



# RECOVERY DHARMA MEETING FORMAT

*Before the meeting, the facilitator may find volunteers to read the following:*

- *The Practice*
- *The Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path*
- *The Dedication of Merit*

## OPENING

Welcome to this meeting of Rockland Recovery Dharma. We are gathered to explore a Buddhist-inspired approach to recovery from addiction of all kinds. We are peer-led and do not follow any one leader or teacher, but trust in the wisdom of the Buddha (the potential for our own awakening), the Dharma (the truth, or the teachings), and the Sangha (our community of wise friends on this path). This is a program of empowerment and doesn't ask us to believe in anything other than our own potential to change and heal. We have found a guide for our recovery in the Buddhist teachings of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, and we invite you to investigate these practices and principles as tools for your own path of liberation from the suffering of addiction. We understand that this is not the only path to recovery and many may choose to combine these practices with other recovery programs.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am tonight's facilitator. I am not a Buddhist teacher, nor do I have any particular authority in this meeting. I am a member of this community and have volunteered to help lead our meeting and discussion.

In order to preserve silence during meditation, please turn off or silence your phones so they do not ring or vibrate.

## THE PRACTICE

I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read The Practice:

**Renunciation:** We commit to the intention of abstinence from alcohol and other addictive substances and behaviors.

**Meditation:** We commit to the intention of developing a daily meditation practice.

**Meetings:** We attend recovery meetings and commit to becoming an active part of the community, offering our own experiences and service wherever possible.

**The Path:** We commit to deepening our understanding of the Four Noble Truths and to practicing the Eightfold Path in our daily lives.

**Inquiry and Investigation:** We explore the Four Noble Truths as they relate to our addictive behavior through writing and sharing in-depth, detailed Inquiries.

**Sangha, Wise Friends, Mentors:** We cultivate relationships within a recovery community, to both support our own recovery and support the recovery of others.

**Growth:** We continue our study of these Buddhist principles and undertake a lifelong journey of growth and awakening.

## THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS AND EIGHTFOLD PATH

I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path:

As people who have struggled with addiction, we are already intimately familiar with the truth of suffering. Even if we have never heard of the Buddha, at some level we already know the foundation of his teachings, which we call the Dharma: that in this life, there is suffering.

The Buddha also taught the way to free ourselves from this suffering. The heart of these teachings is the Four Noble Truths and the corresponding commitments, which are the foundation of our program.

1. There is suffering. We commit to understanding the truth of suffering.
2. There is a cause of suffering. We commit to understanding that craving leads to suffering.
3. There is an end to suffering. We commit to understanding and experiencing that less craving leads to less suffering.
4. There is a path that leads to the end of suffering. We commit to cultivating the path.

The Buddha taught that by living ethically, practicing meditation, and developing wisdom and compassion, we can end the suffering that is created by resisting, running from, and misunderstanding reality. We have found that these practices and principles can end the suffering of addiction. The Eightfold Path helps us find our way in recovery and consists of the following:

1. Wise Understanding
2. Wise Intention
3. Wise Speech
4. Wise Action
5. Wise Livelihood
6. Wise Effort
7. Wise Mindfulness
8. Wise Concentration

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

In an effort to build community and get to know each other, we start each week by introducing ourselves. There is no need to identify yourself by anything other than your first name. If you feel comfortable, you may share about what brings you here today or how your week has been. If not, you can just say your name and pass. Please remember to limit your share to 2-3 minutes so everyone has a chance to check in. *(Facilitator can start or defer to someone else.)*

## **MEDITATION**

*(The facilitator leads a Buddhist meditation of their choice.)*

We will now do a guided meditation on \_\_\_\_\_. A reminder that it's always okay to take care of yourself during meditation. If you need to get up or take a break, please do so as quietly as possible so as not to disturb others.

## **LITERATURE DISCUSSION MEETING**

We will now take turns reading from the *Recovery Dharma* book (or another Buddhist book), and then open the meeting for discussion. If you do not wish to participate in the reading, simply say "pass" to skip on to the next person.

## **GROUP SHARING**

Now is an opportunity for open discussion. If anyone wishes to share something with the group, this is an opportunity to do so. Please limit your share to 3 to 5 minutes to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak. We commit to making this space as safe and welcoming as possible for all members of our community. Please be wise in your speech by trying to use "I" statements and focusing your share on your own experience of addiction, recovery, Buddhist principles and practice, or tonight's topic.

## **CLOSING**

That is all the time we have for sharing. In order for this to be a group where we feel safe to share about our recovery, we ask that you respect the confidentiality of everyone in the room. We encourage you to continue your meditation practice, your study of Buddhist principles, and to reach out to others in order to build community.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

We now pass the basket for dana, which is a Buddhist term for the practice of generosity. Please give what you can to support the meeting and help pay our rent.

*(Announcements about clean up, phone/email list, books for sale, free handouts, upcoming retreats, or other news pertaining to the group.)*

## DEDICATION OF MERIT

I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read the Dedication of Merit.

Refuge does not arise in a particular place, but in the space within the goodness of our hearts. When this space is imbued with wisdom, respect, and love, we call it sangha. We hope that the pain of addiction, trauma, and feeling “apart” actually leads us back toward the heart and that we might understand compassion, wisdom, and change ever more deeply. As we have learned from practice, great pain does not erase goodness, but in fact informs it.

May we make the best use of our practice, and whatever freedom arises from our efforts here today. May this be a cause and condition for less suffering and more safety in our world.

May we be happy  
May we be peaceful  
May we be free from suffering

May all beings be happy  
May all beings be peaceful  
May all beings be free from suffering

*(Close with a bow)*