

## Santosha Recovery Meeting Etiquette; In-Person or Virtual

I would like to suggest a few practices and etiquette on how to mindfully conduct yourself during a meeting and get an idea of what the group leader is asking of you. I hope this reduces any anxiety that you might have and increase a sense of ease which allows you and other sangha members, to get the maximum benefit of each meeting. Sangha is a group of people coming together for a common purpose of, for Santosha Recovery, becoming content and happy in their lives and relationships. But most of all the SR meetings encourage deep listening and sincere reflection and compassion for yourself and others. With an understanding that these qualities will come in time by just showing up and doing the practices. Please have patience with yourselves and others.

### 1. Confidentiality

Please be respectful of others privacy. What is said in the meetings stays in the meeting. Also please respect the privacy of others by not using names outside of the meetings. If two of you who were at a SR meeting meet outside meeting and discuss meeting, do so in the content of your own experience not using others names or what they shared in meeting. The group leader will also respect confidentiality except in the case where the group leader believes that someone is in danger, then it is the group leader's responsibility to take action to keep everyone safe.

### 2. Try not to label

See people as people or spiritual beings; and see actions of people as actions of people. I am a person with addictions issues, not an alcoholic. You will not be asked to get up in front of others and announce that you are an alcoholic or any other label. Yoga is about seeing people as beings living on the earth plane to heal, evolve and mature. We are all here doing the best we can with what resources we have. Mistakes are the number one way to get it right the next time. Our tendencies, our negative karma and hurtful actions, once we become aware of them, are the way in which we heal, evolve and mature. Give yourself as well as others the compassion to evolve and grow. People are not good or bad. People can have some very inharmonious actions or even harmful actions but people are spiritual beings with an innate desire to love and be loved.

### 3. Let go of stories

Stories are the minds way of making sense of a situation, or even to control a situation. We get fearful when we lose control of a situation or some aspect of our life. The story your mind comes up with is totally based on the lens you use to see life. If you happen to have on your "this always happens to me" lens then the stories will all be about being a victim. If you happen to have on your "I am right and everyone else is wrong" lens, then the stories will reflect that in a self righteous story by line. In SR, you will be asked to let go of your stories and eventually see life from a lens of santosha (contentment) and acceptance. But as long as your memory bank is full of your old stories you will be pulled back into seeing life from those harmful perceptions. A quote from Lao Tzu "When I let go of who I am, I become what I might be"

### 4. Sharing

There will be opportunities within the meeting in which the group leader will ask if anyone would like to share. During these share times, please share from your self-awareness of how these experiences effected you and you only. Remember SR is about developing a relationship with yourself. And you can only be responsible for yourself and your own feelings. If you need to discuss your relationship with your spouse or your friends, or if you find yourself wanting to share something with another in the meeting, or if you have a personal issue you would like to discuss with the group leader, there will be time at the end of the meeting to engage in conversations, but please keep the share about the reflection you are asked about. This is important because 1. The reflections are about your feelings in response to your reactions to life. 2. When you share your feelings and reflections out loud you learn new things about yourself. And as a sangha member, it is asked that there is no judgment, and no responding or asking questions of the person who is sharing. It is asked of the rest of us to put on our deep listening skills and just listen with compassion and acceptance.

## **5. Right to pass on sharing**

No sangha member is required to share or join in on any activity that makes them feel uncomfortable. The group leader and sangha members shall not pressure anyone to participate in any activity. If a seeker wishes to come and be present with the teachings and not participate in sharing that is fine. If during a sharing the turn comes to someone who wishes to not participate, just say “pass” and we will respect your right to pass. If you wish not to join in with Mantras or prayers, just sit quietly and non judgmentally and try to get a sense of the group vibration.

## **6. Avoid Side Conversation**

Meetings will run more smoothly when side chatter is kept to a minimum. Although it can be tempting to whisper to the person sitting next to you, it can also be distracting to others, and the person speaking. Remember, there are three parts to every meeting; before, during, and after. If you wish to make connections and converse with others, do so either before or after the meeting!

## **7. Limit Cell Phone Use**

These days, we are always accessible, glued to our phones and habitually scrolling on social media. However, in order to stay entirely present, hear the message and not distract others, it is asked to keep your phone put away and on silent for the duration of the meeting. If you need to receive an important phone call that absolutely cannot wait until after the meeting, put your phone on vibrate, and be sure to take the call outside the room.

## **8. Alcohol and Other Drugs**

Group members cannot participate in the meeting under the influence of alcohol or other mind altering drugs. When under the influence of chemicals, persons do not have access to their emotions and have less control over their behavior. I understand that if the leader believes that I am under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, I will be asked to leave the group.

## **9. Have Water Bottle**

No food or beverage during the hour meeting except for water. While we are chanting, meditating, and doing physical postures, it is best that the body is free from digesting food or beverage and instead quiet and content to bring focus on the inner body, mind, emotions and the teachings. Having a water bottle or glass of water with you to drink from serves to quench thirst and smooth the throat. If you have to eat during the meeting for medical reasons, please quietly do so and maybe even step into the back of the room to do so.

## **10. How the Room Is Set Up**

There will be available chairs to sit on and there also will be floor space for those who wish to bring a bolster or a folded mat to sit directly on the floor. The space will be set up semicircle with the group leader facing semicircle. The Hatha Yoga (physical postures) that we do will be accessible seated either way. There may be a few standing poses to stretch and open energy body. But all the movements we do will be gentle and guided.

## **11. Coming Late or Leaving Early**

If you need to come late or leave early every once in awhile you should do so as non disruptive as possible. You could even let the group leader know ahead of time and chair can be set up for you. But it is highly encouraged to arrange to be at the meeting on time and stay till the end of the teachings. If you prefer not to stay for discussion at the end of meeting, that is fine also. If the meeting meets up against some timeline with your other responsibilities, let the group leader know and maybe something can be worked out. Communicate and we will try to accommodate.