

The Social Contract



Reframing Conflict Resolution

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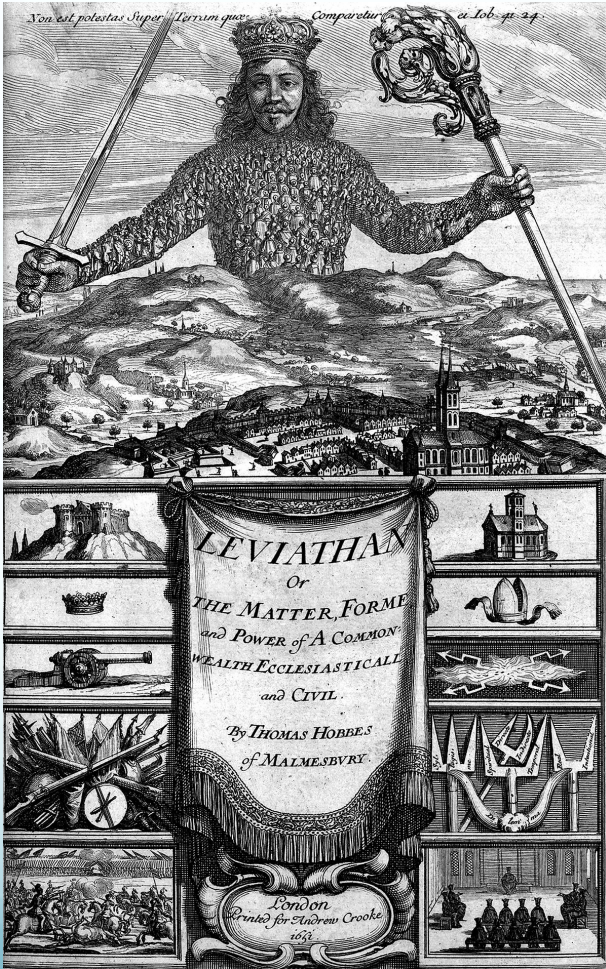
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A little about the workshop

Getting along with one another and valuing differences are important skills when joining the American version of cohousing. In this interactive workshop:

- Participants will learn about the cohousing social contract - Leviathan
- Participants will be led through a personal journey about how their pasts inform the present and how to move into the future.
- Participants will learn skills and ideas, including the importance of a “higher purpose” to assist their communities function more efficiently by getting to know their neighbors by knowing themselves better.



A little about the facilitator

- **About the Presenter, Alan O'Hashi (Silver Sage Village Cohousing)**
 - I provide tailor-made cultural competency training and facilitation – short term, half day / full day. My work includes training for a variety of groups, including youth services, victim services and three housing organizations in Denver. I'm a graduate of the Visiones Advanced Leadership Training which develops transformational leadership skills and consensus - building. I represent the Rocky Mountain Region on the Cohousing USA Board of Directors; previously was a member of the city of Boulder Planning Board, formerly the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity St Vrain Valley – Longmont, Colorado.
 - These days, though, I make movies. The most recent is “Aging Gratefully: The Power of Community” about cohousing. “Mahjong and the West” about dating violence now has Amazon and Vimeo video on demand distribution. I'm currently working on documentaries about the “Art of the Hunt”, “New Deal Art in Post Offices” and “Plein Air painting on the Grand Teton”. I also provide video production services for businesses and non-profits wanting to tell their stories better.

Norms and Expectations



Set the rules of the day - accountability

- Be respectful – speak one at a time
- Be good listeners
- Use 'I' statements
- There are no 'mistakes'
- Challenge by choice
- What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas

Who's in the house today?

- **Please introduce yourselves:**

- Where did you live before the place where you live now?
- How many siblings do you have and where are you in the stack?
- What kind of bread did you eat growing up



The Leviathan Social Contract

- Thomas Hobbs – 1651
 - Members of the community surrender some of their freedoms and submit to the good of the whole in exchange for protection and maintenance of the social order.
 - In a pluralistic society, like Superman's American Way, social contracts aren't practical nor do they exist
 - Rugged individualism – I don't need your help
 - Acceptance based on assimilation – Learn English, cut your hair
 - Bigger is Better than Smaller – Claw your way to the top
 - Majority rules - Win by one
 - Cause of conflict - Self interest, greed and mistrust
 - Cohousing by definition, reimagines Superman's American Way
 - The group is valued over the individual – agreed upon mission/values
 - Acceptance based on a person's inherencies – general diversity
 - Less is better than more – one lawn mower, not 16
 - Consensus – minority views have clout
 - Cause of conflict – Self interest, greed and mistrust

What are a social contract's parts?

- **Coho cultures are many and all different and generally defined as practices and values held in common among a unified group of people possibly around a higher purpose. For cohousing, practices and values may include:**
 - Familial and non familial networks
 - Association patterns: formal, informal relationships, friends, allies, neighbors, cliques
 - Roles around gender and age: respect of elders
 - Food traditions: common foods, meals,
 - Life transitions: birth, death
 - Spirituality: individual vs collective
 - Core values: independence, interdependence, individuality, boundaries, consequences, accountability
 - Diverse Personalities: control freaks, slackers, over achievers, introverts, extroverts, liars, elitists, etc.



What is the coho social contract?

- **In the context of cohousing, the social contract is not a signed document. It results from a developmental process that evolves over an extended period. At any given moment, depending on past histories and experiences individuals and cohousing communities are at various levels of awareness and knowledge about the community social structure.**
- **When do we enter into our community social contract?**
 - Name a person, not a relative, who was a positive influence on you as a child and a particular incident that you continue to carry to this day?

Sources Cohousing Conflict

- **Transactional vs transformative governance**
 - **Transactional Top Down** – leader defines goals, leader gives “rewards” in exchange for performance. Leaders run afoul with unwilling followers (Consensus In Name Only - CINO)
 - **Zero Sum Game – is NOT compromise.** The winner takes the ball home and the losers get nothing.
 - **Transformational Bottom Up** – shared consensus-based leadership; all help each other move beyond self interest to shared goals; shared visions (true consensus decision making)



Transformational Solution

- **Containment** is transactional and used in criminal justice and educational systems and is very labor and time intensive. Many times applied in communities because they do nothing different
 - A disruptive student is monitored by school administrators, teachers, counselors; notes sent home to parents; expulsion (out of sight, out of mind)
 - Not effective in communities or organizations because there are no consequences for misdeeds, remedial at best until the next flare up
- **Restorative justice** brings together victims and other stakeholders to come up with consequences for a convicted criminal acts, usually minor juvenile offenses
- **A transformational solution** brings together targets, inciters, bystanders with the outcome being one of accountability
 - In a community or organization there are no punishments
 - Each participant must be accountable for their role in the disruptive behavior
 - Target – What's my role in bringing about the incident
 - Bystander ; How could I have been better involved
 - Retaliator - What are some ways I could have responded
 - Instigator – How was my initial reaction the root cause

The Dynamic Players

- **Instigator**
 - Exerts power and control, generally for personal gain
- **Target**
 - May be the inciter, retaliator, bystander
- **Retaliator**
 - May be the target, bystander
- **Bystander**
 - May be allies of anyone involved
 - May be a passer by
 - Generally a bystander will intervene

Commitment to uphold the community social contract

- Did you learn anything about yourself that can either help or hinder your journey to get along with people not like you?
- Are there current beliefs formed by your past that you will try to 'undo' as you move forward?
- As a member of a cohousing social contract, are you willing to put your individual wants aside for the good of the community?

Need help building your community?

Read My Book:

**True Stories of an Aging Do
Gooder: How cohousing can
bridge Cultural Divides**

<http://bit.ly/truestoriescoho>

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