Proposed Mini Manual of Council Circles
By Stephen Wing

If at all possible, hold council out on the land, under the sky.
Make sure everyone concerned has plenty of notice of the time and place.
Especially invite the people you disagree with (or who disagree with you).
Always hold hands first and bless the circle.
As soon as possible, pass a feather around the circle to hear what each person has brought
to be discussed.
Make sure the feather makes it at least once all the way around, so everyone gets a chance
to speak.
If no one else does, (explain the Council tradition: passing the feather; facilitating a
discussion by pointing the feather, making a proposal and asking for concerns; consensuse by
silence).
If no one else does, offer a prayer for Spirit's guidance.
If no one has a discussion to facilitate or a proposal to make, passing the feather and
sharing heart songs is always worthwhile.
Once everyone has spoken the feather can be put aside if it is no longer needed.
Council is the process of figuring out how the group feels; it's not just for thinking.
The goal is not necessarily consensus of action, but of understanding: once we understand
each other, what to do should be obvious.
The Council process only works if everybody present wants it to.
Council gets longer, not shorter, if more than one person is talking at a time.
Listening without interrupting the feather is a spiritual discipline (we do our best).
Listening to others is also the only way to be sure they will listen to us when our turn
comes.
It is appropriate to interrupt someone who takes advantage of our willingness to listen.
Interrupting too can be done respectful.
Anything can substitute for the feather: nothing can substitute for respect.
Just don't let respect degenerate into a rule.
Watching out for the process is the responsibility of every person present.
Consensus doesn't mean that all of us agree, only that we agree to get out of the way, of
the larger will- a trusting, a humility, a surrender.
Consensus is not bending to the pressure of expedience or to anyone's personal motive.
A single person's proposal naturally changes as it becomes everyone's consensus.
It's dangerous when opinionated people get their way because someone doesn't love them
enough to speak up.
It is not just a right but a duty, to block a consensus which you see is not in the interest of
the Family as a whole; it is a sacred responsibility not to exercise it for any other reason.
It is not the person raising a concern that blocks consensus- it is the concern itself, once the
circle recognizes it as everyone's concern.
If the circle cannot be convinced to honor a given concern, the concerned person may stand
aside as an acknowledgment that the circle is not bound by individual concerns.
The Family cannot be expected to honor irresponsible blocking.
How do I know I'm right unless others agree?
Most of us didn't grow up with Council and Consensus. Be gentle, be clear, be patient.
If the People disagree with the Council, they'll simply do something else.

These are my observations, representing no consensus of Rainbow Family council; please
feel free to suggest additions or improvements, and perhaps someday this will evolve into a
Mini-Manual on Council Circles - Wing.

from:
eurocircle: the European Rainbow mailing list internet: