



The Agreement Field: Creating Group Agreements — Willingness to Participate

What is an Agreement Field?

Successful teams have an *Agreement Field* – a set of guidelines co-created together to outline the ways of being & doing together. The objective of creating a documented *Agreement Field* is to ensure that there are invitational spaces to actively increase **trust**, **vulnerability** & **difference** in the group, thus supporting interpersonal relationships which are the cornerstone of any group's success.

Culture Garden believes that “*how*” groups are together, informs, nourishes and inspires “*what*” groups can achieve — having a clear *Agreement Field* allows for honest, open, communication, and leads to building on the team's assets, skills and opportunities supporting the groups' collaborative intentions. *Agreement Fields* bring more capacity to achieve real **consent** – towards collaboration, supportive actions, and ultimately successful intended outcomes. Here are some ways to begin:

Agreement Enquires:

- ❖ Who is leading, and who makes decisions? Are **Role Outlines** clearly understood?
- ❖ Is there a clear **Governance structure** that outlines who holds *Power & Authority*?
- ❖ Are there any specific **Needs & Requests** to enable everyone to fully participate?
- ❖ What is the process to **support Conflicts** when they arise?
- ❖ Is there a shared understanding of **Feedback & Appreciation** as well as **Evaluations**?
- ❖ Share each other's hopes & fears, challenges & opportunities — and what empowers you?
- ❖ In Meetings: Who is facilitating? What is the purpose? When to end? How to proceed?

Willingness to Participate:

In our experience, many people begin by resisting the clarity of such agreements, as they feel trapped or bounded by them; however, Culture Garden's '**Philosophy & Values**' show that it is from THIS clarity of agreements and process guidelines which allow for — and stimulates — healthy group cultures to deepen, and become rooted in *Connection*, grow in *Collaboration*, and flower in *Creativity*.

When we bring awareness to the human experiences — especially during action planning & implementation — the process and the results will be more authentic and less likely to be derailed by solo/personal agendas, rather than the group's.

Social Technology tools only work if your intention is to fully participate. Be honest with yourself (you don't have to tell anyone else) then you are empowered to choose to participate in a constructive dialogue, or to step back.

Up next — we offer ways to bring awareness to your own Agenda.



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Understanding Your Own Agenda:

Many well intentioned initiatives can get quickly derailed by interpersonal conflict. Healthy groups bring awareness to personal agendas, which are precisely the areas teams need to develop before (and during) any groups' actions are undertaken.

Before you use any of the [Tools](#), carry out a quick personal agenda check:

- ◆ Do I really want to build collaboration & understanding?
- ◆ Do I want to have openness or be vulnerable? Is it safe?
- ◆ Can I genuinely bring myself to an open conversation?
- ◆ *If not, maybe I notice that I actually don't feel safe, or that I don't want to work with this person, or maybe I notice that I have a hidden agenda that "I don't want them to succeed".*
- ◆ Just notice it, don't feel bad; see if you can bring yourself around to a more open space
If not, consider that you sh/could leave the conversation until you are ready to be open.
- ◆ Do some [NVC](#) to find your agenda to see what the block is — Am I afraid? Am I angry?
 - ◆ See [Feelings](#) & [Needs](#) inventories.

Social Technologies (Tools) to Support Your Group's Agreement Field:

In order to support the growth of healthy group cultures via Culture Garden's [Core Elements](#), we utilise various [Tools](#) to support specific learning outcomes for our [Clients](#).

These tools are not intended to be stand alone "handouts", as we know from experience that it takes time, and it requires dedicated group practice, with members who have the *Willingness to Participate* and the ability to enquire towards *Understanding Their Own Agenda*, in order to grow together:

- ❖ [Group Agreements](#)
- ❖ [Compassionate Listening / NVC](#)
- ❖ [Reflective Listening](#)
- ❖ [The Way of Council](#)
- ❖ [PeaceMaking & Clearing](#)

Practice the above links to develop skills in a safe environment (at home, with a friend, etc), or in your group in a slow and compassionate manner. We have learned that these tools often bring up a significant amount of disruption to your groups' regular ways of being, as old patterns are acknowledged and transformed — what often arises within the group and its leaders can take the form of projections, triggers, and resistance which can benefit from Culture Garden's philosophy and generative holding process.

Culture Garden is available to support your growth process towards more *Collaborative, Creative & Connective* ways of being & doing together.



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The Current Opportunity

This moment in history is compelling groups of all kinds to make a shift towards more collaborative ways of organising and acting, and to increase their effectiveness in a changing world. However, despite these groups' best intentions and often considerable skill, many find they are unable to achieve complete and lasting change.

At this time of increasing uncertainty and environmental crises, Culture Garden is opening up the territory of our group cultures, learning a new landscape and building the skill sets to best **Connect, Create & Collaborate** within your team in order to transform our cultures — and the world — from the inside out. We believe that, in order to truly meet the challenges of our changing world and to become more successful in group initiatives, we must consciously un-learn Dominance-based patterning and integrate instead the skillset for “**Partnership**”.

Partnership is an emergent philosophy of leadership which understands that the best outcomes for any endeavour are the ones that benefit everyone involved. This is based in the synergetic alignment between the multitude of interdependent roles, requiring group cultures to understand how to include and engage their members' diverse perspectives, priorities, and strengths, in a robust and effective manner.

Culture Garden provides consulting, facilitation, and project management, as well as experiential educational programmes, to enable organisations and communities to make the transition towards partnership-oriented ways of being and doing together. We help our **Clients** to incorporate systems, structures, and practices to foster a thriving internal culture, which increases operational flexibility, and responsiveness, improving their collective impacts. They learn to achieve these results by distributing Power & Authority throughout the whole, with clear agreements on Governance & Decision making empowering increased Unity & Alignment.

At the same time, we support the human experience of these transitions, while holding spaces to allow for the organisation's inner guidance, and any new opportunities, to emerge.

About The Team

We are a **Team** of skilled associates providing facilitation, training, and mentorship. At every stage of the process, our strong, synergistic support draws from the wisdom of nature, the wisdom of the group, and the wisdom of the body in order to help you to grow new ways to live and work together.

We draw from our collective expertise of our Culture Garden **Core Elements** as we hold space for the sometimes bumpy transitional process that most organisations and groups go through as old patterns are brought to light and compassionately released, even while they integrate new ways of being.

