

# SOCIAL TOOLS

## Decentralized Organizing in Practice

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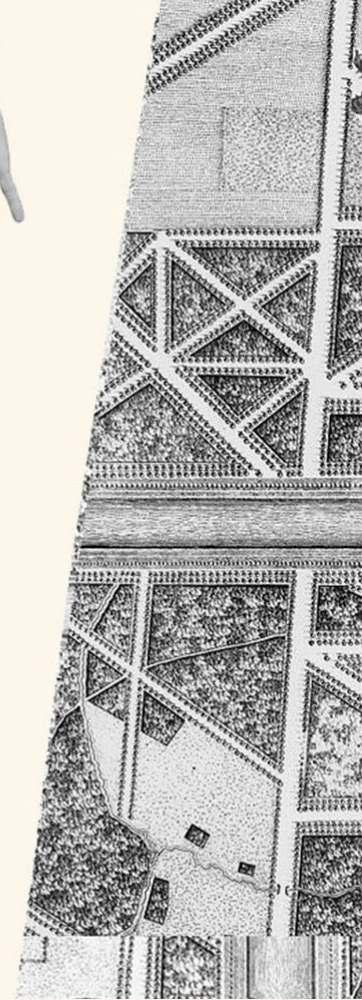
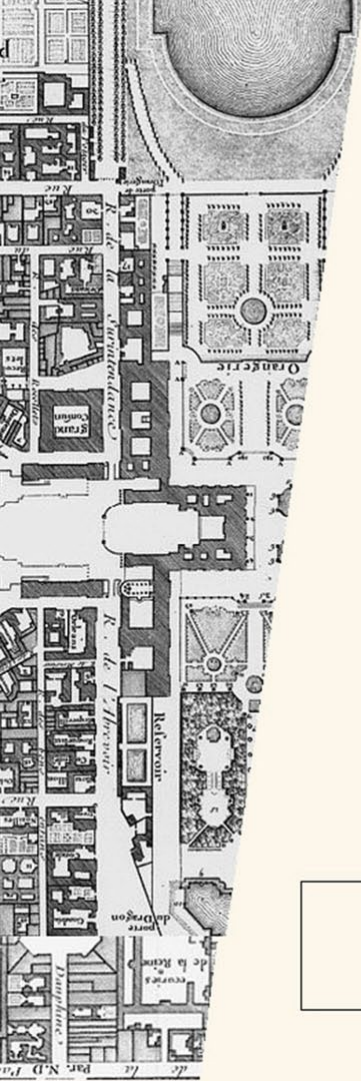
TRAINING CIRCLE

SESSION 2 - Patterns 9+10  
JAN 14

- + Make Decisions Asynchronously
- + Agree on Communication Tools

[www.socialtools.us](http://www.socialtools.us)

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### TRAINING CIRCLE - THE PROGRAM



### Patterns for Decentralised Organising

TheHum.org

#### Self-development for collaboration.

We need to unlearn hierarchy to learn collaboration. We can grow our collaboration skills with practice (empathy, self-awareness, reflection, communication, etc). We learn by mimicking people we look up to. So be intentional about which behaviours you bring to your group.



#### Systematically distribute care labour.

Care is work. Make it visible so it can be fairly shared. e.g. Practice giving & receiving care in a 'stewardship' peer-support circle. Monthly check-in: 'how can I support you?' Continuous improvement in emotional intelligence → help from internal specialists → external mediators → system review.



#### Conflict is normal. Agree how to deal with it.

E.g. conflict escalator from Loomio co-op: agreements (norms & boundaries) and practices (non-violent communication) → direct 1:1 communication → steward-supported conversation → help from internal specialists → external mediators → system review.



#### Build a culture of trust & belonging.

Project Aristotle research found the #1 predictor of team performance is psychological safety, i.e. everyone feels they can take risks, suggest new ideas, or disagree.



#### Collectively agree norms & boundaries.

Common sense doesn't exist, so define your shared norms explicitly. Review and update agreements periodically. Clear expectations: easy onboarding + buy-in.



#### Keep talking about power.

Power differences are inevitable. Distinguish "power-with" (social capital, legitimate reputation) from "power-over" (coercion, threats). Make it transparent.



Rotate roles that attract influence. Founders/elders/leaders be patient while new people learn the ropes.

#### Distinguish commitment from participation.

Define different levels of engagement, e.g. volunteers + workers + owners; or 1 + 9 + 90; or contributors + members. Explicit rights + responsibilities for each group. Transparent pathways in and out.



#### Make decisions asynchronously.

Use loomio.org for transparent, accessible, inclusive decisions. More participation, less time spent in meetings. Use meetings for: bonding, trust, complexity, brainstorming.



#### Use rhythm to align autonomy.

Designate spaces for different conversations, e.g.:

1. Daily standup (yesterday, today, blocks, wellbeing)
2. Biweekly sprint (planning, demo, retrospective)
3. Quarterly retro + objective setting
4. Biannual retreat



#### Get unstuck with an external peer.

Someone you trust & respect who is not directly involved in your situation.

Help you rethink issues, gain perspective, renew enthusiasm, host difficult conversations.

Could be a friend or a professional.

For example: talk to us! [contact@thehum.org](mailto:contact@thehum.org)

We are available for training, coaching, advising, hosting retreats...



#### A toolbox of decision protocols.

Mandate: I'll decide, then respond to questions  
Advice: I'll listen to input, then I'll decide  
Consent: I'll proceed if nobody objects  
Consensus: I'll proceed if everyone agrees

Prerequisites: transparency, shared purpose, psychological safety, reliable conflict resolution, regular reflection...



#### Agree how you're using your communication tools.

E.g., 3 tools for 3 jobs:

1. Realtime feed: chat/Slack
2. Async threads: email/loomio/forum
3. Static docs: wiki/handbook/gDocs



#### Intro new tools with care.

Agree the problem; begin time-limited trial; support people to learn; evaluate + repeat.

#### Find your own patterns with regular retrospectives.

Regular structured reflection (good, bad, change). Hear about problems when they are small. Practice trying new things. Grow the org structure that is right for you. Continuous participatory change.

see [retrospective.wiki.org](https://retrospective.wiki.org)



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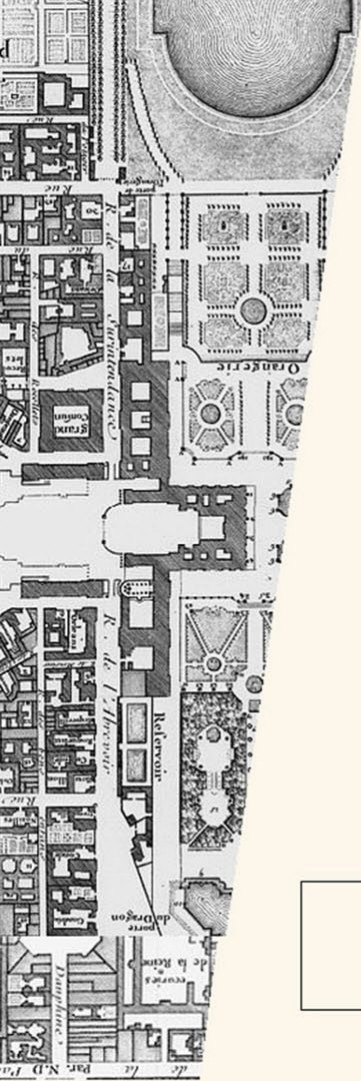
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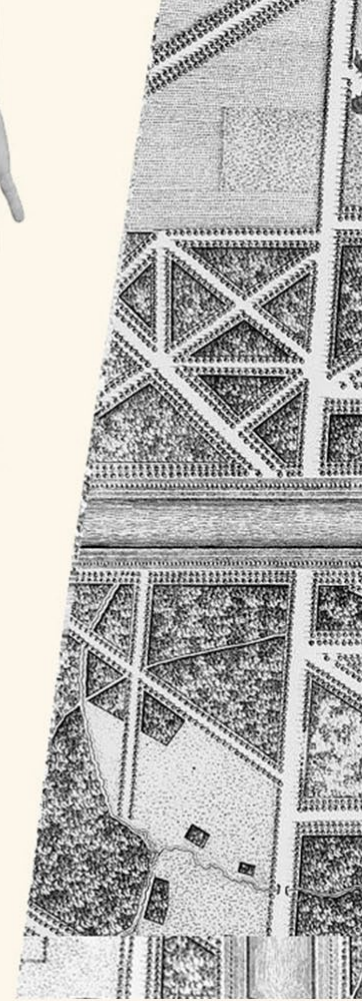
### PATTERN 9

#### MAKE DECISIONS ASYNCHRONOUSLY

Video 7 min



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Loomio thread:  
**April Board Meeting**

April 2



**Time poll:** "When shall we meet?"

April 5



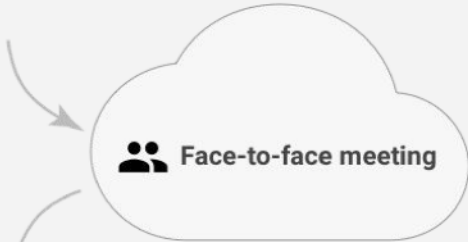
**Poll:** "Add your agenda points here."

April 10



**Check:** "Has everyone read the reports?"

April 13



April 15



**Proposal:** "Sign off minutes."

April 20



**Archive**

## ASYNCHRON/SYNCHRON - EXERCISE

+ How do you do it?

+ Draw Your Own Chart (6 min)



Loomio thread:  
**Policy Development: Health & Safety**

April 14



**Discussion:** data, context, invitation to participate in policy development

April 16



**Poll:** test support for different options

April 25



**Proposal:** "Let's use this system for Health & Safety Reporting"

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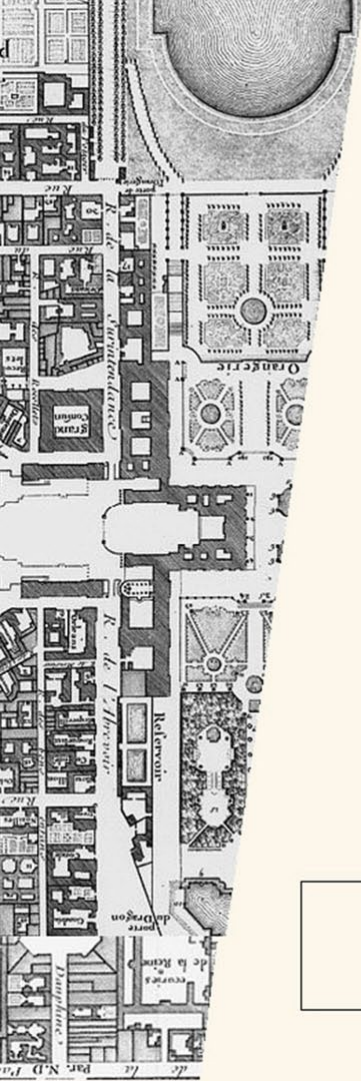
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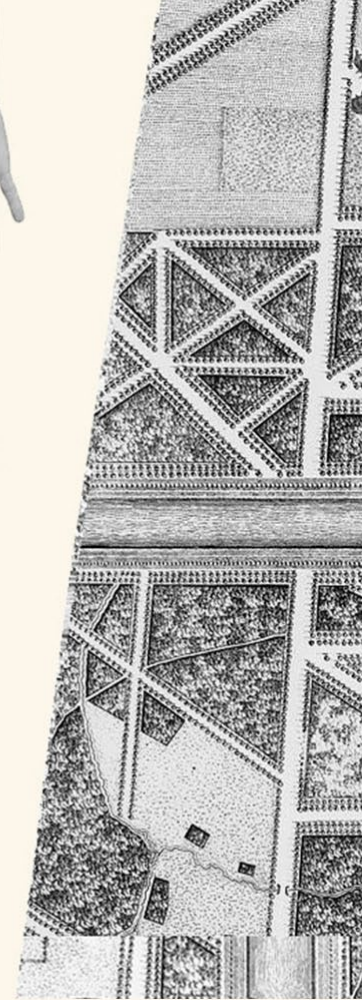
### PATTERN 10

#### AGREE ON COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Video 5 min



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PATTERN 10  
AGREE ON COMMUNICATION TOOLS

QUESTION:  
WHAT COMMUNICATION TOOLS WE WANT TO USE ?

EXERCISE 1  
PROPOSAL FORMING

EXERCISE 2  
CONSENT DECISION



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### PROPOSAL FORMING

Video James Priest (Sociacracy 3.0)

- + what's the issue?
- + considerations (as questions)
- + “cook” a proposal

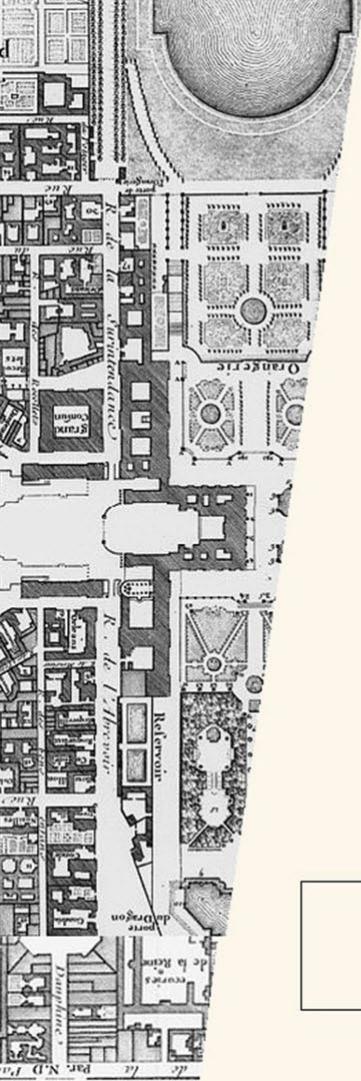


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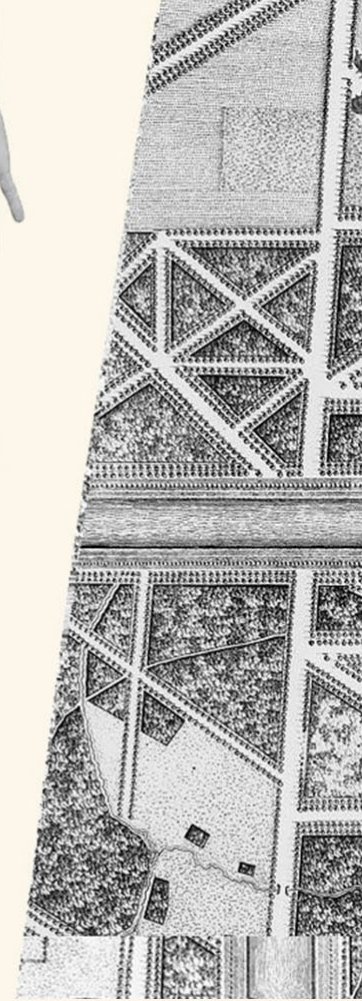
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CONSENT DECISION

Video James Priest (Sociacracy 3.0)

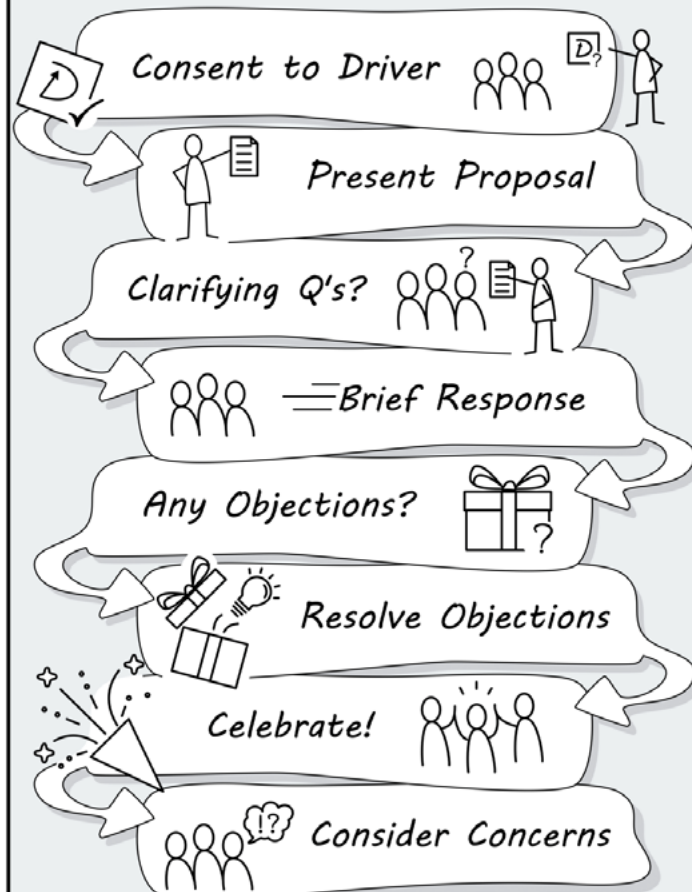


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# Consent Decision Making



## Consent Decision-Making – Short Format

1. Present Proposal

2. Clarifying Round

3. Quick Reaction Round

4. No Objection Round  
"Do you object to this proposal?"

No  
**Any Objections?**

Yes -  
choose one:

Facilitator amend proposal

"How might you solve this?" round

Brief dialogue – 2 or 3 people

Free-form dialogue → amendment

Rework; refer to higher/lower circle

5. Announce Decision; Celebrate  
Go to Next Agenda item

