

DIAGNOSTIC: NOTICING THE THREADS

A Toolkit for Democratizing Power from *Rooted Together*

Instructions: Use this checklist during your next coalition meeting, board session, or community town hall. For the first 30 minutes, remain in Observation Mode. Mark the behaviors that occur and use the notes sections to record specific examples of power accumulation.

Spatial and Digital Design (Visible Power)

Audit the physical or digital landscape to identify who is centered in the space.

- Identify who occupies the head of the table or the first page of the Zoom gallery.
- Note who is relegated to the 'outer circle' or stays off-camera.
- Confirm whether the space accommodates all bodies, languages, and tech-literacy levels.

Notes: _____

Agenda and Planning (Hidden Power)

Investigate the 'meeting before the meeting' to identify who controls information.

- Determine if the group co-authored the agenda or received it as a finished product.
- Check if all participants received participatory resources 48 hours in advance. Note if 'in the moment' sharing prevents scrutiny.
- Identify if the meeting time and location favor the power elite or the working community.

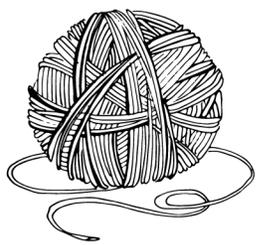
Notes: _____

Communication Metrics (Invisible Power)

Track the first 15 minutes of dialogue to identify the cultural default.

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Language and Information Gatekeeping

Identify who acts as the 'translator' of knowledge.

- Note the use of unexplained acronyms or academic jargon.
- Observe if the group shares raw data, budgets, and reports or relies on a single 'translator' to summarize the narrative.

Notes: _____

Emotional Labor and Role Casting

Identify who maintains the social glue versus who makes the decisions.

- Identify who is automatically expected to take minutes, order food, or manage logistics.
- Identify who smooths over tension or silences dissent when a difficult topic arises.

Notes: _____

Post-Observation Reflection

Once the meeting adjourns, answer these three questions to inform your next pivot:

1. Where did I feel physical tension during this meeting? What specific power thread caused that reaction?
2. Did I witness an imbalance but choose not to name it? What survival script (e.g., fear of appearing demanding) enforced my silence?
3. Which of these imbalances requires a formal policy change in our next collective accountability review?

ACTIVATE THE THREADS

This diagnostic helps you observe the specific terrain where power accumulates. Once you see the threads, you can begin to move them.

- **Observe and Diagnose:** Continue to map your terrain before attempting to change it. Other Rooted Together resources include: Ecosystem Health Audit, Strategic Choice Worksheet, Restoration ROI Calculator.
- **Join the Movement:** Get the full Shared Power Library at talemconsulting.com/resources.