

# Group and Personal Sustainability



## Activity

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Putting long hours and working passionately without taking care of your personal sustainability is like running a marathon without taking any breaks to drink or eat. Eventually, you'll run out of energy and won't be able to finish the task. This is not a situation that benefits anyone. Groups and individuals can both benefit from prioritising and discussing how to promote sustainability within the group (see [Transition in Group Culture](#)).

Personal sustainability is about taking care of yourself, so you can keep doing the things that matter to you without burning out (see [Burnout to Balance](#)). And when you have personal sustainability, you also ensure the group's sustainability as each member is able to put their best efforts forward and contribute more consistently long-term.

The way to do this is finding a balance that ensures people take the time they need to relax and recuperate as well as do their work. Personal sustainability means considering what helps you feel good (sleep, food, hanging out with friends, going on vacation, and so on.). And putting it into practice means making time for those things, even when life feels busy or work feels too important (see Self-Care series [01](#) [02](#) [03](#) [04](#) [05](#) [06](#)).

So how do you get started? Try out the activity below that Transition Town Totnes ran in their second core group meeting after discovering that nearly everyone was working in a way they wouldn't be able to keep up for more than the next few months.

## Activity

Exploring giving, taking, and sustainability for you and your group.

Duration:	40 minutes
Participants:	Everyone in your group, in pairs and as a whole group
Purpose:	To discuss each team member's input and reflect on how sustainable their efforts are over a certain period of time.
Materials needed:	- A quiet space with enough room for everyone to sit comfortably. - Large flipchart paper if you want to write down any take-aways at the end of the session.



Flow: 5 minutes	<b>1. Introduce the activity.</b> Like many Transition groups, you may have ambitious ideas about what you want to achieve. And it can be easy to take on too much when you feel the scale and urgency of the issues you care about. This activity is a safety check on the well-being of individuals and the group as a whole.
10 minutes	<b>2. Explore giving, taking, and sustainability.</b> Explore the questions below by using active listening in pairs – where one person speaks and the other listens without any interruptions, or making any comments. If you're an odd number, someone pairs with the facilitator. Otherwise the facilitator reflects on the questions on their own and takes notes.  Take 4 minutes for the first person to answer on the following questions below, and then swap: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you give to this group?</li> <li>• What do you get from being part of it?</li> <li>• How sustainable is your current balance of giving and taking – for the next two or three months? For the next six months to a year?</li> </ul>
20 minutes	<b>3. Reflect together.</b> Come back together as a whole group. Go around hearing every person talk for up to a minute about what they said, especially to the last question about sustainability.  <b>Facilitator note:</b> If several people can't keep going at their current level of activity, give at least 15 minutes to talk about what they and the group can do about this. If this isn't enough time make it an agenda item at another meeting.
5 minutes	<b>4. Wrap-up.</b> Thank everyone and briefly summarise what was shared during the activity. And if you're mostly totally sustainable – take some time to congratulate yourselves and celebrate!

## Related Resources

Self-Care series [01](#) [02](#) [03](#) [04](#) [05](#) [06](#)  
[Respecting 'Yes' and 'No'](#)  
[Inner Feedback for Personal Resilience](#)  
[Personal Reflection](#)  
[Burnout to Balance](#)  
[Transition in Group Culture](#)

[Task-Process-Relationship](#)  
[Seeking Support](#)  
[Guide – Mentoring](#)  
[Effective Groups](#)  
[Working Together Well](#)  
[Succession for Long Term Success](#)



## References

- Keltner, Dacher (2023). "[Happiness Break: A Meditation to Inspire a Sense of Purpose.](#)"
- Newman, Kira M (2023). "[How to Not Let Your Job Define You.](#)"

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