# 11. How and when do we meet?

We only recommend these methods in teams that work well together without tension and still improve their team culture. If greater tensions are present, we recommend that external support be sought. We define low-tension as follow:

* verbal communication is not very difficult
* compassion for others is still there
* there is not strong subset of people forming a coalition within the broader team
* people still willing and able to point out personal development areas to each other and accepting them

In our experience, as soon as one of these points is affected, these methods can no longer be applied without external guidance.

### Why does it make sense to talk about this question?

*Regular Meetings:*  
Successful communities require engaging meetings. It is important to regularly find out what is on the minds of others, what they are actively working on and what work is pending. It is a good exercise to try and look through other peoples’ lenses and see the company from their perspective. On the one hand, this makes cooperation easier, and on the other hand, it increases one's own ability to develop and act. That is why the basis of any joint process is the binding agreement to hold regular meetings at fixed, unalterable times.

Participation in the meetings must be possible for all participants and the choice of topics must be appropriate for all participants. For example:

* the farm baker with a very independent work area does not need to participate in the daily work meeting of the farmers, unless they want to
* Discussing the operational side of one branch of the company has no place in the big meeting of a diverse company

Therefore, different types of meetings are needed: daily working meetings, meetings for strategic and general questions and meetings for the evaluation of the own cooperation. (see below)

In addition to the many advantages of working together as a community, it can be difficult, especially because of anticipated or experienced negative social/political interactions in the company.

For example:

* we have not really "learned" to deal with our own deeper needs and emotions and those of others. And maybe we hardly know our own emotions and most secret desires ourselves or we do not acknowledge them, but we encounter them when dealing with others
* cooperation can easily lead to misunderstandings and mis-interpretations (I receive a different message than the one sent to me)
* the need for harmony or our own fear and "cowardice" keeps us from being truly honest and direct
* the partner/colleague acts as a mirror, one is annoyed with the other about what one cannot do or would like to do
* And so on...

In this respect, as a community in the social process, one always embarks on a path with many unknowns, which enables a lot of positive personal and community development and can bring many other advantages. But it also requires a lot of courage and honesty with yourself and others.

### When do we recommend addressing these questions?

Addressing questions related to meeting and team development is particularly important for the prevention or improvement of stressful relationships within the entrepreneurial team. It is important in the context: If the cooperation is burdened by missing or unclear agreements, and this often happens, the fields of work 1 (Where do we stand?) to 10 (Do we have everything we need?) should be discussed quickly and agreements made. However, in extremely stressed relationships, it makes sense to first restore the ability to work together through external support and then work on the work areas sequentially and one after the other.

### Worksteps

The needs of each community are of course very different in this area. However, the most important thing is regular and productive meetings, so we would like to go into more detail. Under Supplements you will find some proven methods with a focus on team and personal development. And once again: in socially tense situations we recommend that you seek outside support.

*Timeline and content of the meetings*  
In the long run, meetings are most successful when they are prepared, well moderated and managed, when decisions are recorded in writing and implementation is monitored. Make a binding agreement to hold regular meetings. Establish a fixed, irrevocable period of time that suits all parties involved.

The meetings are divided into:

1. Work meetings (degree of difficulty: relatively easy)

These are daily or at least regular (depending on the intensity of the cooperation) meetings of people who work together directly and regularly. In larger enterprises, these can be different teams (stable team, marketing team etc.).

Topics: who does what, what is needed for it, where does it need support or what influences the others.

1. Meetings for strategic, general questions (difficulty level: medium)
   1. All partners and responsible individuals of a community, along with their life partners, should participate in jointly managed enterprises, usually at least 2 hours per week, many communities do this on a fixed evening in the week
   2. This meeting must not be used for everyday operational discussions
   3. Minutes shall be recorded and kept for resolutions and they will be regularly reviewed for execution status
   4. It’s ideal to have one person lead the meeting and one to take the minutes. If possible, the community should nominate one of its members as the meeting officiant and one as note taker. These tasks can also rotate.
   5. It is important to have regular meetings of all community leaders, but possibly additional strategic meetings within the areas of responsibility (e.g. a joint breakfast of the gardening team on Wednesday morning)
   6. Goals: Exchange information about important events and developments, discuss and decide on strategic issues, advise colleagues, decide on unplanned events, develop a mission statement, strategize, approve the annual budget, evaluate BWAs/FiBu etc.
2. Meeting to reflect on cooperation (difficulty: difficult)
   1. For this purpose, it can be useful to seek external support, especially in politically/socially tense situations
   2. Serves to evaluate the cooperation in order to strengthen what’s working, improve what isn’t working, and develop what is missing
   3. Should be done regularly at least once a year or as needed. Indications of the necessity of an evaluation are
   * over a longer period of time the meeting becomes tedious, conversations are tough and nobody looks forward to it
   * some participants withdraw or say nothing more
   * people do not listen to each other, people are not talking “with” each other, but rather “at, over, or down” at each other level, coalitions are formed
   * Discussions go in circles, there are no common visions or agreement on resolutions
   * mistrust has built up and people do not talk about the really important things
   1. Possible themes
   * Do the regular work meetings succeed, what can be improved?
   * Is the strategic work successful? Do the really important things come up? How can we improve this work?
   * Do we meet at eye level? Is everyone contributing to the fullest they want and are able? What are our needs? What can be improved?
   * Do we strengthen each other or do we pull ourselves down? How can the situation be improved?
   * Do we listen to each other attentively, absorb it and let ourselves be moved by the thoughts of the others? How do we improve our culture of conversation?
   * Is there a clear vision of possibilities, in which all essential aspects are discussed, before decisions are made?
   * Do we make decisions promptly and usually without dispute?
   * Are decisions recorded and implemented within the agreed time?
   * Are our decisions sustainable, or do we often have to readjust them?
   * Do we want to create further meeting places? Through joint actions or also concrete places such as certain places in the garden?
   * Living communities: Do our common meals work? Who cooks when and where? Do we create a balance that suits everyone?
   * Do we want to integrate additional rituals, such as reading out sayings, short thoughts of our own, celebrating annual festivals?
3. Meeting for joint "intellectual" work

By reading and discussing, for example, basic works, you get to know different aspects of your partners and identify and appreciate commonalities. If this is successful, it becomes clear how fruitful the joint work is through the sharing of complementary perspectives, and futures can be imagined for shared mission-based work. Suitable topics could be biodyn./bio-org. economic or joint management (e.g. Frederic Laloux)

Some people also find it helpful to organize evening meetings at the farm where someone prepares and gives a presentation on a topic that is very important to him/her. This can be done briefly and concisely, followed by a short exchange of ideas (about 20-30 minutes in total). Through this method, a person's own personality can be revealed, and through this, understanding and connection can grow.

### Supplements and Additions

There are many methods and approaches for improving the team culture. We would like to present a small selection here.  
  
*The Graves-Analyse*  
The Graves analysis shows each user of the survey which value attitudes and fields of motivation individual people of a farm community or a team bring along. It also provides information on how motivation is created and which behavioral patterns promote cooperation or provoke conflicts. The analysis also shows which forms of communication and which management tools are beneficial for the respective communities. The survey is subject to a fee, is conducted online and takes about 20 minutes. You will receive password-supported access from the consulting firm Kugler-Rosenberger GbR. The results will of course only be sent to you and discussed with you afterwards.

*The DISG-Modell*  
This method is strongly based on the temperamental teachings of the four different characters (choleric, sanguine, melancholic, phlegmatic). It can help to shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of the different characters and to improve understanding for each other and communication. There are professional providers for this method, on the net you can also find sheets for free download. Otherwise this method is included in the booklet "Das neue 1x1 der Persönlichkeit", by Lothar Seiwert and Friedbert Gay, GU Verlag (12.99.- €).

If one of the members of a community prepares for it, he/she can guide the others for a joint analysis with subsequent discussion of the results and discussion of the findings and consequences.

*Systematic Reflection*  
This method is suitable for improving the culture of conversation and for dealing with minor conflicts (under guidance). It is about learning to give space one after the other to the perception, the feelings that have arisen, the associated needs and the suggestions for improvement instead of mixing them up and, most importantly, instead of interpreting the perceptions, feelings, needs, and suggestions themselves.

Negotiating Roles  
This method is suitable for learning to give each other both positive feedback, and sweetly, but clearly reflect what one would like to have done differently. This method also needs to be well instructed and clearly moderated, but can, especially if it is repeated e.g. once a year, improve the team culture sustainably.

Dealing with needs

The example und "other materials" illustrates how a perception of an action in a team is unconsciously compared and evaluated with our own needs. In order to then either react or retreat with anger, rage or dead spots. It is suitable for reflecting on one's own behavior in the team and for searching for possibilities for improvement.