

# Misery Addicts and Self-Sabotagers Anonymous (MASSA) Meeting Guide

## **NOTICE TO THE MEETING LEADER**

***Thank you for leading this meeting.***

***Before using this guide for the first time:*** You are Encouraged to read through the format to become familiar with it. Suggestions for the leader are in red italics inside a box. They are not to be read during the meeting. This document is meant to be a guideline.

**Please begin on time even if only 1 member is present so the meeting can end on time**

Welcome to this meeting of Misery Addicts and Self-Sabotagers Anonymous. (MASSA)

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am recovering from Misery Addiction and Self-Sabotage and the leader for today. This is an open meeting, and we are glad that you are here, especially newcomers.

Please join me in a moment of silence to reflect on the reasons we are here followed by the Serenity Prayer.

**God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.**

MASSA is a fellowship where we share our experience, strength, and hope so that we may solve our common problem and help others recover from misery addiction. It is for anyone who is addicted to self-sabotage which results in unhappiness, joylessness, isolation, avoidance, amnesia, hopelessness, sadness, depression, rebellion, resistance, or anyone who may be fearful of success, happiness, joy, intimacy, or well-being.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop self-sabotage.  
Our primary purpose is to stay in recovery and to help other misery addicts find recovery.

Who would like to volunteer to read "*How It Works*."?

The latest updated "Meeting Guide" can be found at [miseryaddicts.org/meeting-guide](http://miseryaddicts.org/meeting-guide)

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## How It Works (The 12 Steps for MASSA)

1. We admitted we were powerless over self-sabotage and that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could bring us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understand our Higher Power.
4. Made a searching and thorough self-Inventory.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our choices.
6. Were entirely ready to have our Higher Power remove any unhealthy character traits and behaviors.
7. Humbly asked our God to remove those traits and behaviors that no longer serve us.
8. Made a list of damage we had caused to ourselves and others and became willing to make amends to all.
9. Made direct amends, when possible, except when to do so would cause harm.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and took appropriate action as necessary.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand it; praying only for knowledge of our Higher Power's will for us and the power to carry it out.
12. Having a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we carry this message to other misery addicts and practice these principals in all our affairs.

Many have exclaimed, ***"What an order! I can't go through with this!"***

Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything close to perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines.

The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the self-sabotager and our personal adventures before and after starting recovery make clear three pertinent ideas:

1. That we were addicted to self-sabotage, misery and avoidance and could not manage our own lives.

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2. That probably no human power, including our own, could have relieved our self-sabotage addiction.
3. That a Higher Power could and would relieve us of this addiction, if that Power were sought.

The Tradition of the Month is:

*Read the tradition that matches the current month*

### **The Twelve Traditions:**

1. Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends upon MASSA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God, as may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for MASSA membership is a desire to stop self-sabotage.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups, or MASSA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the self-sabotager who still suffers.
6. A MASSA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the MASSA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every MASSA group out to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. MASSA should remain forever nonprofessional, but the fellowship may utilize special workers.
9. MASSA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. MASSA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the MASSA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and other media of communication.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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In keeping with the Seventh Tradition which is “Every MASSA group ought to be fully self-supporting.” There are no dues or fees. Your contributions help keep our website open, maintained, and the Zoom platform running.

- Donations can be made by clicking on the donate tab on our [miseryaddicts.org](https://miseryaddicts.org) website.
- Being self-supportive through our own contributions does not apply only to money. Service is critical for recovery. Service includes: participating in meetings by leading meetings, being a special speaker, sharing at meetings with the camera on, volunteering to read, being the time keeper, attending Group Conscience, working the steps, sponsoring, and reminding others of an upcoming meeting. All these actions will aid in promoting recovery.

ALL meetings are open meetings. There are meetings every day of the week. Check the [miseryaddicts.org](https://miseryaddicts.org) website for times, details, or changes.

Each meeting will have a short Group Conscience on the first week of the month immediately after the regular meeting to discuss items applicable to that meeting. Please plan to attend as your input is important.

Is anyone celebrating their Anniversary of coming into MASSA this month?

Are there any MASSA announcements?

Are there any visitors, returning members or anyone here who considers themselves new to MASSA? If so, please introduce yourself by your first name and last initial so that we can welcome you

**Ask for a volunteer to read “A Summary of MASSA” -**

- *If there is a newcomer*
- *If it is requested*
- *If it is the Leader's choice*

This is A Summary of MASSA, created by us, which comes from various portions of the book “When Misery is Company.”

When we say we are addicted to misery; it does not mean we enjoy being miserable. It means that we are addicted to a system of behaviors we have unconsciously developed to protect ourselves. At some point, possibly early in childhood, our wires got crossed and we ended up with a deeply ingrained pattern of choices, behaviors, or blindness to choices, that do not serve our well-being.

At the center of this pattern of behaviors we find avoidance, self-sabotage, and a fear of losing what we have. This pattern may create an amnesia like fog. In this fog we miss deadlines, waste opportunities, and see no point in accepting help offered to us. On a very basic level, a part of us has given up.

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We may have used other addictions or compulsions to create avoidance. These serve the dual purpose of giving us a security blanket which temporarily offers comfort and helps us avoid our misery, fear, and/or hopelessness. Some of our secondary addictions include excessive use of food, shopping, illness, work, gambling, sex, exercise or clutter, religiosity; overspending, being in debt, over use of: technology including: TV; news; internet surfing; social media; reading, or game playing.

Other avoidance behaviors include codependence, caretaking, self-abuse, self-denial, sleeping too much or too little, or addiction to alcohol, drugs, nicotine, caffeine, or any other chemical substance.

We crave avoidance like an alcoholic craves a drink.

We develop plans that would make our lives better and then forget or abandon them when our pattern of self-sabotage takes over. If this happens many times, we experience a loss of self-trust. As our lives become littered with more failures, we may become convinced that we ourselves are failures.

## **So, what's the use?**

Here are some good reasons for facing this addiction: Because we were born, our lives have value. We deserve to reclaim our inner, authentic selves. Recovery from other addictions will be successful when the addiction to misery is addressed. We will be healthier, because as we heal emotionally and spiritually, our bodies will heal, too. By learning to access and embrace feelings of joy and happiness, we will be blessed with an abundance of intimacy, fulfillment, and serenity.

## **What do we do next?**

Even if we can't fully embrace the MASSA concept yet, we can begin by working the steps, getting a sponsor, doing service by coming to meetings to listen and share, leading meetings, volunteering to read, or by being the time keeper. All of these can aid in our recovery.

We finally have Hope. Together we can do this. Many have recovered and we can too.

*This ends the MASSA Summary*

- Meeting on Zoom replaces sitting in a 12-step room together; where we can be seen and accepted for who we are. It is vital in all 12-step fellowships and for our recovery, to be able to recognize and support each other. So, please consider turning your camera on except for the occasional reason like illness.
- Background noise is distracting. Please remember to mute yourself when not speaking.

*The leader can set the time according to the number of people in the meeting.*

- Who will volunteer to be our time keeper for this meeting? Each share will be timed for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. The time keeper will give notice when there are 30-seconds left to complete your thoughts.

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- MASSA is about living the solution not the problem. Only one of the 12 steps deals with the problem. The other 11 steps focus on a solution. We encourage speaking from your own experience, strength, and hope. Present all statements in the “I” first-person, form. We do our best not to use “You” or “We” statements. Please keep this in mind as you share.
- At the end of your share, please say if you are available to sponsor. You can give out your phone number and time zone.

*A suggested response by the Leader, after a share ends could be:  
“Thank you for sharing” and/or “Glad you are here”*

- **We support a No-Crosstalk policy.** Crosstalk includes feedback, offering advice, commentary, judgements, or reactions to another person’s share.
- After a person has ended their share, you may see members using the American Sign Language for “love” or “like,” which looks like this: *Leader demonstrates the sign*
- This is showing support that the person is here and shared; not agreement with what they said.
- Anyone wanting to share a second time, please wait until everyone else has had a chance to share.

### Today’s Topic Suggestions –

- If there is a newcomer present – Ask for sharing on “What brought you to MASSA”
- Leader’s choice of topic
- Book Study –  
*If the meeting is a Book Study and there is a newcomer then ask for a volunteer to share their experience, strength and hope AND what brought them to MASSA.*
- Ask if anyone has a suggested topic they would like to discuss today?

*Some additional topic ideas can be found on the last page of this guide*

### The meeting is now open for participation

You are invited to share on today’s topic or anything else that is important to your recovery.

*Leader: If you call on members by name; you may remind them they are not required to share*

*After everyone has shared, including you, here are some options -*

*1. If there is lots of time left, you can ask if anyone wants to share a second time*

**OR**

*2. If there are only a few minutes left, you can ask for a quick round of gratitude’s*

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## **Closing the meeting:**

*Please end the meeting on time!*

*Only If there is 8-10 minutes left before the scheduled end time*

Does anyone have a burning desire to speak another time?

If you did not get a chance to share everything you wanted to, please reach out to your sponsor or another member with your share.

Who would like the benefit of leading this meeting next week or for the rest of the month?

*If no one volunteers*

Then someone attending the next meeting will get the benefit of doing this service.

Thank you all for being here. We hope to see you next time. Remember that just by attending a meeting, you do a service for others. Check the [miseryaddicts.org](http://miseryaddicts.org) website for current times and meeting details.

## **Everyone may come off mute for all the following responses**

Remember, too, that anonymity, like recovery, is a treasured possession. What we say here, what you hear here, when you leave here, please let it stay here. **Hear! Hear!**

Who would like to read the “MASSA Promises.”

**The MASSA Promises written by us:** They can also be found on [miseryaddicts.org](http://miseryaddicts.org) website.

- As we live the Twelve Steps, we find freedom from misery addiction and discover our authentic selves.
- Self-sabotage, avoidance, and fear leave us as trust grows.
- Compassion increases as we love and accept ourselves *just as we are at this moment*.
- We no longer use guilt, shame, and regret to hurt or motivate ourselves or others.
- As we release perfection and control, we become more successful, secure, and happy.
- We find the dreams that are within us and the courage to live them.
- Recovery brings clarity, intimacy, and joy by drawing us into harmony with life.
- As good things happen again and again, we experience our Higher Power doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.
- Do we see these Promises coming true? **YES, WE DO or YES, I DO!**

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Connection with others is essential for recovery. Please let us all reach out by phone, text, email, or any other medium of communication to newcomers, returning members, each other, and someone you haven't seen here in a while.

Together we get better.

Let us form a virtual circle.

I put my hand in yours and together we can do what we could never do alone! No longer is there a sense of hopelessness. No longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours. And as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.

**God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change,  
The courage to change the things we can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.**

Remember that it works! AND WE ARE WORTH IT!

Let us say together: We, I, and You are worth it.

**WE ARE WORTH IT! I AM WORTH IT! YOU ARE WORTH IT!**

**The meeting has now ended**

***If there is a Group Conscience; remember to invite members to stay***

**Is there anyone wishing to stay after the meeting to chat? This is a time when Newcomers can ask questions.**

***If you are the Meeting Host on Zoom (not just the Leader for the meeting) and cannot stay after the meeting when there are people who want to chat – Assign a new host so the meeting link will not be closed when you leave!***

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## **Additional Meeting Topic Ideas**

Abstinence

Surrender vs Compliance

Relapse & Recovery

Intimacy in Recovery

How to Avoid Avoidance

Feelings are Not Facts

Healthy Rewards

Tool Addictions

Pick a topic from the Index in the book “When Misery is Company” to read and discuss.

Use a topic suggested on WhatsApp