

Wait, What? Why SOS works the way it does. An intermediate Q&A

Please click each question to see the answer.

Why can't coordinators simply direct what others do?

Because in the Self-Organising System, **authority lives in the role, not the person**. Coordinators don't command — they align. Their job is to hold the big picture, set priorities and connect the dots, not to tell others how to do their work. Each role-holder has their own mandate and the autonomy to act within it.

This way, decisions stay close to where the real knowledge and motivation live. It keeps power circulating, prevents hierarchy from creeping back in, and honours Principle 7 (**We actively mitigate power**) and Principle 2 (**We set our mission on what is necessary**). Coordination replaces control with clarity — and that's what keeps the system alive and responsive.

Why is decentralisation safer than having a strong central leadership?

Because power spread across many people is harder to corrupt, silence or break. In SOS, authority lives in clear roles and mandates, not in personalities or status. This makes the system resilient: if one person leaves, or a mistake is made, others can step in and the work continues. Centralised power may feel faster or simpler, but it creates single points of failure and dependence on a few decision-makers.

Decentralisation builds collective intelligence and accountability. It allows decisions to be made close to where the knowledge and motivation live, while still aligning through shared principles and purpose. This reflects Principle 7 (**We actively mitigate power**), Principle 2 (**We set our mission on what is necessary**), and Principle 3 (**We need a regenerative culture**) — creating a movement that's distributed, adaptable, and hard to stop.

Why is “good enough for now, safe enough to try” better than perfect — and why does SOS encourage experimenting, even if we fail?

Because waiting for perfect slows everything down — and usually means nothing changes. In the Self-Organising System, we learn by doing, not by designing flawless plans. If an idea is “good enough for now, safe enough to try”, we act, observe what happens, and adapt. Every experiment — even one that fails — gives us real feedback that makes the system smarter.

This approach turns mistakes into learning fuel and keeps the movement flexible and alive. It reflects Principle 5 (**We value reflecting and learning**) and Principle 3 (**We need a regenerative culture**) — reminding us that growth comes through iteration, not perfection. Perfection is static; experimentation keeps us evolving.

Why record everything on the Hub? What role does this transparency play in sharing power?

Recording roles, mandates and decisions on the Hub isn't bureaucracy — it's how we share power. When everyone can see who's responsible for what, authority stops being personal and becomes collective. No one has to rely on insider knowledge or private networks to get things done. Everyone can see who is accountable for what.

This visibility speeds up trust and prevents power from concentrating around a few people who “just know how things work.” It embodies Principle 7 (**We actively mitigate power**), Principle 5 (**We value reflecting and learning**) and Principle 3 (**We need a regenerative culture**). Transparency turns information into a common resource — making the movement more equal, agile and alive.

Why should we welcome tensions — and see conflict as information, not a threat?

In SOS, a tension isn't a problem to suppress — it's a message from the system that something needs attention or change. Conflict often signals a gap between 'what is' and 'what could be better'. When we listen to that signal instead of resisting it, we uncover valuable information about what's missing, unclear or misaligned.

Avoiding tensions lets frustration build underground; working with them helps the team evolve. By naming and processing tensions openly, we strengthen trust and creativity instead of eroding them. This embodies Principle 3 (**We need a regenerative culture**), Principle 5 (**We value reflecting and learning**), and Principle 7 (**We actively mitigate power**). Conflict handled well isn't destructive; it's the heartbeat of adaptation.

Why should I welcome objections to my proposal — and treat them as gifts, not obstacles?

Because an objection is a sign that someone else sees a risk you've missed — and they're sharing it before it becomes a problem. In SOS, objections aren't blocks to your idea; they're contributions to making it stronger. When we integrate valid objections, proposals become safer, more resilient, and more likely to succeed with everyone's support.

Treating objections as gifts builds trust and shared know-how. It shifts us from defending our own ideas to improving them together, turning difference into creativity instead of conflict. This embodies Principle 3 (**We need a regenerative culture**), Principle 5 (**We value reflecting and learning**), and Principle 7 (**We actively mitigate power**). By welcoming objections, we practise shared care for the system — ensuring it grows wiser with every decision.

How does updating mandates help prevent burnout?

By keeping mandates clear and current we keep work doable and purposeful. When roles drift or outgrow their original scope, people end up carrying invisible responsibilities, absorbing tensions, or feeling they can never do enough. Regularly reviewing and adjusting mandates lets teams rebalance workloads, clarify boundaries, and drop what no longer serves their purpose. Updating a mandate isn't bureaucracy — it's regeneration in practice. It helps the team stay aligned with reality, not habit, and ensures each person's energy is used where it matters most. This reflects Principle 3 (**We need a regenerative culture**) and Principle 5 (**We value reflecting and learning**): caring for the system means caring for the people who sustain it.

Why should I speak from my role instead of from my personal opinions?

Because speaking from your role keeps the conversation focused on what serves the team's shared purpose, not individual preference. Personal opinions are valuable, but in SOS they can blur accountability — no one knows whose mandate a comment relates to, or how to act on it. Speaking from your role makes clear what authority or perspective you're bringing, and helps others respond from theirs.

It also protects relationships: disagreements between roles are easier to explore than conflicts between personalities. This clarity builds trust and efficiency, ensuring that decisions come from the work itself, not from ego or dominance. It reflects Principle 7 (**We actively mitigate power**) and Principle 3 (**We need a regenerative culture**) — practising humility, boundaries and care in how we use our voice.