



### **What is The Embodiment Circle?**

A network of accessible face-to-face groups to connect and support those passionate about embodiment. Each group may be called a “circle”, “lab”, “cell” or something else.

### **What is the purpose of embodiment circles?**

Embodied connection and learning. Some groups may also have some focus on mutual business support for embodiment professionals.

- Connection: to build a sense of togetherness between (often isolated) - practitioners of all the different embodied arts. To build community
- Learning: circles are dedicated to growth and embodied education, and make this accessible at a low cost
- Mutual business benefit: through offers, advice and referrals it helps members make their work more successful and sustainable. Some groups may explicitly call themselves a “professional” group or label some circles as such, while others may just include a bit of this

Other activities such as activism and healing are not the goals of circles, but may happen in anyway that does not interfere with the primary purpose of the group organically. Groups have no other purpose other than embodiment, and in having no sectarian, political or religious affiliations, are open to all.

### **Vision**

The vision of The Embodiment Circle is a more embodied world. We believe that a more embodied world is a wiser and a kinder world.

### **Guidelines - The Principles of The Embodiment Circle**

These are the guiding principles of The Circle. There are however no hard rules and all are open to interpretation by groups.

1. **Principles before personalities and provincial practices.** There is great diversity between circles, and all are roughly aligned these core principles. Critically, no single person or practice can dominate a circle. Leaders are temporary and no embodiment style or clique may take over.
2. **One primary purpose.** Groups have a clear purpose: embodied connection and learning. Embodied learning and connection above ego, healing and politics. Circles are not therapy, healing, religion, a protest group, etc.
3. **Co-creative, egalitarian and democratic.** The overall ethos of circles is non-hierarchical and egalitarian. Local circle practicalities are voted on by group members and conveners vote on wider issues at the annual gathering. Discussion and voting on the group happens occasionally separate from the circle itself, e.g. before or after them (not continuously in them). People getting involved, taking responsibility (some circles have a “action not complaining” and “those who do, lead” guidelines) and members developing a sense of “ownership” is encouraged.

4. **Ethical.** Circles do no harm and serve those in them. Consent - all activities can be opted out of/ are chosen, transparency (how the group is run is not secret), and confidentiality are three core ethical principles. "Respect not drama" is a good overall intention some have. Circles certainly do not have to be overly sensitive or politically correct however, and humour is a sign of health! There is no "policing" of Circles and they are self-governing
5. **Accessible.** Making embodiment accessible to all is a key ethos in circles and this principle underlies others like the non-profit one. Groups may have specialist focuses such as being for embodiment professionals, LGBTQ+, or "child friendly" (though never have a primary embodied style); but they are all open to all sincere non-disruptive people interested in embodiment. Avoiding more "new-age" presenters, venues and language is often also helpful for making groups accessible, and while each group finds its own line, anything to do with esoterica, The Secret, energy healing and quantum physics may be approached with scepticism. "No unicorns, rainbows or dolphins" is a catch-phrase of some groups!
6. **Boundaried.** Circles respect boundaries of time, expertise, dual relationships etc. Being egalitarian doesn't mean chaos. Clear fair boundaries help groups be ethical, effective and pleasant for all
7. **Useful.** Circles are pragmatic, not just pleasant. People should leave with insights, tools, practices, business ideas and useful connections
8. **Non-profit.** Circles are self-supporting and just cover their costs - e.g. room rent and snacks. Circles are always by-donation and visiting teachers are not paid. Generosity is a key aspect of Circles and they work well when members have a sense of service to each other. In a world of "what's in it for me?!" Circles encourage radical generosity

All principles are **open to interpretation** and cultural/local adaptation. Nothing is "set in stone" or dictated. If you'd like be listed on the website, being aligned with these principles would make sense though. Changes to these core principles are agreed at the international conveners annual gathering democratically, and it's requested that conveners keep in touch with each other to share ideas and best practice. "Connection and camaraderie, not correction or control" is the overall motto in this regard.

Note: a much abbreviated version of these guidelines can be read out at the start of a circle to give people the idea. E.g. "Circles are accessible, egalitarian, not dominated by any style or person, democratic, and encourage everyone to get involved".

### **Service roles**

Each circle is run by volunteers in service roles. These are for a set period - e.g. 1 year, and elected after. One person may take several roles if the group is small but this is not ideal. A role is a commitment and if you have a role and can't attend a circle, you are responsible for finding a substitute (the convener coordinates).

1. Convener - the unofficial temporary "organiser" - ensures other service positions are filled and convenes the next circle. It's suggested that they don't do other roles. They should join the Circle Conveners Facebook group for updates and resources and keep in touch with other conveners
2. Time keeper - the strict role. Keeps circles moving. Must be fair and firm. Some groups also have a facilitator in addition to a time keeper

3. Meditation leader - leads short body-based meditation. Can be consistent for a period or changed each time
4. Movement leader - leads short simple mindful movement. Can be consistent for a period or changed each time
5. Treasurer - to collect money and pay venues. Doesn't need huge financial skills! The convener can do this in smaller groups
6. Host / tea person/ greeter - the welcoming friendly social role
7. Guest teacher - changes each time including diverse people from different styles. Must have an embodied perspective - the subjective aspect of the body as part of the whole person (see video resources) - not just physical/athletic or esoteric
8. Web/ social media person - if desired. Some groups coordinate other ways
9. Others as agreed by the circle

### **Sample structure**

This is one way a circle could run. The parts can be in a different order and nothing is a must. Usually circles contain "the three pillars" (meditation, movement and sharing); and most a guest teacher on top of this. Here's an example of a schedule a time keeper may have:

- Encourage people to arrive 15-20min early

Introduction from the convener - 5min

- Host welcome if at someone's house
- Phones, toilets, other practicalities
- What The Circle is. Primary purpose. Briefly state some of the main principles
- Format and times for the day
- Ethical reminder. Confidentiality and choice (do only what you want)
- Names (depending on size).
- Guest teacher intro / guests from out of town announced

- Meditation with minimal instruction - 10min (body based and not esoteric - e.g. body's scan or mindfulness of breathing). Can use audio/ video if no guide present

- Gentle lead movement - 10min

(Non-athletic, simple mindful content). Restate choice for safety. Can use video if no guide present

- Check-in sharing round - 30min (usually 1-3 minutes each usually dependent on group size - per person strictly timed). People may start with name and end with "thank you" and everyone says "thank you" back. Makes clearer when done

Time keepers may add free sharing space if time, a gratitude round - e.g. "one thing you're grateful for?", a non verbal check-in round, or a coaching round, e.g. "one thing you need to accept now".

Tea/coffee break - 15-20min

A vital part of connecting. A circle without beverages is barbaric! Some groups also like food

- Taught session from guest - 30-45min

They can advertise their courses etc at the end

Business offers (e.g. events, discounts, top tips, recommend suppliers) and requests (for professional groups). "One thing you're offering" followed by "one thing you need" is a good format - 20min. Groups with less professionals in may choose to skip this part

- Official closing. Host/ Convener thanks, mentions next one and closing comments (e.g. one word close) - 5min

- It's suggested to have social options / hang out time after the formal

circle to support further connection

Note: groups may have check-lists or scripts for various parts. This means things are not forgotten and less-experienced people can still guide the group. Some circles may have different types of events that stress one aspect like learning or sharing.

Daniela is setting up zoom dates for the conveners to meet. Conveners are encouraged to check in with each other for support and inspiration from time to time.

### **Video resources**

What is embodiment:

Short <https://youtu.be/JYacDPOWsmE>

Long: <https://youtu.be/crHalJT4Fal>

Simple guided meditation: [https://youtu.be/ZqIKiW4K\\_H8](https://youtu.be/ZqIKiW4K_H8)

Short embodied movement form: <https://youtu.be/ehXFGBFfKV0>

Example of a full circle video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePK-cHuM7Wc&feature=youtu.be>

