Building Partnership Culture:

Dynamic Governance for Compassionate Community

& Ecovillage Self-Governance

By Upgeya Pew, May 13, 2012; updated 09/30/2014

1. **Governance** is the steering process by which a group of people work together to achieve certain results. And it is *part* of the process by which we regulate interdependent relations. We aim for our governance to reflect the values that we share. Among the most important (but not excluding others by their absence from this list), we value:
   A. Everyone's Needs (not some needs at the expense of others, or some people's needs at the expense of other people's needs – the need to matter)
   B. Fun, Play and Celebration
   C. Vulnerability
   D. Awareness, Integrity, Authenticity, Honesty, Responsibility and Transparency
   E. Empathy, Understanding, Deep Listening, and Compassion
   F. Mutual respect
   G. Surrender – release or letting-go of attachment to strategies, embracing the flow of life's calling – from within and without.
   H. Freedom and Space for Self-Expression, Vulnerability, and fully Being who we are.
   I. Heart Connection, Belonging, and Communion with each other.
   J. Autonomy and Choice
   K. Interdependence and Mutual Support for each other.
   L. Shared leadership and decision making.
   M. Dissonance and the Evolution of what wants to Emerge.
   N. Being willing to dwell in the inquiry and the unknown.

2. **We choose** to use the strategy of Dynamic Governance to meet the following needs:
   A. To respect the reality of our interdependence. We are all an organic part of a greater whole, both physically and spiritually. We are *interdependent* and our individual actions affect how well others are able to meet their needs. Given our organic interdependence, we have all the needs inherent in any organic system:
      1) For effective self-governance and self-organization;
      2) For connection and feedback;
      3) For regulation of our relations with one another;
      4) To live in harmony, balance and wholeness with each other and the earth;
      5) To acknowledge and to mourn needs unmet, learning from our mistakes rather than fighting;
      6) To evolve ourselves, as individuals and as a group.
   B. To respect the reality of the connection between means and ends. The ends we achieve are contained in the means we use to get those ends, the kinds of questions we ask ourselves, and the stories we tell ourselves about the nature of self and world.
   C. To consider everyone's needs equally. We recognize that we can rarely meet all needs all the time. And yet, we are called to consider everyone's needs equally as we attempt to meet as many needs for as many people as completely as it is possible for us do so, in the present moment.
   D. To include the input of everyone in making agreements that affect us, in furtherance of the needs:
      1) To consider everyone's needs equally.
      2) To respect, appreciate and celebrate each person's needs and the unique contribution of each person's gifts. To respect dissensus and negative feedback (pain) as a contribution to enlarging the creativity, effectiveness and power of what we can create together.
      3) To trust the wisdom in everyone. This allows us to enlarge our perspective and awareness by listening to marginalized and emergent voices, our own still, soft inner voice, and the feedback of others.

4) To engage our cooperation and creativity.
5) For ease and power of accomplishment, to more effectively marshal resources and create something larger and more whole than any one person could create alone. We are social animals. Our needs are often better met when we cooperate with others for mutual support, and include everyone's intelligence, intuition, and wisdom in forming our strategies. Also, including the wisdom of everyone's needs provides balance and equilibrium in the use of common resources, and in our response to stressors.

E. To encourage active participation, contribution and responsibility in group process. To call forth leadership in each person. To assist each person in developing their own unique leadership.

F. To have mutual understanding and clarity with regard to the basis for how we will engage with one another in taking collective action.

G. To create resilience, dynamic balance and homeostasis in the face of change. To avoid pilot induced oscillations that lead to system instability and unsustainability. Through our actions, we modify the homeostasis of our environment. Positive feedback loops between our actions, the homeostatic response of the ecosystem, and our further actions can lead to instability. When we see this, we can be pretty sure we are out of balance with our environment.

H. To help resolve conflicts that inevitably arise in the strategies that people want. The more resources a community holds as common property, the more likely it is that conflict will arise between strategies for use of that property; and the more urgent becomes the dilemma of accountability posed by the tragedy of the unmanaged commons. Yet, the more resources held privately in a community, the more likely it is that individual use will introduce unsustainable practices that fail to meet everyone's needs, create disequilibrium, fail to acknowledge our interdependence with each other and our environment, and fail to allow a fun organic evolution to ensue between us. So here, collective self-governance becomes a strategy to meet needs for communication, feedback and accountability regarding sustainability and interdependence; freedom of choice in expressing our creativity and evolving our individual uniqueness; and the responsible, effective and efficient use of resources in meeting all our other needs.

3. **Key differentiations and distinctions** of governance:
A. Distribution of Power
1) People are said to have "power" because they are able to influence what others do, whether it be through persuasion or domination. For those of us interested in resilience, cooperation and the fulfillment of human needs, the question of how to maintain and nurture the power of each individual to meet their own needs, contribute to others and blossom becomes important.
2) Authoritarian vs. Democratic; Rule by the Few vs. Rule by the Many
   a) Methods of governance can be seen on a continuum with one person having total authority on one end to everyone sharing power and responsibility on the other. The level of participation increases along this continuum. Oligarchies and autocracies offer no participation to many of those who are directly affected. Representative, majority rule, and consensus democracies involve everybody, to different degrees.
3) Coercion vs. Cooperation
   a) Do we ask how to make others do what we want? Or do we ask, how can we work with others to meet everyone's needs?
   b) Are people told what to do? Or do people cooperate and act voluntarily and in agreement to meet their needs?
4) Extrinsic Motivation vs. Intrinsic Motivation
   a) Do we act out of fear of punishment or hope for reward; or do we act because it meets our needs to do so?
5) Domination vs. Partnership
   a) Some people tend to dominate in group conversations. They do so because:
      1) They have a domineering style: interrupting, talking over others, critical, judgmental, demanding, abusive, labeling, punishing & rewarding, ignoring and discounting, ostracizing, talking loudly, insisting "my way or the highway".
      2) They speak with such energy or intensity, certitude or charisma that others fall in love with them or become afraid to oppose them.
      3) They have more information about issues.
      4) They are able to endure more conflict, creating "decision by endurance".
      5) They have a disproportionally influential role in the community.
   b) "Power-over" vs. "Power-with"
      1) The basic power dynamic in Domination Culture is "power-over", where we attempt to get people to do what we want via coercion. It is generally enforced by punishment when you don't behave (do what others want) and reward when you do. Power-over others is like a disease, that when caught, drives out sanity. With each ensuing increment of power, the disease grows more acute.

2) The basic power dynamic in Partnership culture is "power-with", where we attempt to get our needs met and accomplish results for everyone through partnership and cooperation. It needs no enforcement.

B. Personal/Interpersonal/Psychological/Spiritual Component vs. Community Structural Component
1) Effective governance requires both powerful community structures **and** personal development.
2) It's helpful to develop the ability to govern ourselves, personally, in our own lives: to learn how to be more response-able; to examine how we give our power away, and how we can reclaim it; to learn how to communicate effectively; to engage in personal education and development in becoming more powerful people.
    a) Self-connection, self-reflection & self-understanding: meditation, self-inquiry, diary-keeping, spiritual practice;
    b) Empathy;
    c) Honesty;
    d) Good communication (Nonviolent Communication, etc.)
3) Our willingness to be courageous and transparent about what is alive in us - as individuals – is essential to having a group culture and a social contract in which transparency is an embodied value.
4) Group structures that encourage participation, personal discovery, growth and creativity while providing checks & balances against abuse of power:
    a) Processes that enhance connection to self, others and life.
    b) Processes that help us communicate and enhance resonance, inspiration, aliveness and joy.
    c) Structures that contain and manage our variety, that enhance accountability, contribution and accomplishment.

C. Rule-based (static, moralistic) vs. Process-based (dynamic, values oriented) and People vs. Behavior
1) Communities flounder by trying to be all things to all people. It is important that communities that value variety, diversity, equality and justice (and therefore attempt to be inclusive of all people) have very clear guidelines regarding the kind of behavior and action that is not tolerated and that excludes participation in the community.
2) We have lots of experience in how this goes badly; of how this is used to implement structural oppression, discrimination and power-over. In order to navigate these tricky waters, it's helpful to employ a two dimensional differentiation. These are:
    a) Distinguishing between People and our Behavior. If we have to exclude people, we want to do so based on how they behave, not on who they are. This meets our need for respect of differences, inclusiveness of variety and diversity, and also our needs for accountability for the impact our behavior has on one another. However, this alone is not sufficient, as it doesn't answer how we judge behavior.
    b) Distinguishing between moralistic judgment and value judgment. Do we judge people or behavior based on fixed, static rules/guidelines using moralistic judgments of good/bad right/wrong; or do we judge behavior based on the extent to which it meets or does not meet needs we have and values that we cherish? If we employ these value judgments, do we do so with compassion for each other, and understanding of the dynamic processes occurring between us?

D. The Aim of the Organization/Group: Our Community Vision
1) Why do we want to associate? Why do we want to act together, to take collective action? The answer to this question is the aim of our group.
2) It is essential to be clear about this aim, and have agreement about it, to meet needs for mutual understanding and clarity with regard to the basis for how we will engage with one another.
3) The community vision is our shared image & expression of a desired future; the "why we are here" agreement / alignment that inspires us toward our shared values & aspirations; our common purpose or aim for being together as a community. Our community's vision will arise from the resonance of individual people's combined values, interests, aspirations, strategies, goals and purposes. The *Community Vision*:
    a) Reveals and announces our group's core values and the strategies we aim to embody those values;
    b) Describes the shared future we want to create in the present tense, as if it were happening now;
    c) Sounds a clear note on inner levels (resonates);
    d) Has a quality of energy that grabs or inspires us, drawing out or evoking our commitment to participate fully;
    e) Is simple, clear and authentic;
    f) Helps us to aim high, providing a standard or reference by which we can measure any practice or strategy – especially in times of confusion, discouragement or disagreement.
4) The Vision Statement is a clear, concise, unambiguous, compelling expression of our community vision, articulated in a few sentences. It does not replace the community vision, but expresses it succinctly. It says, in effect, "*this* is what we are about, *this* is what we hope to accomplish, *this* is what guides us." There seems to be a high correlation between clear, specific and grounded vision statements and

communities that actually last; and between flowery, vague or pretentious vision statements and communities that never get off the ground.

E. Individual vs. Group
1) As we recognize a different form of group and group action, based in partnership, connection and evolution, we understand that the group is a construct of our imagination, our mutual choice to associate, and our agreement to work together and co-create. We understand that everything happens via agreements between individuals. And these agreements are motivated by and occur on the basis of the shared needs of individuals.
2) The group exists only by virtue of our agreement to cooperate and partner in various ways. The notion that the "group" has "needs" maintains an illusion that dis-empowers self-determination and response-ability. Only living, breathing alive organisms have needs. Associations of human beings occur by choice – government exists by consent of the governed. We create these associations by virtue of our power to choose – and as individuals, we can un-choose or choose differently at any time. Anything we would like to do as a group is motivated by the needs of individuals that we've agreed to collectively meet. Failure to remember this leads to abdication of personal power – the power to imagine, the power to choose and the power to invent and create. Our association becomes the *expression* of our cooperation. Just as the group has no intrinsic needs, the group has no intrinsic power. All power rests with the individual and his/her choices.
3) The paradox is that we are all connected - with each other and with life. Like it or not, we are all part of this. Whether we acknowledge it our not, we are already in an inseparable, alive partnership with existence and each other.
4) With these understandings, the following questions arise:
   a) How can we reliably remember, recognize, respect, affirm and celebrate the sovereignty of each individual: our individual power to choose, associate, invent and co-create? While simultaneously remembering, recognizing, respecting, affirming and celebrating our interdependence with life? Affirmation Celebration (replaces ritual/ceremony): through my power to choose, associate, invent and co-create, my needs contribute to the existence of this community, and help to bring it to life! Through our individual power to choose, associate, invent and co-create, our individual needs, together, contribute to the manifestation of this community, and bring it to life!
   b) How do we distribute the authority to act on behalf of the group? The authority to use common resources?
   c) If individuals or committees are chosen to represent the group, are they chosen on the basis of power, competence, or trust?
   d) When and how do those delegated authority to act or use common resources check back in with the group?
   e) How do we hold people accountable for how they act, either on behalf of the group, or as it affects the needs of others?
   f) What checks and balances do we build to hold delegates responsible and accountable, and how are they well maintained?

4. **Dynamic vs. Static Governance**
   A. [I am indebted to Brian Robertson and Anthony Moquin of Ternary Software Inc. for some of the material in this section. See http://www.sociocracyinaction.ca/consentvsconsensus.html]
   B. The distinction between static and dynamic governance is one of the most important and far reaching, though it may seem subtle, at first. We are so used to static governance, it is difficult to conceive of dynamic governance or how it would work. The distinction is not just about the form of decision making we use, but – even more importantly – the expectations we have about what "decision" means, and the context that those expectations create. In static governance, a "decision" is a ***conclusion*** about how we are going to operate (or what we are). In dynamic governance, a "decision" is an ***agreement***, ***recognition***, or ***resonance*** between us about our next step or two, one that we can change when new information arises. This kind of decision gives us a lot more flexibility and freedom to invent, create and evolve.
   C. In static governance, "decisions" are made, cast in stone, and relatively immutable. They become rules and laws that can last for generations. It is difficult to change them, often requiring great effort and struggle. The expectation is that you "decide" and then you live with it.
   1) For example, even in traditional consensus, a "decision" lives forever (unless it contains a sunset), and requires yet another consensus to change it.
   2) As a result of our expectations regarding the static nature of "decisions", we often agonize over what is the "right" decision, projecting our thinking far into the future – because we know we will have to live with it for a relatively long time. The lack of ease in changing a decision, once made, to adapt to an uncertain future, can stimulate a lot of fear and many considerations in the present. The **expectation** that in making a "decision" that we get "locked into" a direction for the future can stimulate a lot of fear (of not getting needs for choice & flexibility met). To a huge degree, this process takes us out of the present

moment, into guessing what the future will bring. There are lots of questions about how the "decision" will affect my ability to meet my needs over time. There is a lot of stress to get it "right".

    3) In addition, as time goes on and the future shows up in unexpected ways, there is dissension between people who remain attached to the "old ways", and those who would embrace change. The static nature of our decisions makes it difficult to adapt to changing circumstances. Attachment to previously chosen strategies become embedded in identity, and thereafter vigorously defended, even in the face of new circumstances. Dissension becomes hidden and covert. There is lack of participation and buy-in. Sabotage may occur.

    4) Because of this, a process of static governance tends to contribute to a certain sense of self that is static, disconnected, afraid and defended. Defended by abstractions, interpretations, theory and opinions, rather than connected to observable reality, experience and life-energy. Dissenters are seen as "obstructing" or "disrupting" progress or accomplishment.

D. In dynamic governance, "decisions" are made for the present moment. They may deal with predicted future circumstances, they may be about long-term plans, but are subject to change and evolution, whenever new information arises. Instead of making big "decisions", there is an ongoing process of generally smaller choices about how to proceed in the present moment - how to take the next few steps. These choices become part of a much larger process of evolution and flow. The process of dynamic governance creates a "flow state." So dynamic steering involves a constant, ongoing process of adjustments and choices – that is happening all the time - not something that just happens occasionally when (in static steering), "decisions" are made. Even long term plans are subject to constant revision, as new reality reveals itself.

    1) For example, instead of "deciding" to get on a bicycle and peddle, as if it were stationary, it is the constant process of adjustments and choices that are involved in balancing, propelling, riding, and steering the bike.

    2) Because of our expectations that we will make adjustments as new information arrives, there is much less agony about whether we are making the "right" decision. We understand that we are simply choosing to move in a certain direction, knowing that it will very likely change as we gain experience and new insight. There is a lot of room for change. This encourages us to drop our fears about an uncertain future, while still addressing our present moment concerns for what we do know or can reasonably predict – confident that when new information or circumstances arrive that we will be able to adapt with ease. This encourages us to deal with what we can know in the present moment, rather than getting lost in abstractions, interpretations, theory and opinions. This encourages trust and surrender to life.

    3) In methods of dynamic governance, such as Sociocracy, everyone is assured of having input into the process. Everyone's concerns will be reflected in the collective choices made. When new concerns arise, they too will be incorporated into the choices being made. Any dissension that occurs is a natural part of the process, and is seen for the information it provides about what needs are now being called for fulfillment. In fact, the expectations are completely different: people are called to voice their concerns ongoingly, as these provide new information that inform better choices.

    4) This process encourages a certain sense of self as well, one that is more comfortable with living in the present, emerging moment; feeling what arises; and seeing every new moment as an opportunity to contribute and steer towards fulfillment. It is a self that can align to what is, and is more trusting in processes of feedback, adaptation, change and evolution. What was seen in static governance as disruptive is seen in dynamic governance as an opportunity to integrate new information.

5. **Consensus vs. Dynamic Governance**: Both consensus and consent are collaborative processes that result in unified, harmonious actions. There are, however, two valuable distinctions:

A. The cognitive difference between asking for "agreement" and asking for "no objections" is profound. Consensus facilitators are more likely to be searching for agreement. Sociocratic facilitators specifically look for objections. Asking for agreement affects the perception of participants, and sometimes adversely influences the kinds of solutions they will propose or accept. It tends to restrict the inquiry to what people think they can get agreement about, rather than exploring objections in depth. To hone good choices, all the objections must be examined carefully.

B. Consensus is specifically a decision-making process and as such is heavily dependent on the skills of the facilitator and the experience of the group. Groups using consensus have no particular structure for engaging in conversation to come to agreement and must design their own. While there are good structures for communication, inexperienced groups and facilitators will often rely on older flawed structures that have been designed to support majority rule and based on parliamentary procedure. The sociocratic governance structure is specifically designed to support inclusive decision-making and is based on principles derived from systems theory and complexity theory.

6. **Consensus vs. Dissensus**

A. Dissensus is the recognition that consensus does not exist at a particular point in time; that there is value in differing views and diversity; that respect for these differences actually helps the process of working together to accomplish something; that attempting to reach consensus by discounting or ignoring differences has great

cost. Dissensus attempts to make room for opposed views at all times. Dialog, Dynamic Governance, Deep Democracy, Nonviolent Communication, Zegg Forum, and Sense of the Meeting are all helpful in doing this.

7. **Origins of Dynamic Governance** (also known as Sociocracy, nonviolent governance, and green governance)
   A. The word sociocracy is derived from the Latin and Greek words *socius* (companion) and *kratein* (to govern). It is English for the word *sociocratie*, coined in 1851 by Auguste Comte, a French positivist philosopher and later used by U.S. sociologist Lester Frank Ward in 1881.
   B. The Dutch pacifist, educator, and peace worker, Kees Boeke updated and greatly expanded Ward's ideas in the middle third of the 20th century by implementing the first sociocratic organizational structure in a school in Bilthoven, Netherlands.
   C. In the wide sense, sociocracy means the rule by the "socios," people who have a social relationship with each other - as opposed to democracy, or rule by the "demos," the general mass of people.
   D. What we call Sociocracy today was developed by one of Kees Boeke's students, Gerard Endenburg, and has been further refined by John Buck and others. Its aim, like consensus, is inclusive decision-making, in which the interests and needs of all members are served equally; and in which power, ownership and responsibility is shared equally. Its intent is to allow us to give and receive effective leadership while remaining peers or equals. The design of Sociocracy is an attempt to respect the self-organizing, continuously developing, and emergent nature of living organisms, by addressing human needs and creating the most responsive organization to meet those needs, using the least hierarchy. It requires that the people who regularly interact with one another have a common aim they consciously recognize. It builds trust and understanding, as it requires transparency and helps the participants to educate themselves about the physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs of other members, as they work together in arranging to meet those needs effectively. A system of power equivalence, in which no one has control over anyone else – and an overriding aim – together enable self-organization. In addition to reducing friction and deepening communication, the well-defined, information-based, feedback-seeking and highly disciplined process helps a group stay focused so they may examine an issue and come to agreements regarding strategy and collective action more efficiently.
   E. Sociocracy is both radical and conservative. It is radical to domination and authoritarian structures because it inclusively shares power and invites objections; it is conservative because it requires that people take responsibility and it holds us accountable: for our objections, for the resolution of conflict over strategy, for the implementation of agreements/decisions, for evaluation of results, and for the modification of old strategy based on the feedback of new information.

8. **Principles of Dynamic Governance [Modifications by Upgeya noted]:**
   A. **Transparency:** No secrets may be kept. All books are open. Open communication about what's alive in each person is encouraged. With the possible exception of proprietary knowledge, all financial transactions and policy decisions are transparent to members of the organization and to their clients.
      1) Public transparency is critical as a basis for informed educated action, healthy governance and public accountability. Because it increases vulnerability, it requires an avoidance of moralistic judgment, and reward & punishment.
      2) In turn, it fosters safety and trust, and helps equalize power dynamics.
      3) Our willingness to be courageous and transparent about what is alive in us - as individuals – is essential to having a group culture and a social contract in which transparency is an embodied value.
   B. **Group Ownership: [Upgeya]**
      1) When an idea is put forth it becomes at once the "property" of the group. All ideas cease to be the property of any individual, sub-group, or constituency. The intention behind this principle is to encourage those ideas that spring forth from a sincere desire to contribute & serve, rather than ideas that emanate from a desire for personal aggrandizement or constituency-building.
      2) An important aspect to this principle is the understanding that once a decision is made, it is important for the entire group to act on it with unity - regardless of who created the idea for the decision. When personal ownership is released and the decision is sincerely made and implemented, only then will deficiencies in it become evident in its implementation. This is essential to the measuring and feedback functions of dynamic governance.
   C. **Decision by Informed Consent:** Similar, but not the same as consensus, agreements to common action between members that affect any member must have the *informed consent* of the member. Agreements that involve the whole community require the *informed consent* of everyone. Consent occurs when there are no paramount objections to a proposed strategy. This principle arises out of a value of **Human Equivalence** or "equal rights". Human equivalence does not mean that everyone is qualified to take on the same roles or do the same thing – but that everyone's needs matter.
      1) Organic group agreement is process oriented and ongoing. The process of coming to agreement regarding strategies to meet needs continues and evolves. Since organic feedback is an essential part of sociocracy, all such agreements require periodic review based on feedback from the environmental and social ecosystem. Unlike consensus, which includes the rigidity of requiring consensus to change the original

agreement (unless a sunset is made with the original), agreements/strategies are seen as flexible and modifiable as new information and experience is developed (as it always is). In this way it is a kind of "social permaculture". This level of dialog requires a deep commitment to transcend moralistic judgment, criticism, demands, labeling, exclusion, punishment and reward that stand in the way of connection, support, transparency, caring, compassion, vulnerability, and trust.

2) Day-to-day agreements don't require the consent of everybody – but universal consent must exist concerning an agreement to make decisions through another method – and that agreement can be revisited at any time (see below). Policy decisions, however, generally require consent. With consent, persons or groups can be given the authority to make independent decisions that are implicitly agreed to or binding on all. However, at any time, everyone has an absolute right to be part of a decision that affects them.

3) Other methods that may be chosen from time to time may include Multi-Winner Voting, Systemic Temperature Check, Consensus, Deep Democracy (Worldwork), Zegg Forum, and Sense of the Meeting.

4) There is no blocking or standing aside. Instead, objection/dissensus is specifically invited and "harvested". Strategies are modified and transformed to meet each objection until there are no more "reasoned and paramount objections". If strategies can not be found, the proposal is laid aside or studied further. Inviting concerns helps avoid pressure to conform, go along, think like everyone else; helps avoid the tendency to be unconscious.

5) Every decision may be reexamined at any time, generally when new information arises.

6) Everything is open to discussion.

7) Operational decisions may be made by individuals elected sociocratically and based on Policy decisions made by consent. These may be the subject of objection, in which case they are brought before the group.

8) The failure to arrive at informed consent may indicate:
   a) We don't have enough information to make a decision. In this case, it may be wisest to consent to do more research and planning.
   b) Information is being withheld or kept secret. In this case, we may find it valuable to examine what makes it unsafe or difficult for people to share?
   c) Sufficient creativity hasn't yet arisen in us to surmount our blindness about or attachment to past habits, beliefs, or thinking.

D. **Objections are Tested by Reason and Intuition based on Articulated Needs [Upgeya]:**
   1) In classical Sociocracy, objections are tested by reason (called "reasoned and substantial or paramount objections"). There are difficulties with this. Who decides what is a "reasoned paramount objection"? And how is it decided? In classical sociocracy, it's often a person elected to a role this includes this. Unfortunately, this opens the door to those who possess the most reasoning ability to dominate. In addition to the power issues raised by an intellectual approach, this determination can easily avoid thorny emotional issues and leave people stuck up in their heads, disconnected from life. Being "reason" oriented, the structure argues against intuition and heart connection. It's not spacious enough to allow for the mystery of life, for evolution, for resonance, to seize people.
   2) However, classical Sociocracy's emphasis on functionality and results as much as inclusion is still very valuable. The question is how to include as much information as possible, including intuition, while still getting results and feedback that help move evolution along?
   3) Because of the limitations of the above approach, we will test for a substantial or paramount objection by using a "needs-based" approach, which includes both reason and love, and calls for a needs-based dialog, using empathy, whose intent is to reveal, connect with, and meet all needs in play. Its intent is to honor what is alive in us by honoring our needs. It requires people to deeply connect at the "feeling/need heart level" before moving to strategy, undergoing whatever personal healing and transformation is required to own and assert needs, distinguish strategy from needs, release attachment to strategy, and free up choices around strategy. It represents a fusion of intellect and heart.
   4) Objections based on intuition or emergent (heretofore marginalized) voices are welcomed and require that people work together to get more clarity on the objection. If the person who has the objection is not willing to do this work, the objection can't be considered (see below). Some of the processes that help here are "Worldwork" (from Deep Democracy - Arny Mindell), and the Zegg Forum (http://www.zegg-forum.org/what-is-zegg-forum.phtml).
   5) Each person is responsible for knowing if their objection is paramount. If it is, they are responsible for voicing it **and** helping to resolve it.
   6) If I have an objection, neither the facilitator nor the group can decide that my objection is not paramount to me. And if it is paramount to me, it must be paramount to the "socio", the group – as I am an inseparable part of the whole. Since the whole of Dynamic Governance is based in an understanding of the organic and emergent properties of the group, everyone's input is valuable and essential – and no one can discount this. Discounting an objection diminishes the possibility for emergence, creativity and evolution - for creating outcomes that are previously unknown – all essential properties of alive organisms – and alive, joyful, fun groups.

7) An objection, however, calls not only for articulation, but also for resolution. So, I am further responsible for helping to evolve a resolution to my objection. I am responsible to give others an understanding of and connection to the life energy in me that has difficulty, or allow the group or facilitator to help me do that. I am responsible for **helping** to create a **strategy that addresses all needs in play, not just my own.** Without this active participation and responsibility on my part, the group cannot resolve my objection and I am in effect blocking.

8) Others can only move on, over my objection, if I refuse to participate or engage in this process – to participate in an effort to resolve my objection. The success or failure of that participation is not cause to overrule my objection; the only requirement is that I wholly participate, to the best of my ability. With my participation, if a resolution is not forthcoming, the conversation continues at a later time, or we agree to move forward and review my objection when additional information is generated by moving forward.

9) Another modification that I favor comes from the Quaker *Sense of the Meeting*. After some initial discussion, and at times during the discussion, it is helpful to have a period of silent self-reflection or meditation, or even to lay aside the proposal for seasoning. This gives space in people to become more present to themselves and the subtle calling of life - to sense more about that. It leads to more self-connection. It gives space for people to think through ramifications and implications and allow a process of inner dialog and evolution. The inner emptiness it engenders, stimulates and opens the space for more creativity and evolution.

10) A short period of silence to more fully experience, savor and celebrate moments of resonance, is also valuable.

E. **Election by Consent:** Persons are elected to roles, exclusively by consent, after open transparent discussion. These roles are stewarded, not owned. The qualities sought in each role/responsibility are clearly delineated and, if not already, consented to. All participants nominate persons to be elected, by written ballot. Each ballot contains the name of the nominator and the nominee. Self-nomination is allowed. Tallies are made. People are asked to share why they nominated specific persons, with reference to the positive qualities that have been delineated, without discussion. The candidates are asked last. People end up appreciating each other's unique contributions. People feel good and get their needs for acknowledgement and recognition met. After the initial go-round, the facilitator asks if anyone wants to change their nomination. Typically, some people change their nominations based on this sharing. This process continues until consent is achieved, and/or the facilitator can propose any of the ones most nominated and ask for objections. A "consent round" is often used, where each person is asked if they have any objections to the proposed person. Objections are generally based on the qualities that have been delineated for a given role.

1) Sociocracy requires a particular kind of leadership when you can't appeal to authority or physical power (control over money or employment, use of force, appeal to unnamed 3rd parties). Authority is derived from the abilities called for in specific roles and the inherent calling in individuals to take on those roles and contribute their unique gifts of service to others and life. All rank is earned.

2) All roles have term limits, and everyone holding them are periodically reviewed by their circle and linked circles, often just before elections.

3) Sociocracy requires listening and formulating directions that fit with the aims and abilities of all of those led.

4) Elections can also be used to choose one option from a set of predetermined options, in a variety of situations (e.g. choosing a paint color, choosing where to go for a vacation (or for dinner out).

F. **Organizing in Circles:** For larger groups, an organization is divided into a holarchy (or network) of semi-autonomous affinity groups of individuals called circles. This hierarchy, however, does not constitute a power structure as autocratic hierarchies do. Power and sovereignty flows from the bottom up, not top-down. Circles are best limited to 7-9 people. Given human energy and attention limitations, this seems the maximum number of people who can self-facilitate a conversation/dialog in space and time that connects them intimately and in which everyone is deeply heard.

1) I call the bottom, core circles – sovereign circles.

2) Each circle governs or stewards a specific domain or area. Each circle has its own vision/mission/aim consistent with the common aim that all in the organization consciously recognize. Domains are agreed to via consent. Note that these domains may be distinguished by time-scale and/or size-scale.

3) A circle makes its own policy decisions in its domain, using consent.

4) Membership in specific circles is generally based on earned rank, and is sometimes subject to election. Circle membership can happen by election "down" or "up". You don't get to be in a circle just because you're motivated to be – your qualifications to sit in that circle and serve its functions are important also.

5) Each circle takes responsibility for the three functions of leading/initiating, planning/operating/doing, and measuring/feedback in its specific domain. Each circle creates structures and processes that accomplish these three functions. Together, the three steering functions establish a feedback loop, creating a "learning organization" and making the circle self-regulating.

6) A circle maintains its own memory system through what is called "integral evolution". This evolution occurs where feedback and new experience, emergent information and learning informs and modifies prior strategies. It thus leads to development for each member and the circle's culture.

G. **Double-Linking:** Derivative ("higher level") circles are composed entirely of two members from each lower level circle. Two representatives are selected by the circle to represent the circle's interests in the next larger area circle. Typically, this is the operational leader of the circle (if the circle has one) and one other. These two people function as full members in the decision-making of both their circle and the derivative circle.
1) Circles that are not derivative may arrange to each have one member sit on the other circle.
2) Note that a circle may contribute to more than one derivative circle. Given the size limitation of a circle (7-9), this generally means that one circle can connect to about 4 other circles, without a particular person having to sit on more than two circles.
3) In some organizations, circles may link to each other in a network, rather than form a hierarchy; or there may be a combination of the two.
4) A "fishbowl" process may be valuable so that members of contributing circles can observe (and occasionally offer input into) the proposed policy decisions of other circles.
H. **Feedback:** is essential to effective self-governance. Each agreement is subject to three steering processes and these are performed by each circle in its specific domain, and with regard to the overall vision/intention of the organization:
1) Leading/initiating – making agreements, generally by consent.
2) Planning/operating/doing - determining the who, what, when, how, where, and how much in developing a strategy (a set of actions over time) to put the agreement into practice. Then, acting.
3) Measuring and Evaluation – what actually happened? What results did we get? What can we learn about our system from what we can observe? This function generally includes processes whereby the circle maintains its own memory system of what it decided, did, and what results were obtained.

Each circle creates structures and processes that accomplish these three functions. Together, the three steering functions establish a feedback loop, wherein agreements are then modified based on new or emergent information. This creates a "learning organization" and makes the circle and organization self-regulating. Periodic review becomes a normal part of the process of governance. Note the similarity of this process to the Cycle of Group Development & Accomplishment, Social and Community Evolution, which outlines the full process.

9. **Process Templates for Dynamic Governance:**
A. **The Process and Structure of a Dynamically Governed Meeting**
1) Silence to begin the Meeting: time to self-connect, become present with oneself. Note that periods of silence during the meeting, lasting from a few seconds to minutes, are valuable, to give space for comprehension, self-connection, inner processing, emotional regulation, group resonance, and note taking. The facilitator senses when these needs are crying/yearning and calls for silence.
2) Opening round – Check-In: time to self-connect, become present, release energy, and connect/attune with others – like an orchestra tuning just before the concert. During the check-in, one person shares at a time, without dialog with others, while everyone else listens.
3) Administrative concerns:
   a) Time available for the meeting
   b) Date of next meeting
   c) Consent to minutes of last meeting
   d) Announcements
   e) Consent to the agenda
4) Content: generally content is composed of requests, offers, discussions, proposals, and reports. The most difficult items are best dealt with first, while people are more fresh.
   a) Agenda item one
   b) Agenda item two…
5) Closing round – Checkout - a time to measure the meeting process – needs met and unmet, use of time, adequacy of preparation, maintenance of power equivalence, how could the meeting have been more efficient. Also, this is a time to mention agenda items that should be on the agenda for the next meeting. During the checkout, one person shares at a time, without dialog with others, while everyone else listens.
B. **The Process for Dynamic Governance Policy Decision Making**
1) **Define & Consent to the Issue(s)** to be resolved:
   a) What's the picture?
   b) Identify the initial needs in play:
      1) The needs not being met by the current situation, yearning to be met.
      2) Needs being met by the current situation.
      3) Other needs in play.
2) **Generate a Proposal: (**What's our approach?)
   a) Often a person or persons may be asked to prepare a draft proposal and circulate it for comment and revision before the next meeting.
   b) Brainstorming may be helpful (no evaluation).
   c) We want a proposal to identify:

1) Who, what, when, where, how, and how much (time, resources, $$) in specific, positive, doable form.
2) Needs met and not met by the proposal.
3) How it fits with our values and vision.
4) How it fits within our overall strategy, if we've developed one.
5) Our tactic(s) and our ideas.
6) What information is needed, if any, that we don't currently have.
7) What research we could do to get needed information.
8) What planning, if any, is needed to move forward with the proposal.

3) **Consent to the proposal** (What's our decision?)
   a) Present proposal. Note: this places the needs of the proposer (and those whom the proposal is on behalf of) on the table. When this occurs, alternate proposals are heard and considered only if consent is not obtained during the Consent Round.
   b) Clarifying Round – clarifying questions only. Any concerns are held till later.
   c) Quick Reaction Round – quick feedback about the proposal; as appropriate. The proposer is asked if they'd like to tune (change) their proposal based on the quick reactions. This is not a time for alternate proposals. Requests for specific changes to the proposal can be made to the proposer, but if much conversation is need, or involves others, then such requests are better delayed for the Consent Round.
   d) Time for silent consideration, if necessary.
   e) Consent Round
      1) We recognize that we can rarely meet all needs all the time. And yet, we are called to consider everyone's needs equally as we attempt to meet as many needs for as many people as completely as it is possible for us do so, in the present moment. The intention of this process is to develop the best strategy that we can find, given our limitations in the moment, to meet everyone's needs. Based on identified needs, the original proposal may be modified to be more inclusive of all the needs alive in people, and all the information we have available to us in the present moment.
      2) If there are objections to the proposal, record on a flip chart, identifying unmet needs if able to be stated, without dialog until the round is completed;
         .a Alternate: empathy from the facilitator(s), and/or the group as the objections are raised, to get clarity about unmet needs.
      3) If objections, following the Consent Round, if empathy has not yet been offered, engage in an Empathy Round to identify and connect with unmet needs behind the objections. The group offers empathy to each objector until needs become clear and the objector(s) acknowledge they've been heard to their satisfaction. If, after an Empathy Round, the objection(s) remain, move on to the next step.
   f) Choose one or more of these:
      1) Group dialog to address unhealed trauma, hidden agendas, and/or emergent information: engage in group processes such as Worldwork or Zegg Forum to reveal hidden information and get healing for participants.
      2) Group solutions for unmet needs: engage in a creative dialog, such as brainstorming, to generate other strategies and ideas that would meet more needs. If a temperature check of participants suggests that one stands out as being favored, amend proposal and repeat Consent Round. The use of another decision making process, such as Multi-Winner Voting, is possible, and requires consent.
      3) Individual solutions for unmet needs: Ask those who's needs are unmet if they could get their needs met in another way, while the proposal goes forward. Group or sub-group process to help objector(s) to brainstorm these other strategies. If resolution for objector(s) is found, amend proposal if necessary for group to support individual solution, and repeat Consent Round.
      4) Send proposal back to drawing board, to refine it in consideration of objector(s) needs, in full dialog with objector(s).

C. **The Process for Dynamic Governance Elections:**
   1) Review Role: Describe responsibilities, qualifications, and term. If not already established or if objections exist, discuss, revise and consent to these.
   2) Nomination forms: Fill out nomination forms giving your name and the name of the person you nominate and give to election leader.
   3) Explanations round: Each person says why they made their nomination.
   4) Change round: Election leader asks each person if they want to change their nomination based on the explanations they heard in the previous round.
   5) Consent round: Election leader proposes the candidate with the strongest arguments and asks each person if he or she has a paramount objection to the proposed candidate, asking the proposed candidate last. If there is an objection, the election leader leads the group in resolving the objection and initiates another consent round.

D. There are other templates that help a circle articulate its own aim; organize itself using the three functions of leading, doing, and measuring/feedback; maintain its own memory system; and develop itself through integral research, teaching, and learning.