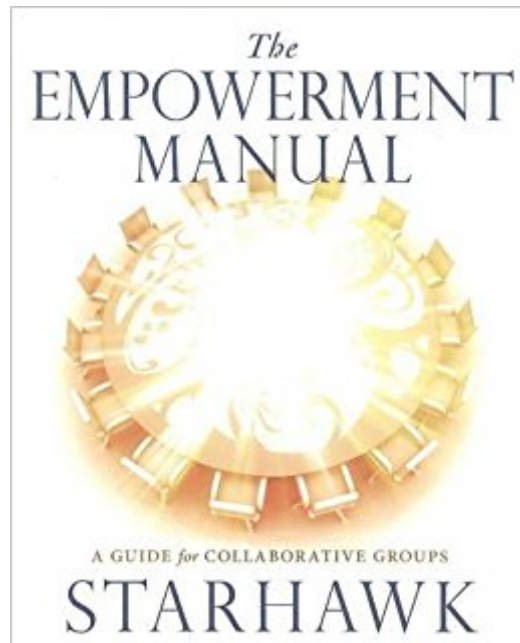




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The Empowerment Manual: A Guide For Collaborative Groups



Synopsis

A Transition Town group involved in preparations for peak oil and climate change; an intentional community, founded with the highest ideals; a nonprofit dedicated to social change—millions of such voluntary groups exist around the world. These collaborative organizations have the unique potential to harness their members' ideals, passions, skills, and knowledge—if they can succeed in getting along together. The Empowerment Manual is a comprehensive manual for groups seeking to organize with shared power and bottom-up leadership to foster vision, trust, accountability, and responsibility. This desperately needed toolkit provides keys to: Understanding group dynamics Facilitating communication and collective decision-making Dealing effectively with difficult people. Drawing on four decades of experience, Starhawk shows how collaborative groups can generate the cooperation, efficacy, and commitment critical to success. Her extensive exploration of group process is woven together with the story of RootBound—a fictional ecovillage mired in conflict—and rounded out with a series of real-life case studies. The included exercises and facilitator toolbox show how to establish the necessary structures, ground rules, and healthy norms. The Empowerment Manual is required reading for anyone who wants to help their group avoid disagreement and disillusionment and become a wellspring of creativity and innovation. Starhawk is the author of eleven previous books including the award-winning Webs of Power. A highly influential voice for global justice and the environment, she is deeply committed to bringing the creative power of spirituality to political activism.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: New Society Publishers; F First Paperback Edition Used edition (November 15, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0865716978

ISBN-13: 978-0865716971

Product Dimensions: 7.2 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 23 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #111,329 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #20 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Public Affairs & Policy > Non-Governmental Organizations #109 in Books > Business & Money > Small Business & Entrepreneurship > Nonprofit Organizations & Charities #199 in Books > Business & Money > Processes & Infrastructure >

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Starhawk has stepped forward to help the 99 percent camped in the streets from Syria and Bahrain to New York and London. To have power one needs to discover the ultimate tools of power - the ability to build friendships and to focus group attention on shared goals. This book provides the real formula for empowerment, in earthy detail, from family to village to culture to global movement. - Albert Bates, author *The Biochar Solution: Carbon Farming and Climate Change* and *The Post-Petroleum Survival Guide and Cookbook: Recipes for Change* It's not easy to meld a sweeping vision with practical steps on how to implement it, but Starhawk has succeeded brilliantly in *The Empowerment Manual*. Filled with case histories, illustrative stories, and, most importantly, clearly written exercises for honing your collaborative skills, this book is a must-read for anyone interested in building community and truly empowering themselves and others. - Toby Hemenway, author of *Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture* Strong, sustained leadership at the grassroots is more essential by the minute, given the failure of political and corporate power-holders to stop trashing our world. True social change is a collaborative art. Here's a trove of tips, guidelines, deft strategies and open secrets, that will speed and ease our capacity to work together. It comes to us with Starhawk's signature blend of vast experience, wit, and love for life. - Joanna Macy, author, *The Work that Reconnects* and co-author, *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess we're in Without Going Crazy* Starhawk has stepped forward to help the 99 percent camped in the streets from Syria and Bahrain to New York and London. To have power one needs to discover the ultimate tools of power - the ability to build friendships and to focus group attention on shared goals. This book provides the real formula for empowerment, in earthy detail, from family to village to culture to global movement. - Albert Bates, author *The Biochar Solution: Carbon Farming and Climate Change* and *The Post-Petroleum Survival Guide and Cookbook: Recipes for Change* It's not easy to meld a sweeping vision with practical steps on how to implement it, but Starhawk has succeeded brilliantly in *The Empowerment Manual*. Filled with case histories, illustrative stories, and, most importantly, clearly written exercises for honing your collaborative skills, this book is a must-read for anyone interested in building community and truly empowering themselves and others. - Toby Hemenway, author of *Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture* Strong, sustained leadership at the grassroots is more essential by the minute, given the failure of political and corporate power-holders to stop trashing our world. True social change is a collaborative art. Here's a trove of tips, guidelines, deft strategies and open secrets, that will

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StarHawk is the author of eleven books on earth based spirituality, Goddess religion, and activism, including *The Spiral Dance*, *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, and the award-winning *Webs of Power*. A highly influential voice for global justice and the environment, Starhawk is deeply committed to bringing the creative power of spirituality to political activism. She also teaches Earth Activist Trainings, intensive seminars that combine permaculture design, political organizing, and earth-based spirituality. She writes for the Newsweek/Washington Post blog *On Faith* as well as her own blog, *Dirt Worship*. Her website is www.starhawk.org.

This book is exactly what I need, exactly when I need it. Being part of Transition Joshua Tree, I am suddenly forced out of my solitary life and must associate with groups of people. Because of this book, I am finding it shockingly easy to change my mind about being part of a group. That windbag who talks and talks? A couple of easy to understand facilitating techniques takes care of him. Meetings that never end? Not when you use the guidelines in this manual. I now craft an agenda, and have a timeline for each segment and the era of the never-ending meeting has come to an end. Using the 4 Direction Mandala information has made me much more understanding of where the other people in the group are coming from and I can appreciate and use their strengths while filling in for their weaknesses. A heartfelt thank you to Starhawk for sitting in a million hours of meetings so that I did not have to. Another thank you for figuring all of this out so that I didn't have to do it the hard way. Collaborative groups are the future, and I now have the tools to move forward into the future. David Zimmerman/Susan Jordan

I have been struggling to understand why a group I belong to makes me want to walk away from it. I decided to take some time to figure out what exactly was bothering me about this group. Then I got to Chapter 5 of Starhawk's book and it was all there. A group with so much potential has terrifically horrible communication problems that cause a domino effect of conflict and other discord. I still have a lot to think about with this group but now I can use the concepts from the book to decide whether to discuss the issues I see with the group.

I have worked in collaborative groups for over 20 years - I wish I had this manual years ago. The

Empowerment Manual is easy to read and understand, great explanations and examples. An inspiring book if you are thinking of, or are currently working in a horizontal organisation. There are so much accessible and helpful advice about how to avoid the pitfalls and get the best out of working with people in non-hierarchical structures. If you are serious about changing your world this is the guide!

How I love Starhawk. I'm so grateful for the gift of her leadership. Low ego, practical.

That is what this manual has taught me. it will leave you with lots of questions, some answers, and plenty of food for thought.

This is an excellent resource. I've lived in an intentional community for 21 years. I thought I had a very solid grasp of collaborative group process and there wasn't much more to learn. However, I learned a lot from reading this book!!! Starhawk addresses challenges that my community has faced for years and provides concrete ideas and tools that are very helpful. I highly recommend this book for anyone living in an intentional community.

I've been a huge fan of Starhawk since I picked up "The Fifth Sacred Thing" in the early 90's. She has done it again with this book, distilling her wisdom to the next generation of activists. Excellent and accessible information.

Good info---Much is a rehash from other books of hers, just dressed up. Not complaining, though. Is very good info!

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