

# Soul Tribe Group Agreements

Soul Tribes cannot exist without trust, and it's hard to establish trust, especially in new relationships, without relationship agreements that help us let down our guard and really *see* and witness and engage intimately with one another. The following Soul Tribe Group Agreements will be a living, evolving document and we count on each of you to help breathe life, authenticity, freedom, intimacy and integrity into it. We are inspired to create this sacred contract between us after meeting with many intentional communities who live together and have needed to clarify their agreements with great specificity and flexibility, holding the tension between our desire for individuality and freedom and a tribe's need for safety, commitment, intimacy, love and ethical behavior.

One request—part of participating in a Soul Tribe is taking responsibility for your participation and your commitment to the group. We ask that everyone do your part to hold everyone else accountable to these agreements. If you witness someone violating these agreements, please intervene and refer your fellow Soul Tribe member back to the agreements. If you are having trouble enforcing the agreement yourself, reach out to your group leader as the “holders of the sacred container.” Thank you for doing your part to keep this community safe as a place to be fully yourself while also respecting everyone else's right to be different and unique and beautiful.

**1. CONFIDENTIALITY:** We agree to keep communication shared within the sacred container of the Soul Tribe confidential. You may share about your own direct experience and reference the Soul Tribe—telling stories, writing blogs or posting on social media—but please do not reference anybody else's experience without their explicit consent. While some of us are comfortable with a lot of public transparency, others are just learning to feel safe when expressing vulnerable shares. Let us hold the safety necessary to reveal uncomfortable shares by protecting everyone's right to having a container of closely held privacy.

**2. PRACTICE, PURPOSE & BELONGING:** Let this be a place where we can support each other in our individual and tribal practices, knowing that we all come from different spiritual backgrounds and do not need to share the same practices. Whether your spiritual practice is meditation, contemplative prayer, dance, singing, being in nature, or a combination of many practices, part of belonging to this tribe is committing to whatever spiritual practice resonates with your unique soul expression. Yet let us not be so obsessively focused on our spiritual practices that we fall into the “spiritual narcissism” of constant practice. Let us also commit to taking our practice off the “mat,” letting our love motivate us into compassionate action in a world that needs our service. Let us support one another as we find and fulfill our calling, individually and collectively. If anyone in the tribe doesn't have a spiritual practice and needs help getting started with one, please reach out. Those of us with experience in our spiritual practices will be delighted to help support your new practice, if you dare to ask for help.

**3. OUR SHARED PURPOSE IS RECLAIMING TRIBE:** While we will have individual purposes (healing health care, reforming the education system, political activism, etc), those of us participating in this Soul Tribe share a purpose—creating healing circles and restoring healthy, healing, soul-based community. If we forget why we’re doing this, let us always come back to this shared purpose that we are part of a global experiment that is trying to restore what humankind needs for our physical and mental health and our cultural wellbeing—healthy, spiritually-connected, authentic, intimate, loving, intimate tribe.

**4. HATE-FREE, ATTACK-FREE ZONE:** Some us wish to discuss topics that we don’t feel safe expressing elsewhere—in our social circles or even on social media. Some topics are so inflammatory that it’s almost impossible to express yourself or feel heard in a safe way. Initiating dialogue about hot-button topics like politics, sexual harassment, abortion, vaccines, male or female circumcision, polyamory, pornography, racial or police injustices, conspiracy theories, white nationalism, or guru scandals can quickly devolve into triggerfests between people who hold opposite points of view and start attacking each other. Let us make this space a hate-free, attack-free zone. Let’s hold this container so safe that respectful progressives from the left and loving representatives of the political right can share space and generously listen to each other without shutting each other down mindlessly and hatefully. Differences of opinion are inevitable between tribe members, and we welcome such diversity! Feel free to dialogue and debate respectfully. Your unique expression of soulful passion and your use of your voice to express yourself is encouraged. But please refrain from judging, polarizing, dividing or attacking anyone who does not share your point of view. If you get triggered because someone expresses a view that feels out of alignment with yours, take responsibility for your trigger—and have the courage to name it. Try to resist the temptation to get defensive, and instead, get curious. Ask yourself, “What’s it like to be the person who’s triggering me?” Perhaps invite them to practice the same perspective-taking with you. This is where peacemaking arises. If you see someone else promoting hatred, intolerance, or judgment in a way that makes others in the tribe feel unsafe, please call it out directly, and if this agreement is not being respected, please your leader. All complicated, conflicted, vulnerable feelings are welcome but nobody representing what the tribe deems “hate” will be tolerated. Violators will be asked to leave the tribe.

**5. ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED:** Many in this Soul Tribe are very intuitive, but it’s not fair to expect us to read your minds or anticipate all of your needs. If your needs aren’t getting met and you’re not expressing what you need, it’s not fair to blame anyone else, harbor resentment or behave passive-aggressively. If you are expressing your needs and your needs are being ignored, violated or neglected, you have every right to feel upset. Please take responsibility for asking for what you need, even if it feels risky or vulnerable to do so. If you feel lonely and you need to talk to someone, please express your need on the forum. If you feel invisible and you want to feel more visible, name it. If you feel like you’re giving more than you’re receiving or that someone else is getting more attention than you and it’s triggering you, please speak up! As a Soul Tribe, we can only expect to have our needs met if we are brave enough to express what we need.

**6. SHARE YOUR GIFTS:** This tribe is not just about getting your needs met; it's also about finding a place to share your gifts, whether they be gifts of unconditional love, companionship, healing, generous listening, service, physical gifts, money, or any other kind of gifts you feel called to share. If nobody asks for what they need, nobody else will know where their gifts are most needed. What better side effect of Soul Tribe than matching up people's needs with the tribe's gifts?

**7. AVOID DRAMA TRIANGLES:** What is a "drama triangle?" The drama triangle is a psychological triad of the victim, the martyr and the perpetrator. We live in a culture that loves drama triangles. We're always trying to find who the perpetrator is so we can demonize the "bad guy," rescue the victim, and be the hero. Yet this dysfunctional triad depends on the consciousness of the story of separation. I'm not advocating the "spiritual bypass" pattern here. Yes, through one lens, sometimes we are victims, sometimes there are perpetrators, and sometimes we need to be rescued. But when we flip the lens to the perspective of the mystic, we see that we are all One, which means that at some root level, we are all part of the culture that plants the seeds of victimhood, rescuing and perpetrating. The way out of the drama triangle is to notice when you're looping your victim story—or when someone else is stuck in theirs. Absolutely, have compassion for the victim story (because it hurts for real when you're in that consciousness!). But also pause. Get curious. Look at your side of the street. How might you accept personal responsibility for your part of the story? I'm not blaming the victim here. That's just another way to loop into the drama triangle, repositioning the victim as the perpetrator. I'm sincerely asking that we examine our lives through the lens of our co-creative capacity. What if we are consciously (or more often, unconsciously) co-creating our reality? I'm not talking about the "law of attraction" kind of manifestation. I don't sense that co-creation is quite that tidy. But how might we be participating in our own victim stories? Where can we be accountable for our own actions, and from that empowered place, where might we need to set boundaries, enforce consequences or take fierce action in order to protect our integrity, our bodies, our life force and those we love? We'll talk more about this, but in general, as part of our Soul Tribe Group Agreements, let's try to focus on taking responsibility for our own part.

**8. CONSCIOUS RANTS:** If you're feeling deeply embedded in your victim story and you need to vent your anger, frustration or disappointment, please do so! But let's do so consciously through a "conscious rant." Ask a Soul Tribe member to be your "conscious rant" partner if you like, or you may post on the forum with the disclaimer that you're asking the tribe to hold space for your conscious rant. Conscious ranting works best when your ranting partner is NOT the person who's triggering you! Here's a way you can do this: 1) The space-holder asks the conscious ranter, "What have you got on [fill in the blank about what's triggering you]?" For example, you're upset at your mother, so you ask a Soul Tribe member to hold space for a conscious rant about your mother. Your ranting partner asks you, "What have you got on your mother?" Then you go for it. Be as "unspiritual" as you want. Swearing is welcome. Go full tilt and get it all the way out of

your system. When you're quiet, your ranting partner will say "Thank you." No feeding the story. No advice. No expression of sympathy. Simply, "Thank you." Then your ranting partner will ask again, "What have you got on your mother?" You'll go nuts-blah-de-blah-de-blah Mother Fucker yada yada. When you're silent again, your partner says, "Thank you. What have you got on your mother?" You do this until your partner asks you "What have you got on your mother?" and you've got nothing left. All the charge is gone. (Trust me, you always run out of rant material at some point.) When you've discharge the intense emotion, you may want to ask yourself, now that you're in a calmer place, "Is there any conscious action I need to take?" Is there a difficult conversation you need to initiate with Mom? Is there a request you need to make? Is there a boundary you need to set? A consequence you need to enforce? This tool is not meant to be a "spiritual bypass" tool. It's simply a container with which you can alchemize anger into healthy intimacy. [Hat tip to Anne Davin, PhD for this "spring cleaning" tool.]

**9. PRACTICE NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION (NVC) WITH EACH OTHER:** Non-Violent Communication, developed by Marshall Rosenberg, PhD, is a communication practice intended to keep you in the heart when you're expressing how you feel and asking for what you need. As described on [his website](#), the four basic steps of NVC are:

- Observe without judging
- Express feelings
- Express and clarify your needs
- Express specific requests based on your feelings and needs.

When we're triggered or there's conflict, NVC keeps us out of the culturally conditioned territory of blame, judgment or domination, opening the doorway to real intimacy and a healthy way to get our needs met and stay out of the patterning of narcissism or co-dependence. [For more on NVC, check out <http://cnvc.org>.] If you need to vent the violence from your trigger, find a conscious ranting partner!

**10. COMMUNI-WE:** Let's set the intention to find a healthy balance between getting our individual needs met and prioritizing the needs of the tribe. If we're only focused on COMMUNI-ME ("How can I get what I want from the tribe?") we'll miss what tribes are really about—focusing on the needs of the whole, not as a form of self-sacrifice, but as an ultimate service to self through the vehicle of healthy tribe. Most of us were raised in a culture of narcissism (unhealthy focus on self) or co-dependence (unhealthy focus on other). Let us experiment with finding the fulcrum between the two, trusting that the Soul Tribe itself will help us find this balance point.

**11. SHARED LEADERSHIP:** We are in the “space between stories” when it comes to group leadership. The old story of the man at the top dictating the rules to the people who bow at his feet is over. The new story of how “the next Buddha will be the Sangha” has not yet revealed itself. Experiments in shared leadership have been messy, and those who are on the cutting edge of the leaderless group have shared many of their struggles. Yet there is beauty in a tribe made up of people who are at least trying to exert their own individual power without “taking over” leadership and dominating others. The intention is to allow those with gifts and power to take on leadership roles, without getting into a power struggle with others in the group or violating the sacredness of the container of love and safety. This requires each of us to be transparent and speak up if we feel unsafe or overpowered. We will not get this “right” because we are in that messy uncertain space between stories, but we can still hold the tension of our desire for shared leadership and our “beginner’s mind” that doesn’t know how to accomplish it.

**12. NO MARKETING:** You all will inevitably wish to benefit from each other’s gifts, and we encourage you to do so! But please, let the sharing of such gifts arise naturally and respectfully. If you wish to offer the gift of your service to another tribe member personally, feel free. And if it arises naturally that you offer a service another tribe member needs, by all means, support each other! If this group agreement is violated, please let us all take responsibility for calling out the one violating the agreement.