



The Buyerlink Way

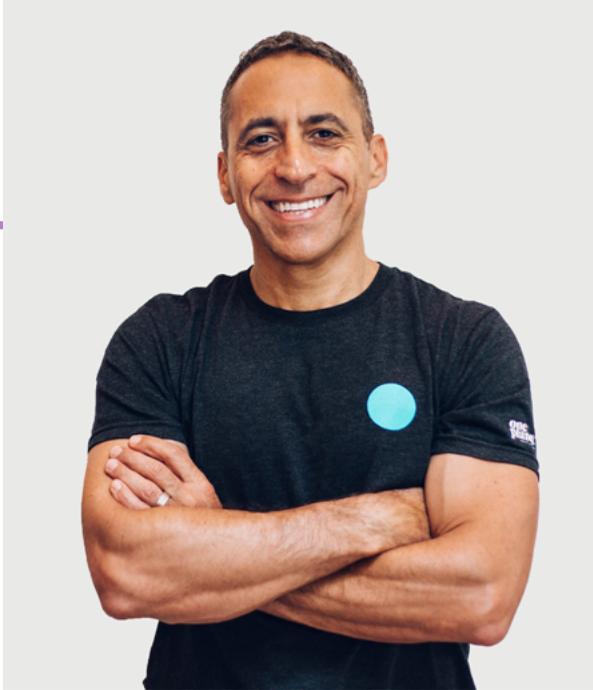
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SAN FRANCISCO - OAKLAND BAY BRIDGE

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



Payam Zamani

FOUNDER, CHAIRMAN & CEO,
ONE PLANET GROUP AND BUYERLINK

Dear New Team Member,

Over the past years we have worked to build a different kind of company –one where the workplace culture, the relationships it engenders, and the products and services it delivers all combine to form a collective contribution to the common good. The world-embracing principles of my faith—the Baha’i Faith—have been my source of inspiration for what Buyerlink could be. What would it mean to run a business that champions diversity and inclusion, unity, service to humanity, and excellence in all we do?

Buyerlink tries to answer that question by not only striving to implement best business practices, but also by seeking to foster an environment that promotes equality, love and empowerment. My fundamental belief is that a company can generate healthy profit margins while maintaining an ongoing sense of mission, meaning and individual fulfillment for all employees. You are here not only because you are skilled and talented, but because we see you also treasuring these values.

We believe you will feel the difference here. Get to know your new peers. Some team members have been with us for more than ten years while others, a few months. We have offices and team members from the U.S., Canada, Ukraine, Armenia and more. Collectively, our team members speak over 20 languages. Regardless, we are all truly one family. Be present and be disciplined, but most of all, let love permeate your work, communications, and relationships. This is the Buyerlink Way!

Love,

payam



Buyerlink is the leading online auction marketplace for the generation and monetization of locally targeted and category-specific consumer demand.

Our patented technology allows our platform to conduct millions of auctions striving to connect consumers to perfectly matched service providers. We currently serve the automotive, real estate, insurance, home services, solar, and home warranty industries, and our category agnostic platform offers us the capability to quickly launch new verticals as necessary.

Our fully integrated Buyerlink Marketplace massively simplifies the process of purchasing enhanced clicks and leads in an auction format. Buyers easily target the consumer intent, location of service, the desired volume and price – and almost instantaneously start receiving demand at scale.

Buyerlink’s platform acts as a catalyst in moving locally targeted ad dollars from other established platforms and concurrently growing the size of the addressable market.

We are a mission-driven business operating to support the betterment of the world - innovation and impact are at the center of what we do.

As a One Planet company, our fundamental values place love at the center of every facet of our business. We stand for social justice, women’s rights, racial justice, and unity. Buyerlink provides the means to uphold our unwavering commitment to universal philanthropy. We believe every business should contribute to social good.



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Our History

The real history of Buyerlink begins with the story of our Founder and CEO, Payam Zamani, whose story could be likened to one out of a novel.

Today, he is known as a serial entrepreneur but in 1988 Payam came to America from Iran as a refugee fleeing religious persecution. He ended up in Northern California and in 1994, by virtue of being at the right place at the right time with the right hustle, Payam's Silicon Valley journey began.

With his brother, he co-created the internet's first online car-buying portal, Autoweb. In 1999 Payam took Autoweb public for \$1.2 billion. Harnessing his expertise, knowledge and passion Payam left Autoweb and began building again.

In 2001, he started Reply.com which was rebranded in 2016 as Buyerlink. Businesses today have a role in shaping the wider social fabric. Payam wanted to build something of consequence, a company that can have a real impact on the world, an influential, trendsetting institution that pioneers true change. This is where we are today.



Our Philosophy

Buyerlink is infused with core foundational values which promote diversity and inclusion, unity, service to humanity, and excellence in all things --to which the entire management team is committed. This makes Buyerlink a company that not only strives to implement best business practices but also seeks to foster an environment that promotes equality, love and empowerment.

Buyerlink dedicates its efforts to the entrepreneurial philosophy of “Universal Philanthropy,” which means that most companies from our entire extended network, whether operating businesses or companies we invest in, actively support social programs for the betterment of the world. That conscious intent functions as an integral part of our DNA, core mission, business model and our daily work. In fact, Buyerlink designates multiple Service Days throughout the year so that employees can take off work for the sole aim of participating in community service and volunteerism.

As a company, Buyerlink supports many nonprofits and charities. In some cases our commitment goes beyond the occasional corporate gift or fundraiser. Instead, we contribute a fixed percentage of the company’s profits every quarter. This unique commitment and profit-sharing model rewards nonprofits with more funds as the company improves its performance and gives an extra incentive to everyone in the company to deliver the most profitable growth possible.



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DNEPROPETROVSK, UKRAINE



Our Principles

Buyerlink is infused with core foundational values which promote diversity and inclusion, unity, service to humanity, and excellence in all things --to which the entire management team is committed. This makes Buyerlink a company that not only strives to implement best business practices but also seeks to foster an environment that promotes equality, love and empowerment.



The oneness of the entire human race

Knowing we belong to one humanity, we strive to respect and value our similarities and differences and include a variety of voices in decision making.

The need for universal education and philanthropy

Each of us contains potential that can be developed through the educational opportunities Buyerlink offers. Buyerlink strives to train team members who are interested in advancement, and prefers to promote from within our organization. In addition, Buyerlink dedicates its efforts to universal philanthropy, which means that most companies from our entire extended network, whether operating businesses or companies we invest in, actively support social programs for the betterment of the world.

Work as worship and the importance of service

When done in a spirit of service we understand that every act, including every kind of work, is a form of worship. We strive to develop genuine and caring ways to affect people on the job and in projects that Buyerlink develops in the larger community. That conscious intent functions as an integral part of our DNA, core mission, business model and our daily work. In fact, Buyerlink designates multiple Service Days throughout the year so that employees can take off work for the sole aim of participating in community service and volunteerism.

Being honest in everything that we do

Truthfulness is a cornerstone that allows us to operate efficiently and effectively. Through any communication medium, presentation, or report we are 100% honest. It is our vehicle for meaningful progress and growth.

The development of virtues

At every Buyerlink office, there is no doubt that virtues like trustworthiness, honesty, generosity and a spirit of friendliness to all are especially important in the workplace of Buyerlink.

The equality of women and men

Men and women are like two wings of a bird. If they are equal and balanced, the bird can fly. If not, the bird is grounded or flies only in a circle. This principle is important at every employment level of Buyerlink.

The need for valuing of justice as an operating principle

We strive to mindfully reflect on integrity, fairness and equity in our dealings with everyone.

Eliminating the societal custom of backbiting or gossip

A corrosive and disunifying custom plaguing society today is the practice of gossiping. Often times people do this to entertain one another, compensate for feelings of insecurity, or to express frustration and dislike. At Buyerlink, we never speak ill of one another and in the face of confrontation employ healthy and productive forms of communication directly to one another. We are a family and care about the hearts and feelings of others.

The need for the eradication of prejudice of all kinds (race, gender, culture, religion, economics, etc.)

We have the opportunity to demonstrate our respect for others' differences and uniqueness.

The interrelationship of unity and diversity

While engaged in the process of creating a cohesive unity at Buyerlink, we understand that differences among us are advantages and we seek differing perspectives as a means of understanding the bigger picture. We treat everyone with respect, understanding and appreciation.

The power of true consultation

True consultation involves the participation of everyone at the table. Those with more confidence or louder voices strive to make room for those who do not ordinarily contribute. Quieter members see their contributions as valuable and voice them. Each member of a group has a piece of the puzzle, and full participation allows the puzzle to take form. After a contribution is made, we strive to give up ownership of the idea, allow the best notion to take hold, and support it.

Judicious Use of Resources

Let us remain mindful and exercise thoughtful judgement to every resource decision we make. Whether they are human, financial, equipment or environmental, resources are finite and wasting them inhibits our ability to invest in other needed areas.

Additional members of the OPG family



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Our Culture in Action

These tools are designed to help create a safe and authentically productive environment. By thoughtful and selected use of these tools, employees should expect increased awareness, understanding, and confidence that comes from acquiring knowledge and practicing new behaviors—creating a social environment in which change is experienced as a positive stimulus for individual and organizational growth.

The 14 tools that follow are described in terms of Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use the Tool, Functions of the Tool (What It Can Do), How to Use the Tool, Model Approaches, Expected Outcomes, Using the Tool, and Behavior to Avoid.



Check-in

“Check-in” is an activity used in relatively small meetings, generally of fewer than 20 people. The aim of “Check-in” is to increase the quality of communication and cooperation among team members, enhancing feelings of recognition, caring, and intimacy.

“Check-in” is structured and more formalized than the ritualized activity of greeting and inquiring about the well-being of others. At the workplace and even in our homes, this process has been reduced in potency by repetition. Thus, “Good morning, how are you?” has come to mean only that, “I see you.”

“Check-in” is a time when we acknowledge the wholeness of the other person, their work life, their family life, their play life, their social life...and we SAY that we are interested in any part of their life that they would like to celebrate, mourn, poke fun at, take pride in, or simply comment on.

This is also a time when we allow this same opportunity for ourselves to STOP, “Check-in” internally, and share with others.



Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use

Although “Check-in” is introduced as a tool for community and organizational development, we are quick to point out its power to strengthen the family circle. As a matter of fact, “Check-in” may find its most important use in the home, where the rush and stress of working, caring for children, and managing the many challenges of a household constantly compete with having quality time or energy for simply BEING with the family. “Check-in” at home allows family members to take the time to share the important things claiming our energy.

Again, the first step in the “Check-in” process is to let ourselves realize what is going on within. This step should not be taken lightly, and for many of us, reading and sharing our own feelings will take patience and practice.



Functions

WHAT IT CAN DO

“Check-in” can change the environment of a group as people, over time, learn to SEE and acknowledge each other in increasing measures of quality and quantity. As you take this little bit of time for yourself and others, love, trust, and caring will increase.

The work of the day or agenda of the meeting will go better when we SEE each other as real human beings, with families, hobbies, troubles, victories, weaknesses, and strengths just like ourselves.



How to Use the Tool

It is very important that “Check-in” be viewed and shared as a voluntary activity. People are invited to “Check-in,” and if they choose not to participate, no sanction should be taken emotionally or otherwise. A good way to introduce “Check-in” is to offer it as an activity YOU want to experience for your own well-being before acknowledging your wish that others will also find the activity beneficial.

Some of the purposes of the “Check-in”



Release pent-up energy.



Bring the thoughts, feelings, and reality of others to the present.



Account for everyone’s moods, feelings, and attitudes.



Build connections, empathy, or rapport.



Acknowledge differences between work life and non-work life.



Create opportunities to value and celebrate the whole person.



Reduce confusion of work focus vs. other agendas.



Help build and maintain quality relationships.

Procedures of the “Check-in”

-  Voluntary participation.
-  Sharing significant events that have happened since last being together.
-  Lifting up feeling and affirming thinking.
-  Not interrupting, with the exception of questions for clarification.
-  Taking risks to be intimate, not sharing more than you want to.
-  Striving to be honest and authentic.

Model Approaches

-  Invite the group to participate in the “Check-in” process.
-  Briefly share the focus of “Check-in.”
-  Have everyone take turns sharing, either in a circle or at random.
-  When all who wish to participate have shared, move on.

Target a time limit, generally only a few minutes per person. Sometimes things happen that call for comforting, celebrating, or other responses. Be flexible. Remember that things that come up in “Check-in” can be followed up on later.

You are encouraged to ask for what you want, including confidentiality. “Check-in” is for the moment, not for future uses. No one should share the offerings of others that may, in any way, embarrass or besmirch the person.

Expected Outcomes

Team member will feel more comfortable with each other and tend to share their feelings, as well as their thoughts, as they proceed through the day. Individuals will be more likely to relate to each other as people rather than positions or roles.

Behavior to Add

Avoid coercing people to participate in any manner. Punishing someone for not participating violates the spirit of the tool. The objective is to make everyone feel safe to offer themselves as they choose. Be patient with people as they warm up to the “Check-in” process, and don’t “enforce” the rules with a heavy hand.

Closure

Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use

Closure is the company activity to “Check-in”. At the end of the meeting, one might call for Closure. This activity gives each person an opportunity to experience a sense of being finished.

Functions

WHAT IT CAN DO

Often the last experience you have at a meeting is the most lasting. Our evaluation of a meeting’s worth is likely influenced by how we feel leaving a meeting and if we are prepared for a transition to other experiences. Closure honors each participant in a meeting by providing an opportunity to offer and request Strokes, check out lingering paranoid fantasies, share resentments, and give self-Strokes. (More on this later.)

Expected Outcomes

People will leave the meeting with a sense of being finished, feeling ready to go on to another activity. Closure reduces the need for people to say after the meeting things they had wished to say during the meeting.

Behavior to Add

Try not to wait until the end of the meeting to bring up weighty, involved, and emotionally laden subjects.

How to Use the Tool

Closure is also completely voluntary. There is not an assumption that anything is wrong, that anyone is in need or has been holding back. Closure is simply an invitation to group members to take a moment to review the meeting, reflect on their participation, get in touch with their feelings, and determine if there are things left unsaid that they now wish to express.

Most often, people use Closure to offer Strokes to others for speaking out, sharing intimate experiences and feelings, playing a facilitating role in the meeting, or simply offering a good idea. Sometimes a person will have made a risky remark during the meeting and claim time in closure to be sure the remark was taken as it was intended.

At the end of the meeting, someone will say it is time for Closure, inviting group members to offer and request Strokes, check out lining paranoid fantasies, share resentments, and give self-Strokes. After a reasonable time, Closure is over and the meeting ends

Guidelines for Meeting and Working Together

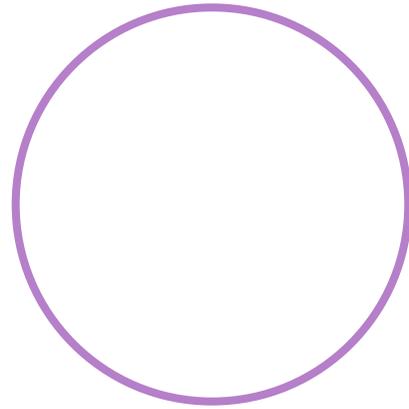
Guidelines, rules, procedures, and principles for group functioning are tools for curbing dysfunctional behavior and eliciting cooperative behavior. As people come together to discuss, plan, and work to improve the community, family, or workplace, “hot” topics such as class, politics, race, ethnicity, individual rights, religion, or sexual orientation often become the center of attention. These issues can provoke disunity, confusion, anger, frustration, and sadness.

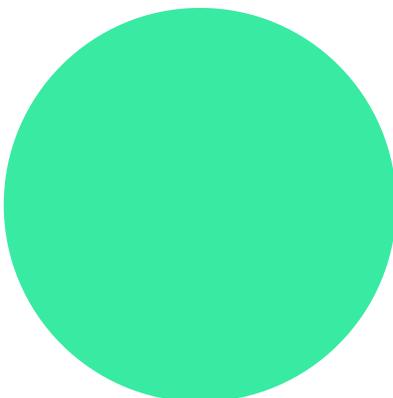
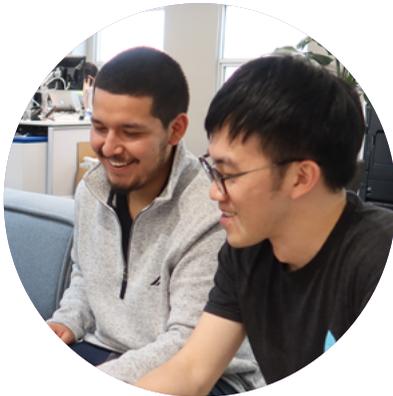


Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use

When attempts at improvement and change hit upon “hot” issues, it is useful to have social contracts for the kind of behavior conducive to exploring these issues. In discussions where it is desirable for people to be candid and take risks, it is necessary for the environment to be safe. Guidelines can significantly aid groups in exploring any issue, while encouraging and supporting the involvement of even the most timid members.

As with “Check-in,” Guidelines are powerful tools for improving communications in the home. Children respond positively to Guidelines which support and encourage them to become full partners and (as appropriate to their ages) in sharing in the development and protection of the family. The fairness and logic of Guidelines are especially attractive to children. On the other hand, it is extremely important that parents and other adults who have contracted to uphold the Guidelines do just that—uphold their end of the contract rigorously.





Functions

WHAT IT CAN DO

GUIDELINES MIGHT ENCOURAGE THE FOLLOWING BEHAVIORS:

-  Respecting the need and right of others to speak.
-  Sharing rather than hoarding and monopolizing speaking time.
-  Recognizing that it is OKAY to disagree.
-  Not attacking others for their thinking and feeling.
-  Not judging or imposing guilt, blame, or shame upon self or others.
-  Considering everyone's needs as valid and equal to their own.

With Guidelines in place, everyone is invited to assume responsibility for successful maintenance of standards of behavior. Working effectively and harmoniously in groups requires skills that must be learned. It is not a safe assumption, for example, that people who are good-hearted, educated, and committed to the workplace naturally work well in groups.

The process of envisioning the climate desired for problem solving, selecting, and talking through parameters that provide safety for everyone to participate, and deciding how Guidelines will be upheld is an educational experience. Therefore, as much emphasis must be placed on the process of establishing Guidelines as on the Guidelines themselves.



Expected Outcomes

Work will move forward with fewer conflicts and less confusion. People will want to be more involved because they will feel seen, heard, and affirmed. Difficult issues that deal with personal property, rights of individuals and families, allocation of scarce resources, public recognition, and information sharing will be handled with greater sensitivity and equity. When individuals are displeased with the way things are handled, Guidelines increase options for identifying affronts and seeking resolution.



Behavior to Add

Tools used with the wrong intentions can become weapons. When people fail to observe Guidelines, some may be tempted to use them to invite shame, to punish, and to belittle. Others might be tempted to force individuals to accept and observe Guidelines. Guidelines are intended to support the creation of safety, unity, and democracy. Efforts must be made to understand the spirit of Guidelines.



How to Use the Tool

Every effort should be made for Guidelines to be understood, appreciated, and accepted by everyone. Any person in the group can initiate discussions as to the benefits of having Guidelines for group behavior or for having Guidelines at all. As people come to see the value of parameters that encourage functional and curb dysfunctional behavior, they are likely to strive to support using Guidelines.

As essential as Guidelines are, rules for upholding them are just as important. From time to time, everyone is likely to slip and break one of the rules. How individuals are reminded and encouraged to adhere to the Guidelines must be established, as this, too, can be educational and bonding.

After Guidelines have been identified and there is a social contract to support them, it is a good idea to “publish” the statement. Share it in a newsletter, post it at meetings, and send copies to all team members.

The Strokes Economy

Strokes are defined as affirmations, appreciations, or acknowledgments. When we recognize another person by looking at, speaking to, or touching them, we are giving them a stroke.



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Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use

Sharing Strokes is the most fundamental interaction between human beings. In some psychotherapeutic circles, Strokes are called “the emotional fuel of life.” We speak to, listen to, talk with, touch, see, or ignore family members, coworkers, strangers, and friends throughout our days and our lives.

The quality and quantity of those Strokes or interactions—or how often Strokes are given and how good those Strokes feel—can be described as the “stroke economy” of the family, workplace, community, or society. A high stroke economy is one in which lots of Strokes are freely given and received, where people generally feel good, recognized, valued, loved, accepted, and needed. A low stroke economy is the opposite, where people feel isolated, unrecognized, unseen, unappreciated, and discounted.

As we come to understand the power and dynamics of giving and receiving Strokes, develops skills, and acquire freedom to manage our use of Strokes, we start to build powerful, vibrant, and nurturing communities. The Stroke Economy is at the very heart of our Buyerlink culture.

Strokes are part of virtually every human interaction, thereby defining the settings for the use of Strokes as the family, workplace, community, and even time alone. Giving Strokes to yourself is a fundamental part of using Strokes as tools.

Examine, explore, reflect upon, break apart, and get a deep understanding of the definition and categories of Strokes. Practice giving Strokes in small groups. Encourage discussion of negative unconditional Strokes but DO NOT practice offering them.

Discuss, offer examples, and practice the five ways of using Strokes.

How to Use the Tool

There are four categories of Strokes



Positive Unconditional
Positive Conditional
Negative Conditional
Negative Unconditional.

Giving or offering Strokes
Receiving or taking Strokes
Rejecting Strokes that we don't want
Asking for Strokes
Self-stroking.

There are five ways that Strokes can be used

These categories and ways of using Strokes are self-explanatory. Following are a few examples:

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POSITIVE UNCONDITIONAL

-  I love you.
-  You light up my life.
-  You are a wonderful person.
-  I love being around you.
-  You are a dear friend to me.

NEGATIVE UNCONDITIONAL

-  I hate you.
-  You should never have been born.
-  You will never amount to anything.
-  You are a loser.

POSITIVE CONDITIONAL

-  I love the way you approach problems.
-  You are the most dependable person.
-  Wow, your handwriting is beautiful.
-  I like the way you dress.
-  I like your new car.

NEGATIVE CONDITIONAL

-  You are never on time.
-  I don't like it when you interrupt me.
-  I hate it when you lie to me.
-  I don't like your taste in clothes.

Functions

WHAT IT CAN DO

Strokes dominate the culture of a group because they are the major vehicles that communicate to others our thinking and feelings for them and their thinking and feelings for us. A high stroke economy encourages and supports trust, cooperation, caring, effective communication, risk taking, loyalty, sacrifice for others, and numerous other qualities and characteristics necessary to build unified families and communities.

Observe that our communities are no longer homogenous, nor do we want them to be. Our 21st-century world is a diverse world, bringing both benefits and challenges. A high stroke economy helps individuals from diverse backgrounds overcome the challenges of understanding, appreciating, and embracing differences of class, race, age, gender, and ethnicity.

Unfortunately, our families of origin and society do not always adequately prepare us to give and receive Strokes freely and effectively. For Strokes to become real tools for development, we must discover the power of Strokes and develop, through practice, the skills necessary to effectively give and receive Strokes.

Expected Outcomes

Caring, love, patience, trust, and other positive qualities will increase, causing communications between people to improve. Productivity will increase as barriers are removed, and negative games will be replaced with direct, positive, and affirming transactions. Cooperation and collaboration will increase as people are attracted to each other and learn to enjoy each other's company.

Model Approaches

Stroking behavior is the very first lesson we learn as human beings and is deeply rooted in our “out of awareness” behavior. Altering this behavior is difficult, but also possible. The first step toward change is to bring out patterns for offering and receiving Strokes into awareness.

In a small group of three to six people, discuss the stroking patterns that each individual can recollect from their family of origin. Some questions might be:

-  How did mother/father (or primary caregiver) recognize or affirm you?
-  How did they stroke each other?
-  How was anger expressed in the family?
-  How were sadness and fear expressed?
-  Were Strokes given or received by women different from those given and received by men?
-  What did you learn to do and not do when receiving and giving Strokes?
-  Whose stroking patterns did you mostly acquire?
-  Reflecting on your earliest experiences of stroking, do you see patterns that are interesting, dysfunctional, empowering, saddening, scary, or anger provoking?

-  What patterns do you use presently? Do you see any parallels between these and the ones in our family of origin?
-  Do your present patterns of stroking serve you well?
-  What pattern, if any, do you want to change?

Identify and underscore observations, insights, and lessons learned from group discussions and practice. Discuss application of a high stroke economy to the team building process.

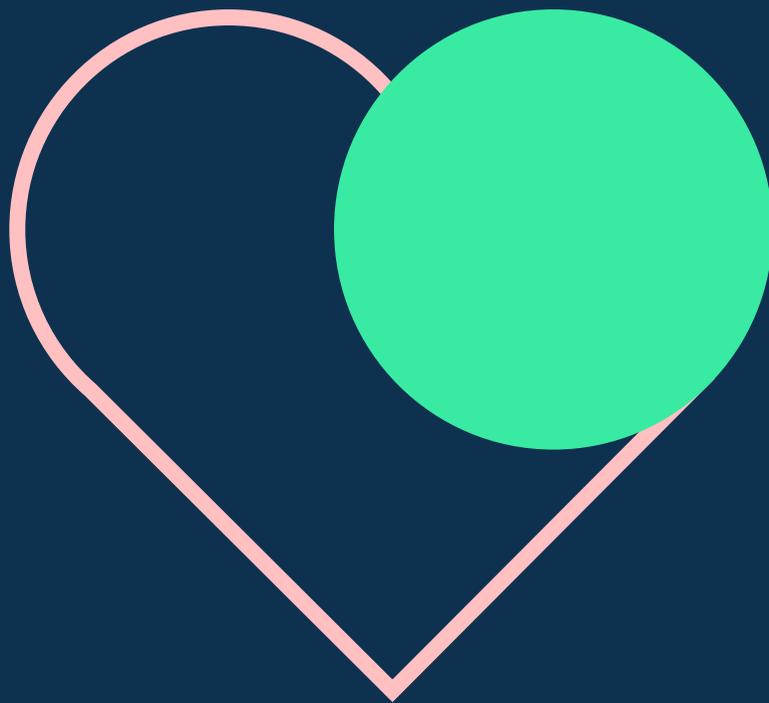
Behavior to Avoid

Avoid a “teaching” approach to exploration of this tool. Use a facilitating approach instead, because all of us need to identify our own dysfunctional stroking patterns and develop skills to offer and take in Strokes.

It is extremely important that safety be created and maintained for everyone. There must be no place for imposing guilt, blame, or shame upon others or yourself. The challenge of bringing lifelong thinking, feelings, and behavior into awareness and sharing them with others is sometimes very scary. Genuine love, understanding, and support need to surround this process of setting aside the old and trying on new behaviors.

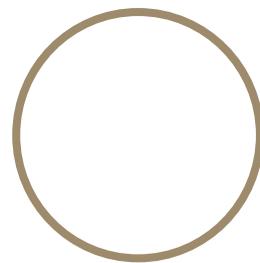
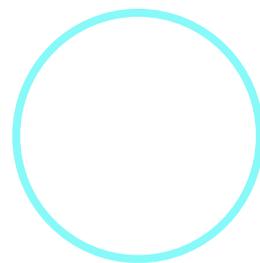
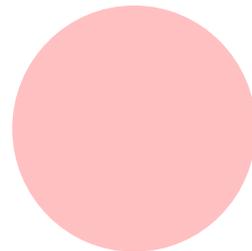
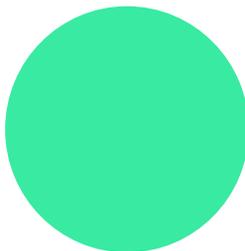
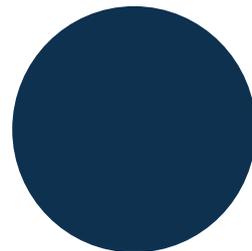
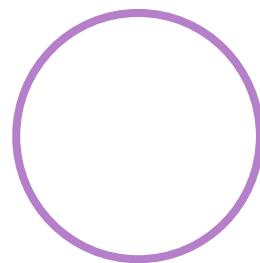
Vision

Exploring the spiritual and governing power of vision on community, family, and the workplace is the focus of this tool.



LET YOUR HEART BURN WITH LOVING KINDNESS FOR ALL WHO MAY CROSS YOUR PATH | **ABDU'L-BAHA**





Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use

Vision is a powerful source of energy. A community's vision informs its members and others about where it is going. The community's shared vision is a bond that encourages involvement, commitment, and even sacrifice to further the common good of fellow members. Vision, like many valuable resources, must be acquired and maintained through effort.

Every member of the community should have opportunities to participate in gatherings where their vision is shared, so a collective vision can emerge. The primary objective of the visioning process is to evolve a truly shared vision where people have similar images of what the community will look like and what must be done to get the community to reflect their vision.

In addition to using vision as a tool on the community level, it is equally valuable for families, committees, and organizations. Vision sessions can range from large formal organized sessions to small informal intimate ones. They can be held in public places like community centers, houses of worship, parks, and in homes. Most important is the necessity to create an inviting and safe atmosphere.

Sharing can be a pathway to building and expanding relationships by creating trust, caring, love, and intimacy. As these feelings increase, our motivation to unite with others and sacrifice for the community also increases. Spiritual qualities and characteristics like love, commitment, trust, forbearance, caring, and sacrifice create the firm foundation upon which united and powerful communities are built.

How to Use the Tool

The visioning process is voluntary. Anyone in the community can organize a session, given that the simplest and most basic reason for having one is for people to share their hearts and minds relative to the well-being and future of the community.

THE GUIDELINES FOR HAVING A SESSION MIGHT BE:

- Strive to share honestly.
- Strive to consciously listen to (to hear, to see) others.
- Respect and value the sharing of every person equally.
- Share time equally.
- Avoid interrupting people while people are sharing.
- Avoid analyzing and comparing one person's vision to others.
- Avoid attempting to editorialize, preach, teach, or edify others.
- Attempt to separate planning discussions from sharing of visions.
- By some means, record the essence of all visions that are offered.



Model Approaches

-  Invite individuals and groups to participate in a visioning session.
-  Share the purpose of the session and offer Guidelines.
-  Take turns sharing, either in a circle or randomly as individuals are motivated.



Expected Outcomes

Motivation and determination to solve community problems will increase. People will access their energies more powerfully and creatively, offering resources to make the community look and work like their vision. Hearing and sharing the vision of their friends, family members, and neighbors, people will find ways to work together more effectively to raise the quality of life for everyone.



Behavior to Avoid

A person's vision is precious. Care should be taken to avoid measuring, valuing, comparing, or analyzing a vision offered by another. The content of the vision is secondary to the spirit of the person offering their vision. The visioning process may offer people their first-ever opportunity to state what they believe, what they think, and what they want for the community and to be listened to, heard, respected, and appreciated for their opinions.

Identification of Barriers to Achieving Vision

This is the companion activity to visioning, by which you work to identify potential challenges.



Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use

Begin this process after the visioning session. It is not necessary that the two take place at the same time or location. However, it is preferable to have the sessions linked or close to each other.

Expected Outcomes

Reflection and discussion of barriers and vision might reveal a spiritual component to community building, as the necessity for spiritual resources as opposed to material resources may be separated and evaluated. This can help you prioritize your needs and assess your resources.

Functions

WHAT IT CAN DO

Identifying barriers to vision will often reveal hidden power and possibilities of vision. Reflection on barriers can generate non-traditional and innovative strategies to remove them. This process also aids the planning process by linking vision to removal of obstacles, and bringing more clarity to what can and must be done to build and strengthen communities.

Behavior to Avoid

One of the objectives of this process is for the community to gain a greater understanding of barriers that stand in the way of progress. People's thoughts, whether on target or not, add to the enlightenment of the community. Therefore, all ideas should be valued and received for their spirit in this process. The quality of the thoughts and ideas must not be used to label or define the person offering their best to the community.

How to Use the Tool

Like visioning, identifying barriers is a voluntary process. Usually, a barriers sessions is planned in conjunction with a visioning session and the rules are similar:

- Strive to share honestly.
- Strive to consciously listen to (to hear, to see) others.
- Respect and value the ideas of every person equally.
- Share time equally.
- Avoid interrupting people while they are sharing.
- Avoid attempting to expand, limit, or otherwise claim the ideas of others.
- Avoid analyzing and comparing one person's ideas to others.
- Avoid attempting to editorialize, preach, teach, or edify others.
- Attempt to separate planning discussions from identifying barriers to vision.
- By some means, record the essence of all barriers that are offered.

The Art and Craft of Group Facilitation

Group facilitation is different from teaching, training, or leading. The dictionary definition of facilitation is the process of making something easier. Ultimately, the community has the responsibility of developing its own potential.



TECHNOLOGY TEAM

Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use

The setting can be any place where people are working in groups to accomplish identified goals. There is a saying among a community of psychotherapists that states when someone comes in for help, “They brings both the problem and the solution.”

If we recognize that people have both the problem and the solution within, help will take the form of removing barriers blocking them from seeing the solution they hold. The helper will ask questions and listen for answers, increasing respect for those seeking help and treating them as a partner in creating change.

The facilitation process of “making the work easier” is guided by our assumption that the community has both strength and capacity. The facilitator becomes a partner, performing functions that support that community and aid the development process.

Functions

WHAT IT CAN DO

Because the facilitator will focus on the process (how things are done) and not the product (the outcome), he or she will listen to the outer and inner meaning of communications and help the group hear each member. Given that some individuals are naturally more or less talkative than others, the facilitator can help the group regulate its conversation so all members can be heard, while helping the group use its time wisely.

How to Use the Tool

Facilitation is a set of skills and behaviors—primarily to be sensitive and manage the process of getting from one step to the next so the group can concentrate more on achieving its goals. Often, the facilitator will be given the responsibility of setting and maintaining the climate for discussion and providing protection and support for individual members. One way the facilitator can create safety is to maintain focus on the work of the group and not the personalities in the group. The clash of ideas is necessary, expected, and healthy, but the clash of personalities is dysfunctional and undesirable.

Model Approaches

 Before beginning, discuss goals and expectations and the role of the facilitator.

 Make clarifying remarks that anchor discussion.

 Stroke behavior that supports the rules of the group.

 Be patient.

 Allow your shared honest feelings to be a tool.

 Make eye contact.

 Be consistent and trustworthy. Treat all people and situations with equity.

 Maintain order by inviting the group to observe its stated rules.

 Move the discussion forward by observing and celebrating milestones.

 Maintain order by inviting the group to observe its stated rules.

 Move the discussion forward by observing and celebrating milestones.

 Help the group identify conflicts and options relative to sharing time.

 Intervene in personality conflicts by stroking the intentions, perspectives, needs, or orientations of both parties and helping them focus on the issue at hand.

 Focus on the difference of thought, styles, values, expectations, and needs as valid, valuable, and necessary differences that diversity brings.

 Ask participants to use language that affirms the individuality of ethnic or social groups.

 Ask participants to use language that personalizes, rather than universalizes, their needs and wishes.



Expected Outcomes

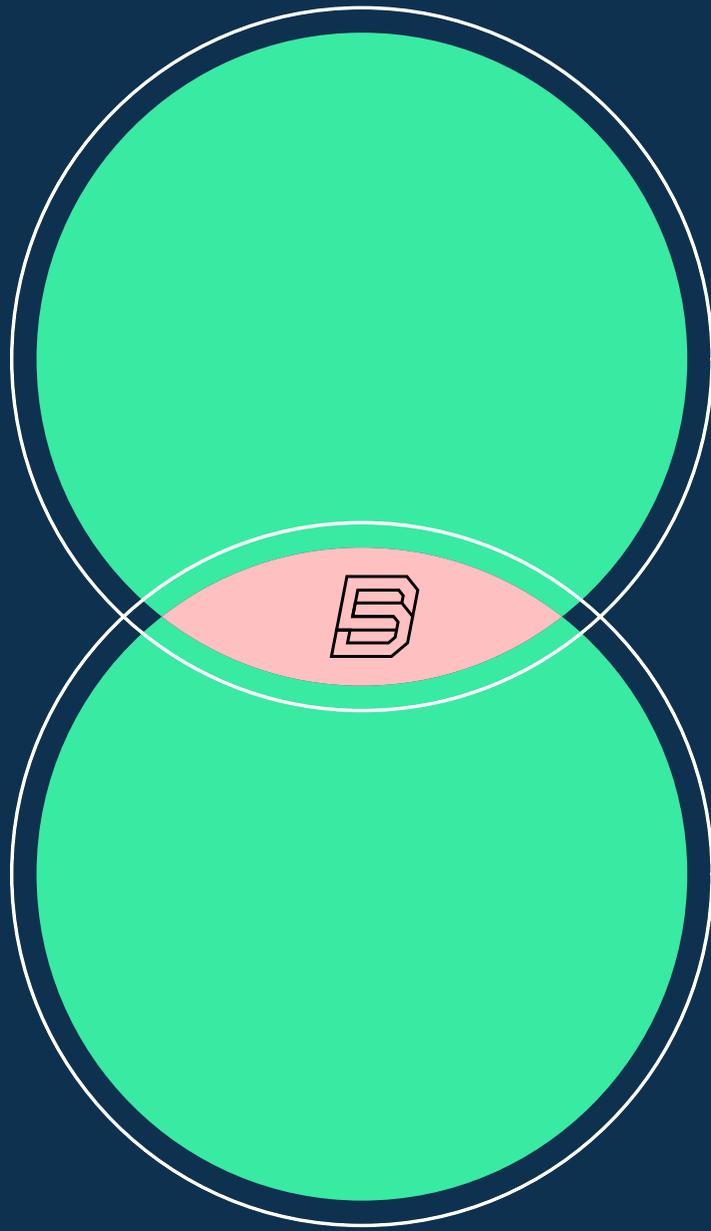
People tend to take more ownership of the collective work and the outcome of their individual efforts. Facilitated support of community efforts stress the fact that the group retains responsibility for the work, while the facilitator is primarily responsible for the process.

Behavior to Avoid

-  Taking sides.
-  Focusing on differences rather than the issues.
-  Punishing, shaming, embarrassing, and putting down people or their ideas.
-  Discounting the thinking and feelings others.

Contracting for Protection

Use this tool to find protection where fear immobilizes or alters appropriate behavior.

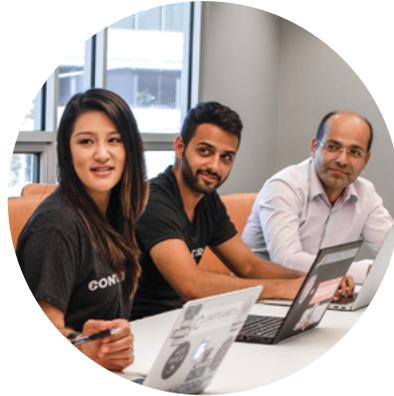


INNOVATION

INTENTION

Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use

Generally, the tool is used in a private setting with only the two people present. When confrontations take place, it is wise not to create conditions where you or the other person might “lose face.” Confidentiality is also important. Emotions will run high, and the setting should not be a barrier to free expressions of feelings.



How to Use the Tool

- Tell the person you have some concerns, and ask if they are willing to listen.
- Share your explicit fears, not what is wrong with the other person.
- Share the behavior you want in place of the behavior that scares you.
- Negotiate for the behavior and outcomes you desire.

Functions

WHAT IT CAN DO

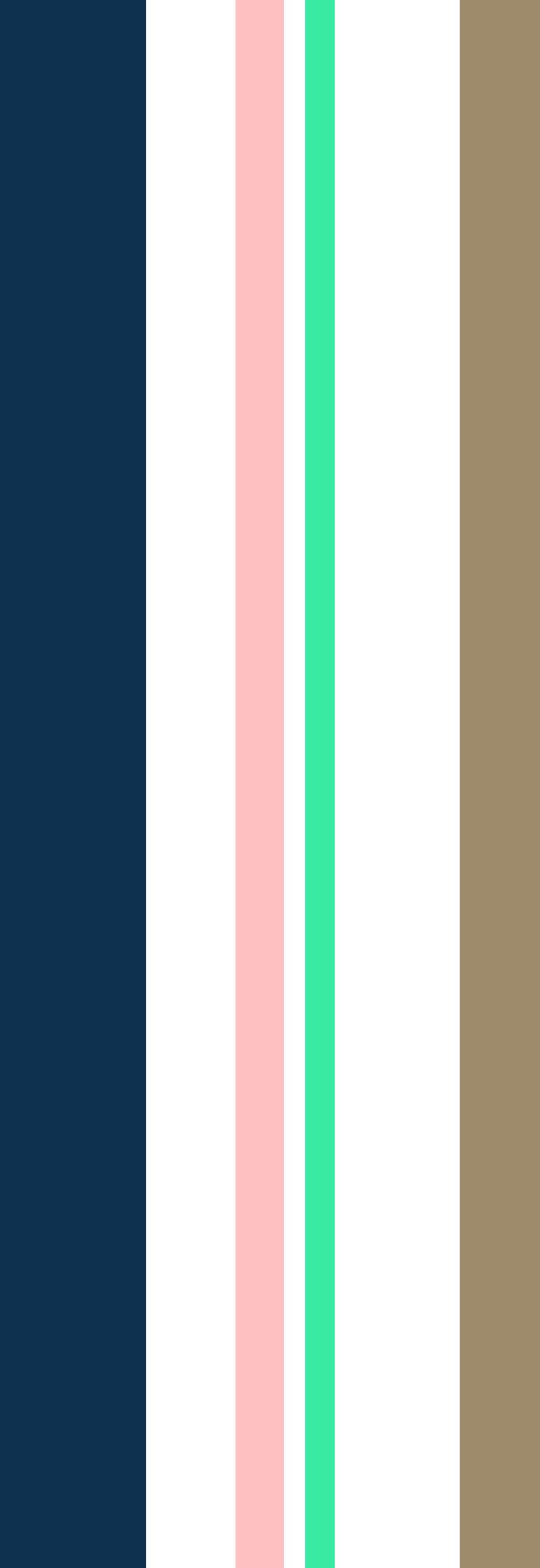
From time to time, we all find ourselves in a position of needing and wanting to confront someone. That person may be a family member, coworker, or neighbor. We are stopped by our fear of their behavior or the outcome, likely based on past experiences. Our dilemma is greatest when we fear the destruction of a relationship.

People often live under this intimidation for years, never getting up the courage or developing the skills to speak up on their own behalf or on the behalf of a loved one.

Where there is fear, there is a need for protection. When faced with fear, one option is to remove the source of it. This option has limited utility when our fear is a spouse's anger, son's temper tantrums, friend's withdrawal, or mother's heartbreak.

THE GUIDELINES FOR HAVING A SESSION MIGHT BE:

- First, we must let ourselves know that we are afraid. If we have been taught not to show or experience fear, this will be a challenge.
- Secondly, we must be able to say clearly what we are afraid of.
- Third, we must identify what will give us protection. What conditions or assurances need to exist so we no longer feel fear?
- Fourth, we must learn to negotiate for what we want in place of the behavior or circumstance we do not want.



Expected Outcomes

You will feel relief and resolution. The other person does not have to cooperate in order for you to experience these feelings. You will have done all you can and should do to remove impediments and improve the relationship. When the other person joins you in the process of hearing and being heard, caring, respect, intimacy, and love will grow and communications will improve.

Behavior to Avoid

-  Accusing, blaming, or shaming the other person.
-  Inviting the other person to take responsibility for your feelings. You are responsible for your own responses, reactions, and feelings relative to the behavior of others.
-  Hiding and mislabeling your feelings.
-  Incorrectly identifying or misrepresenting your fears.

The Cooperative Mode

The basic premise of the Cooperative Mode is that “there is enough.” This integrated set of behaviors to avoid and behaviors to adopt enhances communications and increases intimacy. In our society, where commodities are presumed to be scarce, it is no wonder that—even in our relationships—competition is more prevalent than cooperation. When commodities are assumed to be plentiful, there is no need for competition.

The major commodities in relationships are time, energy, and Strokes. Since we all have the same amount of time, 24 hours each day, the only question is how we are going to use our time to be with each other at any given point in our relationship. The other commodity is Strokes, which can be expressed both verbally and physically.

The second premise of cooperative relationships is giving equal importance to the needs of each person. That means you don’t have to prioritize your needs, because the assumption is they can be met.



Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use

The Cooperative Mode is a set of tools used in community development and in family settings. It is very easy to miss the power of the Cooperative Mode, so we are encouraged to make a substantial investment in unlocking the potential of this model for governing our interactions.

Functions

WHAT IT CAN DO

The Cooperative Mode is an alternative to competitive modes of group interaction. Because it is cooperative, it cannot be successfully imposed on individuals or on a group. Rather, it must be chosen. It is best presented as a strategy to improve the quality of life and interactions between individuals and groups.

The Cooperative Mode is a powerful instrument for change, raising self-esteem, enhancing communication, and generally improving the quality of human interactions of those who choose to learn and apply the tools.

Expected Outcomes

Using the Cooperative Mode strengthens relationships and empowers individuals. Effective communications are greatly increased, as is cooperation between people who are different. Conflict is reduced as people use tools that bring illumination to its sources and strategies to resolve it.

Behavior to Avoid

The Cooperative mode offers tremendous insights to human behavior. An interactive process of studying and practicing its elements will produce intimate information about the feelings, experiences, and worldviews of others. Any behavior that violates, blemishes, discounts, belittles, or defines others must be avoided. Strong communities are built on foundations of honor, trust, caring, and love shared among every member. Avoid using tools as weapons.

How to Use the Tool

The Cooperative Mode is a combination of eight tools, each building upon the power of the others to create positive patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Each element requires study and practice for the potential of this tool to be fully appreciated.

NO POWER PLAYS

A power play is attempting to force someone to do something they don't want to do, or are not ready to do, whether subtly or openly.

NO RESCUES

A rescue is doing something for someone which they can do for themselves, doing something without being asked, or doing more than one's share.

NO SECRETS OR LIES

Defined as withholding or misrepresenting one's feelings, motives, or position. This discredits the intuition of others who may have guessed the truth of the situation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality offers protection that one can express one's real feelings without the worry they will be used against them in the future.

GIVING OF STROKES

Strokes are defined as affirmations, appreciations, or acknowledgments. When we recognize another person by looking at, speaking to, or touching them, we are giving them a stroke.

CHECKING OUT PARANOID FANTASIES

Checking out a paranoid fantasy is the process of identifying our suspicions about the behavior or intentions of others and checking these out before resorting to anger, fear, or sadness.

OFFERING RESENTMENTS

Offering resentments is a way of releasing negative feeling. It is the first step in restoring a relationship to a state of mutual love, caring, and trust. The individual to whom the resentments are being offered must agree to hear them and understand that a response is optional.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability means being responsible for one's actions. If you become aware of a behavior that negatively impacts other, voluntarily name and acknowledge it, explain the reason for it, and commit to an alternative course of action in the future.

Dynamics of Inherent Superiority and Inherent Inferiority

The notion that some people are inherently superior while others are inherently inferior is the foundation of prejudice and oppression. Society is divided along many lines, including race, class, gender, age, and others. From these divisions come messages that convey our assigned “place” in society. Messages arising out of these divisions tell us not only what groups we are members of (rich or poor, old or young, Christian or other), but also which group is better.

For example, they may tell us that it’s better to be young than old, that it’s better to be a doctor than a nurse, that it’s better to be a man than a woman. Notions of inherent superiority and inherent inferiority impact the process of building communities and bring our unexamined thinking, feeling, and behavior into our meetings. Our prejudices contaminate communications with neighbors, skew our judgment and decision-making, and limit our ability to develop intimate relationships with those who are different from us.

This tool can help us understand these dynamics and neutralize their divisive impact. We will look at the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are generated as a result of this system and consider the effect they have on our community and our work.



Internalized oppression is a response to external oppression that is based on the notion of inherent superiority. When people are bombarded with gross mistreatment over a long period of time, they begin to internalize the hurtful behavior and turn upon themselves, their family members, and other people of their group.

This tool will provide an opportunity to get the facts, think about systems, look at our own thinking and feelings, and make new decisions about what bias is and what it does. By consciously focusing on internalized oppression and the systems that create it, we are invited to bring our own negative messages into awareness and begin the process of altering them.



Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use

Understanding the influence that notions of inherent superiority and inferiority have on the way people think, feel, and behave—and using skills to counter their impact—are tools we can use in all areas of our social life. These tools are essential in building and strengthening self-esteem, leadership, and economic viability.



Functions

WHAT IT CAN DO

This process will help us understand the impact and consequences of this system on individuals, communities, and society as a whole. With increased understanding, we can reexamine our methods of developing our community.



How to Use the Tool

These tools are used first to deepen our knowledge and change our own attitudes toward others. From that position, we become advocates for different ways to recognize, affirm, and celebrate the humanness of people who are ethnically, religiously, or economically different from us.



Model Approaches

For many people, exploration of the dynamics of prejudice and bias is best done from a concrete, rather than a theoretical perspective.

Studying the ways society treats people reveals that we not only observe the obvious differences, but we consistently place high value on some groups and low value on others. Most of us have learned our roles and simply go through life without challenging these patterns, even when we are targeted for denial of rights and opportunities.

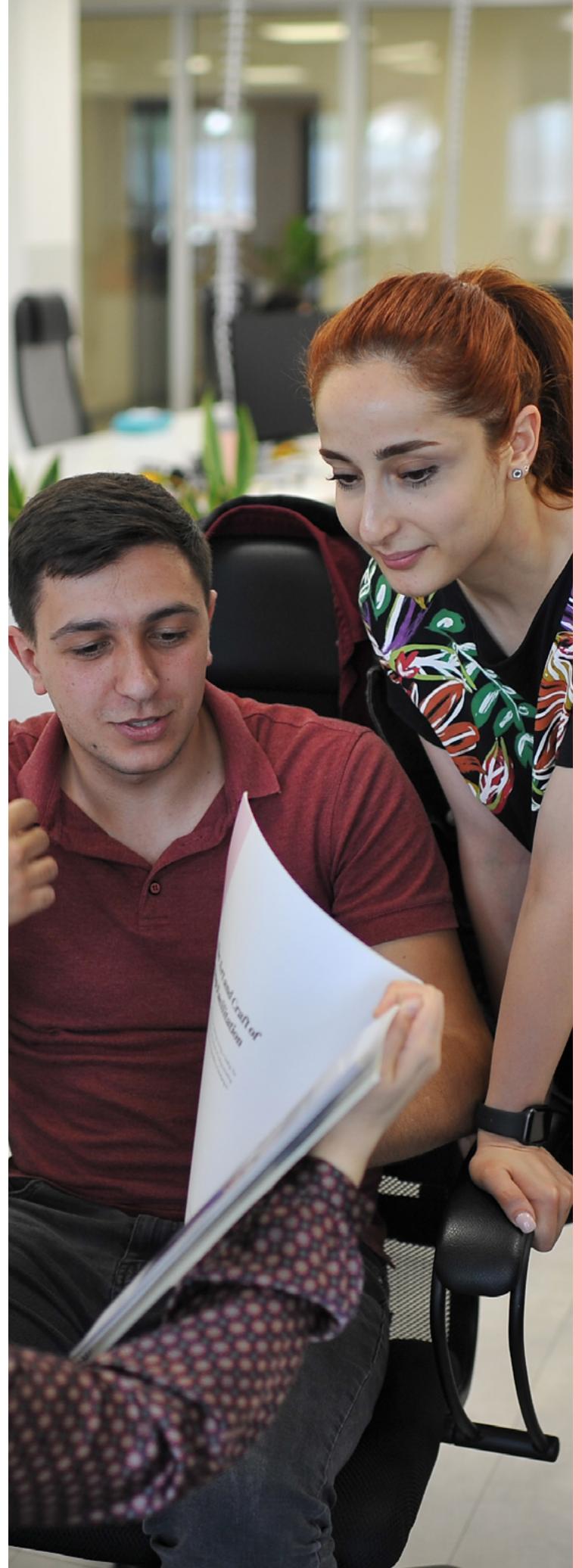
This assumption divides people, saps our energy, clouds our vision, skews our worldview, and shields us from a very profound truth—that we are one with our neighbors, and our own well-being and the well-being of communities depend upon our embracing this truth.

Expected Outcomes

As we learn more about the thinking, feelings, and behavior of people who are different from us, we are likely to become more understanding, patient, trusting, and accepting of them. As ignorance, suspicion, and prejudice are replaced with facts, understanding, and love, working with our neighbors will become more desirable and cooperation will increase. Direction setting and decision making at the community level will improve as differences are recognized, understood, and appreciated.

Behavior to Avoid

Avoid pretending that differences don't exist or don't matter or don't impact our community and our world.



Dynamics of Oppression and Internalized Oppression

Oppressive thinking, feelings, and behavior are insidious and can seep into intimate and personal interactions. Oppression and internalized oppression can corrupt the culture of families, the workplace, and fundamental institutions in the community.

Exploration of oppression and internalized oppression provides an opportunity to get the facts, think about systems, examine our own thinking and feelings, and make new decisions about bias and prejudice, as well as their consequences.



YEREVAN, ARMENIA



Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use

Safety is the most important element of learning about internalized oppression and practicing new behavior. All participants come to the discussion from where they are, not from where they ought to be. We cannot help who we are. If people don't feel safe being who they are, they cannot be expected to participate freely. There is no legitimate place for guilt, blame, or shame about one's own feelings or one's participation in the oppressive systems. By recognizing that we are all victimized, we can challenge ourselves and others in a way that fosters and supports the dignity and self-esteem of all people.

Expected Outcomes

This wonderful, exciting experience can also be very draining and scary, because it invites participants to share from a place of great vulnerability. The rewards, however, are immense. We will gain an understanding of how oppression impacts our efforts to build strong communities. We will explore, create, and develop support for healing old and current hurts and mistreatments. We will share knowledge and experiences with members of our group and educate others.

Functions

WHAT IT CAN DO

Oppression and internalized oppression are woven throughout society and our communities. Although we see and live with discrimination of targeted groups and privileges received by other groups, we seldom explore the dynamics of these conditions.

The tools we will master and develop will enable us to clarify our values, set lofty yet realistic goals, and free up energy that is bound by fear, guilt, shame, anger, and ignorance. With better skills, more knowledge, and increased motivation, we can effectively remove the lines that separates groups in the community.

How to Use the Tool

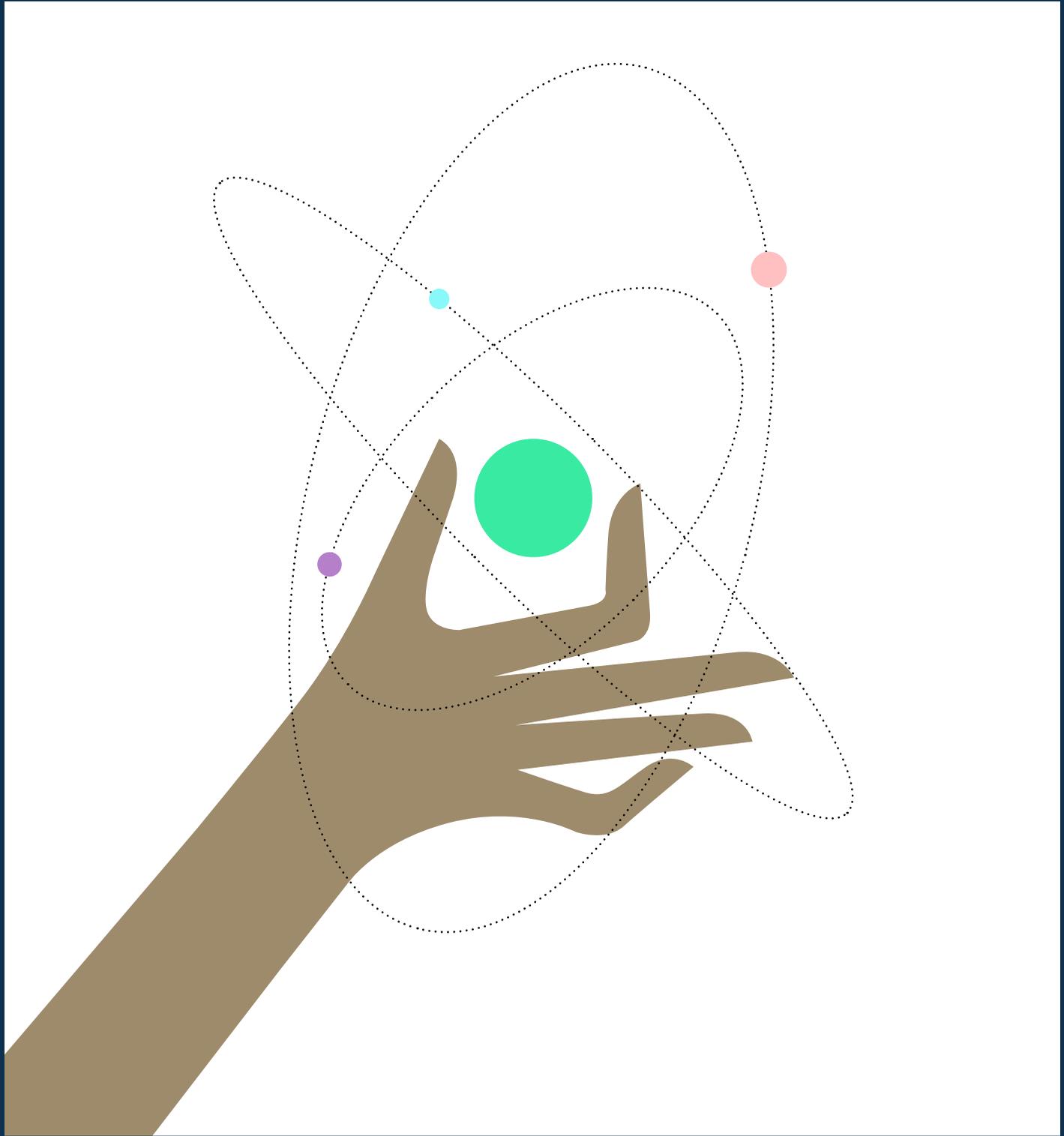
As with most of our tools, we use them to change our own lives first. We interact with others differently. We see and value the humanity in ourselves and others more clearly. As we strive to be better neighbors and better people, we invite others to support us and join us, creating the cement that will become the foundation for stronger communities.

Feeling as Messengers

We use this tool to become emotionally literate, examining the politics of feeling and thinking. Every culture defines acceptable and unacceptable male and female roles and behaviors. With few exceptions, males dictate and maintain both female and male roles through rewards and punishments. It is not surprising, then, that male-oriented thinking, feeling, and behaviors are valued above female-oriented thinking, feeling, and behaviors.

For example, ways of behaving that we attribute to women—such as too emotional, too sensitive, illogical, weak, inwardly oriented, and people oriented—if not explicitly looked down upon are certainly valued less than those more often attributed to males. On the other hand, qualities attributed to males—such as being logical, straightforward, strong, outwardly oriented, task oriented, adventurous, or curious—are qualities society values and rewards.

For our study of this tool, we examine the consequences of discrimination against women in the process of building communities. An underlying assumption of every aspect of community building is that discrimination against any group is antithetical to processes.



CLOSE YOUR EYES TO RACIAL DIFFERENCES, AND WELCOME ALL WITH THE LIGHT OF ONENESS | BAHĀ'U'LLĀH



Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use

Identifying and expressing feelings are among the most fundamental and earliest lessons we learn as human beings. If these lessons are dysfunctional and don't serve us well in later life, they are difficult to unlearn and replace with more useful behaviors and attitudes. Settings in which we examine our patterns of feeling and explore alternative approaches must be safe.

The journey should be undertaken and navigated by the individual. Yet, we need not travel alone. Understanding, love, caring, and support can greatly assist us to overcome rough or scary spots on our journey. Our family and our community are most often the first resources toward which we turn. Sometimes family members are too deeply enmeshed in our patterns to be objective. The community, not limited by historic connections with us, will have people who can offer support for our journey to fully embrace and appropriately use all of our feelings.



How to Use the Tool

When we are free to read our own feelings and experience the feelings of others, we are encouraged to receive the messages our feelings are sending to us and be guided to take appropriate action.

FEELING

scared

MESSAGE

“I am in danger! I need protection and support.”

FEELING

mad

MESSAGE

“I have been violated! I need to re-establish my boundaries.”

FEELING

sad

MESSAGE

“I am experiencing or anticipating a loss... I need space and support to grieve and let go.”

FEELING

glad

MESSAGE

“Things are going well, keep on keepin’ on.”

Functions

WHAT IT CAN DO

Enabling us to separate feelings from thinking is an important value of this tool. Another value is that of separating and categorizing our feelings.

One school of thought suggests there are four “families” of feelings:



Glad



Sad



Scared, and



Mad.

Our feelings help us handle conflict, change, and transition. When we can't express them, we might see or experience ourselves as emotionally illiterate. The emotional literacy of females and males is not the same. As females and males, our lessons about valuing and acting out feelings are very different.

Generally speaking, society gives women permission to exhibit Scared, Sad, and Glad, with little permission to express Mad. Men, on the other hand, are given permission to express Mad and less support to express Scared, Sad, and to some extent, Glad. When conflict is associated with our feelings, it plays out as another emotion. For example, when a male can't express Sad or Scared feelings, he may



show them as Mad, and when a female can't express Mad, she may show her feelings as Sad.

Becoming fully emotionally literate ought to be our goal. When we are free of dysfunctional family and gender messages, we are able to express all of our feelings and not fear the full expression of feelings of others.

Expected Outcomes

Men and women don't share the same emotional language. As we develop with the language of feelings, not only will communication between males and females improve, but communication between all groups and at every level will improve. Hearing and understanding each other more fully impacts decision-making and encourages collaboration. Trust is increased when we feel that we know the other person. When we understand the thinking and feelings of others and unknowns are reduced, little is left to create paranoid fantasies.

Behavior to Avoid

Avoid attempting to direct or manage the journey of others while ignoring your own.

Virtues and Values

The virtues and values component helps participants appreciate the notion that learning how to BE different is preferred to learning how to ACT differently. In other words, the Genesis process is about fundamental change—beginning with the individual, moving to the family and community, and on to political entities and beyond.

This tool offers us an opportunity to examine virtues and values and make connections with our personal life mission and the mission of Buyerlink. In a safe and protected environment, team members may choose to try on new ways of thinking, feeling, and behavior. We are all on a journey of becoming better human beings, and we can and should find ways to help and not hurt each other along our individual paths of becoming.



HALLOWEEN DAY



Settings in Which to Examine and/or Use the Tool

The virtues and values component is not site-specific. It can take place anywhere that is comfortable, convenient, and free of noise and other distractions. A site where chairs can be freely moved and where paper can be taped to the walls is an important consideration. Additionally, a site without interruption and where no one will see or hear activities and conversations is important.

Functions

WHAT IT CAN DO

Participants will identify specific values, virtues, and characteristics they want to develop, and strive to create support systems that will help them to achieve their personal goals and to fulfill their desired roles in the community. You should emerge with written statements that will help guide your personal growth.

Have participants brainstorm a list of 35 or more qualities and values of a good leader. Invite them to identify four to five qualities they already possess and three or four they would like to acquire. In small groups, invite people to share their selections and choices. Encourage them to select a quality from the brainstorm list and give strokes to others who exhibit that quality. Invite them to ask for specific and tangible examples of how they can develop the qualities they desire.



The Individual Growth Plan

The Individual Growth Plan, or IGP, is a statement developed by an individual which identifies their vision, values, goals, and the direction of their work and personal lives, as well as the approaches, methods, and strategies they will use to achieve their goals within one to five years.

The process is an opportunity for people to get in touch with themselves and to create a plan of action for their lives in three key areas—personal, professional, and spiritual. It is also an opportunity to set some goals that excite and energize.

IGPs are useful in the workplace setting because significant benefits result when the values and vision of the individual are aligned with those of the organization. Employees will be more motivated, energized, and fulfilled, more productive, and happier.



Expected Outcomes

Identify and document key values, vision, and attainable goals for the spiritual, social, and professional areas of their lives.

Experience feelings of empowerment as they assume more responsibility for their lives and their futures.



Identify and document barriers to achieving their goals, as well as support needed to achieve them.



Understand and appreciate the dynamics of documenting a vision for their own growth and development.



Identify feelings of sadness, fear, and anger that may sabotage realizing their potential, as well as their goals.

Preparing to Use the Tool

Persons entering the IGP process should be basically informed of what will take place and some of the expected outcomes and benefits for them, as well as some of the challenges the process might offer. Keep it simple, keep it basic, and do not misrepresent any aspect of the IGP process.

A minimum of one and half hours should be set aside for a session that involves five or fewer people. Because the IGP process can be very challenging to many people, the sessions can be more involved and take longer to complete. The primary objective is not simply finishing the session and completing the IGP form, but rather for participants to become aware of life goal and redirect themselves towards achieving them.

Challenges of the IGP Process

As participants examine opportunities lost, dreams set aside, and wishes discounted, the process can become very emotional. As they come to realize they can assume greater responsibility for their lives and their dreams, and also to see the fears and behaviors that sabotage them, deeply held and long suppressed emotions might emerge. The facilitator's challenge is to support the participant as they experience the full range of their feelings and not shut down the process because of their inability to witness the struggles of participants.

Putting the IGP into Action

The facilitator will lead the session by introducing the form and the activities. They will establish times for each part of the exercise, and, most importantly, create a fun, energetic, and unified environment for the session.

Model Approaches

■ Talk about the objectives of the IGP process for the individual and the organization. Give an overview of the steps in the process and encourage participants to expect and embrace their feelings and thinking as valuable gifts and tools to shape their growth.

■ Share Guidelines for Group Behavior and contract for behavior for the session.

■ Give participants time to fill out the IGP form. Offer the option to go to a place that offers solitude or privacy as necessary. Set a time for them to return to the group.

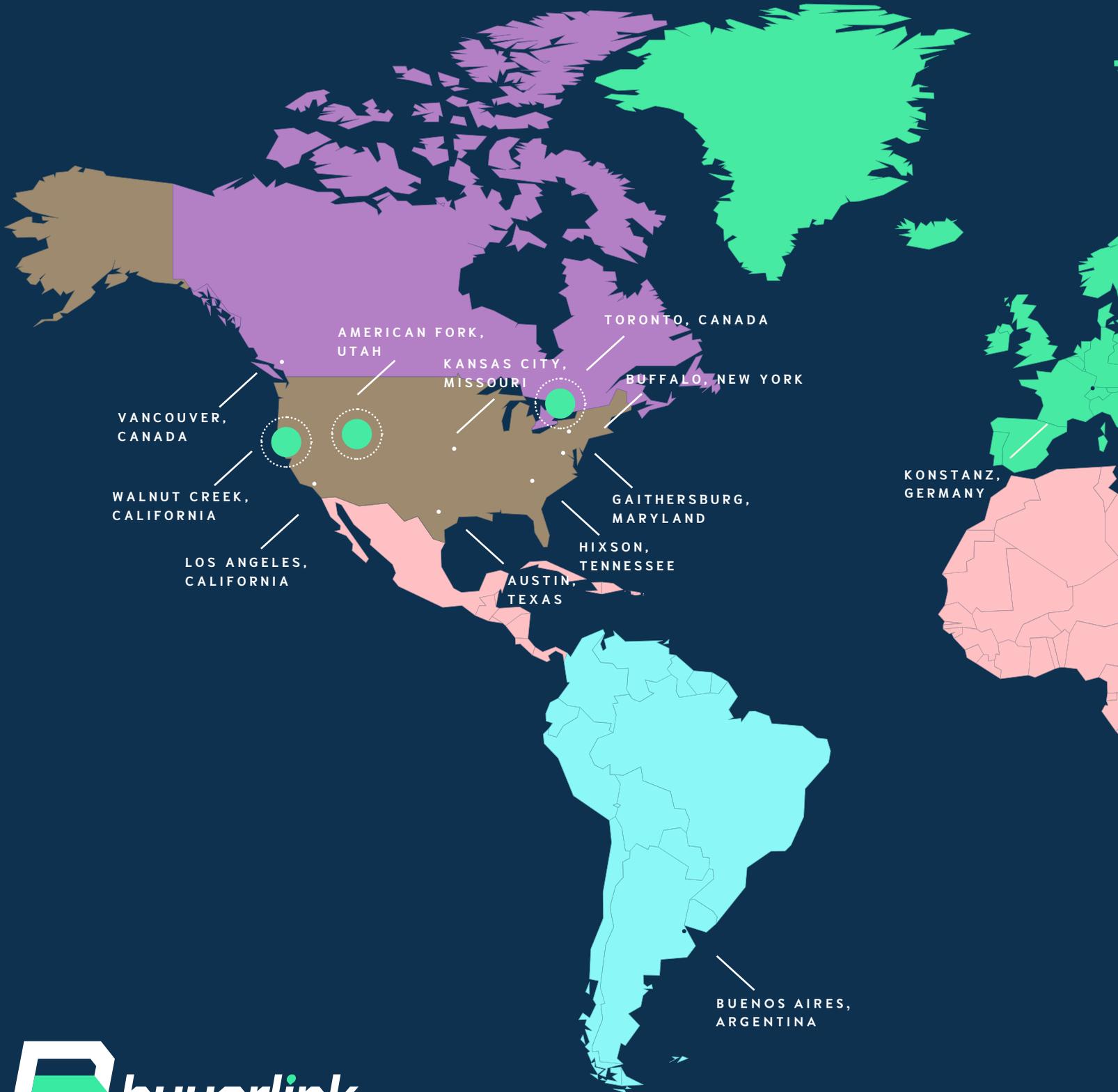
■ Establish the rules for feedback: questions for clarifications only, offering strokes only after an individual agrees to receive them, and responding to specific requests for support.

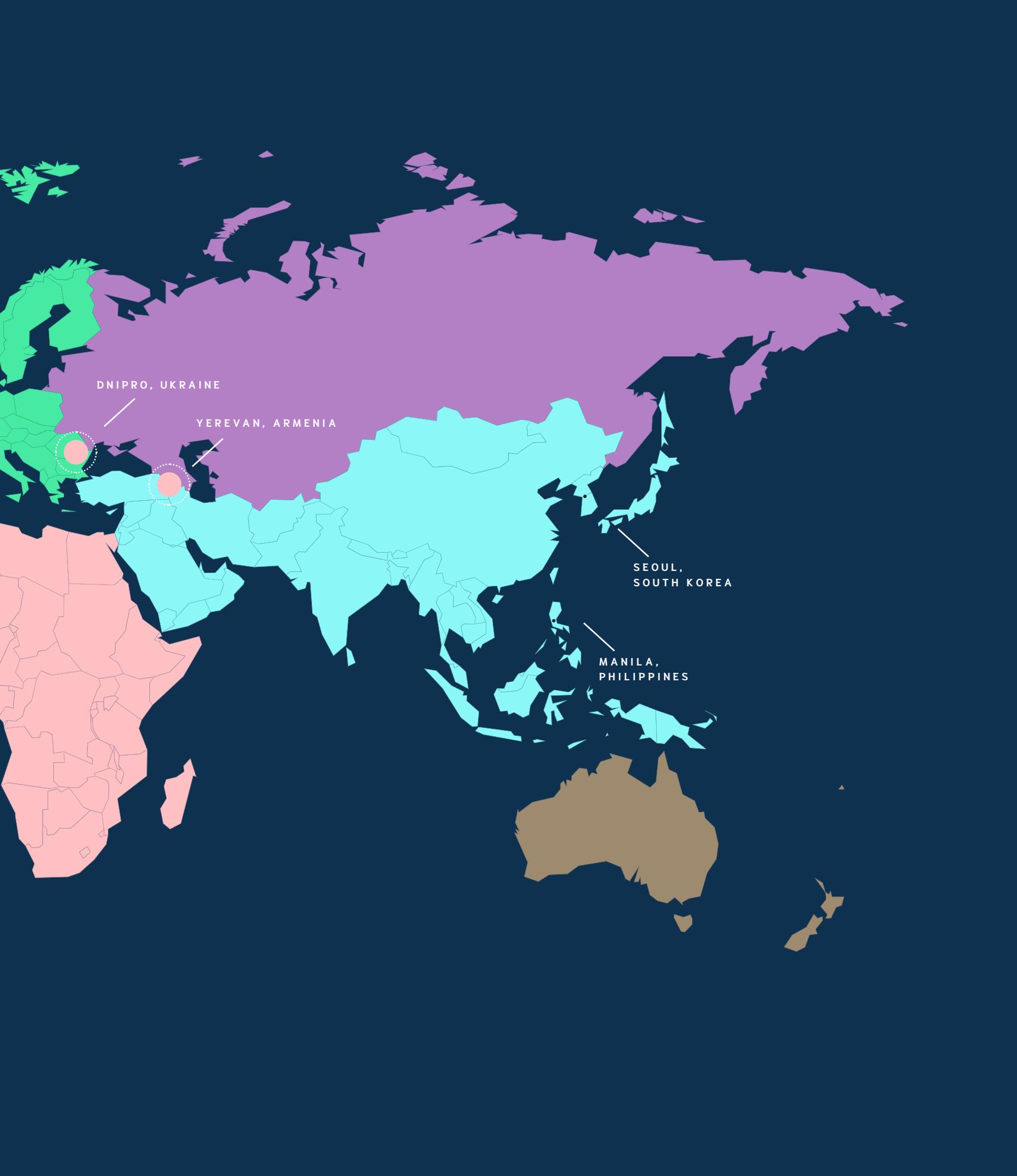
■ Support each participant through completion of the IGP form.

■ Facilitate the Closure process.

Following Up

Establish times when individuals will check in about their IGP (1 week, 1 month, 6 months). Identify people who participants can call on to talk through unexamined feelings. Encourage and facilitate communications between participants as a way to gain support and keep their dreams and goals alive.





DNIPRO, UKRAINE

YEREVAN, ARMENIA

SEOUL,
SOUTH KOREA

MANILA,
PHILIPPINES

— sf bay area

— american fork

— vancouver

yerevan

toronto

dnipro