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| **A “Map” Describing the Star Community**The purpose of the Star Community Map is to summarize the big picture of the Star Community: all of what are we doing and why are we doing it. The map builds on the idea that most of what is happening within Star Community can be usefully categorized into five “activity levels.” Within each activity level we describe our practices. Each of those practices often, but not always, links to activities at another level. That is also presented here. | **The five levels:**1. **Spiritual/Philosophical Level**: Practices in this level develop the basic spiritual and philosophical foundations for our community.
2. **Cultural Level**: Practices in this level help visualize a new cultural model, implement it within our own community, and share this model with the outside world.
3. **Group Level**: Practices in this level support and create powerful interpersonal relationships between individuals, pairs and in larger groups.
4. **Individual Level:** This level focuses on the individual personal development. Individual growth and change have important implications for group, cultural and spiritual processes. Also, personal emotional problems can prevent full participation in all of life's spheres.
5. **Economic Level**: Practices in this level support our physical and economic needs, maximizing emotional, cultural, and spiritual evolution and exploration. The bottom line is that Star Community believes that individual economic circumstances should not stop anyone from participating fully in the community.
 | **Some other important points of context:**1. First, the levels aren’t ranked in importance. Each level has its own unique activities and functions. The Economic Level isn’t more or less important than the Spiritual/ Philosophical Level.
2. All levels play important supporting roles for activities in the other levels.
3. Sometimes a named practice is a label for a collection of related, mutually supportive practices. An example is Conflict Navigation, included in the Group Level.
4. We do a lot, and our calendars get pretty full. But all events are at choice, and SC members do a good job at regulating a healthy involvement with the events of their choice.
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| **The Spiritual/Philosophical Level** | **How Star Community Practices in the Spiritual/Philosophical Relate to the Other Levels** |
| **What We Do** | **How We Do It** | **How Does This Help?** | **The Cultural Level** | **The Group Level** | **The Individual Level** | **The Economic Level** |
| **Spiritual Quest (SQ)** | SQ is a weekly meeting open to anyone. We investigate the philosophical and spiritual foundations of Star Community. | SQ keeps us focused on the “big picture”, i.e., what are we doing in Star Community, what we are trying to achieve, and why we’re dong that. | We believe that modern culture causes us to lose of our sense of meaning. Part of the SQ is understanding the cultural context of our spiritual experience, and how we can reclaim our spiritual lives. | The ideas that are developed in SQ can spawn ideas for new experiments in group living. For example, this spring we are conducting our first in-house Vipassana silent retreat. | SQ is a group where everyone is welcome to bring their own spiritual practices for discussion and feedback. |  |
| **Community Circle (CC)** | CC happens three times a month. It involves the whole community and is also open to others by invitation who are interested in Star Community.  | CC gives everyone a chance to say what is important to them—the goal is for all voices to be heard. Issues often revolve around the political, philosophical, and spiritual issues. | SC is creating its own culture. CC is an integral part of that process. CC serves as a time to reflect on what we are doing as a community, and if we need any course correction. | Star Community group cohesion is supported by making sure that all voices are heard and that important issues are heard in a timely way.  | Everyone has a chance to be heard by the whole community. Individual differences and opinions are honored and respected in the process. | The **Social Democracy** model (see the Economic Level) challenges the cultural and philosophical assumptions built into mainstream economics. It has been a recent topic in Community Circle. |
| **Strategy Meetings** | A free-flowing review of SC events, relationships, and possibilities, examined within the context of Star Community spiritual and philosophical practices. Everyone is welcome to attend. | SM provides an important feedback loop to keep SC on track. | SMs are where the ideas are born that enable us to practically challenge the mainstream cultural milieu and develop our own way of living. | During SM individual ideas coalesce into a larger coherent framework that informs all of SC thinking. | During SM people bring their own specific ideas into the discussion.  | Practical, day-to-day SC economic issues are not usually examined within SM. Separate groups handle financial decision making. |

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| **The Cultural Level** | **How Star Community Practices in the Cultural Level Relate to the Other Levels** |
| **What We Do** | **How We Do It** | **How Does This Help?** | **Spiritual/Philos. Level** | **The Group Level** | **The Individual Level** | **The Economic Level** |
| **Cultural Exploration Through Creative Encounters** | A variety of activities, artistic and creative, happen in Star Community. They are either individually undertaken or group events. Responsibility for our creative process in itself creates new cultural possibilities. | This is one of the basic reasons that Star Community exits—we believe It’s one of our core functions. | Creative encounters can provide an alternative path to exploring our spiritual and philosophical beliefs, a path that is not accessible by the usual logical analysis.  | Cultural change will have a huge impact at the group level. Group level change will, in turn, accelerate cultural change. | Cultural change will also have a huge impact at the individual level. Individual level change will, in turn, accelerate cultural change. | We believe cultural change will inevitably change what’s “necessary and real” at the economic level. Many of our usual economic strategies suffer from a limited range of possibilities. |
| **Reading Groups: Terra Nova and Sacred Matrix** | Meetings occur every week, led by a community member. | These books provide some, but by no means all, of the intellectual foundations of Star Community. | These books originated in the Tamera community, from which we draw much of our inspiration. | The themes of these books also lead to a close examination of the current culture’s underlying beliefs. | The themes of these books can lead to a close examination of a person’s current life. | The groups that have spawned these books also have non-traditional economic systems at their core. |
| **Group Living Experiments:** **Example: Barracks****Example: Winter Weekend****(On hold because of COVID)** | SC experiments with variations in group living situations. The experiments often lead to new cultural insights. Examples:Barracks: 15 to 20 people living in a single house for 10 to 14 days. Continuing with normal life (e.g., school, jobs) is a priority.Winter Weekend: A short 3-4 day gathering of 15-20 people. | Cultural innovations are specifically imagined and discussed. How to implement the innovations is usually an interesting topic.These experiments have rocky moments-- they’re supposed to. Learning to skillfully navigate the ups and downs is a primary goal. If everything goes off without a hitch, then we haven’t done much real exploration. |  Group living experiments are an opportunity to see how our philosophy is matching up with our actual lives. How do our philosophical an spiritual aspirations weather the challenging conditions in our group living experiments. | Group living experiments push the envelope for what is comfortable or easy in group processes and in living together. We sometimes find our boundaries, we sometimes find out we have more room to push the envelope than we realized. | Group living experiments are where people often report they have the most fun in the community.We find our personal edges and learn more about where we need to improve.Almost everyone will have their ups and downs in Barracks. It can be a lot of fun, but it’s also challenging. | Group living experiments often provide insight into the economic practices that underlie traditional culture, which might be changed in a new, evolving culture. |

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| **The Group Level** | **How Star Community Practices in the Group Level Relate to the Other Levels** |
| **What We Do** | **How We Do It** | **How Does This Help?** | **Spiritual/Philos. Level** | **The Cultural Level** | **The Individual Level** | **The Economic Level** |
| **Star Community Forum (SCF)** | SCF is a sharing and transparency process developed in the ZEGG community It has been in operation in Star Community for the past five years.  | SCF, as practiced in the Star Community, is specifically designed to make visible the ongoing personal and interpersonal issues within the community. | Broader philosophical and spiritual questions become more accessible through SCF. What do we want? What do we want to become? In SCF these topics become explicit and open to discussion. | SCF often focuses on connections between individual, social, and cultural processes. SCF also plays an important role in conflict navigation at the cultural level.  | Individuals are seen and understood by the community.Forum plays an important role in conflict navigation at the individual level. |  Issues of status, prestige, and unequal economic status among group members can be topics within SCF. |
| **Monthly Matrix** | Monthly Matrix events are community-wide day-long meetings on topics of interest for the whole community. | The Monthly Matrix event provides for a common experience and examination of topics that are key to the community.  | Star Community spiritual and philosophical beliefs have also been the focus of Monthly Matrix events. | Sometimes the focus is on cultural level issues such as income disparity, or status. | The Monthly Matrix has investigated individual level issues such as depression, the individual’s role in the group, and conflict navigation within groups. | Sometimes the monthly matrix addresses economic issues facing the community. For example, thinking though our housing needs. |
| **Conflict Navigation (CN)** | SC uses an approach to conflict called Conflict Navigation (CN). CN focuses on creating practical and achievable advances in conflict reduction within a short- to medium-term time horizon, while keeping the long-term big picture in mind. In other words, we work on doing what’s possible, going for the good but not the perfect in working with conflict. | In practice, CN works most of the time, but not every time. It’s the best approach we’ve found so far. We welcome our conflicts, especially when they offer possibilities for healing or cultural change.Critical to CN: 1) individuals do not take sides; 2) all people are held and not judged; 3) a continuing path forward is agreed upon before the current, immediate process is finished. |  Our spiritual and philosophical beliefs directly impact CN processes. For example, the concept of right and wrong, while having individual and cultural influences, is directly informed by several philosophical traditions and groups that inform the SC (e.g., Buddhism, Damanhur, Tamara, Possibility Management). | CN skills provide an alternative approach to cultural conflicts. We avoid the “who’s right, who’s wrong” gameworld.It is often useful to explore how larger cultural assumptions and beliefs contribute to the conflict.Conflict navigation is essential when living in group housing. Without the skill set, group housing will often fail or evolve into “roommates living together.” | Failure to resolve conflicts leads to frustration and hopelessness. This blocks positive change. Conversely, with CN, a practical path forward leads to hope and resilience.Implicit in the CN process is the willingness of the individual to accept personal discomfort, and abandon traditional concepts of right and wrong and fairness.  | Failure to resolve conflicts can be economically and logistically disastrous. Major life disruptions, like moving to escape an intolerable situation, divorce, etc., can create serious economic setbacks. |
| **The Group Level (Continued)** | **How Star Community Practices in the Group Level Relate to the Other Levels** |
| **What We Do** | **How We Do It** | **How Does This Help?** | **Spiritual/Philos. Level** | **The Cultural Level** | **The Individual Level** | **The Economic Level** |
| **Investigation and Research into Man/Women and Eros-Related issues** | Investigation into these issues occur frequently, depending on what’s up in the community. More often, however, they are discussed in informal, spontaneous gatherings. | Deepening our research into what is, and what could be between men and women; by creating affectionate bonds between people in our community; by enlarging our space of intimacy. | Part of our philosophical heritage comes from Tamera, where men/women issues have been, and continue to be, a primary avenue of exploration for the Tamera community. We are following in their footsteps. | Man/women issues at the cultural level have a huge impact on individual well-being, and the ability to fully express oneself in relationships. | Man/women issues have a huge impact on individual well-being, and the ability to fully express oneself. | Sex and eros conflicts lead to the breakup of primary relationships as much, and maybe more so, than any other cause. These breakups often have significant economic costs. |
| **Sex and Intimacy Groups** | Smallish (4-7 people) groups focusing on topics related to sex and intimacy. The groups, so far, have focused on issues of interest for their specific members. | Our sexual lives, and the associated personal intimacy, have a great deal to do with group, couple, and individual happiness. We consider this a primary topic in the community. |  |  |  |  |
| **Practicing Alternative Relationships such as polyamory** | Alternative relationships (e.g. polyamory) are assumed as possible for SC members. There is no favoritism towards one kind of relationship structure over another. | Alternative relationship strategies can lead to significant conflict between people who are romantically linked, e.g., jealousy.  |  | Cultural strictures limiting what's possible in emotional, romantic, and sexual relationships, produces significant personal, group, and cultural harm. | Individual (or couples) coaching is often useful for relationship issues such as jealousy. |   |
| **The Social Stuff: *Movie Nights, Board Games, Dinners, Friends of Star Party.*** | A movie is chosen for most Saturday nights. Board games are played regularly by many (not the majority) of people in the community. | It's fun.  | The movies sometimes center on important spiritual/philosophical themes. | The movies often center on important cultural, particularly environmental, themes. Sometimes they’re just fun. |  |  We don’t spend a lot of money on sources of outside entertainment.  |

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| The Individual Level | **How Star Community Practices in the Individual Level Relate to the Other Levels** |
| **What We Do** | **How We Do It** | **How Does This Help?** | **Spiritual/Philos. Level** | **The Cultural Level** | **The Group Level** | **The Economic Level** |
| **Possibility Management (PM)** | PM is a multi-faceted approach to personal and interpersonal change. Conceptually, it takes the best personal and cultural change technologies and builds them into a coherent, comprehensive approach to changing ourselves and our world. More extensive work in PM “Labs” is also offered.  | Individuals understand their historical origins, gain the ability to change their personal psychological makeup, and to change their relationships with others.PM provides a framework by which the personal, social and spiritual life of the community is given context. | Underlying much of our thought around change is the examination of our “gameworld.” A gameworld is a consciously or unconsciously accepted belief system about what thoughts and actions are possible, necessary, or impossible, at the personal, social, cultural and philosophical levels. Examination of controlling the gameworld is critical. | PM directly challenges conventional cultural norms and structures. Hidden cultural assumptions for individuals or groups are an important focus of PM.Ideas about what is culturally possible are expanded. Cultural creativity and inventiveness are explicit PM values. See the Spiritual/ Philosophical level. | PM creates norms for high quality human relationships that are held as ideals for the Star Community.Conflicts with others inevitably exist in intentional communities. PM operates within the broader sphere of Conflict navigation.  |   |
| **Individual Coaching (also including couples and group counseling)** | Individual coaching, based on PM and other modalities, is offered by several people within the community. This is available to SC members, usually at no charge. | Individual coaching addresses a variety issues that arise in everyday experience. Coaching helps the individual break out of existing emotional and interpersonal patterns. |   | The cultural gameworld has a huge impact on how people live their lives. Individual counseling, as SC practices it, directly confronts the cultural gameworld issues. | Individual counseling inevitably interacts with social relationships, including pairs, small groups, and the Star Community as a whole. | Individual coaching is a substantial expense if obtained through the mainstream culture. That creates a barrier to personal growth. |
| **Individual Inner Work** | Personal growth work, often through sources outside of Star Community, is undertaken by virtually all community members  | PM believes in healing our personal issues, not just learning to live with them. Inner work is required to change our groups and our culture. | The ability to step outside of a dysfunctional gameworld has enormous spiritual and philosophical implications for a person, group, or culture. | Old psychological patterns can keep people attached to old cultural norms. Inner work often makes cultural change more possible. | Triggers in group living situations are most often based on old patterns within the individual, but will impact the group. Individual coaching will often help someone get past a stuck point in a conflict. | Once a person feels more emotionally secure, they can take more life chances and, manage their time differently. |

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| **The Economic Level** | **How Star Community Practices in the Economic Level Relate to the Other Levels** |
| **What We Do** | **How We Do It** | **How Does This Help** | **Spiritual/Philos. Level** | **The Cultural Level** | **The Group Level** | **The Individual Level** |
| **Practicing Social Democracy** | SC is consciously trying to develop a flavor of Social Democracy that works within our context. This means socializing, as much as practical, the everyday costs of living, with applications in housing, sharing utilities, and shared transportation. | Social democracy ismany things, but for Star Community, it is an economic world that tries to reduce excessive economic separation between people, and in the end, avoiding the excesses of capitalism. | The social democracy movement directly challenges the underlying economic assumptions and philosophy of the current mainstream culture. | Developing a more harmonious economic system, through social democracy has been done in the Scandinavian countries. It has led to greater happiness and satisfaction with those cultures. | We have seen other intentional communities endure great conflict when economic disparities are not directly addressed. We want to avoid this outcome. | Individual stress over economic issues can be considerable. Creating a stable and reliable economic floor eliminates much of this stress. |
| **Securing Permanent & Affordable Housing** | Purchase of large houses in 2017 and 2019 in South Seattle.We’ll add a third house when the timing/demand are right. | We own our housing; our basic housing costs are fixed.Amortization of housing costs across lots of people lowers per person housing costs.SC members generally live life with less economic stress. | We have no formal membership requirement. You’re a member roughly “in proportion” to your participation. This approach works well for us. However, community membership requires more than a casual involvement if SC goals are to be achieved.  | Experiments in cultural change (e.g., Barracks experiments) can be easily implemented in housing we control.Sharing resources is good for the environment. | Living as a group builds a richer social network.Group living create recreational activities (game playing, shared movies, etc.), shared meals, and additional child care support to parents. | Regular social contact (and less isolation) benefits most people in a variety of ways.Individual growth is supported within the house, for example the opportunity to give and receive valuable feedback. |
| **Socialization of Room Rents and Expenses**  | Rental income is partially shared and distributed across both houses. Room characteristics (e.g., room size, storage space, bathroom access) are not the only consideration for room costs.  | In some situations, a person’s physical needs require a certain bedroom (e.g., no stairs). Personal financial resources don’t frustrate this need. | There is a spiritual component to the economic level in the sense of how our philosophy and values shape our economic decisions. | Economic security helps bridge social class differences.  | Socialization of housing expenses creates goodwill and trust between community members and creates a more level playing field.. | Shared housing reduces financial stress and the associated psychic strain. |

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| **The Economic Level (Continued)** | **How Star Community Practices in the Economic Level Relate to the Other Levels** |
| **What We Do** | **How We Do It** | **How Does This Help** | **Spiritual/Philos. Level** | **The Cultural Level** | **The Group Level** | **The Individual Level** |
| **Shared Resources: Food, Utility, and Transportation**  | *Shared Transportation:* Three shared vehicles are available; most vehicles are informally shared.*Shared Food and Utilities:* Costs are pooled and shared within each house. Amazon Prime, Netflix, New York Times, etc. are shared. | Sharing cars reduces transportation expenses.Sharing food allows for lower food costs (bulk purchases). Bulk purchases allow for higher quality food (e.g., organic) without increasing costs and resource use. | . | Food waste is reduced. Less than half of our members own cars, reducing our environmental impact. | Eating together creates positive social and emotional experiences. Some of our best conversations occur during shared rides and shared meals. | You don’t have to go to the grocery store so often; there is almost always something you’ll like in the kitchen to eat; and we eat better and healthier. A car breakdown is not a crisis. |
| **Shared Responsibility for House Maintenance and Hiring Within the Community** | We do maintenance tasks that we can accomplish ourselves. We hire professionals for jobs that exceed our skills. We have paid Star Community members to do specific tasks within the houses. | Often someone has the needed maintenance skills. Substantial money is saved, and projects get done. Added self-reliance gives us confidence that we can accomplish other things. | Embedded within this practice is an idea we’re working on: Everybody should be responsible for something important in Star Community |   | Increased household self-sufficiency and the positive feelings this creates supports cohesive group action.  | People have the opportunity, and feel good about, and contributing to, community wellbeing.Important skills are learned from others. |
| **We subsidize various channels of personal growth work.** | We offer financial support for various channels of personal growth work. | Growth opportunities that would not be available to an individual become more available. |  | The long-term positive evolution of our larger culture depends on healthy individual and interpersonal processes. | Improved interpersonal relationships are supported through a variety of coaching and workshop opportunities at limited or no cost. | Individual change is embedded into the Star Community culture. |