

Guidelines for Working in Groups with *Weight Release: A Liberating Journey*

Guidelines for working with a partner or in a group:

The following guidelines are simply suggestions. Please use them to assist you in working with the book but do not feel tied to them. Every group works at a different pace – some go slower and some faster. Some sections are more important for a particular group – I encourage you to spend some time where it seems needed. Feel free to revisit an exercise later or repeat an exercise.

I have outlined an eight week program. Again, this can be adapted to fit the needs of your group. If you have more time, extend this process. If you want to do the course more rapidly, consider combining chapters and exercises in a different way.

You can choose to do the exercises at home and share your experiences in the group, or you can meet and go through some (or all) of the exercises as a group – using a combination of individual journaling and group discussion. Your groups may decide to take various exercises home, as homework, and meet back to discuss the following week.

You may want to meet in person or you may choose to meet “virtually” or over the phone. Skype and Dim Dim are excellent free services that can make meeting virtually very effective. Free conference call services (such as www.freeconferencecalling.com) can be very valuable ways to do the process over the phone. Figure out what works best for your group. Perhaps you do a few “in person” meetings and do other meetings over the phone or internet.

Wintention is a free social networking site (accessed through the service to self website: www.servicetoself.com) that has been designed to support people working with the Service to Self™ process. This can be used to check in with your group and gain support. You may also get some professional guidance from the Service to Self™ team – we often respond to discussions in the weight release forum.

When working with a partner or forming a group, consciously create your environment, and be clear about your agreements.

The group you are creating needs to be a safe haven for honest expression of thoughts and feelings. Guidelines for the group experience should be agreed upon by all who join the group. We suggest you make these conscious agreements and commitments:

1. I commit to bringing honesty and integrity to this group.
2. I commit to keeping the confidentiality of all the members of the group. What is shared in group is never repeated and is held in sacred confidence. (This is imperative for establishing a safe environment worthy of trust.)
3. I commit to sharing **my** experience. (Please don't give advice – resist trying to fix anyone or solve problems for others. This allows each member the dignity of his or her own process. Feel free to offer appreciation and support. If you have a suggestion or something you want to point out try to share your experience but refrain from telling others what they should do. Use “I” statements – claim your experience. Try to stay away from saying “you” – or talking about other people. You will benefit most if you report on how it feels to be you.)
4. I commit to speaking with compassion and consideration.
5. I commit to listening with compassion and consideration, honoring always the trust placed in me by my fellow group members.
6. I commit to being sober for all group meetings.
7. I recognize the sacred nature of the relationships developed in this group. (We recommend that you do not date or do business with other members of the group during the workbook process. You want to keep the intention of growing and healing as a group. This commitment is for the purpose of keeping a clear and clean dynamic, free of the complications of business or romance.)
8. I commit to freeing myself to be the best me I can be, participating in my own growth and growing awareness.
9. I commit to the guidelines of the group for the good of all concerned.

The Mission Statement

Whether you are working alone or in a group we recommend that you create a “Mission Statement”. This will a clear focus for your process, and be a guiding principle to keep you on track.

A Mission Statement is an agreement about the intention of the individual, partnership or group. It is a short statement consisting of a few lines defining the purpose of the group. We use this to keep the group on track and moving toward a shared intention. We recommend you read both your own Mission Statement as well as the Mission Statement of the group, at the beginning of every group meeting or workbook session.

Mission Statement

Here is an example of an individual Mission Statements:

-I am open to growth and change as I learn to care for my body in a new and healthy way.

Here is an example of group Mission Statement:

-We are a support community committed to growth and healing, exploring our experience in a safe and nurturing environment.

Possible Break Down of Chapters:

Week One: Read the introduction and the first three chapter of the book (up to page 32), with each member completing the “needs exercise” p. 30-32. Meet as a group to share and discuss your thoughts and experience.

Week Two: Read chapters 4-6 (p.43-53) and do the exercises on intention, affirmation, resistance, and misinterpretations. Meet as a group to share and discuss your thoughts and experience.

Week Three: Read chapters 7-10 (p.55-81) and do the exercises: “a story I’ve been telling”, conscious compassionate observer, and unconscious beliefs. Meet as a group to share and discuss your thoughts and experience.

Week Four: Read chapters 11-14 (p.83-109) and do the exercises: “checking in”, applying compassion to hurt, reframing, and tracking reactions. Meet as a group to share and discuss your thoughts and experience.

Week Five: Read chapters 12-18 (p.111-135) and do the exercises: “getting in touch with your victim”, reframing a victim experience, accepting your body, and “my biggest lesson”. Meet as a group to share and discuss your thoughts and experience.

Week Six: Read chapters 19-23 (p.137-167) and do the exercises: shifting your energy, meaning, inventory of strengths, life vision, and meeting needs. Meet as a group to share and discuss your thoughts and experience.

Week Seven: Read chapters 24-29 (p.169-203) and do the exercises: “designing a game plan”, tracking choices, self-honoring practices, one change, a new quality of life, and new net worth. Meet as a group to share and discuss your thoughts and experience.

Note: Between Chapter 26 and Chapter 27 we recommend that you consider doing a **meal plan** in the same spirit as you did the self-honoring practices. Use the concept of course correction to make adjustments. A weekly meal plan calendar is downloadable from the Service to Self™ website: www.servicetoself.com

Week Eight: Read chapters 30-36 (p.205- 250) and do the exercises. Meet as a group to share and discuss your thoughts and experience. *Note:* This may be a lot to do in a single week – you may want to break it up into two weeks.

Again, these are only suggestions – please adjust your schedule based on the needs of your group. If you are doing well as a group and getting profound value from doing this work, consider extending the group process. You can go back and redo the exercises that

were most valuable. You can also purchase The Weight Release Program™ group package from Service to Self™ and do that entire process together (this is a very in-depth course on weight related issues that goes for 12 weeks).