

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

STRONGLY SUGGESTED BEFORE LEADING A MEETING **READ ALL DIRECTIONS IN RED FOR THIS UPDATED MEETING GUIDE**

<< **To the leader:** Thank you for leading this meeting.

This document is meant to be a guide only. **It is not** "written in stone."

Words in italics or **highlighted** or are bounded by << left & right >> are notes just for the leader and should **not** be read aloud.

Areas that are **bolded** could be read by others **or** said by all.

Welcome to this meeting 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 hopelessness, unhappiness, sadness, joylessness, isolation, avoidance, rebellion, resistance, or anyone who is fearful of joy, success, happiness, 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.

Ask would like to volunteer to read "How It Works."

OR

Ask a member by name to read it.

The version is available in the updated "Meeting Guide" on the miseryaddicts.org website. A version is also available in the book "When Misery is Company," Appendix A on page 262.

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How It Works (12 Steps for MASSA based on the 12-Steps of AA)

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 understood God.
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 God 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 do to 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 our Higher Power; praying only for knowledge of our Higher Power's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we carry this message to other misery addicts and practice these principles 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:

<<Leader - Read **only** the tradition that matches the current month>>

The Twelve Traditions:

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon the 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 ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. MASSA should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ 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.

In keeping with the Seventh Tradition which is “MASSA has no dues or fees; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.”

- Donations can be made by clicking on the donate tab on our miseryaddicts.org website.
- Being self-supportive through our own contributions does not apply only to money. Service is the mainstay of our recovery. We do service by speaking and sharing at meetings, leading meetings, volunteering to read, being the time keeper, attending Group Conscience meetings, working the steps, sponsoring, and reminding other members of an upcoming meeting.

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ALL meetings are open meetings. There are meetings every day of the week. Check the miseryaddicts.org website for times and details.

Each meeting hosts a short Group Conscience meeting on the first week of the month immediately after the regular meeting. Please join us as your input is important.

A special meeting is held on the last Sunday of the month at 9pm ET. Please check the website for details.

Are there any MASSA birthdays for the month of _____?

Are there any MASSA announcements from Meeting Custodians or Members?

<< Wait a moment for anyone to make their announcement >>

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. *>> Wait a moment for any newcomers to respond >>*

<<Leader: Read the "Summary of MASSA" If there is a newcomer on the meeting.

If there are no newcomers – Ask if anyone wants it read?

***OR** You can ask someone to share their 1st step MASSA story for 5 minutes. >>*

Who would like to volunteer to read "A Summary of MASSA"

OR

Ask a member by name to read it.

This is A Summary of MASSA, which comes from the book "When Misery is Company".

When we say we are addicted to misery, it doesn't mean we enjoy being miserable. It means that we are addicted to a pattern 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 a 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.

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: reading; food; shopping; illness; work; gambling; sex; exercise; clutter, overspending, being in debt, over or under use of: technology including: TV; news; or game playing.

Other avoidance behaviors include codependence, caretaking, self-abuse, self-denial, sleeping too much or too little, under-earning or addiction to alcohol, drugs, nicotine, caffeine and other chemicals.

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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'll be healthier because as we heal emotionally, 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, coming to meetings, listening and sharing, volunteering to read, being the time keeper, leading meetings and getting a sponsor can all aid our recovery.

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

<< End of the MASSA Summary >>

- Since we are meeting on Zoom, please consider sharing your video; because non-verbal cues are an important part of communication.
- Background noise is distracting. Please mute yourself when not speaking.
- At the end of your share, please say if you are available to sponsor. Give out your phone number and time zone.
- If you want someone's phone number and are on Zoom; please ask for it in the "Chat". If you are joining by phone, you may ask for it verbally at the end of the meeting.

<< Leader: For share time keep in mind that additional people may join the meeting so the time may need to be adjusted if you set 4+ minutes.>>

- Who will volunteer to be our time keeper for this meeting? Each share will be timed for 3.5 minutes. Notice will be given at 30-seconds left, so you can complete your thoughts.
- After a person has ended their share, you may see other members using the American Sign Language for "love" or "like", which looks like this >> Leader demonstrates the sign >>

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- Anyone wanting to share a second time, please wait until everyone else has had a chance to share.
- 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. Please keep this in mind as you share.
- **We support a No-Crosstalk policy.** Crosstalk is a boundary violation.
- When others share with us, just listen. Our reality, our truth, our ideas, our feelings, our self-image, our beings are affirmed. When we focus only on our own recovery (keeping out of other people's), we are taking responsibility for our own lives. We do this by presenting all statements in the "I", first-person, form.
- We do not use "You" or "We" statements.

**<< Leader: A healthy response at the end of a person sharing is just:
"Thank you for sharing" and/or "Glad you are here" >>**

*<<Leader: Before opening the meeting for member shares:
If someone is the meeting using their phone or tablet, they can't see anyone.>>*

Since there is someone joining by phone, I will say the names of everyone in the meeting.

Today's topic is *<< topic of Leader's choice >>*

OR Does anyone have a suggested topic they would like to discuss today?

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

OR Use one of the suggested topics listed in the MASSA newsletter on the miseryaddicts.org website

<<Leader: After everyone has shared, including you,

1. If there is lots of time left, you can:

a. Ask for a second round on the same topic.

OR

b. Ask if anyone has another topic they would like to discuss

2. If there are only a few minutes left, ask for a quick round of gratitudes.>>

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The meeting is now open for sharing.

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

<< Leader option:

Who would like to share first?

OR

You can call on members by name (remind them they always have the option not to share) >>

<< Closing the meeting: Please be mindful of ending the meeting on time.

Start closing the meeting 3 -5 minutes before the ending time so that you don't go over the scheduled hour for the meeting. >>

<<If there is time>>:

Does anyone have a burning desire to speak another time?

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

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.

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

<< Wait a moderate time for someone to volunteer >>

<< If someone volunteers: >>

Thank you. Please check the miseryaddicts.org website for the most up-to-date meeting guide.

OR

<< If no one volunteers >>:

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

Remember that MASSA has meetings every day of the week. Please check the miseryaddicts.org website for times and details.

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!**

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Who would like to volunteer to read the “MASSA Promises”.

OR

Ask a member by name to read it.

The MASSA Promises written by us: (They can be found on 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 or regret to hurt 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!**
>> Pause for people to unmute >>

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 for 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.

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Say: Everyone may come off mute and join me in the “we” version of The Serenity Prayer.

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.

Thank you for joining us.

Remember that it works! AND WE ARE WORTH IT!

If you care to say it with me now,

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

The meeting has now ended

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

>> If you are the Meeting Host (not just the Leader for the meeting) and can't stay after the meeting when there are people who want to chat – Don't close the link and/or assign a new host >>

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