



RECOVERY DHARMA

MENTORSHIP GUIDELINES

Based on the book *Recovery Dharma*
and guidelines developed by the Portland Sangha in 2018

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From "The Practice"

Inquiry and Investigation: We explore the Four Noble Truths as they relate to our addictive behavior through writing and sharing in-depth, detailed Inquiries. *These can be worked with the guidance of a mentor, in partnership with a trusted friend, or with a group.* As we complete our written Inquiries, we undertake to hold ourselves accountable and take direct responsibility for our actions, which includes making amends for the harm we have caused in our past.

Sangha, Wise Friends, Mentors: We cultivate relationships within a recovery community, to both support our own recovery and support the recovery of others. After we have completed significant work on our Inquiries, established a meditation practice, and achieved renunciation from our addictive behaviors, we can then become mentors to help others on their path to liberation from addiction. Anyone with any period of time of renunciation and practice can be of service to others in their sangha. *When mentors are not available, a group of wise friends can act as partners in self-inquiry* and support each other's practice.

MENTORSHIP VOWS

With the awareness that mentorship is a supportive collaboration in which each person must do the recovery work themselves, and that developing mutual trust and respect is essential to the relationship and process...

- I vow to actively engage in the Recovery Dharma program through continued renunciation, regular meditation practice, and written and verbal inquiries. I will also undertake the trainings of the five precepts, looking beyond face value and deeply engaging with them.
- I vow to be ever mindful that my role as a mentor is non-authoritative; I will not act as a parent, social worker, therapist, or dharma teacher.
- I vow to listen with loving-kindness, curiosity, concentrated attention, non-judgement, and open-mindedness. I will listen actively both to what is being said and how it is being said. I will ask open, supportive questions and will provide guidance in alignment with Wise Speech.
- I vow to gratefully regard mentorship as an act of generosity, service and mutual healing. I will also consider, clarify, and outwardly articulate my own boundaries to my mentee, or, if self-care needs arise.
- I vow not to establish a mentor/mentee relationship with someone with whom I could become sexually or romantically involved with.
- I vow to revisit these commitments with fellow mentors and use them as prompts to investigate my relationship to my own recovery and to my mentees and their recovery process.
- I vow that, should I relapse, I will take refuge in sangha, ask for help, and we will collectively decide the next right action in regard to my relationships with mentees.

OVERVIEW

- This document provides a framework for all those seeking recovery from addictions using the principles and practices found in the book *Recovery Dharma* and the teaching of the Buddha.
- To foster this mentorship idea, meeting announcements should include the offer of mentorship within the members to anyone seeking mentorship. If no Mentor is available, members can mentor each other.
- Once someone expresses an interest in being mentored, or being a Mentor, every effort should be made to connect a Mentor with a potential Mentee as soon as possible.
- When you commence, begin by reading the *Recovery Dharma* book together and help them establish a regular meditation practice .
- The intention is for mentors/mentees to develop a working understanding of the Four Noble Truths and to learn, practice and apply the principles outlined in the Eightfold Path. Emphasizing the importance of thinking, speaking and acting in a skillful way leads to the liberation from suffering which is of benefit to self and others.
- If there are very few or no members in your community with sufficient experience (*see Definitions*) you may be able to find a Mentor by connecting with others online, or with other *Recovery Dharma* communities in other cities/states.
- Do not cause harm in the mentorship relationship. When you suspect or know that you have caused harm, apologize and ask for forgiveness, seeing mistakes and/or criticisms as non-personal and an opportunity to examine my own ego and behaviors.

SUGGESTED MENTORSHIP PATHWAY

- Hear their story, where they are in recovery and what attracted them to Recovery Dharma.
- Agree that you will meet in person, online, or by phone regularly.
- Explain the Three Jewels: Traditionally, Buddhists commit to the path of awakening by taking refuge in our own potential for awakening (*Buddha*), truth/teachings (*Dharma*), and community (*Sangha*).
- Read and discuss the Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path, and Five Precepts.
- Have a copy of the book *Recovery Dharma*. Here is a link to the free version if the printed copy is not available:
<https://recoverydharma.org/book>
- Attain these commitments from the mentee:
 - Establishment of a daily meditation practice. Mentees may wish to attend Buddhist meditation groups in their area.
 - Attendance at meetings on a regular basis. Newer members may be encouraged to attend other abstinence-based meetings/programs.
 - The study of and processing through the Inquiries via writing and sharing.
- Establish an accountability system to review progress and questions regarding meditation, meetings, and Inquiries.
- Work with them on making their amends.
- When a mentee has an established practice, continuous sobriety, and completed significant work on their Inquiries they may begin mentoring others.

DEFINITIONS

ADDICTION - The repetitive process of habitually satisfying cravings to avoid, changes, or control the seemingly unbearable conditions of the present moment. This process of craving and indulgence provides short-term relief but causes long-term harm. It is almost always a source of suffering for both the addict and others.

MENTEE - One who

- would like help learning the process.
- is open to spiritual growth.
- is willing to collaborate on a plan, understands expectations, and commits to them.
- is willing to go into this knowing spiritual growth and recovery require individual effort.
- is willing to commit to the interior work as outlined by the inquiries
- is willing to be a Wise Friend (*see Definitions*).
- follows the Five Precepts

MENTOR - One who

- has more experience and comfort with recovery/Buddhist practice.
- is willing to collaborate on a plan, set expectations, and commit to them.
- has an established regular meditation practice.
- has completed significant work on our Inquiries.
- has read the entire book *Recovery Dharma*.
- is willing to share their experience and offer suggestions based on what has worked for them.
- is willing to be a Wise Friend (*See Definition*).
- follows the Five Precepts
- is willing to establish times of availability on a regular schedule. (Set boundaries)
- remembers that the Mentor wasn't responsible for the Mentee's addiction nor is the Mentor responsible for the Mentee's renunciation.

- remembers that Mentors are not mental health professionals, bankers, crisis interventionists or taxi drivers.

MENTORSHIP GROUP - A group of people who are working together as a Mentor/Mentee dynamic and agree to journey through the inquiries together until they are completed. This is an idea sprung from the reality that many people in Recovery Dharma are new to recovery, new to the program, and the program itself is young and growing. This allows members to commit to the path of practice when Mentors are not readily available.

RECOVERY - A process of healing the underlying conditions that lead to addiction. It is establishing and maintaining the practice of abstaining from satisfying the cravings for the substances and behaviors that we have become addicted to. Recovery is also the ability to inhabit the conditions of the present reality, whether pleasant or unpleasant.

REFUGE - A safe place, a place of protection—a place that we go to in times of need, a shelter.

RENUNCIATION - The practice of abstaining from harmful behaviors.

WISE FRIEND (*kalyāṇa-mitta*) - *can be translated as “wise friend.”* This implies a working relationship between members that are walking this path together. Work on your inventories together, support each other, be open to sharing a different perspective and be open to the other’s experience. Be reciprocal. A Mentor is a Wise Friend, but a Wise Friend is not necessarily a Mentor. This is a personal, supportive relationship with another member actively engaged in the Recovery Dharma program freely sharing their journey through the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path as outlined in *Recovery Dharma* with whom they can regularly connect, check in, and share in life’s many joys and sorrows.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

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 EIGHTFOLD PATH

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

THE FIVE PRECEPTS

1. We set the intention to refrain from destroying living creatures.
2. We set the intention to refrain from taking what is not given.
3. We set the intention to refrain from sexual misconduct.
4. We set the intention to refrain from unwise speech.
5. We set the intention to refrain from substances and behavior which cloud our awareness.

MENTORSHIP RESOURCES

The following are just some examples of mentorship resources when mentors are not available in your local sangha.

Local Groups

Meet an hour before or after your regularly weekly RD group to work on Inquiries together. It can be supportive to have a dedicated time and place for committing to the Inquiry process.

Workshops

Groups can schedule full-day or half-day events to work on the Inquiries. Groups can be peer-led or guided by members that have already completed significant work on the Inquiry questions. It's often helpful to break up into dyads or triads to explore the questions and responses together.

Facebook - Recovery Dharma Wise Friends/Mentors Group

Facebook group set up to connect potential mentors and mentees. Members may apply to be either a mentor or mentee and post a brief bio.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1489787601065790/mentorship_application/

Discord Sangha

Slack-like app with a channel set up for members to discuss sangha, wise friends and mentors.

<http://discord.recoverydharma.rocks>

RD Friends Act

An online action guide offering resources for the community to engage with one another in the practice.

<https://sites.google.com/view/rdfriendsact/>