



# Empowering Public Wisdom: A Practical Vision of Citizen-Led Politics (Manifesto Series)

*Tom Atlee*

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Lifelong activist Tom Atlee proposes innovative ways to distill the wisdom of ordinary people in order to better guide public policy. In *Empowering Public Wisdom*, Atlee recognizes currently popular forms of progressive democracy advocates, such as citizen participation and voter education, but suggests that what is really needed is a re-thinking of the very concept of democracy; Atlee advocates the use of "public wisdom," a collective intelligence that can be drawn upon to guide public policy and action. Reaching beyond partisan politics, Atlee explores how a diversity of views can be engaged around public issues in ways that generate a coherent, shared "voice of the people" that takes most or all of the population's perspectives and needs into account. Atlee's core approach is through "citizen deliberative councils," in which a small group of people randomly selected creates a "mini-public" or a microcosm of the larger population. Citizen councils engage in the study of a public issue and make recommendations to public officials and the community, but disband afterward; when a new issue arises, a new council is formed. Ultimately, Atlee aims even higher, suggesting a possible fourth branch of government to better balance our current democratic system. Combining a radical vision with practical solutions, *Empowering Public Wisdom* provides a unique and refreshing voice in the political arena.

*Empowering Public Wisdom* is part of the EVOLVER EDITIONS Manifesto Series.



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