



RECOVERY DHARMA

WISE FRIEND WORKBOOK

This Beta version of the Wise Friends workbook is based on a handbook developed by the Portland Sangha in 2018, texts from Recovery Dharma Friends Act web page, an article by Christine Carter, and adapted by Wise Friends, Octavio Campos, Carl Hildebrand and Daniel Wittenberg in Chicago and Ft. Lauderdale Sangha from April 2020 - present.

CONTENTS

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS/ EIGHTFOLD PATH	3
THE FIVE PRECEPTS	3
OVERVIEW	4
WHAT IS WISDOM?	5
WAYS TO BEGIN	6
BEST PRACTICES	7
EFFECTIVE APOLOGY	8
DEEPER LOOK AT WISE FRIENDSHIPS	11
WISE FRIEND SCHEDULE	13
WISE FRIENDSHIP VOWS	15
INQUIRY QUESTIONS	16-33
DEFINITIONS	34
BUDDHIST CHEATSHEET	37
RELAPSE AGREEMENT	38

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

- Wise Understanding
- Wise Intention
- Wise Speech
- Wise Action
- Wise Livelihood
- Wise Effort
- Wise Mindfulness
- 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.

OVERVIEW

- This workbook is a response to the perceived Inter-Sangha need for a more structured approach to the Wise Friend process.
- This workbook is to be seen as a living document – it is a collaboration - it may be used, modified or disregarded.
- This Workbook seeks to provide fertile soil for ideas between individuals seeking ways to alleviate their own suffering.
- Urgency should be put on meditation practice and reading the *Dharma of Recovery* book and other literature when you commence.
- 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.
- The whole idea is that the two individuals learn, practice and apply the principles of the Four Noble Truths and the constructive behavior outlined in the Eightfold Path. Constructive behavior in Buddhism is to think, speak, and behave in a skillful way towards life, leading to personal happiness.

THE VALUE OF WISE FRIENDSHIPS

When a person has wise people as friends, companions, and comrades, they are better able to develop and pursue the noble eightfold path. Working with others is a valuable tool of recovery, and many find that in addition to meetings, more individualized or in-depth support from those with greater experience, or those in the same stage of recovery can help in one's personal recovery and spiritual path. Receiving support from others can help in many ways, including providing accountability, inspiration, motivation, experience-based knowledge, and compassionate support. In addition, supporting others in recovery supports the concept of *dana* (giving, generosity) and can provide valuable insight, learnings and good reminders of one's own intentions.

The level of support that will benefit you is unique to your situation, your personal comfort with interpersonal sharing, and the stage of recovery you are in. You should review your thoughts and needs to understand the types of support that would be helpful, including the frequency and intensity of the support. One of the most central teachings of the Buddha was the Middle Way, the path between pushing too hard and being too lax. It

is a very subtle aspect of practice; how to find Right Effort. It is important in your recovery that you find the right balance of support to be helpful without being overwhelming.

What is Wisdom?

Wisdom, sapience, or sagacity is the ability to think and act using knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense and insight. Wisdom is associated with attributes such as unbiased judgment, compassion, experiential self-knowledge, self-transcendence, non-attachment, and virtues such as ethics and benevolence.

Wisdom has been defined in many different ways, including several distinct approaches to assess the characteristics attributed to wisdom.

Although it is inaccurate to say that the only path to wisdom is through Buddhism, it is accurate to say that the study of Buddhism can lead to wisdom. This wisdom is achieved because many of the thought processes used to understand Buddhism are common thought processes used in basic logic and common sense, along with the spiritual aspects of Buddhism.

Attaining wisdom is a process, and your wisdom grows through daily experience. As we grow wiser, we understand that we should hold judgment and remain calm when we meet adversity. But some of us go through life having never mastered these lessons. This may be because we have not fine-tuned our awareness to understand ourselves and the world.

One of the goals in Buddhism is to achieve wisdom as well as enlightenment. Buddhist philosophical guidance such as the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path are so important because they provide the structure and thought processes that lead to wisdom. Whereas meditation cultivates the mind to understand our thought processes on a deeper level which is the path of enlightenment.

WAYS TO BEGIN A WISE FRIENDSHIP

There are as many ways to use Wise Friendship to support recovery as there are people seeking relief from the suffering of addiction. The following list is intended to provide some ideas to help you find what best suits where you are in your recovery and spiritual growth. All of these approaches may be casual and informal or more structured routines: whatever works best for the people involved.

- Wise Friends (formerly known as “mentors”) - A more intensive, intentional relationship between individuals in the Recovery Dharma program. Some members use the term "mentorship" for this, some do not. In this Workbook we do not.
- Share your stories of recovery.
- Have a copy of the book *Recovery Dharma*.
- Review and reflect on the 3 jewels of Buddhism: Traditionally, Buddhists commit to the path of awakening by taking refuge in three things: taking refuge in our own potential for awakening (Buddha), the truth (Dharma), and our community of wise friends (Sangha).
- Read and discuss Recovery Dharma’s Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path, and Five Precepts.
- Get a commitment to a daily meditation practice and daily meeting time.
- Create a daily Check in and Check out ritual.
- Encourage your Wise Friend to attend any Buddhist meditation groups that may be in their area.
- Newer members should be encouraged to attend other abstinence-based programs to, at the very least, understand the lingo.
- Get commitments for a number of meetings to attend per week. It is not bad to encourage attendance at other 12-step programs, if the Wise Friend feels comfortable in those meetings.
- Encourage the Wise Friend to keep a journal from day 1 and use this workbook and it’s accompanying empty pages to serve as that journal.
- Set the expectation that you will meet in person (or by phone or online if necessary) daily or bi-weekly. Set expectations for frequency of contact, meetings and meditation.
- Peer text/phone Check-in: Having a friend or peer with whom you can text regularly to check in, Having a friend or peer to text with for a particular focus (e.g. gratitude)

- Peer in-person activity or Check-in: Casual regular get-together with a peer for checking in or activities (e.g going for walks, going to the movies, support with grocery shopping, sober support at events, etc).
- "Accountability Friends" or "Buddha Buddies" - Having a peer whom you can check in with via text, phone, or in-person to hold you accountable.
- Getting together with another person to do writing or sharing on each of the Inquiry questions in the Recovery Dharma book.
- Mirroring: 'wise reflection' - Someone with whom you can check in when struggling who can provide support using Buddhist principles and practices.
- Text or email message group - Having a group of peers who text or email each other for support - Having a group of peers who text or email each other on a particular topic (e.g. gratitude, meditation, etc)
- 'Traditional' sharing meetings.

BEST PRACTICES for ANY PEER BASED SUPPORT

THINGS TO BE AWARE OF WHEN GIVING OR RECEIVING SUPPORT

- Practice Wise Communication. Try using whole statements (or other versions of this) when making a request or stating a need:
 - **I notice/I observe** ...(a factual and specific statement about the situation-no judgment or opinion) -
 - **I think** ...(what you think about the situation) -
 - **I feel** ...(what emotions or feelings you're having about the situation)
 - **I want or I need** ... (your request for the situation moving forward).

Example: I noticed that the last time we spoke you kept looking at your phone. I felt hurt and that you weren't listening to me or that you were uninterested in what I was saying. I would like to know what was going on with you that had you looking at your phone. I'd like to ask you to put your phone away when I'm sharing something important.

- Keep the Three T's in mind: Timing, Tone, & Tact.
Ask yourself:
 - Is now the right **time** to bring this up?
 - Is the **tone** of your voice appropriate? This can point to your internal emotional state.
 - Is how you are stating something **tactful** ?
In other words, are you using Wise Speech?
- Take ownership when you make a mistake.
- Apologize when appropriate. Utilize the Three Parts on an Effective Apology. (see below)
- Avoid support situations which could lead to romantic or sexual attraction or are of a sexual nature. This can slow your progress on the eightfold path and introduce new challenges in your recovery.
- Ask open-ended questions (avoid "yes" or "no" questions). Try asking questions that come from a place of curiosity that will encourage exploration of thoughts and feelings.
- Notice how much or how little space you are taking up. Do you tend to talk more than listen? If you do, try listening more and asking more questions of the other person. Do you tend to listen more than talk? Try speaking up and asking for some time to share your own experiences.
- Notice if you have a strong opinion of what "should" be done or if you have a desire to "fix" this person or their situation.
- Try to avoid pushing your own agenda on someone else. A great way to notice this is to pay attention to whether you are giving advice and what your emotional state is in when offering advice or support. If you feel stressed, judgmental, frustrated, angry, resentful, etc. these might be indicators of your own internal process. Can you put that aside and just listen and offer support?

The Three Parts of an Effective Apology

"I'm sorry" isn't enough— what else needs to be said.

BY CHRISTINE CARTER | NOVEMBER 12, 2015

People make mistakes all the time. Not just bad people, or weak people. All people. Our mistakes are what make us human. And even when we don't think that we've made a

mistake, other people will often find errors in our ways. We human beings are walking offenders.

Here's the real question: If we've done something that offends someone else—whether or not we feel we are to blame—should we apologize?

I believe that it almost always serves our highest good to apologize if we've hurt or offended someone else—even if we think the offended person's anger is unjustified, or if we have a perfectly good excuse for what happened. Or if our intentions were all good.

Often, the impact of our action is not what we intended. But here's the thing: **Impact matters** much more than intention. Our happiness is best predicted by the breadth and depth of our social connections—our relationships with friends, family, partners, spouses, neighbors, colleagues—and so broken or fraying connections are usually worth repairing.

We don't repair a fissure in one of our relationships by ignoring it. (We have a saying in our family: You can sweep sh*t under the rug, but it is still going to smell.) And we don't repair it by blaming someone else, or defending our actions. We initiate a repair by apologizing.

But all apologies aren't created equal, of course. (All parents have watched children spit out a forced "SORRY!" and known it was worthless.) A good apology is something of an art.

So what makes a good apology? After studying that question extensively, Aaron Lazare developed perhaps the most robust criteria to date for effective apologies. Drawing on Dr. Lazare's work, I've whittled down his ideas to the following three-step method for making a good apology.

Step 1: Tell them what you feel.

Usually, we start by saying "I'm sorry" to express remorse. "I'm sorry" is more effective when we elaborate on our remorseful feelings. For example, "I'm so sorry and sad to hear that my lack of communication has made you so angry and resentful." Or, "I'm so sorry and embarrassed that my comment caused such an uproar."

Just share the remorseful feelings, please. It is not constructive to succumb to—and share—feelings of resentment or defensiveness, like, "I'm sorry...you're being so petty and critical."

Step 2: Admit your mistake AND the negative impact it had!

This is the hardest part, because it requires admitting responsibility for our actions or behavior. This can feel impossible if we don't really think we did much wrong, or if our intentions were good.

Ask yourself: How is the other person feeling? What did I do that caused that feeling? Could I have done something differently?

Then acknowledge these things. Empathize with the offended person; the most important thing is that you demonstrate that you are trying to understand how they feel. (Don't apologize until you actually do understand how they are feeling; if you can't put yourself in their shoes, your apology will ring false.)

For example: "I can see that my comment hurt your feelings, and that you are feeling misunderstood and uncared for."

Or to your partner you might say, "I know that it was wrong for me to call you out in front of the whole family, and that you are angry because I've hurt your credibility with the kids. I'm sure that was embarrassing, and it was a mistake for me to do that."

This is where most of us are tempted to offer an explanation for our behavior. When in doubt, leave the explanation out; trying to explain away our actions can seem like we're being defensive, or making excuses. (Remember, the point is to repair the relationship, not make the other person see that you were right.)

If you need to shed light on why you did what you did, be careful to continue to take responsibility for the negative impact you had. Saying, "I really didn't know that you would be offended" is an excuse, not a good explanation. Whining that you didn't intend for the other person to be hurt doesn't shed light on anything. More effective would be saying "It is no excuse for standing you up, but I want you to know that my stepfather had just had a stroke, and I was so frantic to get to the hospital that I forgot to call you."

If you do offer an explanation, it can help to reiterate your mistake and again acknowledge how the other person feels: "Again, I'm so sorry that I didn't call you, and that you were struck there waiting for me for an hour. I can only imagine how upset, worried, and angry you must be."

Step 3: Make the situation right

Good apologies include a reparation of some kind, either real or symbolic. Maybe you create an opportunity for the person you have embarrassed to regain credibility. Or perhaps you admit your mistake to others, too, as part of the reparation. In many relationships, a hug is a great reparation.

Often, all we need to do is explain what we are going to do differently the next time so that we don't repeat the offending action or behavior. This helps us rebuild trust and repair the relationship.

If you aren't sure how to make it right, just ask, "Is there anything I can do to make this up to you?"

Above all, deliver on any promises you make. When we feel guilty or embarrassed, sometimes we over-correct in our attempt to gain forgiveness. If the person is asking for something that you can't give, say so, and say that you will give some thought to what you can give to make it up to him or her.

Knowing how to apologize well is the top of my sweet spot manifesto. It's a life skill I want my children to practice and master. And it's one that I'm still working on myself.

A DEEPER LOOK AT WISE FRIENDSHIPS

We are emphasizing a peer-based approach to recovery, recognizing that we are *all* wise, we are *all* equal, and we can *all* learn from each other.

- There are many relationships within a community and each can fall into the pitfalls of power imbalance, or codependency, without wise understanding, intention, speech, action and effort.
- As such, there is a perceived need for a more peer balanced approach to mutual learning and peer relationships within one's community.
- By encouraging a peer-to-peer support structure, without imbalanced power relationships, we tend towards healthier Wise Friendships, or peer support.
- Recovery Dharma aims to be trauma-informed.
- Putting a person without clinical psychotherapy training in the role of support giver or guide could inadvertently cause harm, no matter how well-intentioned a support giver or guide may be.

Things to be aware of when receiving support:

- Listen to your intuition; if something doesn't feel right, trust yourself and ask a trusted friend for feedback.
- Understand that all of us have different ways of learning and recovering. What works for one person may not work for you. Try it out. If it doesn't work, try something else!
- There is no "right way" to do this. If someone says that you MUST do something a certain way, proceed with caution.
- Ask for what you need! Try not to be attached to whether the need gets met, but it won't get met if it's never expressed.
- Ask for what you want! Trust and vulnerability can be strengthened when we ask for what we need or want.
- Practice setting boundaries. It can help to write down what you want to say and practice it alone or with a trusted friend (for example "can I stop for you a moment? I'm feeling overwhelmed and need a break from the conversation").

Things to be aware of when offering support:

- When supporting someone during a relapse, (especially of the opposite sex) be ready to enlist the support of another Wise Friend / "Buddah Buddy" when making an in-person visit.
- Practice active listening (deep listening).
- Fully listen to what speaker is saying, Work to understand what is being said.
- You might demonstrate understanding, or clarify what is being said, by repeating back what was said using your own words,
- Remember what is being said.
- Think about the emotions behind the content, or why it is being said,
- Practice patience!
- Finally, respond appropriately. Often, people with a history of trauma may put themselves in a vulnerable position.
- There is a considerable risk of repeating unhealthy cycles and patterns, recreating trauma in a person who is already suffering.

We recognize each person's path is unique and what works for one person may not work for another

WISE FRIENDSHIP SCHEDULE

4 Month Example

In all weeks, keep communication open - LISTEN and USE YOUR WISEST JUDGEMENT and adjust the schedule and these activities accordingly. Everyone and every recovery is different.

Week 1	<i>Create Check in ritual Review the Workbook Set a time to meet and a structure for sessions</i>	<i>Take Wise Friendship Vows</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting Check out</i>	
Week 2	<i>Check in Review Eightfold Path and Four Noble Truths Read and discuss</i>	<i>Tell each other your story</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting Check out</i>	
Week 3	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting Check out</i>	
Week 4	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting Check out</i>	
Week 5	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting Check out</i>	
Week 6	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting Check out</i>	

Week 7	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting</i> <i>Check out</i>	
Week 8	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting</i> <i>Check out</i>	
Week 9	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>		<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting</i> <i>Check out</i>	
Week 10	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting</i> <i>Check out</i>	
Week 11	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting</i> <i>Check out</i>	
Week 12	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting</i> <i>Check out</i>	
Week 13	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting</i> <i>check</i>	
Week 14	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting</i> <i>Check out</i>	

Week 15	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting</i> <i>Check out</i>	
Week 16	<i>Check in Read and discuss</i>	<i>Work on/discuss some of the Inquiries</i>	<i>Daily Meditation: mutually agreed upon to support meeting</i> <i>Check out</i>	

Continue:

1. Complete all Inquiries
2. Work with them on making their amends
3. When they have an established practice and continuous sobriety they can start Wise Friendships with others and/or join a Wise Friends group in the process.

WISE FRIENDSHIP VOWS

With the awareness that WISE FRIENDSHIP is a supportive collaboration in which each person must do the recovery work themselves...

I vow to actively engage in the Recovery Dharma program through continued renunciation, regular meditation practice, and inventory writing and discussion.

I vow to be ever mindful that my role as a Wise Friend is non-authoritative; I will not act as a parent, social worker, therapist, or dharma teacher.

I vow to revisit these commitments with fellow Wise Friends and use them as prompts to investigate my relationship to my own recovery and to my Wise Friends and their recovery process.

I vow to do my best to not cause harm in the Wise Friend relationship. When I suspect or know that I have caused harm, I will apologize and ask for forgiveness, seeing mistakes and/or criticisms as non-personal and an opportunity to examine my own ego and behaviors.

I vow to gratefully regard this relationship as an act of generosity, service, and mutual healing, while also considering and clarifying when needed, articulating my own boundaries to my Wise Friend and practicing needed self-care.

I vow to listen with loving-kindness, curiosity, concentrated attention, non-judgement, and open-mindedness.

I vow to educate myself on experiences outside of my own—including cultural attitudes, world views, ethnic traditions, races, sexual orientations, ages, physical abilities, gender identities—and not expect my Wise Friend to teach me about theirs.

Should I relapse, I will take refuge in the sangha, ask for help, and we will collectively decide the next right action in regards to my Wise Friend relationships..

QUESTIONS FOR INQUIRY

These Questions for Inquiry are intended to be a useful tool for supporting our growth and recovery. They can be used as part of a formal process of self-investigation or inventory with a mentor, wise friend, or group; as tools to explore a specific life situation; as guides for a daily self-inquiry practice; as meeting discussion topics; or any other way you may find helpful on your path of awakening and freedom from addiction and habitual behavior.

Questions for Inquiry of the First Noble Truth:

1. Begin by making a list of the behaviors and thoughts associated with your addiction(s) that you consider harmful. Without exaggerating or minimizing, think about the things you have done that have caused harm to yourself and others.
2. For each behavior listed, write how you have suffered because of that behavior, and write how others have suffered because of that behavior. List any other costs or negative consequences you can think of, such as finances, health, relationships, sexual relations, or missed opportunities.
3. Do you notice any patterns? What are they? What are the ways that you might avoid or reduce suffering for yourself and others if you change these patterns?
4. How have your addictive behaviors been a response to trauma and pain? What are some ways you can respond to trauma and pain that nurture healing rather than avoiding?

Questions for Inquiry of the Second Noble Truth:

1. What situations, circumstances, and feelings do you avoid that cause harm?
2. List the emotions, sensations, and thoughts that come to mind when you abstain. Are there troubling memories, shame, grief, or unmet needs hiding behind the craving? How can you meet these with compassion and patience?
3. What things did you give up in your desire to cling to impermanent and unreliable solutions? For example: did you give up relationships, financial security, health, opportunities, legal standing, or other important things to maintain your addictive behaviors. What made the addiction more important to you than any of these things you gave up?
4. Are there any beliefs you cling to that fuel craving and aversion, beliefs that deny the truth of impermanence, or beliefs about how things in life “should” be? What are they?

Questions for Inquiry of the Third Noble Truth:

1. What makes it so hard to quit?
2. What resources are available to help you abstain and recover?
3. List reasons to believe you can recover? Also list your doubts? What might the wise and compassionate part of you—your Buddha nature—say about these doubts?

Questions for Inquiry of the Fourth Noble Truth:

1. What is your path to recovery and ending the suffering of addiction?
2. What behavior can you change to more fully support your recovery?
3. What does it mean to you to take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha for your recovery?

Questions for Inquiry of Wise Understanding:

1. What is a truth in your life that is causing confusion or unease?
2. Are you seeing clearly, or are you getting lost in judgment, taking things personally, in stories you're telling yourself, or repeating past messages you've internalized?
How?
3. Is your vision clouded by greed, hatred, confusion, clinging, attachment, or craving?
How?
4. In what situations and parts of your life do you have the most difficulty separating desire from need? Are there areas or relationships where the drive to get what you desire overshadows any other consideration? Has this changed as you began or continue in recovery?
5. Are there parts of your life where you are driven to continue unpleasant experiences because you think you "must" or "need to?"
6. How is karma—the law of cause and effect—showing up right now? Where in your life are you dealing with the effects or aftermath of action you took in the past, both positive and negative?

Questions for Inquiry of Wise Intention:

1. During your periods of addictive behavior, how did you act in ways that were clinging, uncaring, harsh, cruel, or unforgiving? Toward whom (including yourself) were these feelings directed? How might generosity, compassion, lovingkindness, and forgiveness have changed your behavior?
2. What actions have you taken that have harmed others?
3. Have you formed an intention to reconcile with both yourself and the person or people you've harmed (to make amends)? If so, have you found a wise friend or mentor you can go to for guidance and support in the amends process, which is summarized below? What support can this person provide as you begin the process of amends?

Making Amends:

1. Have you done something intentionally that you now recognize caused harm to another? Who has been harmed by your actions?
2. Have you honestly formed the intention not to repeat harmful actions and to learn from the experience in future interactions? Have you begun the process of directly addressing the harmful actions of your past?
3. Making amends depends on the circumstance, including your present relationship to the person and the extent to which you can undo the harm caused through direct actions (like correcting a public dishonesty or compensating another for

things you have taken that were not freely offered). Ask yourself, “What can I do in the present?”

4. Can you address and reconcile with the harm you have caused without forming an attachment to being forgiven? Identify the motivation for making each amends.
5. What actions would restore balance in your own feelings and approach to whatever harm you have caused? Can these steps be taken without causing new harm to the person or the relationship?

If you're experiencing a difficult situation or choice in your life right now, investigate the intention you are bringing to this situation.

1. Are you being selfish or self-seeking? How?
2. Are you being driven by aversion (running away from an unpleasant experience) or craving (grasping for pleasure)? How?
3. How could you bring in a spirit of generosity, compassion, lovingkindness, appreciative joy, and forgiveness to this situation?
4. How would this situation look different if you brought these factors to mind *before* reacting or responding?
5. If you don't want to, can you at least have the intention and willingness to do so?

Questions for Inquiry of Wise Speech:

1. Have you caused harm with your speech? How?
2. Have you been dishonest or harsh in your communication? When, and in what specific ways?
3. Do you use speech now to hurt or control people, to present a false idea or image of yourself or of reality, to demand attention, or to relieve the discomfort of silence? Detail specific instances in which you used speech to mislead, misdirect, or distract.
4. Are you careful to avoid causing harm with your speech?
5. Do you say things you know are not true, or pretend to know the truth about something when you don't, to appear more knowledgeable or credible than you are? List some examples.

Questions for Inquiry of Wise Action:

1. Have you acted in a way that was unskillful or that created suffering? How?
2. During those times you were unskillful or created suffering, how would it have changed the outcome if you had acted out of compassion, kindness, generosity, and forgiveness? Would you now have a different emotional or mental response to your past actions if you had acted with these principles in mind?

First precept:

1. Have you caused harm? How? (Allow for a broad understanding of harm, including physical, emotional, mental, and karmic harm as well as financial, legal, moral, or other forms of harm.)
2. Even if you can't point to specific harms that you have caused, have you acted in a way that purposely avoided being aware of the possibility of harm?

Second Precept:

1. People “take” in many ways-we take goods or material possessions, we take time and energy, we take care and recognition. With this broad understanding of taking, have you taken what has not been freely given? How?

2. What are specific examples or patterns where this has been true for you?

Third Precept:

1. Have you behaved irresponsibly, selfishly, or without full consent and awareness (from yourself or partners) in your sexual conduct? How?
2. Reviewing your sexual partners or activities, have you been fully aware in each instance of other existing relationships, prior or current mental or emotional conditions of yourself and your partner(s), and your own intentions in becoming sexually involved? How or how not?
3. Has your sexual activity, both by yourself and with others, been based on non-harmful intentions? Have you entered into each sexual activity with awareness and understanding? How or how not?

Fourth Precept:

1. Have you been dishonest? How?
2. What patterns did your dishonesty take? Did you act or speak dishonestly to deny or misrepresent the truth about your own behavior or status?
3. Were there particular situations in which your dishonesty was particularly present (for instance: when dealing with your addictive behaviors, in job or professional settings, among friends, with family)?
4. Investigate the source of the dishonesty in each setting-was it based on greed, confusion, fear, denial? Why were you lying?

Fifth Precept:

1. Have you used intoxicants or other behaviors that cloud your ability to see clearly?
2. What substances and behaviors have you become reliant on to change or cloud your awareness? Has this changed over time, or, if you have periods of abstinence, were your habitual intoxicants or behaviors replaced by other ways to avoid awareness of your present circumstances and conditions? How?

Questions for Inquiry of Wise Livelihood:

1. Does your job cause harm? What is the specific nature of that harm?
2. How can you do your job more mindfully and with an intention of compassion and non-harm?
3. Do you bring an understanding of karma and kindness to your job, or do you compartmentalize it and exclude it from awareness of wise action?
4. What part does greed play in the choices you make in your livelihood? Does greed get in the way of awareness or compassion?
5. How can you be of more service in your community?
6. How might you bring a spirit of generosity to your life, both in your profession and outside it?

Questions for Inquiry of Wise Effort:

1. What efforts have you made to connect with a wise friend, mentor, or dharma buddy who can help you develop and balance your efforts?
2. Think of a situation that is causing you discomfort or unease. What is the nature of the effort you're bringing to the situation? Pay attention to whether it feels balanced and sustainable, or if you're leaning too far in the direction of either inactivity or overexertion?
3. Are you dealing with overwhelming desires, aversions, laziness or discouragement, restlessness and worry, or doubt about your own ability to recover? How do these hindrances affect the choices you're making?
4. Are you avoiding feelings by checking out and giving up, or through obsessive busyness and perfectionism?

Questions for Inquiry of Wise Mindfulness:

1. What are steps you can take to support a regular meditation practice?
2. What are steps you can take to practice mindfulness more throughout the day by checking in with yourself about how you're feeling, and pausing before reacting to situations?
3. What are steps you can take to sit with your discomfort instead of running from it or running toward temporary pleasure?
4. What are steps you can take to question the "truths" that your mind tells you, rather than automatically believing them? Identify specific instances where your mind and perceptions "lied" to you about the truth of a situation, and how being aware of that might have changed your reaction and led to a less harmful outcome.
5. Think about times when you felt fear, doubt, or hesitation. Now bring an awareness of their temporary nature. How might that awareness have led to an outcome that was less harmful?

Questions for Inquiry of Wise Concentration:

1. How do you get unfocused or distracted in meditation? What distracts you the most? What are steps you can take to refocus your mind without judging your own practice?
2. Notice what value or learning you could gain by carefully and kindly noticing where your mind has gone, or what has distracted you.
3. What are steps you can take to use concentration to see clearly and act wisely?
4. What are steps you can take to be kind and gentle with yourself through this process?

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 those who care about the addict.

WISE FRIENDS (fka) - MENTEE / MENTOR - One who

- would like help learning the process.
- is open to spiritual growth.
- is fairly new to the program or never had a Mentor before
- 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.

WISE FRIENDS (fka) - MENTOR / MENTEE - One who

- has more time, experience and comfort with the process.
- is willing to collaborate on a plan, set expectations, and commit to them.
- has an established regular meditation practice.
- has completed the inventories.
- should have their own Mentor.
- has read the entire book *Dharma of Recovery*.
- remembers that the Mentor wasn't responsible for the Mentee's addiction nor is the Mentor responsible for the Mentee's renunciation.
- is willing to point the way for the Mentee, and not walk it for them.
- is willing to share their experience.
- is willing to be a Wise Friend (*See Definition*).
- is willing to establish times of availability. (Set boundaries)

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

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.

SUFFERING - Suffering, or pain in a broad sense, is an experience of unpleasantness and aversion associated with the perception of harm or threat of harm in an individual. Suffering is the basic element that makes up the negative valence of affective phenomena. Suffering may be qualified as physical or mental. It may come in all degrees of intensity, from mild to intolerable. Factors of duration and frequency of occurrence usually compound that of intensity. Attitudes toward suffering may vary widely, in the sufferer or other people, according to how much it is regarded as avoidable or unavoidable, useful or useless, deserved or undeserved. Suffering occurs in the lives of sentient beings in numerous manners, and often dramatically. As a result, many fields of human activity are concerned, from their own points of view, with some aspects of suffering. These aspects may include the nature of suffering, its processes, its origin and causes, its meaning and significance, its related personal, social, and cultural behaviors, its remedies, management, and uses.

WISE FRIEND - *kalyāṇa-mitta* can be translated as “wise friend.” This implies a level playing field, no hierarchy. 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, one-on-one 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 *The Dharma of Recovery* with whom they can regularly connect, check in, and share in life’s many joys and sorrows.

WISE FRIEND GROUP - A group of people who are working together as a WISE FRIEND dynamic and agree to journey through the truth inventories 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 may solve the problem of not finding someone to be your Mentor and not finding someone to be your Mentee.

BUDDHIST CHEATSHEET (minimal edition)

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

The Buddha taught that to attain liberation one must practice

Wholesome:

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1. View | 5. Livelihood |
| 2. Intention | 6. Effort |
| 3. Speech | 7. Mindfulness |
| 4. Action | 8. Concentration |

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

This was the Buddha's first and fundamental teaching about the nature of our experience and spiritual potential

1. Ordinary life brings about suffering
2. The origin of suffering is attachment
3. The cessation of suffering is attainable
4. Suffering can cease, by following the Eightfold Path

THE SEVEN POINTS OF POSTURE

Attend to each in turn when you first take your meditation seat. If you become uncomfortable while sitting, you may go through these points again

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 1. Legs | 5. Hands |
| 2. Shoulders | 6. Tongue |
| 3. Back | 7. Head |
| 4. Eyes | |

THE SIX WHOLESOME AND UNWHOLESOME ROOTS OF MIND

The mind is always under the influence of one of these states

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1. Generosity | 4. Greed |
| 2. Love | 5. Hatred |
| 3. Wisdom | 6. Delusion |

THE SIX SENSE DOORS AND THREE FEELING TONES

Everything we experience comes through these portals

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Eye (Seeing) | 4. Tongue (Tasting) |
| 2. Ear (Hearing) | 5. Body (Touching) |
| 3. Nose (Smelling) | 6. Mind |

Experience is felt as one of three tones
 1. Pleasant 2. Unpleasant 3. Neutral

THE FOUR METTA PHRASES

Send loving kindness to yourself and others by using these phrases or words that have personal meaning for you

1. May I be free from danger
2. May I be happy
3. May I be healthy
4. May I love with ease

THE EIGHT VICISSITUDES

According to the Buddha, we will experience these vicissitudes throughout our lives no matter our intentions or actions

1. Pleasure and pain
2. Gain and loss
3. Praise and blame
4. Fame and disrepute

THE FIVE PRECEPTS

An ethical life is founded on these standards of conduct

To refrain from

1. Killing
2. Stealing
3. Sexual Misconduct
4. False, harsh, and idle speech
5. Intoxicants that cloud the mind

THE FOUR BRAHMA-VIHARAS

These four "best abodes" reflect the mind state of enlightenment

1. Loving Kindness
2. Compassion
3. Joy
4. Equanimity

THE THREE KINDS OF SUFFERING

The Buddha taught that we can understand different kinds of suffering through these three categories

1. The suffering of pain
2. The suffering of change
3. The suffering of conditionality

THE FIVE HINDRANCES

These are the classical hindrances to meditation practice

1. Desire, clinging, craving
2. Aversion, anger, hatred
3. Sleepiness, sloth
4. Restlessness
5. Doubt

THE SIX STAGES OF METTA

Expand your circle of loving kindness by starting with yourself and moving gradually outward

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Yourself | 4. A difficult person |
| 2. A good friend | 5. All four |
| 3. A neutral person | 6. The entire universe |

Relapse Agreement

This agreement is meant to protect my recovery. It is also an opportunity for me to inform my recovery team and support network how to respond in case I experience a relapse crisis or slip. I am completing this Relapse Agreement with the feedback and collaboration of my recovery team, sponsor/mentor, peer support group and counselor.

1. If anyone in my family recovery team is concerned that my recovery program is inconsistent or is in danger, please do the following:

Review my relapse warning signs with me, in person, via text or by phone Identify the warning signs you are observing, in person, via text or by phone Have my counselor talk with me, in person, or by phone

With my family recovery team, create a plan for more recovery structure.

With my counselor, create a plan for more recovery structure.

With my sponsor/mentor, create a plan for more recovery structure.

Other:

2. If anyone on my recovery team believes I am in a relapse, using alcohol or other drugs, please do the following:

Consult with my counselor or addiction professional.

Put together the following people as an intervention team: (use back for additional

names and numbers). Name: _____ Phone: _____
Name: _____ Phone: _____ Name: _____ Phone: _____

- Have the intervention team review my relapse agreement with me and help me implement it.
- Contact my sponsor/mentor Name: _____ Phone: _____ Determine the professional help I need to appropriately address relapse.
- With my counselor, create a plan for more recovery structure after receiving professional help.

With my sponsor/mentor, create a plan for more recovery structure. If I have a full-blown relapse, I agree to detox plus one of the

following:

- Intensive outpatient or day treatment. Inpatient or residential treatment.
- A halfway house or professionally monitored sober house. I will follow all aftercare recommendations.
- I will also do everything listed under a "slip" below.
- Other:

If I have a one- or two-day slip, not requiring detox:

I will get honest with my recovery team.

I will get honest with my sponsor/mentor.

I will be honest with the members of my home group. I will go to ninety meetings in ninety days.

I will talk with my sponsor/mentor daily. Other:

A Conversation with My Future Self

In the future, if I am exhibiting relapse signs or am in a relapse and I am unwilling to honor the promises I made in my relapse agreement, or I am in denial of my need for help, I am writing myself a message here. Please ask me to read the following to myself and to my family recovery team.

(here is a brief example for writing a personalized Conversation with my Future Self)

“Now when I look back on all the suffering I have endured and all the hard work I’ve done to feel well, have healthy relationships and a life I feel proud of living, I can say that my decision to finally stop using and abusing myself and the people around me is a place I am finally thriving in. I am feeling full of purpose again and don’t ever want to feel the shame, guilt and hurt that my past behaviours have caused me.....”

(create personalized Conversation with My Future Self on exhibit A attached)

Rapid Relapse Response:

In the event of a relapse or slip please read this **Rapid Relapse Response**. This is a statement that will immediately address anyone concerned about my safety, whereabouts and mental state. This message is to quickly empower my family recovery team, sponsor or anyone identified by me in this document and use it as a tool of support in this difficult time.

(Here is an example for writing a personalized Rapid Relapse Response statement.)

“I ask my family to act as quickly as possible if I am in danger of relapse or in relapse. I may be difficult to deal with while I am in such a bad place, but do not let me persuade you not to help me. The sooner you help me, the less damage is done by this insidious and powerful disease. Regardless of what I may say or do, remember, I love you.”

(create personalized Rapid Relapse Response on exhibit B)

Provide copies of this Recovery Plan and Relapse Agreement with signatures and names to:

recovery team_____

counselor_____

My sponsor/mentor:_____

The following professionals:_____

The following intervention team Members:_____

Other: _____

Name: _____ Signed: _____

Date: _____

Exhibit A - A Conversation with My Future Self

In the future, if I am exhibiting relapse signs or am in a relapse and I am unwilling to honor the promises I made in my relapse agreement, or I am in denial of my need for help, I am writing myself a message here. Please ask me to read the following to myself and to my family recovery team.

Exhibit B - Rapid Relapse Response

Present this statement to the family recovery team and or anyone identified in agreement if I am in relapse.