

PEERSPIRIT CIRCLE PRACTICE

The Circle, or council, is an ancient form of meeting that has gathered human beings into respectful conversations for thousands of years. In some areas of the world this tradition remains intact, but in some societies it has been all but forgotten. PeerSpirit circling is a modern methodology that calls on this tradition and helps people gather in conversations that fulfil their potential for dialogue, replenishment and wisdom-based change.

What is Circle good for?

One of the beautiful things about circle is its adaptability to a variety of groups, issues, and timeframes. Circle can be the process used for the duration of a gathering, particularly if the group is relatively small and time for deep reflection is a primary aim. Circle can also be used as a means for “checking in” and “checking out” or a way of making decisions together, particularly decisions based on consensus. Be creative with circle and be ready for the deep wisdom it can unearth!

Principles of Circle:

- Rotate leadership
- Take responsibility
- Have a higher purpose that you gather around

Practices of Circle:

- *Speak with Intention*: Noting what has relevance to the conversation in the moment
- *Listen with Attention*: Respectful of the learning process of all members of the group
- *Tend to the Well-being of the Group*: Remaining aware of the impact of our contributions

Four Agreements of Circle:

- Listen without judgment (slow down and listen)
- Whatever is said in circle stays in circle
- Offer what you can and ask for what you need
- Silence is also part of the conversation

General Flow of the Circle

- Intention
- Welcome/Start-point
- Centre and Check-In/Greeting
- Agreements
- Three Principles and Three Practices (see above)

- Guardian of the Process
- Check-Out and Farewell
- Tend to the Well-being of the Group: Remaining aware of the impact of our contributions

Intention shapes the circle and determines who will come, how long the circle will meet, and what kinds of outcomes are to be expected. Additionally, the centre of a circle usually holds a focus that can be supported by placing the question in the centre or objects that represent the intention of the circle.

Check-in usually starts with a volunteer and proceeds around the circle. If an individual is not ready to speak, the turn is passed and another opportunity is offered after others have spoken.

To aid self-governance and bring the circle back to intention, having a circle member volunteer to take the role of **guardian** is helpful. This group member watches and safeguards the group's energy and observes the groups process.

Closing the circle by checking out provides a formal end to the meeting, a chance for members to reflect on what has transpired.

(The above was adapted from a handout which was generously provided by Peer Spirit to the Art of Hosting community)

For more information: <http://www.peerspirit.com/downloadable-gifts.html>