

# Preface

- The freedom group was founded originally in 1994 by the need of several individuals to be able to communicate their spiritual beliefs and apply them to the 12 steps of recovery that are found in Alcoholics Anonymous. As a result of this original small group of about 12 people, we found ourselves, in a little over a year, having 20-25 meetings in different locations because of the acceptance and open mindedness of not just toward our beliefs, but the freedom to allow others to have theirs.

Our central emphasis was to allow us to first reach the place of self honesty, which is the beginning of this spiritual journey, then to allow ourselves to take responsibility for our actions, then allow God to heal us through a series of steps and exercises to experience a freedom of which we had never known or been able to reach without the study of what I call the intangible spiritual absolutes.

I was given the responsibility through my church sponsor to lead, facilitate, and search. I was only able to do this with the help of a core group of 6-8 people who had experienced sobriety but still needed spiritual healing.

This manual is designed to facilitate others to take this journey and it is our intention to not direct but rather to facilitate and support. We realize through the process of our early beginnings that everybody's journey spiritually is as unique as our individual fingerprints and by being open and honest in a safe environment, the process of our search and our healing became contagious.

There is but one leader and that is God as we understand him and we continue to search for a deeper and healthier and continuous relationship with Him. The guidelines which are laid out in this manual are merely a format to pursue the personality that reveals itself in each and every group.

As far as my personal experience, I could wrap up the scriptural side of this process with just "Romans 5:3-5" and "1 Peter 5:6-11".

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

*Romans 5:3-5*

(continued on back)

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

*1 Peter 5:6-11 (NIV)*

In the process we will all come to our own truths. My opinion of the truth does not have any effect on the truth which allows me to search without reservation. The truth is what sets us free and that is how we arrived at the name "The Freedom Group".

[ Can benefit anyone w/ ongoing issues not just drunks and addicts ]

# Freedom Group Meeting Format

Suggested Leader Format

Begin the meeting at 7:00pm

1. Good evening, I'm \_\_\_\_\_.
2. This is the 7:00 PM open meeting of the Freedom Group.
3. Please join me in **Silent Meditation**, followed by the reading of the **Serenity Prayer**.
4. **Vision Statement:** The Freedom Group is an effort of \_\_\_\_\_ to demonstrate its commitment to the community by providing real help at the point of need. It is not our intention to force any belief or to guarantee any results. It has been our experience that by listening and sharing what God has done in our lives and the lives of people who have been placed in our path, things get better. If we then take the time to help our fellows with the grace that has been given to us, things get miraculously better. In short, we pray, we listen, we share, and we love!!!
5. Ask for visitors or newcomers. Welcome them.
6. Have people in the group read: **A Vision For You, Step 3**, and **Step 7**.
7. If you are new at this meeting, this is a discussion meeting. We share our experience, strength, and hope. We do not give advice, but have cross talk. Please allow everyone the opportunity to share before speaking a second time.
8. Moderator qualifies the meeting at this time. Please share your testimony or topic, limit yourself to approximately 5-10 minutes.
9. At 7:55 PM close the meeting. Before closing ask, *"If anyone has a need, please feel free to stay after the meeting to share with someone."*
10. Remember: *What you hear here and whom you see here, when you leave here, PLEASE let it stay here.*
11. Please help me close the meeting by joining hands while we pray the **LORD'S PRAYER**.

# Step 1

Admitted that we were powerless over \_\_\_\_\_ and that our lives had become unmanageable.

## Exercise

Write down, from as far back as you remember to the present, all the things that you thought would fix you or make you OK, but only the things that you actually acquired.

Example: Toys, trips, clothes, tennis shoes, girlfriends/boyfriends, sports, cars, houses, sex, drugs, rock & roll.

## Insight

Most everyone is aware of the lack of control or powerlessness over whatever they were addicted to prior to seeking any help or looking for any answer. The real issue is identifying the connection between the lack of power to change their behavior and the continuing unmanageability of their lives.

## Scripture Reference

I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.

Romans 7:21-23

## Step 2

Came to believe a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

### Exercise

Write down all the characteristics that God (Higher Power) would have to have in order for you to trust him completely and absolutely!

Example: Trustworthy, all powerful, forgiving, merciful, understanding, loving.

### Insight

- Why do people have a resistance against the clear evidence that there is a supreme being or Spiritual Director of the universe?
- What wrong messages do religious people send to non-religious people?
- Learn how to be comfortable in your discomfort.
- We are spiritual beings have a human experience not human beings having a spiritual experience.

### Scripture Reference

When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."'

So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.

Luke 15:17-20

## Step 3

Made a decision to turn our lives over to the care of God, as we understand God. Praying only for the knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out!

### Exercise

Write from the third step prayer in the Big Book, in your own words, your personal version, memorize it, and pray it first thing in the morning for the rest of your life!

### **Third Step Prayer from the Big Book**

*(See page 17)*

### Insight

This step is a clear spiritual place of decision. If you feel led, you can testify about when you decided to become a Christian, what happened emotionally, what you prayed, and what happened spiritually.

### Scripture Reference

For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.  
Matthew 11:30

## Step 4

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

### Exercise

Write down every significant event that you can remember as far back as you can remember, who was involved, what happened, and how you felt. Break it into 1/3 of your life starting with the first third, second third, and final third.

### Insight

This could take several weeks. It's important not to hurry and not to back off. It's a fine balance to help people to express the hidden experiences that drive people's repetitive negative behavior patterns.

Most of us are unaware of how our early life experiences form and influence our fears, resentments, underlying anger. These behavior patterns can affect and compound our ability to relate, understand, and process our daily lives.

### Scripture Reference

And I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up their dead. And all were judged according to their deeds. Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:11-15

## Step 5

Admitted to ourselves, to God, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

### Exercise

Thoroughly review our inventory; be clear on what part of our past is our own selfish nature and what part of our past was situational conditions.

Using our new understanding and relationship with the God of our understanding, confess our wrongs to him in prayer and ask for spiritual help in delivering you from your past wrongs interfering with your new way of life, which involves service to our fellows.

Then carefully select a person who you trust and respect how they live (not anyone who is directly involved in your life). Make an appointment (usually 1 hour) to admit your past and to help with your amends.

### Insight

This step is profound in its effect on a life changing experience. The intangible spiritual absolute here is the act of true humility and acceptance in a relationship with a loving, healing, and powerful God who is interested in the smallest of issues, that can direct us to freedom in Him.

### Scripture Reference

If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

1 John 1:8-9



## Step 6

Were entirely ready to have God remove all of these defects of character!

### Exercise

1. Drive the speed limit 4 out of 7 days
2. Stop at all stop signs
3. Start a hobby or activity you have never done before
4. Do something nice for someone else without them knowing
5. Replace the phrase “I’m sorry” with “I’m wrong” or “It’s my fault”

### Insight

Having had just experienced a new relationship with God, admitted our faults, and changing some behaviors not normal to us, puts us at the doorway of true freedom!

People who have done this work to the best of their abilities to this point will be experiencing a new power in the understanding of who we are, who God is, and how to live life from this point forward.

Never is perfection attained but we comprehend a new joy in traveling the happy road of our true destiny!

We should always encourage our new brothers and sisters that it’s progress not perfection, and to focus on the journey not the arrival. Count all your blessings everyday if possible!

### Scripture Reference

I don’t mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

Philippians 3:12-14

# Step 7

Humbly ask God to remove all of our shortcomings.

## Exercise

When you get close to the attitude and understanding of God's will for your life, and want Him to remove all your defects in His time and in His way, you can pray the 7th step prayers alone.

My Creator,

I am now willing that You should have all of me, good and bad.

I pray that you remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows.

Grant me strength as I go out from home to do your bidding.

Amen.

## Insight

This is stepping through the door of freedom, and transferring our limited abilities to change our beliefs and behaviors and placing ourselves under the umbrella of God's grace and power.

## Scripture Reference

If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil.

1 Peter 3:10-12

## Step 8

Make a list of all people we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

### Exercise

Made a list of every person, place or thing that has suffered a loss as a direct result of your actions or your non-actions. They weren't as well off financially, mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, or spiritually.

### Insight

This is another significant spiritual window (intangible spiritual absolute) that comes as a result of our ability to be honest with ourselves! When we write it down (just as we did in the 4th step) and make a decision to restore others, we become restored, established and joyful!

### Scripture Reference

Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!

1 Peter 3:13-17

## Step 9

Make direct amends to such people whenever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.

### Exercise

You are to make or begin to make amends to one such person. Remember that you are not to force anything on the person you are making amends to. Use humility and a willingness to allow them to be and act anyway they want.

### Insight

This is a very delicate matter. The willingness to do the amend releases the person doing the amend, but needing to have the humility to not further injure or change the injured party. In a lot of cases, direct amends, because of the passing of time or changing situations, might be better done through a surrogate such as an ex-wife who has remarried. The person doing the amend should not injure themselves legally, emotionally, or spiritually

### Scripture Reference

Dear friends, I warn you as “temporary residents and foreigners” to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls.

1 Peter 2:11

# Step 10

Continue to take personal inventory and when wrong promptly admit it!

## Exercise

Ask yourself 4 questions everyday:

1. What did I do today that I liked and respected myself for?
2. What did I do for someone else today?
3. What happened today that I enjoyed and appreciated that had nothing to do with me?
4. Where did I have a problem today?

## Insight

We are now at the maintenance portion of our recovery. You will notice that three of the four questions are very positive. If the person has done the work, this should be an outward sign that their lives are no longer based on negativity and personal weakness. It is not ours to grade people on their progress but it is important to know how they're doing in order to respond to each person where at are in the process!

## Scripture Reference

So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

James 1:21-25

# Step 11

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out.

## Exercise

For the next week, I would like you to pray only for God's will,. Could be as simple as "What can I do for you God?". Any prayer as long as it makes no special request from God. Also meditate for 20 minutes a day.

## Insight

It's obvious why this is a maintenance step. However, we will constantly be fighting for our primary focus and source of power! When people no longer pray and meditate, they are beginning down a slippery slope!

## Scripture Reference

And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

Give us day by day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Luke 11:2-13

## Step 12

Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we try to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all of our affairs.

### Exercise

From this day forward we are called to share God's grace with all those suffering, and host people that God puts in our path to the best of our ability one day at a time. Without regret standing firm in hope and love of the truth God has given you.

### Insight

The truth is what sets us free, therefore you have been introduced to your Godly mission and been set free!

Freedom Group

### Scripture Reference

As for you, Titus, promote the kind of living that reflects wholesome teaching. Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely. They must have sound faith and be filled with love and patience.

Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that honors God. They must not slander others or be heavy drinkers. Instead, they should teach others what is good. These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on the word of God.

In the same way, encourage the young men to live wisely. And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and have nothing bad to say about us.

Titus 2:1-8

## A Vision for You

Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.



## Step 3 Prayer

So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, many of us are an extreme example of self-will run riot, though we usually don't think so. Above everything, we must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help.

This is the how and why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children. Most good ideas are simple and this concept was a keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to **freedom**.

When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new employer. Being all-powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves; our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were **reborn**.

We were now at Step Three. Many of us said to our Maker; as we understood Him. "God I offer myself to thee – to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self; that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life. May I do Thy will always!"

## Step 7 Prayer

My Creator, I am now willing that You should have all of me, good and bad.

I pray that you remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows.

Grant me strength as I go out from here to do your bidding.

Amen.

## Step 11 Prayer

It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee - Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it.



