



Second Edition

RELATIONSHIPS THAT WORK

The Power of Conscious Living

A Transformative Communication
Approach to Self-Realization

Book Study Group Facilitation Guide

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This is a six-meeting guide for facilitating an experiential book study series designed to have a leader to practice and study tools and principles presented in the first three sections of the book, *Relationships That Work*, Second Edition, by David B. Wolf, PhD. This guide suggests readings, guidelines and activities during and between meetings.

Objective of this Series

The objective of this series is to provide a structured process for experiencing and practicing some of the lessons and approach to conscious living in *Relationships That Work: The Power of Conscious Living, A Transformative Communication Approach to Self-Realization*, in a group setting with a discussion leader. The aim of the series is for all participants to experience first-hand, some of the processes of self-discovery through transformative communication discussed in the book using tools that create empathic and responsible dialogue while being in the service of the personal development of others in the group.

This is different than most “book clubs” as it involves personal sharing and experiencing transformation in a group setting where trust gets built over time. Thus, it is important for people to commit to attending all meetings and completing most assigned activities.

About the Book

Transformative Communication, a communication-based foundation for self-realization, forms the basis of this book which is built on the premise that we are spiritual beings having a human experience. Our spirit is eternal, conscious and blissful, and our purpose is to serve including helping in the spiritual development of others. We possess a human form of life, and we have a responsibility to deliberate about spiritual matters and re-connect with the essential self.

This book provides practical exercises and principles for you to master strategies for high-level communication. You will learn empathic listening skills, conflict resolution skills, and ways of assertion that align with the principles rooted in your spiritual truth. This book shows you how to be in more honest satisfying relationships, deepen self-awareness, and learn how to live a life of purposeful action.

You will be guided to recognize patterns of assumptions by which you've been living your life, and to replace unhealthy and ineffective belief systems with truths and principles rooted in your core spiritual identity. What are some belief barriers you are holding onto? Identify what you are telling yourself – about yourself, about life, about commitment, money, love, and happiness – that prevents you from full achievement. In following the processes described in this book, you will learn principles, strategies and tools to transform this inner talk and profoundly alter your experience of self and the world. You will be empowered to connect with what is vitally important, and live with intentionality to manifest your highest purpose while helping others do the same.

Guidelines for Leading a Successful Discussion Group Series

1. This guide book is designed as a series of six 2.5-hour meetings with between meeting activities with partners, and a group of 6 or 8 people is ideal.
2. This book discussion series is interactive and experiential as well as reading-based. It functions on the basis of trust and connection with other members of the group so works best when all members commit to attending all planned meetings and completing all assignments.
3. To facilitate this series, the facilitator will be managing time for activities and discussions. A timer will be necessary for some of the in-class activities that are recommended.
4. To invite people for the series, email potentially interested people and create a Facebook, EventBrite or other planning webpage, sharing:
 - a. a description of the series with meeting dates, times and location as well as your personal approach
 - b. the expectation that participants will commit to attending all meetings, and completing between-meeting assignments.
 - c. a link to the book website <http://relationshipsthatwork-book.com>
5. For meetings,
 - a. Put chairs in a circle if possible so all can see each other and are sitting relatively close together.
 - b. Suggest Ground Rules for participant interaction in meetings. Here is a suggested list:
 - i. Attend all meetings and participate in all assignments
 - ii. Come on time, stay the whole meeting.
 - iii. Honor confidentiality; what is said in the room is not repeated to others, or discussed later out of the meetings, except with permission.
 - iv. Avoid cross-talk, side-talking and interrupting. One person shares at a time.
 - v. Avoid commenting on what others share. It is their experience and their process.
 - vi. Stay focused on current activity or question. Be mindful of impulsive talking.
 - c. It is important to manage time. Each item for each meeting has a time estimate for it so each meeting lasts 2.5 hours or less including a break.
 - d. If you have completed Satvatove courses, it is strongly suggested that when people share in the group, you demonstrate reflective listening to a level that they feel understood.
 - e. Use the guide below which has italics for words to be read during meetings, if desired. Times written are suggestions based on a 6pm-8:30pm meeting timeframe.

Meeting 1 (pp. 3 - 33)

Part One: Spiritual Principles of Personal Growth

- The Nature of Spirit
- Examining Assumptions
- Be-Do-Have

Part Two: Transformative Communication: Creating Sacred Space

- Warmth, Empathy, Genuineness (WEG)

Meeting 2 (pp. 33 - 72)

- Roadblocks to Effective Communication
- Reflective Listening

Meeting 3 (pp. 73 - 96)

- Reflective Listening
- Open-Ended Questions
- Assertiveness
- WIN strategy

Meeting 4 (pp. 97 - 115)

- Feedback, immediacy
- Handling Broken Agreements

Part Three: Be-Do-Have: A Paradigm for Conscious Living

- Language Reflects Consciousness

Meeting 5 (pp. 116 - 133)

- Grungies and Payoffs
- Pulling the Weeds

Meeting 6 (pp. 134 - 170):

- Victim Stories
- Feedback

Post-meeting 6 Partner Assignment

- Strategies for Surviving
- Strategies for Living

In this series, only Parts 1 through 3 are covered.

Two weeks Before Meeting 1

- Register an even number of participants if possible (6, 8, 10) and secure a private location for meeting.
- Ensure they are able to come to scheduled meetings and are committed to attending.
- Send correspondence with Assignment 1, meeting time, place, how to get a book, etc.

Sometime before Meeting 1

- Make ½ page printouts of ground rules to hand out at Meeting 1.
- Make a partner grid at the beginning of the series, deciding who meets with whom for each between-meeting session. Here is an example of a 6-person grid, numbers being the meeting numbers:

	Ruth	Claudio	Allen	Gail	Jenny	Prema
Ruth	xxx	1	2	3,6	4	5
Claudio	1	xxx	3	4	5,2	6
Allen	2	3	xxx	5	6	1,4
Gail	3,6	4	5	xxx	1	2
Jenny	4	5,2	6	1	xxx	3
Prema	5	6	1,4	2	3	xxx

Assignment 1

- Read up to page 33 - until Roadblocks to Effective Communication
- Do exercises on pages 9-12 alone.
- Write a half page or more related to assumptions and beliefs you hold in your life (see pp 15-17).

What are some belief barriers that you are holding onto?

Meeting 1

1. **Introduction** (45 minutes) (6pm)
 - a. Gather people in a circle
 - b. Welcome. Introduce yourself and why you started this book study group.
 - c. Announce housekeeping items: when there is a break, ending time, if there are snacks, bathroom, parking considerations etc.
 - d. Invite each person to share
 - i. Their name
 - ii. What they do in their life, or other intro question.
 - iii. What attracted them to being in this series, and what they want to get out of it.
 - e. Review schedule of the future meetings and expectation that each person will attend.
 - f. Explain that there will be assignments between meetings: some individual, some with each other and some with other people in their lives.
 - g. Share how you plan to communicate with the group between meetings (email, Facebook group)
 - h. Propose **ground rules** for meetings; pass out ½ page printouts. Read through and then ask if anyone has questions or issues with these proposed ground rules? Ask if the group wants to adopt the ground rules. Group may adjust/change the ground rules in order for all to accept.
 - i. If desired, share that you will be doing some reflective listening sometimes when people share during meetings.

2. **"Nature of Spirit"** and **"Service as Our Dharma"** (15 minutes) (6:45pm)

Ask for 5 volunteers to read 5 paragraphs starting on page 6 and continuing on page 8.

Discussion question: Who would like to share about how they see their dharma of service taking place in their own life?

Do light reflective listening here to model what that looks like.

- | |
|---|
| 3. TAKE A 12-MINUTE BREAK. (it ends up being 15 min) 7-7:15pm |
|---|

4. **“Examining Assumptions”** (refer to exercises on pages 10-13) (15 min) (7:15-7:30pm)
Ask someone to read 1st paragraph on page 9 under Examining Assumptions.

Discussion question: *Part of Assignment 1 was to complete the exercises in this section. Who wants to share about their experiences doing exercises on pages 8 and 9 and the assumptions they did or did not make while doing them?*

Discussion question: *What are some assumptions that you are living under that are limiting your experience of life?*

(I shared my assumption that I’ll always make less than a certain amount of money... that it will always be less than 50 or \$60,000).

5. **“Creating Sacred Space” – SOLE – Attending Behavior** (15 minutes) (7:30-7:45pm)

Ask 2 people to read a paragraph each on page 30 “More Than Words”

Read this to the Group:

The physical aspects of proper attending behavior can be summed up as SOLE:

- *Sitting Squarely*
- *Open Body Position*
- *Leaning forward slightly*
- *Eye contact*

I invite everyone to try this attending behavior now. Sitting up straight, looking at the speaker, arms to your sides, legs uncrossed, calmly sitting.

6. **Warmth, Empathy and Genuineness** (30 min) (7:45-8:15pm)

Ask 2 people to read a paragraph each on page 32 “WEG”

Read to the group: *WEG can be conveyed by “matching energy”*

Read first paragraph under “Matching Energy” on page 39, ending at top of 40.

Dyad Exercises – Good and Bad Attending Behavior

- Ask everyone to get a partner -- someone they don’t know well -- and put their chairs facing each other in pairs.
- Choose *who is the listener, and who is the speaker.*

Bad Attending Behavior

- *If you are the speaker, when the timer starts, speak for 1 minute sharing about something challenging that happened for you in the last month.*

- *If you are the listener, when the timer starts, exhibit terrible attending behavior. Cross your legs, cross your arms, look at your watch, bite your nails, dig through your purse or pockets.*

Use a timer. **1 minute**

Switch roles. Repeat. Read again the bulleted instructions above.

Ask partners to converse with each other about their experiences. (1-2 minutes)

Discussion question: *Who wants to share with the group about their experience doing this process?*

Good Attending Behavior

- *If you were the speaker first, you are speaker again...*
- *When the timer starts, speakers, you will speak for a few minutes about your writing assignment: belief barriers that you are holding onto.*
- *Listeners, you will exhibit good attending behavior: sit squarely with open body position looking at your partner, leaning forward slightly, and with warmth, empathy and genuineness, simply listen to what your partner shares.*

Use a timer. **3 minutes**.

Switch roles. Repeat. Read again the bulleted instructions above.

Ask Partners to share with each other about their experiences.

2-3 minutes.

Discussion question: *Who wants to share with the group about their experience doing this process?*

Put chairs back in a circle.

7. **Closing** (15 minutes) (8:15-8:30pm)

Hand out the printed assignment 2 sheets, and go through the assignment (next page).

Tell people who their partners will be (using grid you made ahead of time)

Close with any other way you want to close the meeting.

Meeting 1 Assignment

- a. Read up to page 72.
- b. Complete exercises on p. 54-58.
- c. Practice employing SOLE & WEG in at least 3 conversations in your life while **avoiding roadblocks** to effective communication and empathic listening (see pages 33-46).
- d. Then, write a page about the several roadblocks you notice you tend to use when listening to others. As part of this, reflect on the question: "What do these roadblock habits do for me?"
- e. Pair up with partner before next meeting to engage in conversation using good attending behavior (SOLE), WEG, and avoiding major roadblocks you read about. Meet in person for 45 min to 1 hour for conversation and then sharing of the experience. In these conversations there will be one person sharing, and one person listening:
 - i. Partner A speak for 5 or 10 minutes about self-limiting beliefs you wrote about in your first assignment. Partner B listens using good attending behavior (SOLE), WEG, and avoiding major roadblocks (e.g., avoid reassuring and advising). Switch roles and do again.
 - ii. Repeat this process with another topic: discuss roadblocks (for 5 to 10 minutes) that you have realized that you tend to use in conversing with others and what those roadblocks do for you. Notice which roadblocks you were tempted to use when you were listening!
 - iii. Finally, have a natural conversation with each other about your experience being the listener and your experience being the speaker and your process in avoiding roadblocks to communication and using WEG & SOLE.

Partner Name:

Phone/email:

Meeting 2

1. **Discussion of Assignments** (30 min) 6-6:30pm

Ask each person to share about their experience listening with WEG and SOLE and avoiding roadblocks. (Invite each person to share so each person can 'arrive' in the meeting)

Discussion question: *Who wants to share about their favorite roadblocks they tend to use when listening to others... and how those roadblocks have been helpful to them?*

2. **Group activity - Listening to "the Mayor"** (10 min) 6:30-6:40pm

You are sitting at a breakfast bar at a diner in your small town when the mayor walks in, sits next to you, orders a coffee and sighs,

"I am very frustrated because nobody is listening to my ideas. People are not paying attention to me, or doing what I suggest for this community."

What are some potential responses you might provide?

Participants can throw out ideas of responses...

Read to the group:

Another possibility that is proposed, in order to be of service to this person, is to reflect what they have expressed: "You are really frustrated because people in the community are not listening to you or agreeing with your ideas."

Discussion Question: *Why is reflective listening helpful for the speaker?*

3. **"Roadblocks to Communication"** (20 min) 6:40-7 pm

Ask someone to first 2 paragraphs of "Roadblocks to Communication" at the bottom of page 33.

Then ask group members to go around the circle and take turns reading one response each on page 34, and describing what kind of response they think it is, **in their own words** (advisor, historian, critic, boss, florist, etc).

Others can chime in with ideas... This goes quickly.

Read labels of types of responses...

Read Aloud to the Group:

Each of the given responses is a potential roadblock to effective communication, blocking the ability of the speaker to feel heard, cared for or respected. There is an appropriate time in many cases, to give advice, praise, and criticism or to warn, etc., but as an initial response to someone in an emotionally charged state, these responses can interfere with their expression and self-exploration.

Roadblock responses tend to be about ourselves rather than focused on the person who is expressing. In sattvic listening, we genuinely focus on the other person and get into his or her world in a mode of illuminated, compassionate non-attachment without a motive to coerce, manipulate or defeat.

4. **Why do Reflective Listening?** (10 min) 7-7:10pm

Read to the Group:

- *“We want to honor the spiritual spark inside the other person that wants to grow.” – David B. Wolf*
- *“The first duty of love is to listen.” – Paul Tillich*
- *“The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood.” — Ralph G. Nichols*

Ask someone to read the paragraph that begins “When someone really listens to me...” at the bottom of page 37.

Read to the Group:

It is said that people don't care what you know until they know that you care.

Demonstration of empathy is a wonderful way to show that we care. Empathic listening in itself creates a quality of human connection that is satisfying for the soul. It produces an environment conducive for sharing whatever valuable knowledge we may have.

In the field of social work they say “Start where the client is at.” By meeting people where they are, we build trust, stimulate self-exploration and clarify our perceptions.

All through this class we will be using reflective listening.

5. BREAK (12 min) ends up being 15 7:10-7:25

6. **Reflective Listening Example** (15 min) (7:25-7:35pm)

Ask for 2 volunteers to read the parts of Client and Coach starting on pages 49 until the top of page 53.

You, or a 3rd person, will read the narration portions.

Discussion Question: *How did the coach's reflections help the client discover herself more?*

7. **Reflective Listening described** (15 min) (7:35-7:50pm)

Read to the group:

The above example of reflective listening with a coach and client was an intimate in-depth discussion.

Simple reflective statements serve an important purpose to helping people feel valued and cared for and can open up conversations into deeper levels of exploration:

- a. *Example: "The concert last night was so fun!" Reflection: "You had a good time?"*
- b. *Example: "Traffic was terrible." Reflection: "Sounds like you are frustrated."*
- c. *Example: "This cereal is buy one get one right now!" Reflection: "You are so excited to get a deal on your favorite cereal!"*
- d. *Example: "I don't know how I am going to sell this house." Reflection: "You are wondering what it's going to take."*

When we reflect what a person has said, we can reflect Content, and we can reflect Feelings.

Reflecting content looks like:

"You had a great time on your vacation."

"You want to slow down a little bit."

"You ran a bunch of errands yesterday?"

"Your mother is really wanting you to get married."

Reflecting feelings looks like:

"You are feeling nervous."

"You are super excited!"

"You don't care anymore."

Reflecting both looks like:

"He told you he'd call, but you are feeling scared that he might not."

"She has cancelled two times already, so you are feeling mistrustful with her."

"You went all the way to his house, and you are really disappointed because he wasn't even home."

In these reflections it is helpful to match the energy of the speaker.

Ask for a volunteer to read the first paragraph under "Matching Energy," page 39.

8. **Reflective Listening Practice.** (7:50 – 8:20pm)

Assign partners to sit in chairs facing each other sitting in SOLE position.
Come to silence... ask for quiet.

Choose who is speaker

- *The speaker will share, a few sentences at a time, about an experience they had this week that was emotionally exciting, scary or challenging... with some emotional charge.*
- *The listener will do short 1-sentence reflections of content and/or feelings.*
- *Again, if you are the speaker, talk in short chunks – say just 2 or 3 sentences then pause so your listener has a chance to reflect. It may not feel totally natural but we are practicing a technique.*

Use a timer. **3 minutes.**

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up and come to silence.
Then,

Speakers, share with your partner how well you felt reflected by them. (1-2 min)

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up.

They will now switch roles; Read again the bulleted instructions.

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up and come to silence.

Ask Partners to have a natural conversation about their experiences in this dyad activity.
3 minutes.

Ask participants to again sit in a circle.

9. **Closing:** (10min)

Hand out the printed assignment sheets, and go through the assignment (next page).

Tell people who their partners will be (using grid you made ahead of time)

Close with any other way you want to close the meeting.

Meeting 2 Assignment

1. Read up to page 96.
2. Write 4 examples of closed ended questions, and 4 examples of open-ended questions. (see p. 73)
3. Do exercise on page 78, exploring sattva, rajas and tamas.
4. Write about two areas in your life that you are experiencing rajas, two areas that you are experiencing tamas, and two areas that you are experiencing sattva.
5. Do exercises on page 96, expressing appreciation for three people in your life whom you have been withholding your thankfulness, either in person or by phone.
6. Meet with your class partner for 2 exercises:
 - a. Engage in a conversation with your partner (at least 15 min) using empathic reflective listening to discuss a topic in their life that has some emotional charge.
 - i. Speaker will share about a topic with which they are experiencing vagueness or confusion. They will allow space for reflection. Speak in short chunks.
 - ii. The listener will use empathic reflective listening while avoiding all roadblocks for this exercise. In your reflections, reflect the energy of the speaker and when appropriate, practice using the format on page 38: “you feel _____ because _____.” Also when being the listener, allow for a pause in silence if they are experiencing emotion or experiencing their process.
 - iii. Switch roles, repeat.
 - b. Practice immediacy with your class partner; share what you are feeling with them after the exchange above (see “Immediacy” section starting on page 88).

Partner Name:

Phone/email:

Meeting 3

1. **Discussion of Assignments** (30 min) 6-6:30pm

Ask each person to share about their experience with reflective listening with their partners.
(Invite each person to share so each person can 'arrive' in the meeting)

Discussion question: *Who wants to share about areas in their life that they experience rajjas, tamas or sattva? (refer to page 19 to 21).*

2. **Reflective Listening Practice** (6:30 – 6:50) (20 min)

Assign partners to sit in chairs facing each other sitting in SOLE position.
Come to silence... ask for quiet.

Choose who is speaker

- *The speaker will share, a few sentences at a time, about an experience they had this week that was emotionally exciting, scary or challenging... with some emotional charge.*
- *The listener will do short 1 or 2 sentence reflections of content and/or feelings, not necessarily using the same words.*
- *Again, if you are the speaker, talk in short chunks – say just 2 or 3 sentences then pause so your listener has a chance to reflect. It may not feel totally natural but we are practicing a technique.*

Use a timer. **4 minutes.**

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up and come to silence.

Then,

Speakers, share with your partner how well you felt reflected by them. (1-2 min)

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up.

They will now switch roles; Read again the bulleted instructions above.

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up and come to silence.

Ask Partners to have a natural conversation about their experiences in this dyad activity.
3 minutes.

Ask participants to again sit in a circle.

3. **Open Ended Questions** (6:50 – 7:10) (15 min)

There will be a point after speaking for a while, that it might be helpful to

- get more clarity, more concreteness,
- help the speaker shine more light on what is happening for them

Starting at the top of page 73, and ending with the bottom of page 75.

Ask 5 participants to read a paragraph each.

We ask open-ended questions, NOT out of our curiosity, but to help the person better understand his/her world. When we ask questions about what time, where was it, who was there, -- that is about us and OUR curiosity, and can be a roadblock to the person's expression and self-discovery.

Group Activity:

Ask for people to respond with Open-Ended Questions to:

1. "I had a great trip to Europe last summer."
2. "I hate school."
3. "I am really struggling with this assignment."
4. "I feel confused about what to do in my life."

5 TAKE A 12-MINUTE BREAK (7:05 – 7:20)
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4. **"WIN: What Happened; Inside Feelings and Thoughts; Needs and Wants"** (40 minutes) 7:20 – 8pm

Read to the group:

It happens to all of us that at times we have something difficult to say, something that might be unpleasant for others to hear. How should we go about expressing ourselves? Assertiveness, instead of passivity or aggressiveness, is a healthy form of expression.

Ask for 3 volunteers to read 3 paragraphs about WIN starting on page 80.

Then ask for volunteers to take turns reading paragraphs from page 82 to the middle of page 83.

Discussion Question: *How is the WIN strategy a way of taking responsibility for your own experience while communicating honestly?*

Role Play “WIN” Dyad Exercise

Ask participants to “Think of a situation in your life where you could use a WIN strategy. A situation where you are feeling difficulty sharing your feelings with someone that might be painful, angry, disappointed, frustrated... a case of wanting to ask for what you desire in relationship to someone.”

(give everyone about 45 seconds).

Ask everyone to get a partner and sit opposite each other in SOLE position.

- *Speaker: using the WIN strategy, practice sharing a painful situation to your partner as if that person is the person in your life.
Refer to page 80...
Keep it simple and refer to the example at the top of p. 83 in the book.*
- *Listener: you will exhibit good attending behavior: sit squarely with open body position looking at your partner, leaning forward slightly, and with warmth, empathy and genuineness. Be attentive to matching energy. At the end of the WIN practice, reflect what Partner A shared.*

Use a timer. **1 minute**.

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up and come to silence.

- *Speaker: tell listener how you feel heard and understood and tell your partner what they missed about what you said, and how you could have felt more heard and understood.*

(1 minute)

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up.

Switch roles. Repeat. Read again the bulleted instructions above.

After both have shared/listened, ask Partners to share with each other about their experiences.

3-4 minutes.

Ask participants to again sit in a circle.

Discussion Question: *Who wants to share about their experience practicing WIN strategy? How can you take this experience into your life to generate clean, responsible communication? Who here is committed to practicing the WIN strategy with 1 or 2 people in their life by next meeting?*

5. **Closing:** (10 min) 8-8:10pm

Hand out the printed assignment sheets, and go through the assignment (next page).

Tell people who their partners will be (using grid you made ahead of time)

Close with any other way you want to close the meeting.

Meeting 3 assignment

- e. Read up to page 115.
- f. Do exercise on pages 78-79, distinguishing passivity, aggression and assertiveness.
- g. Practice using **immediacy** with 3 people in your life (see page 88).
- h. Do **reflective listening** with at least 3 people, matching energy (not counting book group partner) with just a sentence or two, and observe your experience, and if they seem invited to share more.
 - a. Example: "Traffic was terrible." Reflection: "You sound frustrated."
 - b. Example: "This cereal is buy one get one right now!" Reflection: "You are so excited to get a deal on your favorite cereal!"
 - c. Example: "I don't know how I am going to sell this house." Reflection: "You are wondering what it's going to take."
- i. Do **reflective listening** for at least 5 minutes with at least 2 people (not counting book group partner) about something that has emotional charge for them.
- j. Apply the **WIN strategy** in 2 relationships and journal about your experience.
- k. Meet with your partners to
 - a. Have an **empathic dialogue to discuss assertiveness (see p 76) in your life** and your experiences sharing WIN strategy with people in your life. You should each share for at least 15 minutes with your partner who will practice reflective listening.

Listener: remember to match energy, use attending behavior, allow silent pauses. After 5 or 10 minutes of listening, try using open-ended questions if needed to create clarity and concreteness for the speaker.

- b. After both of you have shared, share with each other your experience of your partner's reflective listening. Did you feel understood, cared for? Is there anything the listener could have done differently to help increase that experience for you?

Offer feedback to the listener. Use reflective listening in this exchange also!

Partner Name:

Phone/email:

Meeting 4

1. **Discussion of Assignments** (20 min) 6-6:20pm

Ask each person to share about their experience *with reflective listening with their partners about assertiveness and using the WIN strategy.*

(Invite each person to share so each person can 'arrive' in the meeting)

2. **Dyad to share about feedback and immediacy** (20 min) (6:20 – 6:40pm)

Ask participants to find a partner they have not been with before.

Ask them to:

Think of your experiences in sharing immediacy with others in your life, or sharing a WIN strategy with someone in your life.

Ask everyone to sit opposite each other in SOLE position.

- *Speaker: share about your experience sharing immediacy with people in your life, or about sharing a WIN strategy with someone.*
- *Listener: you will exhibit good attending behavior, and reflect what your partner shared.*

Use a timer. **4 minutes.**

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up and come to silence.

- *Speaker: tell listener how you feel heard and understood and tell your partner what they missed about what you said, and how you could have felt more heard and understood.*

(1 minute)

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up.

Switch roles. Repeat. Read again the bulleted instructions above.

After both have shared/listened, ask Partners to share with each other about their experiences.

3-4 minutes.

Ask participants to again sit in a circle.

Discussion Question: *Who wants to share about that experience sharing in dyads?*

3. **"Agreements and Handling Broken Agreements"** (35 minutes) (6:40-7:15pm)

Read at the top of page 97 "Bring to mind a time..." and invite people to connect with the experiences there jotting notes as instructed...

Read until the end of second paragraph on p. 98 ending with "... a life that doesn't work."

Short Answer Group Sharing Question:

What were some of the feelings you wrote down about broken agreements?

What were some of the feelings you wrote down about broken agreements?

Go over the 5 recommended steps to handling an agreement you have broken with someone - The 5 "A's" - on page 100.

Ask 5 people to volunteer to read about each of the 5 "A's" on pages 100 to top paragraph on 102.

5 A's Dyad Exercise

Ask participants to find a partner they have not been with before.

Ask them to:

Think of an agreement that you have broken with someone in your life. Refer to page 100 and share with your partner as if they are this person that you want to handle an agreement you broke with them.

Ask everyone to sit opposite each other in SOLE position.

- *Speaker: share with your partner as if they are the person in your life. Go through the 5 A's to take responsibility for your broken agreement.*
- *Listener: you will exhibit good attending behavior, and reflect what your partner shared after they have finished all 5 A's.*

Use a timer. **2 minutes.**

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up and come to silence.

- *Speaker: tell listener how you feel heard and understood and tell your partner what they missed about what you said, and how you could have felt more heard and understood.*

(1 minute)

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up.

Switch roles. Repeat. Read again the bulleted instructions above.

After both have shared/listened, ask Partners to share with each other about their experiences.

3-4 minutes.

Ask participants to again sit in a circle.

Discussion Question: *Who wants to share about that experience sharing in dyads?*

4. TAKE A 12-MINUTE BREAK (7:15 - 7:30)

5. "Language Reflects Consciousness" (30 minutes)

Ask participants to take turns reading, starting in the middle of page 111, "Often our language..." and reading up to the middle of 112, up to "no, I guess not."

Ask the participants to get their notebooks.

Write down 3 sentences where you feel you have to do something in the form "I have to..."

(wait until they are finished)

Rewrite these using "I get to"

(wait until they are finished)

Write down 3 sentences where you feel you should do something in the form "I should..."

(wait until they are finished)

Rewrite these using "I want to"

(wait until they are finished)

Write down 3 sentences where you feel you can't do something in the form "I can't..."

(wait until they are finished)

Rewrite in the form "I am not willing to..."

(wait until they are finished)

Group sharing question: *Who wants to share about their experience doing that exercise?*

6. **Closing:** (10 min) 8-8:10pm

Hand out the printed assignment sheets, and go through the assignment (next page).

Tell people who their partners will be (using grid you made ahead of time)

Close with any other way you want to close the meeting.

Meeting 4 Assignment

- a. Read up to page 133.
- b. Do **reflective listening** with at least 3 people, matching energy (not counting book group partner) with just a sentence or two, and observe your experience, and if they seem invited to share more.
 - d. Example: "Traffic was terrible." Reflection: "You sound frustrated."
 - e. Example: "This cereal is buy one get one right now!" Reflection: "You are so excited to get a deal on your favorite cereal!"
 - f. Example: "I don't know how I am going to sell this house." Reflection: "You are wondering what it's going to take."
- c. Do **reflective listening** for at least 5 minutes with at least 2 people (not counting book group partner) about something that has emotional charge for them.
- d. Do **5 A's** to handle broken agreements with 2 people in your life.
- e. Write about two **grungies** and their corresponding **payoffs** in your life, and complete the related exercise on page 125.
- f. Meet with your discussion partners to
 - a. Discuss your experience with **reflective listening** in this class and in your life. When are you choosing to use reflective listening, and why? What has been your experience? When do you choose not to use it and why? Share for at least 10 minutes with your partner who will practice reflective listening.

Listener: remember to match energy, use attending behavior, allow silent pauses. After 5 minutes or so of listening, try using open-ended questions if needed to create clarity and concreteness for the speaker. (note: You can craft a question to contain reflective content.)
 - b. Have a second exchange about your experience **using the 5 A's** with someone in your life.
 - c. After both of you have shared, share with each other your experience of your partner's reflective listening. Did you feel understood, cared for? Is there anything the listener could have done differently to help increase that experience for you? Offer feedback to the listener. Use reflective listening in this exchange also.

Partner Name:

Phone/email:

Meeting 5

1. **Discussion of Assignments** (30 min) 6-6:30pm

Ask each person to share about their experience with their partner exchanges, or about their experiences sharing 5 A's with people they broke an agreement with.

(Invite each person to share so each person can 'arrive' in the meeting)

2. **"Grungies and Payoffs"** (40 minutes) 6:30-7:10pm

Page 116.

Invite participants to look at the list of unpleasant emotions on page 116.

Ask 3 volunteers to take turns reading a paragraph each starting with the paragraph below that (page 116-117).

Read the paragraph at the top of page 118. Ask volunteers to read examples #1 to #4, on that page, taking turns.

Ask the group: *What emotional habit are you using as a grungy, and what is the 'payoff' for you in your life? List examples:*

- *you may have a habit of depression to get attention or avoid responsibility;*
- *you may always get angry to avoid intimacy with your partner;*
- *you may consistently get confused to avoid commitment;*
- *you may experience a lot of resentment in order to feel superior to another person;*
- *you may tend towards having guilt or shame to get support and reassurance from others.*

Dyad Exercise

Ask people to get a partner they have not shared with before, if possible, and sit opposite with attending behavior (SOLE).

- *Speaker: share with your partner about a grungy emotion and the payoffs you experience in your life.*
- *Listener: you will exhibit good attending behavior, and reflect what your partner shared using open ended questions after a lot of reflection, if clarity or concreteness would be helpful to your partner.*

Use a timer. **5 minutes.**

- *Speaker: tell listener how you feel heard and understood and tell your partner what they missed about what you said, and how you could have felt more heard and understood.*

(1 minute)

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up.
Switch roles. Repeat. Read again the bulleted instructions above.

After both have shared/listened, ask Partners to share with each other about their experiences.
3-4 minutes.

Ask participants to again sit in a circle.

Discussion question: *Who wants to share about their experience sharing grungy/payoffs?*

3. TAKE A 12-MINUTE BREAK (7:10 – 7:25)

4. **“Pulling the Weeds”** (40 minutes) 7:25 – 8:05

Read to the Group:

An important component of Bhakti yoga is “pulling the weeds” – removing from our hearts any unwanted things, elements that are foreign. In this metaphor, the heart is a garden where spiritual qualities are meant to flourish and bloom. Removing our grungy-payoff habits is one way of pulling the weeds from our hearts, clearing the field so that all the water that enters the garden is used for nourishing the seeds and flowers of the authentic self. We are not meant to agonize, smolder and ferment with bitterness, depression and fear. These, in their grungy form, are foreign elements, and clearing them is an essential aspect of restoring our natural state of fulfillment, balance and power.

Ask 4-5 volunteers to take turns reading paragraphs starting in the middle of page 128 starting with “To apply this process...” until the end of the first example that ends at the top of page 129, ending with “... tone is respectful.”

Then, invite people to think of a situation in which it would be helpful to pull the weeds with someone, and write in their notebooks the 4 steps that they would say to that person (see page 130). (4 minutes)

Dyad Exercise

Ask people to get a partner they have not shared with before, if possible, and sit opposite with attending behavior (SOLE).

- *Speaker: Role play with your partner how you would pull the weeds with someone in your life, based with what you journaled just now. Use your journaling and page 129 as a guide.*
 1. Share the grungy that you maintain
 2. Reveal what the payoff is
 3. Commit to not running this grungy-payoff racket anymore
 4. Declare what is essentially important in the relationship.

- *Listener: you will exhibit good attending behavior, and reflect what your partner shared.*

Use a timer. **3 minutes**. Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up.

- *Speaker: tell listener how you feel heard and understood and tell your partner what they missed about what you said, and how you could have felt more heard and understood.*

(1 minute)

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up.

Switch roles. Repeat. Read again the bulleted instructions above.

After both have shared/listened, ask Partners to share with each other about their experiences.

3-4 minutes.

Ask participants to again sit in a circle.

Discussion question: *Who wants to share about their experience practicing this process of Pulling the Weeds?*

5. **Close Meeting** (15 minutes)

Hand out the printed assignment sheets, and go through the assignment (next page).

Tell people who their partners will be (using grid you made ahead of time)

Close with any other way you want to close the meeting.

Meeting 5 assignment:

- a. Read up to page 170 (end of Part 3).
- b. With at least 2 people in your life, **Pull The Weeds** from the garden of your heart referring to pages 133. Journal about the experience.
- c. Do the **Victim Story/Accountable Story** writing exercise on page 137. Do it for 2 situations in your life.
- d. Meet with your partners to have 2 conversations
 - i. Share about the Masks you wear. What mask do you wear at work? What mask do you wear with your parents or siblings? What mask do you wear in a social gathering? What would it look like to be authentic in each of those situations?
 - ii. Share about emotions that you tend to push down and keep under the surface (see page 153).

Keep each other accountable to stay in reflective listening and open-ended questions.

Partner Name:

Phone/email:

Meeting 6

1. Discussion of Assignments (30 min) 6-6:30pm

Ask each person to share about their experience with their partner exchanges, or about their experiences pulling the weeds.

(Invite each person to share so each person can 'arrive' in the meeting)

2. "Victim Stories" part 1 (55 minutes) 6:30 – 7:25pm

Dyad Exercise

Speaker: share with your partner a victim story from your life. Convince your partner you were a victim. You are welcome to leave out details that would show you might have been responsible to make your story more believable that you were the victim.

Listener: you will exhibit good attending behavior, and simply listen without speaking.

Use a timer. 4-5 minutes.

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up.

Speaker: share with your partner a victim story from your life. Convince your partner you were 100% responsible. Pretend you are in a part of a play! Even if you don't believe you were all responsible, stick to this format to experience this process of taking responsibility for everything. You are welcome to leave out details that would show you might have been more victimized.

Listener: you will exhibit good attending behavior, and simply listen without speaking.

Use a timer. 4-5 minutes.

Ring a bell or announce end of time. Ask them to wrap that up.

Come to silence.... Allow 1 minute of silence for people to be with alone their experiences.

Invite partners to discuss their experiences with the sharing of one's victim/accountable stories.

Use a timer. 4 minutes.

Partners will switch roles.

Read the same instructions above with the new partner roles. Repeat the whole process.

Finally, allow the partners to discuss their experiences with sharing their victim/accountable stories with each other.

Use a timer. 4-5 minutes.

Ask participants to again sit in a circle.

Discussion question: *Who wants to share about their experience sharing victim stories and accountable versions?*

3. TAKE A 12-MINUTE BREAK. 7:25pm-7:40pm

4. **Feedback Exercise** (20 min) 7:40 – 8pm

*Now we will have a feedback process.
Everyone please stand.*

We will go to each person in the room and share with them something we appreciate about them; something that has inspired us about them. Spend 15 to 45 seconds with each.

State in the form, "I experience you as..."

State something you appreciate... Share aspects of the person that you appreciate and feel are inspiring to you. Each person will share with each other person.

Discussion questions: *Who wants to share about their experience with the feedback process?
How is giving encouraging feedback an enriching strategy for living?*

5. **Closing** (30 min) 8 – 8:30pm

Hand out the printed assignment sheets (next page).

Tell people who their partners will be (using grid you made ahead of time)

Invite people to discuss ways they want to stay in touch or continue meeting, if desired.

Meeting 6 Assignment

- a. Write a page about your favored **Strategies Survival**. What strategies to you use? Looking Good? Being Right?
- b. Write half a page about the **masks you wear** in different parts of life. Do you wear one mask with a parent, a different mask with buddies, and yet another at work?
- c. Write ½ a page about the **Strategies for Living** you would like to embrace more in your life, and how you want to commit to one change moving forward.
- d. Write ½ a page about how you are a giver, how you receive in your life, and how you are a taker. How is this working for you in your life, the balance of giving, receiving and taking?
- e. Meet with your partners to have 2 conversations
 - i. Explore your favored **Strategies for Survival** that you have employed until now.
 - ii. Share about 1 or 2 **Strategies for Living** you want to embrace in your life.

Partner Name:

Phone/email: