Introduction

Volumes 1 and 2 in this series address how to find your place in intentional community by either creating or joining one. But how can this experience—and communities themselves—last past the "honeymoon" phase? How can groups turn long-term ideals into reality within their lives together?

A combination of "soft" and "hard" skills and systems must be present for intentional communities and their members to endure, evolve, and thrive. Sustainability in both human and ecological relationships is key to developing a cooperative culture that lasts—and is the focus of *Wisdom of Communities* Volumes 3 and 4.

The stories in this third volume focus on the "soft" skills and approaches—the human dimension of community living. Authors share experiences, tools, advice, and perspectives that will benefit anyone who wants to help their community function well and support members' well-being.

Articles explore the nuts and bolts of living together in community: creating and sustaining a cooperative group culture; decision-making and governance (including extensive reflections on consensus as well as Diana Leafe Christian's complete series on sociocracy); power, gender, class, and race; relationships and intimacy; politics and neighbor relations. These are all essential areas that communities need to address if they are to retain members and develop strong and healthy group connection.

Communitarians often discover that the quality of life they experience has much more to do with the quality of their interactions with each other than with physical amenities. Systems, structures, agreements, understandings, awareness, cultural practices, and self-education can all contribute to increasing that quality of life. Learning about these "soft skills" from others engaged in similar work can help communities immeasurably.

All articles are drawn from the past decade of Communities magazine. Every issue of Communities contains further treatments of these and similar themes, so we hope that you'll not only learn from these past stories, but also keep up with new ones by subscribing to the magazine (ic.org/subscribe).

Thanks for making use of these resources, and good luck on your community journey!

Chris Roth
Editor, Communities
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COMMUNICATION IN COMMUNITY

(Wisdom of Communities, Volume 3)

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