persons or so. This kind of committee is not new. If we could have a look at the countless committees in existence, we should probably find that those which are doing the best work do so without voting. They decide on a basis of common consent. If a vote were to be taken in such a small group, it would usually mean that the atmosphere is wrong.

Of special importance in exercising sociocratic government is the leadership. Without a proper leader unanimity cannot easily be reached. This concerns a certain technique which has to be learnt. Here Quaker experience is of the greatest value. Let me describe a Quaker business meeting. The group comes together in silence. In front sits the Clerk, the leader of the meeting. Beside him sits the Assistant Clerk; who writes down what is agreed upon. The Clerk reads out each subject in turn, after which all members present, men and women, old and young, may speak to the subject. They address themselves to the meeting and not to a chairman, each one making a contribution to the developing train of thought. It is the Clerk's duty, when he thinks the right moment has come, to read aloud a draft minute reflecting the feeling of the meeting. It is a difficult job, and it needs much experience and tact to formulate the sense of the meeting in a way that is acceptable to all. It often happens that the Clerk feels the need for a time of quiet. Then the whole gathering will remain silent for a while, and often out of the silence will come a new thought, a reconciling solution, acceptable to everyone.

Everything depends on a new spirit breaking through among men. May it be that, after the many centuries of fear, suspicion and hate, more and more a spirit of reconciliation and mutual trust will spread abroad. The constant practice of the art of sociocracy and of the education necessary for it seem to be the best way in which to further this spirit, upon which the real solution of all world problems depends.

Appendix I – Consent & Consensus

A point of great confusion about sociocracy comes from the use of "consent" rather than "consensus" as the basis of decision-making.

The aim of sociocracy is inclusive decision-making because it has proven to be more effective. When people are included in decision-making, they are more committed to the decisions, and equally important, perhaps even more important, the decisions include their information about the course of action that is being decided. Decisions are thus based on all available knowledge and seek to establish harmonious and productive organizations through good decision-making.

The cognitive difference between asking for "agreement" and asking for "objections" is profound. Consensus facilitators are more likely to be searching for agreement or to start the discussion by emphasizing agreement. The mindset is to bring people together by emphasizing shared values the value of being in accord with each other.
Sociocratic facilitators specifically look for objections because asking for agreement affects the perception of participants, often adversely. It influences the kinds of solutions they will propose or accept because they fear being viewed as anti-community or uncollegial. Sociocratic groups understand that to hone a good decision, it must be examined critically and questioned. The objections must be examined as carefully in order to make a decision that can resolve all the issues that prompted the need for a decision in the first place.

Practical Consensus
To make consensus workable in highly diverse groups, particularly between people who did not have daily contact nor shared aims in the rest of their lives, various teachers of consensus and professional facilitators have come to put limits on consensus, for example, redefining "agreement" to mean "agree that this is in the best interests of the group even though it may not be my personal preference." People are allowed to "stand aside" so the group can still declare consensus.

Some groups define consensus as "all but one" or "all but two." Culturally, consensus has come to mean many things from an almost sacred union of minds to a negotiated supra-majority vote.

In the 1960s, Gerard Endenburg, a student and friend of Boeke's, began to apply sociocracy in Endenburg Electric, a small manufacturing company in the Netherlands.

As an engineer, he had learned that in nature and in machines, if a part cannot function, it stops. It objects. Thinking by analogy, he realized that in human systems, the analogous mechanism was "consent." A person could consent to a decision that affected their ability to function. Or object.

Further, these objections were vital to the functioning of the whole system. If one part of a system doesn't express its objections as soon as it experiences discomfort, the whole system could suddenly collapse and be irreparable. Consider the example of the body's organs working in "consensus." If one does not object as soon as it begins to fail, like the heart, the whole body will die.

Thus objections had to be taken seriously. Objections, Endenburg realized, not agreements, were the needed and necessary corrections that allowed a group to make good decisions and maintain energetic and harmonious functioning.

By changing the premise of "consent," "consensus," and "unanimous" from "agreement" to "no objections," Endenburg made inclusive decision-making more effective. Like parts in other systems, individuals give consent. The boiler doesn't consult with the thermostat about whether they are in "agreement" or not. The boiler works or doesn't work. By using the word "consent" he emphasized the process of resolving individual objections and avoided the religious and emotional connotations.

Endenburg put two further conditions on objections. Firstly, the objections had to be paramount, meaning they had to be serious enough to prevent the person from supporting

the aims of the group. And secondly, they had to be reasoned. The person had to express their objections sufficiently clearly that the rest of the group could understand and resolve them.

In sociocracy if a decision would interfere with a person's ability to be enthusiastic and energetic in working toward the aims of the group, that person has an *obligation* to object. Objections are made in the context of the aim statement. Can I help the group acheive this aim if this decision is made? Will this decision interfere with my work? Will it help me do my work? Will it allow me to thrive as a member of this group?

Further, within the sociocratic structure a group can decide, by consent, to use any other basis for decision making for some decisions.
Sharon Villines, January 2007

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How is consent different from consensus?
Consent looks for disagreement and uses the reasons for disagreeing to come up with an amended proposal that is within everyone's limits. Consensus looks for agreement.
If a group wants to paint an outbuilding, consensus would require everyone agreeing on a color. Consent would require everyone defining their limits and then allowing the choice to be made within those limits. The painter might end up with 10 colors that are within everyone's limits and then choose from those.

What if I don't think someone else's objection is reasoned and paramount?
The best way I've found to answer both of these questions is to ask the person whose objection is questionable how they would change the proposal to accommodate their objection.

Appendix II - Circle Process

A learning organization is a dynamic system. It's purpose is to detect disturbances to the dynamic equilibrium and take steps to restore it. It seeks the optimum. Using the rules from Cybernetics, it is possible to design structures for dynamic processes. Whenever activities threaten to ignore someone, the concerned group or individual can make a correction. The circle process seeks the optimum by identifying limits that we can live with and operate within. Endenburg uses the example of a bike weaving down a bike lane. The limits are the curb and the car lane. The bike doesn't travel in an exact straight line - nor do we aim to make the bike go in a straight line. That straight line is the optimum, which we as the biker seek, but we don't need to stay on it. We weave back and forth near it, correcting our path based on the circumstances that we find ourselves in at the time.

There are three functions that the circle process governs: Leading, Doing, and Measuring (Reflecting and Connecting).

Of course, any circle needs to have a vision, mission, and aim to keep it on track.
Reflecting is used to observe. Connecting is generating new ideas.

9-Block Charting
The 9-block chart is a tool to help evaluate processes and identify faulty - usually missing - pieces. The pieces usually missing are measuring parts.
Any process can be looked at as having an Input, a Transformation, and an Output. Then look at each of these elements as having a Leading, Doing, and Measuring.

leading input	leading transformation	leading output
doing input	doing transformation	doing output
measuring input	measuring transformation	measuring output

Here is a possible 9-block chart for a school.

Acquisition of students look for potential clients (parents/students)	Education of students preparation of the teaching (people, means, method)	preparations for the graduation
intake (co-ordination of supply and demand)	teaching	graduation ceremony
Graduation of students agreement/contract	testing /(internal)exams	satisfied students (& parents)

Appendix III - Vision, Mission, Aim

Vision – describes a desirable future. It refers to or includes your norms and values. For organizations, it provides guiding principles and helps members of an organization identify with it.

Mission – describes how the vision will be realized. It describes what the organization offers to its relevant environment. It is a statement of your identity in the environment. For organizations, a mission statement helps members show commitment to the organization.

Aim – describes how the mission will be accomplished. It describes a desired result in an exchange with its relevant environment. A clear aim provides a firm foundation for leadership and decision-making. For organizations, an aim states the members' common interest and helps them align their activities with each other. An aim:
- States the concrete product or service being exchanged
- Indicates what distinguishes the product or service from other products or services
- Is stated in a way that the customer (exchange partner) can easily understand.

Formulating an aim

A common aim is the circle's reason for existence. Circles should set their aims by consent and review them every year or two to be sure they are leading to the desired results

A well-formulated aim meets the following criteria:
The desired result is clearly stated. The specific quality which distinguishes it from other aims is included. The customer (people who have a need) must be able to recognize and understand the formulation. In other words, the aim must be clear through the glasses of the customer.

Well formulated aims:
Are the basis for measurement of the production process and for assessing consent arguments. Reduce interpersonal conflict. Make it easier to lead effectively.

Cautions:
Don't make aims too broad so that they have everything or nothing in them. Aims should not express contrasts or conflict relationships such as social versus economic, labor versus capital, and so forth. Don't divide aims, but distinguish. Aims are never isolated. Each is related to the next step or the next level of abstraction.

The customer
A circle supplies something to someone who has a need. Ongoing exchanges must be on the basis of mutual consent. When formulating an aim, make sure there is both a demand and a supple (overlap with the customer). Only then is an exchange relationship possible.

Appendix IV - Elections by Consent

1. Review the function/responsibilities that the person to be elected will have and how long the job will be for.
2. Write your own name on the ballot and the name of your candidate.
3. Give the ballot to the "election leader."
4. Lead a go-round by reading one at a time. Make sure that every participant gives the reasons for their choice during a "round" without discussion.
5. The election leader asks for any changes in the proposed candidates, possibly in a round.
6. Have open discussion, if needed.
7. The election leader asks consent (no objection) in a round for the most supported candidate.
8. The nominated candidate is asked last.

Look out for the following possible mistakes:

Don't ask beforehand who has an interest in the job.
Don't ask who is not interested.
Don't have discussion during the first round.
Don't election anyone for an unlimited time.

*Sociocratic elections are like nothing I've ever experienced before. During my first workshop weekend we did an election. It had to be something real so we chose some to give a review in the evening. Everyone votes on paper first putting their own name on it as well. The facilitator says, "Ted, you voted for Mabel. Why?" A reason is always given. "Because she already seems to understand this stuff and I think she'd present the material clearly." You end up saying nice stuff about each other! People feel good and get positive feedback. The facilitator puts the votes in piles for each person and asks if anyone wants to change their vote. Usually people do. If there's not a clear majority for someone, the facilitator can choose any of the ones most voted for (or even not if they think they can get a 'no objection') and go for a 'no objection' round. The candidate asked about is asked last. Elections are interesting and fun, but most importantly **nobody feels like they lost!***

Appendix V - Objections and Aims

In a sociocratic organization, these four principles are used to form a governance structure that all its members. Everyone has a direct voice, within their domain of responsibility, guaranteed by the principle of consent, in the determining the policies that affect their role in the organization. To understand how this works, sociocratic consent and objections need more explanation.

As individuals we become a group when we decide to do something, to reach a goal, together: play golf, start a business, eliminate land mines, or build a community. When we join an existing group we agree to support the aims of the group and to act in accordance with the group's decisions. We agree to follow the rules, to be governed by the rule-makers.

If it is a sociocratic organization, we become one of the rule-makers. We participate in determining the aims of the organization and of the circle in which we work, or live, or socialize. In sociocracy the definition of the aim of the organization is directly related to decision-making. Decisions are easier to make when we understand what aims they are intended to fulfill. And if we raise objections, withdraw our consent, this must also be done within the context of the aim of our circle or the organization and our ability to support that aim.

That sociocracy is based on consent is profound. It affects every aspect of the sociocratic organization because it means that the group cannot move forward if one if its members objects. But objections must be "paramount and reasoned". "Paramount" means that the objection must be directly related to the person's ability to work effectively within the group. "Reasoned" means the person must be able to explain the objection to other members of the group. Unless they can understand the objection they cannot resolve it.

Objections are important in sociocracy because they help the group find better solutions -- solutions that help everyone work more effectively toward the group's aims. An objection is not a veto; it is a valid reason why a particular decision will prevent a member of the group from doing their job or otherwise supporting the aims of the group. Not all decisions in a sociocratic organization must be made by consent. The group can decide by consent to use majority vote for some decisions (when to hold the next meeting) or autocratic decisions for others (letting the shop supervisor assign daily tasks). But everyone must consent before another decision-making method is used and everyone must consent to the policies that determine the parameters for such decisions (who must be included in meetings and how daily tasks are defined).

There are many other concepts and methods that are important in governing sociocratically but the beauty of the method is that the basic structure is simple. If the four governing principles are observed, the structure will be stable and preserve the ability of all members to participate fully.

Appendix VI - Sociocratic facilitation

This outline is to give an idea of what facilitating for a meeting using consent decision making is like.

When I use 'round' or 'go-round', it means that each person speaks in turn. No one answers anyone else. This is key to the process of consent. When I use discuss it means that people answer each other and the facilitator may "stack" people when they raise their hand. During discussions, try to quiet the dominant and bring out the quiet. Gerard says this maintains equivalence which creates chaos which promotes self-organization.

The facilitator must be a time keeper. People appreciate meetings that begin and end on time. This means that the schedule for the agenda has to be realistic. You might need to schedule hang out time before the meeting. · Be aware that not everyone processes information at the same rate.

* Remember, you can always revisit a decision.
* Once a meeting starts, think about how comfortable the room is and how to start cooling it down before it gets too hot.

Before the meeting
Each person should become familiar with the proposals that will be raised.
The facilitator needs to prepare the agenda – this may involve talking to circle members outside of meeting time.
Prepare the space, hang up the meeting, the proposal, and the election formats, get chairs, get things to write with and on, get the notebook and make sure it has paper for minutes and ballots, make sure there's a clock or timer around.

THE FORMAT OF A CIRCLE MEETING

Moment of Silence

Opening round
Each person: Introduces self if needed

· Relates recent experiences concerning the subject area of the meeting

· Brings up any questions and points for the agenda

Administrative matters
· make sure there's a note taker to record each decision

· Approve prior minutes
· Schedule - the next meeting, breaks, when to begin evaluation round

· Approve prior minutes

· Agenda - ask for any additions or changes; Decide on times for items

Agenda Items
·
Discuss each item

· make a policy decision

· and delegate someone to execute the decision

Evaluation round

This needs to begin before the scheduled ending time of the meeting
Each person evaluates how well the facilitator managed time and how well the meeting used the consent process, and other relevant comments concerning the conduct of the meeting.

Moment of Silence

GENERAL PROCESS FOR MAKING DECISIONS BY CONSENT

Present the proposal
· Ask one person to present a proposed policy decision
· Others may ask clarifying questions

React to the proposal

· React in a go-round

· 30 seconds per person is a good amount of time

· This is not the time to propose amendments

· The facilitator may go for a no-objection round

Amend and reformulate the proposal

· The proposer amends or reformulates the proposed decision

Formulate objections

· Do a round asking for any objections and the associated arguments

· Every objection must be supported by a reason drawn from personal concern or interest.

· Also, the proposal can't be passed if anyone objects.

Use any objections to improve the proposal

·Discuss how to improve, eliminate parts of, or include precautions in the proposed decision.

Verify that there are no more objections

· Do a final round asking if there are any objections.

· As needed, discuss action items flowing from the decision.

· The note taker records the decision and any action items.

The facilitator should attempt a **no-objection round** whenever possible. If time doesn't permit crafting an acceptable proposal, a new proposal that everyone will consent to must be made. This could be like, "Let's send it back to committee," "I retract the proposal," "Let's research it some more." You will make most of the final proposals.

Encourage

· proposals

· feedback on the meeting process

· objections backed by arguments drawn from personal concern or interest

· questions that probe objections

· brainstorming

· laughter

Discourage

· majority thinking

· manipulation or factionalism or ignoring ideas

· competitive challenges

· striving for agreement

· objections not founded in personal experience

· arguments for absolutes

Tension can be your friend and so can silence

Ask the circle for help and feedback

Your aim is to produce decisions