

## **8 Step Recovery MEETING MATERIALS**

To run a successful meeting, you need a copy of the Eight Step Recovery book, and you will need to follow a suggested meeting format.

Make sure you have someone signed up to chair each meeting. The chair is somebody who welcomes people, and facilitates the meeting, by asking people if they are willing to read part of the meeting materials.

Chairs are not expected to be experts or have more knowledge than anybody else. It is expected that they will facilitate people having the opportunity to share in a meeting. Knowledge of Buddhism is not necessary and could even be a pitfall. All you need to do is study the book together.

The chair's role is to begin the meeting and end the meeting on time, and also ask for Dana. Some of you will know this as the seventh tradition. Dana is an expression of generosity. Making a donation supports the group to continue holding meetings, and helps to pass on the teachings you have been given. Nobody is turned away due to lack of money. Meetings are run on the multifaceted expression of generosity.

It is helpful to print the Welcome, Meeting Guidelines, Preamble, Moral Inventory, Eight Steps, and the AGE and Transference of Merit on cards or laminated paper so that different people can read them out aloud. Also, ensure you have enough printed paper copies of the eight steps and the Transference of Merit for everyone. Some groups create booklets for people.

### **Order of Meeting**

- The chair opens the meeting with the Welcome.
- The chair asks if someone will read the Meeting Guidelines.
- The chair asks if someone will read the Preamble
- The chair asks if some will read the Moral Inventory
- The chair will ask someone to lead the 8 steps  
(of course this could be also done by the Chair reading the welcome and then asking someone to read the meeting guidelines and then that person asks someone to read the next script. (What ever works best for you.)
- Choose Meeting format: Step meeting, book study meeting, speaker meeting.
- Always end with someone reading the three minute breathing space AGE
- And then everyone reads the Transference of Merit and Self Surrender together.

## Welcome

My name is ..... and I will now read the 10 -minute breathing space AGE

- Become aware of your body; aware of sensations in the body; aware of thoughts; aware of emotions.
- Gather your breath on the upper lip, the chest, or in the abdomen, and let the contact of the breath calm your thoughts.
- Expand the breath throughout the whole body. Let me hear everyone take a deep breath and expand it throughout the body.

We invite you to introduce yourself and say one word to describe how you are feeling . Please take up to a maximum of twenty seconds; thank you. It is also okay for you not to say anything.

(After introductions, ask if there are any newcomers, and please welcome them.)

Will somebody now read the Meeting Guidelines?

## **Meeting Guidelines**

I would like to remind all of us of our suggested meeting guidelines

- If there is more than one person, there are enough people for a meeting.
- The only requirement to attend this meeting is the desire to live your life by the five precepts, which are training principles to help train the mind. And the desire to be free of your addiction and or compulsive behaviours.
- Please respect people's personal sharing – let what you hear, stay here.
- Be kind to yourself, and in turn be kind to others.
- Enjoy your recovery.

Will somebody please read the Preamble?

## **Preamble**

This Eight Step Recovery Meeting explores recovery through the lens of the Buddhist teachings, and Buddhism through the lens of recovery. If you are attending Twelve Step meetings, this can be your expression of your eleventh step and if you are not in a Twelve Step Program, it can be another way to approach your recovery. This is an extra meeting to complement your recovery, whatever that looks like.

For the next one and a half hours or two hours we are temporarily going for refuge to the Three Jewels. What we mean by that is, as best we can, we are placing the Buddha (the Awakened mind), the Dharma (the teachings of the Buddha), and the sangha (the spiritual community that has recovered and woken up to the truth) at the center of our thoughts. Those of us in recovery know too well that our addiction has often been at the center of our thoughts.

Will somebody please read the moral inventory?

## **Moral Inventory**

So we begin with our moral inventory. We are turning our thoughts over to the Three Jewels. To the Buddha, the Awakened mind, which has gained liberation from suffering. To the Dharma, the teachings that point to the truth. And to the sangha, the spiritual communities, which have gained liberation. We will now recite the training principles to help train the mind in call and response. I will say a line and you repeat.

1. I undertake to abstain from harming life. With deeds of loving-kindness I purify my body.
2. I undertake to abstain from taking the not given. With open-handed generosity I purify my body.
3. I undertake to abstain from sexual misconduct. With stillness, simplicity, and contentment I purify my body.
4. I undertake to abstain from false speech. With truthful communication I purify my speech.
5. I undertake to abstain from taking intoxicants. With mindfulness clear and radiant I purify my mind.

Will somebody read HOW IT WORKS

co-founder of AA Dr Bob once wrote in a pamphlet *Spiritual Milestones*:

'Consider the eight-part program laid down in Buddhism: Right view, right aim, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right-mindedness and right contemplation. The Buddhist philosophy, as exemplified by these eight points, could be literally adopted by AA as a substitute for or addition to the Twelve Steps. Generosity, universal love and welfare of others rather than considerations of self are basic to Buddhism.'

We will now say the eight steps together:

## **Eight Steps**

**Step One:** Accepting that this human life will bring suffering.

**Step Two:** Seeing how we create extra suffering in our lives.

**Step Three:** Recognizing impermanence shows us that our suffering can end.

**Step Four:** Being willing to step onto the path of recovery, and discover freedom.

**Step Five:** Transforming our speech, actions, and livelihood.

**Step Six:** Placing positive values at the center of our lives.

**Step Seven:** Making every effort to stay on the path of recovery.

**Step Eight:** Helping others to share the benefits I have gained.

Will the chair please choose the meeting format

Please see an example of a meeting format below. For full meeting formats, and how to mentor people through the eight steps please sign up for the free booklet on the website.  
[www.eightsteprecovery.com](http://www.eightsteprecovery.com)

## **A MEETING FORMAT - SPEAKER TO SHARE FOR 15 MINUTES ON A STEP**

- This evening we will focus on **Step One**: Accepting that this human life will bring suffering. What does it mean for you to accept that this human life will bring about suffering, in the context of your dis-ease?
- This evening we will focus on **Step Two**: Seeing how we create extra suffering in our lives. How do I create extra suffering in my life?
- This evening we will focus on **Step Three**: Recognizing impermanence shows us that our suffering can end. What do I need to let go of in my life today?
- This evening we will focus on **Step Four**: Being willing to step onto the path of recovery, and discover freedom. How willing am I to step onto the path of recovery today? or What is one aspect of freedom I have discovered since being on the path of recovery?
- This evening we will focus on **Step Five**: Transforming our speech, actions, and livelihood. How can I begin transforming or continue to transform my speech, or actions, or livelihood? Just choose one to focus on.
- This evening we will focus on **Step Six**: Placing positive values at the center of our lives. What are some of the things that tend to occupy my thoughts? What is the impact of having these thoughts at the center of my life?
- This evening we will focus on **Step Seven**: Making every effort to stay on the path of recovery. How can I make more effort to stay on the path of recovery?
- This evening we will focus on **Step Eight**: Helping others to share the benefits I have gained. What could I do this week to help share the benefits I have gained?



Once this part of the meeting is over, please always end with the following: The chair will lead the 10 Minute breathing space (AGE):

## AGE

- Become aware of your body; aware of sensations in the body; aware of thoughts; aware of emotions.
- Gather your breath on the upper lip, the chest, or in the abdomen, and let the contact of the breath calm your thoughts.
- Expand the breath throughout the whole body. Let me hear everyone take a deep breath and expand it throughout the body.

Let's all say the Transference of Merit together.

## **Transference of Merit and Self Surrender**

May the merit gained  
in my acting thus  
go to the alleviation of the suffering  
of all beings.

My personality  
throughout my existences,  
my possessions,  
and my merit in all three ways  
I give up without regard  
to myself  
for the benefit of all beings.

Just as the earth  
and other elements  
are serviceable in many ways  
to the infinite number of beings  
inhabiting limitless space,  
so may I become  
that which maintains all beings  
situated throughout space  
so long as all have not attained  
to peace.

## NOTE TO CHAIR

Please ask at this point for dana (voluntary financial contribution) – nobody is paid. Dana is an act of generosity, showing an appreciation of the Buddhist teachings. However, there is no suggested fee, and nobody is turned away. There is no price to attend a meeting. And nobody should be made to feel uncomfortable if they don't put into the pot. This must come from each individual's generosity of spirit. Some people may give dana by offering to open up and put out chairs each week, and tidy up after. Being of service as dana is as valuable and generous as giving money.

Just as recovery is a process, so is the act of generosity. Dana will pay for your meeting space, for materials, books, non-alcoholic beverages, and anything else you need. If you have a surplus, you might wish to give money to a participant who wants to attend a recovery retreat.

## ENJOY YOUR RECOVERY