strength of the full structure. For purposes of simplicity, we are going to assume that you are calling the circle. You are getting ready to invite circle practice into a new setting or into an ongoing group that you hope will be willing to adopt circle as the process for its meetings or conversational time.

Figure 2.1
and to learn some poignant history about one another. So PJ is wise to tend first to preparation—of herself and of the space in which to hold such conversation.

**Levels of Preparation**

This is often how preparation for circle in an organization begins: one person, who becomes the initial host, reads about circle process or has an experience of circle process that is transformative and wants to apply it meaningfully somewhere else in his or her life. These initiators want to take it into the places where relationships or processes need to be more collaborative, thoughtful, and creative. Like PJ, they begin to articulate their desire for something different to themselves and imagine changed outcomes.

There are three facets to preparation: getting one’s own motivation clear, writing and extending the invitation, and literally finding time and space.

**EXHIBIT 3.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I Have Enough Of</th>
<th>What I Have Too Much Of</th>
<th>What I Want More Of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support from husband for doing this work; good friends who let me download and find humor in situations</td>
<td>Meetings that are ill-planned, more meetings that are ill-planned, and even more meetings that I have to plan; number of e-mails and calls per day</td>
<td>Weekends! Time when I am really not mentally at work; time to exercise; time to enjoy cooking for us—not just take-out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair compensation, good health, etc.</td>
<td>People thinking I have to know everything—they don’t trust their own autonomy.</td>
<td>Mini-vacations that revive my spirit; time to have fun with family and friends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agenda Builder for the Circle/Session

Date: ________ Time opened: _____ Time closed: ______

- Circle Host: ____________________________
  Guardian: ________________________________

Sponsors by agenda items

- Item Host: ______________ Item: __________
  Scribe: ______________ Negotiated Time: ______
  Tasks, decisions, outcome: ____________________

- Item Host: ______________ Item: __________
  Scribe: ______________ Negotiated Time: ______
  Tasks, decisions, outcome: ____________________

- Item Host: ______________ Item: __________
  Scribe: ______________ Negotiated Time: ______
  Tasks, decisions, outcome: ____________________

- Item Host: ______________ Item: __________
  Scribe: ______________ Negotiated Time: ______
  Tasks, decisions, outcome: ____________________

Ⓒ PeerSpirit, Inc.

FIGURE 4.2
Most human conflicts arise from a passion that has not had space to be fully expressed or witnessed by the other side. The father and son cannot change their relationship until they have heard each other out; conservatives and gay people cannot let go of their differences until they have each been listened to; the Catholics have to be heard by the Protestants and the Protestants have to be heard by the Catholics; and so on. The literal and energetic presence of the center in circle allows us enough room so that those holding
restabilization, he could make a heartfelt contribution to the quality of check-in. Though his words were challenging, we heard him because he shifted his energy.

The Energetic Roles of Host and Guardian

In the social containment of circle, the role of the host and guardian is a seamless collaboration—like a Möbius strip—in which each person assists the other in tracking the energy within the group process. A Möbius strip is a one-sided three-dimensional object (see Figure 8.2). The simplest way to make one is to cut a strip of paper, twist it once, and paste the two ends together. Voilà!—a circle, and an environment, where there are no leader or follower positions: all is in motion—host, guardian, and all participants.

By sitting across from each other, the host and guardian carefully watch the other side of the circle. They provide a compass of leadership that tends to activate others around the rim to step into their own leadership. Just as the guardian’s bell is a voice in the circle, energy has a seat in the circle, and the host is hosting it.
“The fact that we designed two separate charts is significant,” explained Dahlborg. “They say pretty much the same thing, but in different ways for different people. Those who come from a more circular perspective prefer the True North Circle Connectivity diagram, which rounds out the necessary legal, hierarchical connection between our nonprofit board of directors, medical director Hays and practitioners, and myself and support staff. Some members of the True North staff find the Public Trust Hierarchical Chart to be clearer and more precise. We wanted to offer both versions.”
During the reevaluation process, the decision circle tallied the number of hours each staff member had been spending in circle meetings and the number of hours each staff member would now be spending in circle meetings under the evolved model. Under the earlier system, the yearly cost of wages for staff and practitioners to attend circle meetings came to $492,000. Under the evolved model, costs are $360,000, for a savings of $132,000. “These figures represent our best effort to quantify time spent in meetings,” explained Tom. “This is a useful accounting for any organization, whether meetings take place in a more hierarchical form or in circle as they do at True North.”