

## **Say what you think and do what you say**

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The sentence that stuck in my mind from the first evening I heard of Sociocracy is not from any of the important faces of Sociocracy, but from the Austrian Jewish and Israeli philosopher Martin Buber (1878-1965): “Say what you think and do what you say.” An easy sentence, but deeply true and often enough difficult to realise.

Not many people know what the other is really thinking if he or she doesn't want it. We can keep our feelings inside, we can hide what we really think and only speak about it with a few people.

We speak a lot, but not always what we think, and even less do we do what we said: We decide that we will not smoke inside anymore, only at the balcony – and just a few days later also those who co-decided, are smoking inside.

Where is the connection to Sociocracy?

### **“Say what you think”**

After the question round every decision has up to 2 opinion rounds. Every opinion counts. Every objection can question a proposal, can help to make it better and to guide the circle to its aim. So it is important to really hear everyone's voice, because everyone can make the result better.

Why don't we say what we think even though it seems to be important?

We think what we want to say is not important.

The first opinion round is for everyone to listen and to help to get the own opinion more differentiated. So it is up to the circle to decide if it is important or not. How many times one thought “It is just a small thought that maybe has no impact” and then in the 2<sup>nd</sup> opinion round someone took up what he or she said as an “unimportant thought”. Many times the circle knows better than we know if it is important or not.

We feel ashamed of what we want to say

The safety of the circle is an important precondition to saying what we think. If we have made the experience such that no one judges our thoughts and appreciates that we have an opinion, we can feel more and more safe to say what we think.

We are afraid to be alone with an opinion

This is another part of the learning process and of the safety we can feel in a circle. Sometimes we are alone with an opinion. But no one will see this afterwards, because it is not about personal failure or victory, it is about reaching the aim of a circle, and reaching it together.

So in a healthy circle we can say what we think without fear, we even need to have to say what we think in order to go on all together towards the aim of the circle / the organization.

At the same time we can learn that we don't have to say what we are thinking if it has been said before. It is not about being clever, about being smart, it is about working together and finding together what is good for everyone in the circle.

### **“And do what you say”**

If it is already difficult to say what we think it is even more difficult to do what we say. That's a fact.

In Sociocracy we make a distinction between basic decisions and the executive (executive decisions). Once the decision is taken, the work begins.

After a decision in a sociocratic meeting we always clarify who is carrying it out and until when. And this will be reported in the next meeting.

So everyone knows that a decision has an impact on real life.

Everyone knows that the measurement, which is an important tool in Sociocracy, will show if what we said has been done or not. And this will have consequences.

If the aim of the circle is clear and everyone who is member of the circle wants to reach this aim, everyone will help to implement the decisions of the circle.

Why don't we do what we say?

We are lazy or we have other things to do

We love the meetings and the decisions, but until the next meeting our mind is full of other things. We have to learn that if we have decided together, it also has to be done. If we don't do it, the aim of the circle is in danger. We have to reflect that we are a part of a circle (and maybe of a circle-structured organization) that counts on us.

We are afraid to take responsibility

It is a completely new culture in a sociocratic organization that everyone has a personal responsibility. This is what human beings are longing for - and in the same time are afraid of.

Beside the basic decisions, there are executive decisions, that the one(s) who are in the executive of a basic circle decision can decide by themselves. To have the responsibility and the freedom to decide in the domain that is given is something that can make us afraid of doing anything.

### **So why should I say what I think?**

Everyone knows that the decision will be executed by someone from the circle, that means by someone (or more) who decided by consent. It would be helpful to be clear and honest in what we provide in a circle decision. It has an impact on the way the circle is going.

### **And why should we do what we say?**

Because there is a good way of “control” in a sociocratic circle. There is a leader whose role it is to see the tasks and the members of the circle. There is a logbook where basic decisions are written, with date and date of expiry. There are roles and a common aim that helps everyone to see why and for what the members of the circle are working.