

Committee Meeting

Remember how we already said that we are run by committee? Well, the exciting news is that we can call a virtual committee meeting and discuss and negotiate with each of our committee members, and in so doing resolve their concerns in a way that works for you *and* them.

Is this real? Is it metaphor? Is it just a way of working with your brain?

I've no idea, but I love the results and I am excited to share the process with you.

This concept of committees is a mixture of the following concepts:

- Ideas I was exploring myself as I explored why I would keep sabotaging myself and why others do so too: it seems to be a universal human problem,
- Inner child work based on writers such as John Bradshaw and Lucia Capacchione — but inner child work expanded as we have inner all ages and inner attitudes and so on,
- Matrix Reimprinting, created by Karl Dawson, which is a way of using Tapping in your imagination directly with the younger You who experienced the trauma you're trying to resolve, rather than the today-you who is experiencing the fallout of that trauma, and
- Internal Family Systems (IFS) created by Richard Schwarz. What I have been calling committee members, IFS calls parts.

And I am beyond excited to share all this with you as a resource to help yourself resolve your blocks to going No-Contact, but you can also use it in the rest of your life.

As you go through this, as with the Tapping, know that you take full responsibility for your experience with it. I believe it to be safe, or I wouldn't be sharing it of course, but I

cannot take responsibility for any adverse reactions you might have. Use your discernment here.

Now, neither do I want to scare you off: as I say, I think this is very safe and gentle, but I just need you to be in charge of your own experience.

As you prepare to 'meet' your committee members, let me remind you that there are no bad guys here. All the committee members are **you**, doing their best to keep you safe and happy (in that order: safety trumps happiness exactly as in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs). These committee members absolutely have the best of intentions; it just might be that they have wrong information about how to meet your highest good. Or they might have such good points that you come around to their way of thinking. In this way, Committee Meetings are a way of accessing more of your wisdom.

I came to this technique because I was so frustrated with my incessant self-sabotage, but I have come to realise that it's not self-sabotage at all, but protection. It is, in fact, an intervention against what the committee member thinks is a serious danger. And a small pain is worth it to prevent a bigger one, just as, if you grabbed a child to pull them out of the path of an oncoming car, you wouldn't care if you bruised that child's arm in the process.

The whole process of discussing and negotiating with your committee members might sound strange, but don't let that intimidate you: this is **you** talking to **you**, and so it will most likely flow well. Think of it like you going to a friend to discuss something, but that friend is guaranteed to be on your side. There's no incorrect way to do this; you cannot get it wrong, so just relax and enjoy the process rather than feeling there's some standard you have to reach.

I share the process below, and then share a summary below that, and also worksheets for you to print out if you choose to use those via donm.info/htgnc-resources.

How to hold a Committee Meeting

Sit yourself down:

Sit yourself somewhere private and comfortable. Be sure to have a drink of water with

you.

As with any meeting, you will need to start with an Agenda, and finish with the Minutes of what was agreed to during the meeting. So, do have a pen and paper with you, (or the printables available from donm.info/htgnc-resources).

You can speak these Committee Meetings or freewrite them. Again there are printables available for freewriting the Committee Meetings, but they're not necessary as you can just use a notebook.

If you speak them, you might like to record the sessions but this is absolutely not essential.

You might find it easier to close your eyes, especially if you are speaking rather than writing. If you like, you can imagine yourself in a special place, either real or imaginary: the beach, woodlands, etc, but this is absolutely not necessary.

If you are speaking rather than writing, I find it best to speak aloud, to help with concentration. If you're just thinking quietly it's far too easy to get distracted. You might find yourself thinking something like, *I'd like to invite x committee member to join me, oh I wonder did Moira ever get her car problems sorted, I must ask her, and that reminds me it's Philip's birthday, must send him a card ...* and so on.

The fact you're speaking aloud is another reason to make sure you have privacy. You don't want to have to censor your discussion in any way.

Write the Meeting Agenda:

This will be a one-item Agenda, and is just to clarify your thoughts about a) which Committee Member you are going to speak with, and b) what you're hoping to achieve. In our example it will be: *Meet with a Committee Member who doesn't want me to go No-Contact, discuss their concerns, and come to a mutual agreement.* You can write this on your own paper or on printables.

Invitation:

Literally say aloud, or write: "I'm now inviting the Committee Member who thinks I shouldn't go No-Contact to come and meet with me so we can discuss their concerns."

And then wait for them to show up, which they will.

You might experience them as an image of some kind, or feel a sensation in your body.

Thanking them for joining you:

Thank this committee member for turning up to meet you.

Try to feel genuine gratitude, both for them turning up, and also for them holding this role all these years, which was always done to protect you despite how it might feel right now. Remember: there are no bad guys in this process.

If you feel in any way negative towards them, for example, angry that they are blocking you from something you want to do, remind yourself that they *are* you: a part of you who definitely has your best interests at heart, but who just has different information. They are (possibly) mistaken, but they are never malicious.

This process cannot continue unless you feel warmth and even gratitude towards them. Remind yourself that you are not on an opposing side to them, but rather are allies who both want to create the best life for you, and who just need to discuss how to do that. Knowing this should help you resolve any negativity, but don't forget you can use Tapping to let go of any negative feelings if needed.

Don't move forward in this process until you feel warmth and gratitude towards them, for obvious reasons: if you feel adversarial, guess how the dialogue will go! Even assuming they will speak to you at all.

Naming them:

Ask them what their name is and wait for them to tell you. It might be a real name such as Madge or George, or a descriptive name. In this example let's say our committee member's name is Blocking. Make a mental or written note of that, and indeed you can use their name when speaking to them during the rest of the conversation.

Ask them if they are willing to discuss this issue with you:

They might not be, for example if they don't trust you yet. If this is the case, ask them what you can do to help them trust you enough to have the conversation. Remind them that they hold all the power here, in that you cannot force them to do anything. Remind them too that *you are them*, a part of them who wants the best for you and just has different information, that you are not on an opposing side to them, but rather are allies who both want to create the best life for you, and who just need to discuss how to do that.

As you do this process more, you will find that the committee members will trust you more, for reasons I'll share below.

Conversation to resolution:

You then begin the conversation with them and it might go something like this:

You: I know that you have good reason for blocking me from going No-Contact, and I wonder would you share with me what that is?

[Try to keep your questions mild and interested, rather than being like an interrogation. You are genuinely trying to find out what the Committee Member's reasons are, rather than trying to catch them out.]

Committee Member: Because it would hurt her too much.

[And can you see how this is a perfectly valid reason?]

You: Yes, it probably would. But maybe we could let that be okay?

CM: No! Of course we can't.

You: Why not, do you think?

CM: We have to be better than her. Just because she's cruel doesn't give us the licence to be cruel back.

[And this is a very valid opinion, isn't it? It makes perfect sense how the Committee Member came to this conclusion.]

You: Absolutely. I fully agree. We want to act in integrity, don't we?

CM: Absolutely. We will not sink to her level.

You: I agree on that too. I wonder, though, could we explore a bit more about whether it is cruel to protect yourself from someone's abuse. I'm considering just to cut off contact, not to proactively do anything bad to her.

CM: We—ll...

[The Committee Member is a bit confused now; their previous certainty wavering a bit. You give them some space to think about it before continuing.]

After a few moments you might continue: If we had our way, nobody would be hurt. Our ideal would be to have a loving and mutually respectful relationship with her, wouldn't we?

CM: Yes. That's true.

You: But she doesn't give us that option, does she?

CM: No. True. We have tried before, I know that, but she wouldn't listen. She just accused us of being horrible to her.

You: Exactly! So the way it is now, either we are hurt by the continued relationship, or she is hurt by it ending, right?

CM: **Yes.**

You: **And she is the one forcing that choice, right?**

CM: **Yes.**

You: **So if we end it, really, she's the one causing her own hurt.**

CM pauses to think about it, and again you give them space. And then they say: **Yes.**

Yes, she is.

You: **We can regret that she is hurt, but we don't have to sacrifice our well-being to prevent it, I think. What do you think?**

CM: **I agree.**

You: **So you don't have to stop us going No-Contact any more?**

CM: **No. No I don't.**

New job/role for them:

You: **So now that you no longer have to hold that job of making sure she's not hurt, what would you like to do next? You could take on a new job, or just rest and play as you choose. What do you think?**

The Committee Member will choose then what they want, and whatever it is, you give it to them. If they want a whole water-park for themselves to play in, you imagine that, and there it is, in an instant. Often the Committee Member is very tired from holding a tough role all these years and is more than happy to retire and just play.

Or they might choose a job that's the opposite of their old one, e.g. in this example they might want the role of reminding you that you matter too and that you don't have to let people abuse you. They may well choose a new name for themselves too as part of the change. In our example it could be now Alerting.

You might find too that as you go through this process their physical appearance changes. They might go from hunched to standing straight. They may change size. They may look happier. Don't be surprised if this happens, and in fact it's something to be celebrated.

Once you have thanked them for meeting with you and sent them off for their new role, you then check in with yourself to see how you feel about going No-Contact now. Don't be surprised if you still feel resistance to the idea. This is because you might well have other Committee Members who have other good beliefs that make them think you need to stay in Contact, and you need to speak to them too. Later in this book we will go through all

possible beliefs and resolve them as needed.

Write the Minutes:

Write down the agreement you and the Committee Member came to, or you can do this before they head off. It is very possible that as part of the discussion you had to agree to some commitment, for example, to check back in with this Committee Member at a given time to see how they're doing with the new role, and if so, write this down too. And it is essential that if you make a commitment, you keep to it, partly because you said you would, and partly because this teaches the Committee Members that they can trust you.

As we said before, don't go into this discussion assuming that you have all the answers; the committee member can contribute wisdom to this too.

This is a genuine discussion and problem-solving rather than you imposing solutions. The committee member might propose a good solution or compromise. For example, I was doing this work with one DONM whose committee member was willing to allow her to go No-Contact if she would agree to leave the door open to her mother genuinely changing. This was easy to agree to, and I share later how that would work in practice.

Good questions to ask the committee member:

- What are you protecting me from?
- What bad thing will happen if you give up your current behaviour?
- How can I help you feel comfortable enough to reconsider your position?

Using Tapping with the Committee Member

Sometimes the committee member is stuck on an issue and it's just not shifting by discussing it with them. In this case I ask them would they like me to use Tapping on them for the stuck issue, and in my experience they always say yes. In this case I simply imagine myself touching all the tapping points on their body in turn, and those points lighting up with a red light as I do, while we repeat the stuck issue, e.g. 'Not allowed to go No-Contact'.

If they are a non-human shape, which sometimes happens, I just use my best guess as to the tapping points, and it works anyway.

In my experience tapping in this way works even more quickly than it does in the real world; it's amazing to have your committee member make those powerful shifts.

One thing I was working on for myself, the committee member was convinced that if I resolved that issue I would literally die. Given that risk, you can see how they worked so hard and undertook as much self-sabotage (really, interventions) as they needed to to make sure I didn't resolve the issue. I used the Tapping on them and it resolved in about two minutes, and they were able to say to me, completely happily, that it was okay now if we resolved the issue, and I went on to do so. I never found out how or why that committee member created that belief, but it didn't matter once I was able to resolve it.

Committee Meeting Summary:

1. Find a comfortable and private location.
2. Write down the meeting agenda.
3. Invite the relevant Committee Member to join you and wait for them to arrive.
4. Once they arrive, thank them for coming to meet you.
5. Ask them their name and make a mental or written note of that.
6. Ask them if they're willing to discuss this issue with you, and if not, discuss with them what would help them to be willing.
7. Have a genuine conversation with them until you come up with a solution you're both happy with.
8. Write down the Minutes of the meeting,