

The question

How can we use Sociocracy to organise ourselves and make decisions in a way that grows trust and our capacity to get things done?

Introduction

Sociocracy: A Living Tradition Rooted in Love, Respect, and Natural Wisdom

- **Quaker roots:** Sociocracy emerged from a long tradition of **Quaker practice**, where deep listening, love, and the belief in an **inner light within every person** laid the foundations for inclusive decision-making.
 - **Kees Boeke's spark:** Inspired by his pacifist and educational work, Boeke saw the pain of exclusion in a child's tears and asked: *What if every voice truly mattered?* He created the first sociocratic school where children and adults had equal say — a living experiment in **mutual respect and autonomy**.
 - **Gerard Endenburg's evolution:** As an engineer and student of Boeke's school, Endenburg brought sociocracy into complex organizations, using **natural systems** and **cybernetics** (the study of self-regulating systems) to shape a governance method that mimics the intelligence of **living organisms**.
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Natural principles at its core:

- **Everything has a voice and a function** — like organs in a body or species in an ecosystem.
 - **Feedback is vital** — like rivers adjusting their course or forests responding to seasons.
 - **Resilience comes from diversity and distributed power**, not central control.
 - **Decisions evolve** — nothing needs to be perfect, just *“good enough for now, safe enough to try.”*
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Why this might feel uncomfortable (and that's okay):

We live in a world shaped by **mechanistic thinking** — where decisions are often top-down, speed is prioritized over inclusion, and discomfort is avoided rather than welcomed.

That's why **this process might feel strange at first**.

You might feel:

- Awkward about sharing honestly.
- Frustrated by the slower pace.
- Unsure about giving or receiving objections.

That's normal. In fact — it's valuable.

This discomfort means **you're growing**. It means **you're strengthening a muscle** of collective awareness and mutual care that's been long neglected.

Mycelial life

Mycelial Life

To be the tip of a hypha —
stretching forward, no map in hand,
drawn not by will but by *feeling*,
by the pull of moisture, of possibility, of life itself —
is to live in a trust so deep,
it does not question its own movement.

There is no strategy here,
no committee planning the direction,
no fear of failure —
just the quiet confidence of being what one is.

Each hypha grows with exquisite sensitivity,
responding to the shape of stone,
the song of root,
the story held in decaying leaf.
It feels its way,
and in doing so, it **finds the way**.

No part of the mycelium sees the whole.
There is no central mind,
no leader issuing instructions.
And yet —
it forms networks vast as forests,
wise enough to feed trees,
resilient enough to outlive empires.

Each tip is free.
Each tip is **respected**.
Because its nature — to sense, to explore, to extend —
is the very nature of life itself.

It is vulnerable.
It may break.
It will feel hunger, dryness, heat.
And still — it reaches.

Not because it knows what will happen,
but because **it knows what it is**.

And from this faith — not in a plan, but in a pattern —
life thrives.
Not once, not occasionally,
but for **3.8 billion years**.

This is the quiet faith of the mycelium.
That life creates conditions conducive to life.
That trust in one's nature
is not a luxury —
but a law of the living earth.

Question:

How are you feeling?

What stood out if anything from this piece?

The Exercise

Consent-Based Decision-Making Exercise for Meadow Orchard

Purpose:

To experience the sociocratic consent process in a fun, low-stakes way while highlighting the difference between consent and consensus, and building trust in a group's collective intelligence.

Part 1: Explaining Consent

Start by clearly explaining what consent means in sociocracy:

"Consent in sociocracy doesn't mean we all *love* the decision — it means no one sees a *reasoned objection* that would harm the group's ability to reach its aim or values. It's not about liking it. It's about whether it's *'good enough for now and safe enough to try.'*"

Contrast with other approaches:

- **Majority rule:** Fast but can leave some unheard or excluded.
 - **Consensus:** Inclusive but can be exhausting and lead to deadlock.
 - **Consent:** Includes all voices and keeps things moving forward.
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Part 2: The Consent Decision-Making Process

Choose a light, fun decision to practice with. For example:

"What snack should we bring to our next meeting?"

Or:

"Should we all do a group dance before each meeting?"

The 4 Rounds:

1. Present the Proposal

Clearly state the proposal and its purpose. Example:

"I propose we bring popcorn, fruit, and biscuits to our next meeting — each person brings one." "The aim is to enjoy a snack together that is easy, inclusive, and doesn't create a burden."

(Tie this back to the group's vision, mission, principles or any other governance that has been agreed by everyone)

2. Clarifying Questions Round

"Any questions to help understand the proposal better? No opinions yet."

Allow time for questions. Go in a circle or use hand-raising.

3. Quick Reactions Round

"What's your quick reaction? **How do you feel about this?** Anything you'd like to express?"

Short, emotional or intuitive reactions. No debate or problem-solving yet. Don't think, feel.

4. Consent Round

"Do you consent to this proposal — meaning, do you see any *reasoned objections* that would make it unsafe or unworkable?"

Each person responds with:

- "I consent"
 - "I have an objection"
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Part 3: Integrate Objections

If someone objects, ask:

"What is your concern? How might we adapt this so it works for you and still meets the group's aim?"

Work together to refine the proposal. Objections are used to **strengthen** the outcome, not block it.

In the same way as a tree develops stress wood to respond to the prevailing wind, objections make you more resilient.

Repeat Rounds 3 and 4 as needed.

Part 4: Debrief and Reflect

Ask the group:

- How did that feel?
 - What surprised you?
 - When was the last time your objection was welcomed in a group?
 - How might this change how we work together?
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Tips for Facilitators:

- Maintain a safe, open atmosphere
- No cross-talk during rounds
- Welcome objections as "gifts to the group"
- Anchor the principle: "Good enough for now, safe enough to try"

This exercise often leads to surprising moments of connection, clarity, and collective power.
Let it unfold naturally.

Closing

What small step will you take (as an individual) next?

How do you feel about this approach?

Time to trust your intuition. Go with what comes to mind before the analytical, critical mind steps in.

🌻 **This is yours now — not mine to dictate.**

This isn't a script to follow rigidly.

This is a **seed** we're planting together. It grows best when you **nurture it as your own**, with curiosity, commitment, and care for one another.

As volunteers, your **autonomy and love for the shared purpose** are already the soil.

This process simply helps you **grow in harmony**, with nature — and with each other.

And a recording of Mycelial Life



Recording (38).m4a

Note

This was developed in partnership with ChatGPT (my own version that I am training – Grow Your Own Guru). In particular, it researched Sociocracy with my guidance, summarised it following my direction and produced the prose that I used.

This was done with full awareness of the tensions that arise within me and others with the emergence of this technology.

Questions that I use to guide this are:

What is the nature of AI?

What is my nature and how do I honour both?

How do I balance my engagement with AI as opposed to my engagement with the wider natural world to support and inspire me and create conditions conducive to all life?