

Consensus-Building & Nonviolent Communication Resource Guide

Created by Audre Lorde to Howard Zinn Library of Occupy Boston

Books

These are books available locally through the Audre Lorde to Howard Zinn Library (A-Z Library) of Occupy Boston, the Boston Public Library branch system and other local public libraries. Specific availability is listed after each book, which is organized alphabetically by title. If you need assistance tracking down or requesting any items on the list, please do not hesitate to reach out to the librarians of the A-Z Library at General Assembly, via our working group wiki page or by email at library@lists.occupyboston.org.

- *Building United Judgement: A Manual on Consensus Decision Making, and A Manual for Group Facilitators* / Center for Conflict Resolution, Madison, WI.
 - Availability: <http://www.archive.org/details/BuildingUnitedJudgmentAHandbookForConsensusDecisionMaking> (e-book)
 - Description: A handbook for community groups or other organizations that describes the process of making decisions and resolving conflict through consensus techniques.
- *Conflict and Consensus: A General Theory of Collective Decisions* / Serge Moscovici
 - Availability: Boston Public Library (Copley Branch) at HM24 .M62413 1994x
 - Description: Chapters include: What Use Are Groups?; The Elementary Forms of Participation in Decisions and Consensuses; Extreme Conflicts and Consensuses; The Effects of Private or Public Discussions; Conflicts and Extreme Consensuses: The Role of Values; 'Warm' and 'Cold' Communications; Consensus in Closed and Open Groups; Decision-making.
- *Dynamics of Nonviolent Action (Politics of Nonviolent Action, Vol. 3)* / Gene Sharp
 - Availability: A-Z Library of OB
 - Description: An illustrated analysis of how nonviolent action “works” against a violent, repressive opponent. Includes discussion of the groundwork for such struggle, as well as requirements for effectiveness and reactions to repression.
- *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* / Sam Kaner
 - Availability: Boston Public Library/Minuteman Library Network (several locations)
 - Description: Chapters include: the dynamics of group decision making, participatory values, dealing with difficult dynamics, principles for building sustainable agreements, gathering diverse points of view, building a shared framework of understanding, and developing inclusive solutions.
- *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century* / Grace Lee Boggs
 - Availability: A-Z Library of OB
 - Chapters include: These are the times to grow our souls, Revolution as a new beginning, Let's talk about Malcolm and Martin, Detroit, place and space to begin anew, A paradigm shift in our concept of education, and We are the leaders we've been looking for.
- *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* / Marshall B. Rosenberg
 - Availability: A-Z Library of OB, Boston Public Library
 - Description: Enrich your personal and work relationships with the art of compassionate communication. What if you could defuse tension and create accord in even the most volatile situations just by changing the way you speak? Over the past 35 years, Marshall Rosenberg has done just that, peacefully resolving conflicts in families, schools, businesses, and governments in 30 countries on 5 continents.
- *On Conflict and Consensus: a handbook on Formal Consensus decision making* / C.T. Lawrence Butler & Amy Rothstein
 - Availability: A-Z Library of OB; online at <http://www.consensus.net/ocaccontents.html>
- *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution* / Virginia Coover
 - Availability: A-Z Library of OB
 - Description: A handbook for activists and community organizers that provides tools, techniques and analysis on social change, social action, group dynamics and nonviolence.
- *Social movements: Development, participation, and dynamics* / James L. Wood
 - Availability: A-Z Library of OB
 - Description: Chapters include: Theories of development and participation and Social movement dynamics

Articles / Online Resources

These articles are freely available online; the list is organized alphabetically by article title.

- “Blocking Progress: Consensus Decision Making in the Anti-Nuclear Movement” / Howard Ryan
 - Availability: <http://www.docspopuli.org/pdfs/consensus.pdf>
 - Description: The author examines the benefits and challenges of both the consensus and voting processes and describes his personal experiences with each.
- “Consensus Decision Making” / Seeds of Change
 - Availability: <http://seedsforchange.org.uk/free/consensus>
 - Description: Describes the consensus process and conditions that should be followed for successful meetings. Graphs and flow charts illustrate the process for small, medium, and large groups. Also includes techniques for dealing with issues such as disruptive behavior and miss-use of blocks.
- "Consensus decision-making" / Connexions Social Justice Encyclopedia
 - Availability: http://www.connexions.org/CxLibrary/Docs/CxP-Consensus_Decision-making.htm
 - Description: Describes the consensus process and possible roles that can be assumed. Dealing with dissent and non-unanimous consensus are also discussed. Different consensus models, historical examples, and tools for success are also discussed.
- “It Ain't the Meeting It's the Motion” / Alexandra Devon
 - Availability: <http://www.connexions.org/CxLibrary/Docs/CX4716-Alexandra-Meetings.htm>
 - Description: Focuses on the idea that we are often more interested in the end than the means of getting there, little realizing that the process would be much more enjoyable and the end product enriched if we're better able to harmonize means and ends.
- “On Organization” / Tom Wetzel
 - Availability: <http://www.uncanny.net/~wsa/organization.htm>
 - Description: Reviews the ways in which we can maintain structure and order while respecting one another, overcoming power dynamics and reaching levels of agreement and consensus. Great read in tandem with Freeman's article below.
- “Traité du Savoir-Vivre for the Occupy Wall Street Generations” / Al Giordano
 - Availability: <http://narcosphere.narconews.com/thefield/4664/trait-du-savoir-vivre-occupy-wall-street-generations>
 - Description: Reviews some of the caveats and lessons of organizing and consensus-building at OWS.
- “Tyranny of Structurelessness” / Jo Freeman (aka Joreen)
 - Availability: <http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm>
 - Description: Freeman's essays reflects on resisting the idea of leaders and even discarding any structure or division of labor in social movements and organizing. She explains how apparent lack of structure is too often disguised as informal, unacknowledged and unaccountable leadership leading to reinforced oppression and power dynamics.

Additional online bibliographies and reading lists to consider:

- “A Bibliography on Consensus” / Elizabeth Cove, Earlham College
 - Availability: <http://legacy.earlham.edu/~consense/pabib.shtml>
- “Cooperative Decision-Making” (Papers series) / Vernal Project
 - Availability: <http://www.vernalproject.org/papers/Process.html>
- “Consensus Decision Making: Topic Index” / AlterLinks
 - Availability: <http://www.alterlinks.ca/Info/WWWHeading3337.htm>