

## The Role of a Guardian in a Circle Gathering

Circles started around the fires of our ancestors and have centered us ever since. When we are in a circle; we listen and speak more intentionally and thoughtfully.



**What:** A role for a group member to hold the group's energy and keep the group accountable to the circle process.

**Why:** What transforms a meeting into a circle is the willingness of group members to shift from informal or opinionated conversation into a receptive mode of thoughtful speaking and deep listening that utilizes the Circle Way process. The Guardian holds an essential role for the well-being of the group.

**How:** An important tool for aiding in circle self-governance and bringing circle members back to their intentions, is the role of the Guardian. One circle member volunteers to watch and safeguard the group's energy and observe the circle's process. The Guardian usually employs a gentle noisemaker, such as a chime, bell, or rattle, that signals to everyone to stop the action, take a breath, and rest in a space of silence. The guardian makes this sound again and speaks to why s/he called the pause. Any member may call for a pause and the Guardian will signal with the gentle sound. The role of the Guardian is one of the shared leadership roles and rotates among circle members during subsequent gatherings.

**When:** The member who has volunteered to be the Guardian is identified at the opening of a Circle and they share the sound of their gentle noisemaker with the group so circle members recognize the sound as the beginning and ending of a pause.

**Virtual Application:** The role of the Guardian and use of a gentle noisemaker is equally valuable during in-person circles and virtual gatherings when members are sharing audio and video.

This description is a gift from THE CIRCLE WAY, a loosely connected global circle of colleagues who practice, consult, and teach [The Circle Way](https://www.thecircleway.com). Originally mentored and guided by Ann Linnea and Christina Baldwin of PeerSpirit Inc.