

QUAKER DECISION MAKING - MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS
QUAKERISM 101, SESSION III, FEBRUARY 18 & 20, 2017 presented by Matt Drake

“WELCOME TO THE QUAKER COOKING SHOW. TODAY WE’RE GOING TO REVIEW THE INGREDIENTS OF MWAB.”

FIRST, be sure to choose the proper “container.”

- Not one in which votes are taken
- Not one in which the group attempts to reach consensus
- Choose the one that is a meeting for worship - *George Fox’s letter from Worcester Prison around 1674: “Friends are not to meet like a company of people about town or parish business . . . but to wait upon the Lord.”*

SECOND, let’s pour in three historic beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends.

- There is a God/Spirit
- We, as individuals, can be in direct communication with and guided by God/Spirit
- God/Spirit is available to direct/guide us as a group, as a Meeting

THIRD, we’ll add three favorable conditions:

1. Participants bring to the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business a common understanding of, a faith in, and a commitment to the Quaker process
2. Participants “. . . are acquainted with one another, better still if affection exists among them.” (H. Brinton)
3. Participants bring helpful skills and abilities (to worship, to set aside one’s own desires/solutions, patience, ability to search for “the way through,” to listen)

FOURTH, be sure to add the role of the clerk: prepares the agenda; helps the meeting move into, continue in, and close in worship; serves as a neutral facilitator; recognizes Friends who wish to speak, encourages those who have not spoken to do so; identifies “the sense of the meeting;” places this into a minute.

FIFTH, stir in six essentials of the Quaker process of reaching group decisions:

1. Worship – at the start, interspersed, at the close
2. Presentation of the business
3. Discussion, sharing, practicing Quaker courtesies
4. Arriving at the sense of the meeting
5. Writing the minute
6. When serious differences exist, the clerk’s next steps may include: identifying the new information or insight, “holding over” until the next meeting to enable further discernment to take place; inviting the Friend to voluntarily “stand aside;” inviting the Friend, if s/he wishes, to be recorded in the minutes as standing aside. The clerk may also discern that the “sense of the meeting” is clear, even though not everyone agrees, and state the decision of the Meeting.

SIXTH, the final ingredient consists of the responsibilities of each participant: to attend . . . be prepared (have read the previous month’s minutes & reviewed the agenda) worship listen share seek the best decision/God’s leading for the group change own opinion be surprised help carry out the decision

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business is the crucible, the container where faith and action meet, where the individual and the corporate body meet, where the corporate body and God/Spirit meet.

Q & A