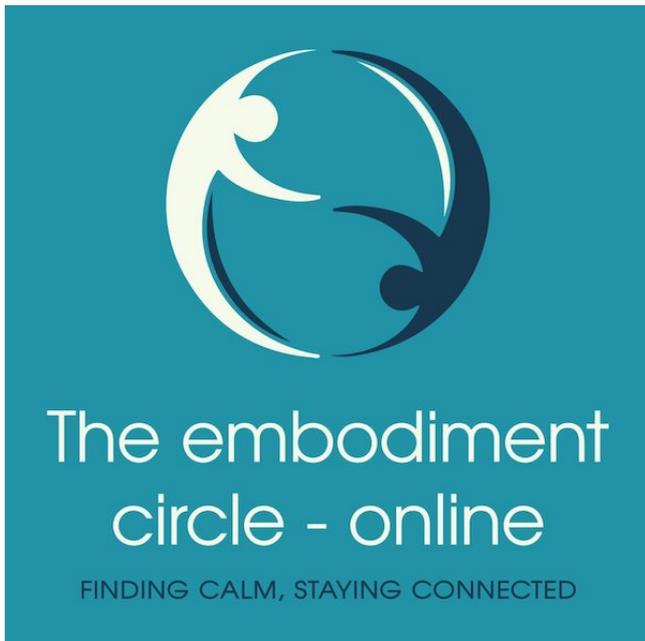


# Top tips for online hosts



The fundamental idea for hosts is that your decisions are guided by the core purpose of The Circle (learning, wellbeing and connection) and the guiding principles ([HERE](#)); and then specifics are voted on in the group as needed - after Circles in “business meetings”. There are no hard rules except the few below, and circles are mostly guided by loose norms and their “culture”.

## Essentials

To be considered an Embodiment Circle and be listed on this site groups must:

- Be egalitarian, and not run just by one person or organisation. A host organises roles and keep time, but is in service to the group.
- Be accessible, not athletic or esoteric\*
- Be free to all.
- Include the main three elements of movement, meditation and sharing.
- Start and end on time. Strictly. Keep all groups to one hour and do not use the Zoom link for anything else.

\*ask in the conveners group if in doubt about a practice.

# Top tips for new online conveners

- Play with Zoom with friends before you host a Circle. You can get a free account.
- Have a good internet connection. Really.
- Make a friend “co-host” just in case your internet drops out. They can also help with technical stuff on Zoom too.
- See Daniela’s Zoom tips videos [here](#) :
- Do not use the Zoom account for anything else as it is in near constant use. Do not share the Zoom link with people directly and definitely not the login details (if someone steals the account we lose the whole project and will need to spend hundreds of pounds to get a new one).
- A helpful embodiment for the role is, “firm, fair and friendly”.
- Be fair but strict about time. Interrupt and even mute people when necessary. This is your primary job - to keep things flowing and not let anyone one person dominate, or one section eat the time. Use exact timings/ boundaries like “one minute each”, or “five words or less”, not vague requests like, “keep it short”. IMMEDIATELY step in (in a friendly way) at the first person to overstep the boundaries. Otherwise you’ll get “chat creep” and it will seem unfair when you decide to stop it. You may well get push-back from more “alternative” people who struggle with authority and boundaries. Be firm but kind, explain its about fairness and part of Circle culture. Most people will thank you for asking verbose people to move on, and for “holding the container.
- Use a phone app that makes a pleasant noise at the cut-off time. A phone stopping people feels more fair and objective than a person.
- Do not let guest teachers (E.g. the movement teacher) do their own times without you also keeping time. Again, set a chime that will interrupt them if necessary and step in if they ignore it. Arrange times with them ahead and mention you mean the time exactly and will cut them off when on time.
- Keep in touch with other hosts. Reach out to a couple of experienced people and have a chat. We have our own FB group here for discussion: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/210388169884549/>

- Fill the movement and meditation teacher slots (and other service roles) BEFORE your circle so people come knowing if they have a “job” and how to do it. Ideally!
- Separate out talking about circles from the circles themselves. You may allocate time before or after for the later (15-20min max, and do this only after a month), and those that are there get a say.
- See the “how to open a circle” and “how to close a circle” tips below. These may be worth printing.
- The three core practices of a circle are:
  1. Some kind of meditation
  2. Some kind of mindful movement, and
  3. Some kind sharing; but groups vary with the nature of these widely. The order they are in also varies. Find what works for you and keep consistent leaders of these parts if possible. Keep it simple, non-esoteric and non-athletic; so that the circle is accessible.
- Less is more with content (trying to cram in too much is a common mistake)
- Discourage “cross sharing” - people commenting on other people’s shares.
- At first circle members may be mostly people you know and people from the conference, but over time please try and open the circle up to other networks and types of people. Promote as you like but please share the main online Circle page not the Zoom link.
- This applies to guest teachers too, start with people you trust then open it up. Brief guests as to what to do and expect (E.g. that their time is limited, who the participants are, that that they can advertise at the end but to offer value, that people have an opt out, etc).
- Be aware that being a host is not a permanent position and that eventually it’s good to hand this over to give someone else a chance. It is never “your” slot.

- Make your Circle enjoyable to you and everyone in any ethical way that you like :-) Be creative and have fun.

## How to open a Circle

It's normal for a host (aka facilitator/ secretary/convener) to open up a circle and also be a general timekeeper. As a time keeper you run the circle during it and should be quite "strict", and you primarily organise circles beforehand (based on people's requests, votes etc). Here's some top tips for opening:

- Please mention it's sponsored by The Embodiment Conference and share the site link.
- State the purpose of The Circle right up front ("embodied wellbeing, learning and connection") as everything relates back to this - E.g. any tricky decisions. Also some of the principles/ values like the co-creative vibe, but no need to go through a long boring list.
- A general warm welcome plus practicalities (times, roles, Zoom features, etc) is typical. Helping people feel at ease is your main role at the start.
- State the two basic ethical principles: Choice (people don't have to do anything at a circle) and confidentiality. Also no giving advice (especially medical!) or hitting on people in a circle you host.
- If you feel inspired to connect the Circle to a vision of a more embodied world feel free.
- You can do an instant mood or energy check by asking people to raise hands, make a noise, give thumbs up/down etc.
- You can also do a quick centring to relax people, "social centring" (looking at each other in friendly way) or group coordination exercise like taking three breaths together.

- State the order of what's coming up so all contributors are clear (this also helps people feel at ease).
- This can all be done in 5min with practice!  
Often the next thing is a quick names round if a small group. Sometimes with location and occupation (but careful to limit this or this will become time consuming, and actual sharing is usually best done after getting more present). Other groups go straight into meditation or movement and cover names when sharing, or use the chat box to say hello or see where people are or what they have come for.

## How to close a circle

This is done by the host to “book end” the circle. Closure - wrapping things up practically and emotionally - is really important so allow 10 min for this and don't allow a guest teacher to go overtime and squash this. Most conveners include:

- Thanks! (especially for those who lead).
- Practical information on the next one and on other Circles.
- Please mention it's sponsored by The Embodiment Conference and share the site link, as well as your own site and those of guest teachers.
- Ask people to tell their friends and colleagues about The Circle - share the website not the Zoom link please.
- Possible paired “one thing you're taking away”, or “one key insight from today”.
- One word/ one minute check-out round.
- Encouragement for self-care if people feel triggered or incomplete.
- Applause or gesture for a clear “ritualised” close (on time), like a bow or wave.
- Thank yourself for contributing to a better world :-)