



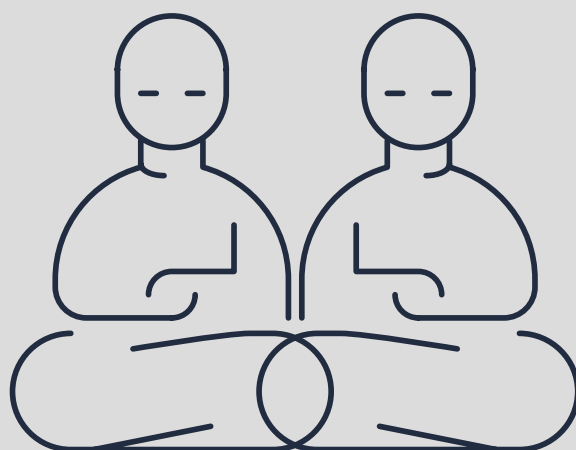
**RECOVERY
DHARMA**

New York City

**MAKING
WISE FRIENDS
IN RECOVERY
DHARMA**

FIRST EDITION

FEBRUARY 2021



Wise Friendship is a relationship with other people in Recovery Dharma that serves to support everyone's recovery.

Receiving support from others and offering support to others can provide inspiration, motivation, experience, and support.

Each relationship is unique and fluid, and defined by each person. The level of support that will be beneficial is unique to you and your recovery.

It is important to find the right balance of support to be helpful without being overwhelmed. A central teaching of the Buddha was the Middle Way, the path between pushing too hard and being too lax.

Wise friends are a valuable tool for recovery that should include mutual respect, kindness, and compassion.

TYPES OF WISE FRIENDSHIPS

These may be informal or structured: whatever works best for the people involved. We encourage using a combination, as more support leads to stronger recovery.



Individual Wise Friend

A peer with whom you can check in via text or phone, or meet in-person to help you stay on track and maintain accountability



Peer Support Guide

A pair where one of its member has more experience in Recovery Dharma. The relationship is more structured than with an *Individual Wise Friend*. Some may choose to use the term *mentorship* for this.



Support Circle

Small groups of trusted friends from the sangha that you can meet in person, meetings, fellowships, and Recovery Dharma events.

WISE FRIENDSHIP IN ACTION

Text/Phone

Checking in with a friend or peers. Having a friend or peers for a specific focus, like gratitude lists, goals, daily meditation, renunciation accountability, etc.

In-Person Activity

Hanging out before or after meetings
Regular meet-ups with a peer for checking in or social activities

Inquiry Writing/ Discussion

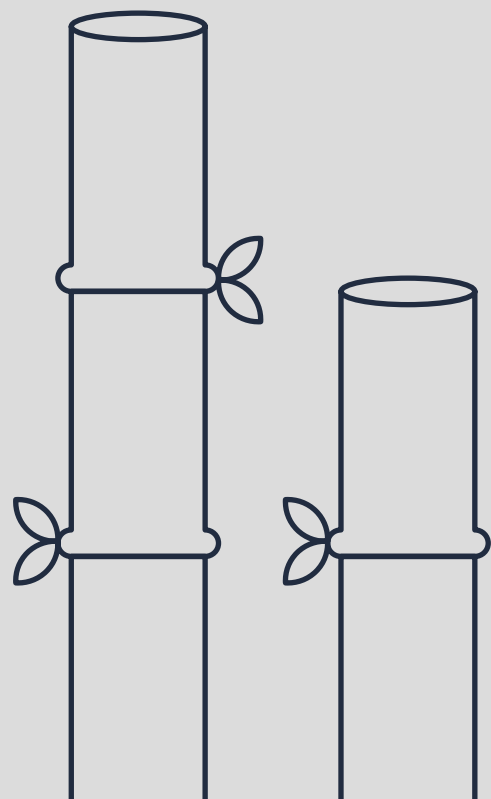
Getting together to discuss Inquiry questions in the Recovery Dharma book

Urgent Support

Someone with whom you can check in when struggling

Sharing in Meetings

When we share in meetings, that is an act of wise friendship as it allows others to get to know you, and inspires others to do the same

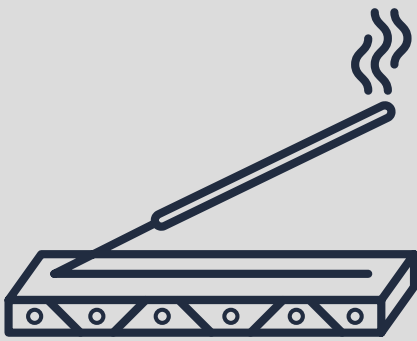


ON NURTURING THE FRIENDSHIP

Recovery Dharma encourages a wise and mindful approach to recovery support relationships that are as free from power dynamics as possible. For this reason, some members prefer a more specific term – “Peer Support Guide” – instead of “mentor,” while other members may like the language of “mentorship” better.

To that end, we offer the following recommendations:

1. The relationships should not be between folks who may develop sexual attraction.
2. The person seeking support is encouraged to seek additional forms of assistance, such as input from other meetings or programs or books, work with a recovery coach, and especially professional therapy or counseling if possible.
3. The autonomy of the person seeking support is respected and they are empowered to grow.
4. The person offering guidance doesn't make demands or give orders, instead presents ideas as suggestions or shares their own experience.



KEEP IN MIND

- Recovery Dharma is not hierarchical, and relationships are not necessarily based on time abstinent.
- Wise friendships are mutually beneficial to everyone in the pair, group, etc.
- Conflict occurs. Miscommunication happens. How you deal with conflict and disagreement is important. Listening and open-mindedness are key.
- Take care of yourself first and foremost.
- You can always take a break or end a relationship by clearly and kindly communicating to your friend or group.
- It's okay to say "no" to someone else's request.

COMMUNICATION SUGGESTIONS

- Use “I” statements (“I think...”; “I feel...”)
- Speak from your own experiences
- Own your thoughts and beliefs as yours; they’re not universal truths
- Try using whole statements when making a request or stating a need
- “I want...” or “I need...” (what wants or needs you are hoping to get met)
- Requesting context or a specific action rather than something vague is generally more well-received and do-able and offers a bridge for further communication/interaction
- Try to avoid blame by making observations rather than accusations
- Timing, tone, & tact
 - TIMING: Is now the right time to bring this up?
 - TONE: Is the tone of your voice appropriate? This can point to your internal emotional state.
 - TACTFUL: Is how you are stating something tactful? In other words, are you using *wise speech*?
- Take ownership when you make a mistake. Apologize when appropriate.



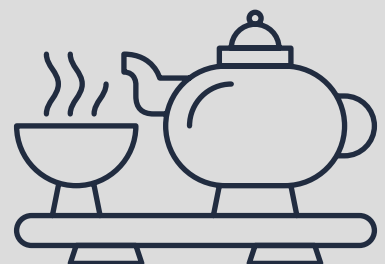
"SPEAK WITH KINDLY MOTIVATION.

SPEAK WHAT IS TRUE AND HELPFUL,

SPEAK IN DUE SEASON AND TO THE BENEFIT OF ALL."

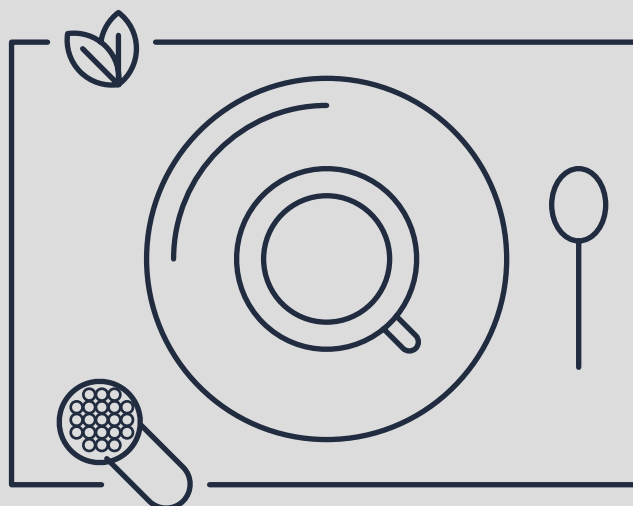
WHEN OFFERING SUPPORT

- Practice deep listening.
- Fully concentrate on what the speaker is saying.
- If you're thinking about your response while the other person is talking, you probably aren't listening.
- Work to understand what is being said.
- You might demonstrate understanding, or clarify what is being said, by repeating back what was said using your own words
- Try and remember what is being said.
- Think about the emotions behind the content, or why it is being said.
- Practice patience.
- Finally, respond appropriately.
- Avoid “yes” or “no” questions. Ask questions that come from a place of curiosity and kindness.
- If you tend to talk more than listen, try listening more and asking questions of the other person.
- If you tend to listen more than talk, speak up and ask to share your own experiences.
- Notice if you have a strong opinion of what “should” be done or if you have a desire to “fix” a person or situation.
- Try to avoid pushing your own agenda.
- Pay attention to your emotional state when offering advice or support. Stress, judgment, frustration, anger, and resentment can be signs of your own internal process. Try to put that aside: just listen and offer support.



WHEN RECEIVING SUPPORT

- Listen to your intuition; if something doesn't feel right, trust yourself or check in with a trusted friend for feedback.
- Know that all of us learn and recover differently. What works for one person may not work for you. Try it out. If it doesn't work, try something else.
- There is no “right way” to do this. If someone says that you **MUST** do something a certain way, proceed with caution.
- Ask for what you need or want. Trust and vulnerability can only be strengthened when we ask. You might get a “no” and you won't get a “yes” if you don't ask.
- Set boundaries to create healthy relationships.





PARTING NOTE ON WISE FRIENDSHIP

We are emphasizing a peer-based path to recovery, recognizing that we are all wise, we are all equal, and we can all learn from each other. It is a myth that only those who are completely healed can help others heal.

There are many relationships within a *sangha* and each can fall into pitfalls without wise understanding, intention, speech, action, and effort.

As such, there is a need for a peer-based approach to mutual learning and relationships within one's community.



**"WHEN A MONK HAS A WISE FRIEND, A WISE COMPANION,
A WISE COMRADE, IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT HE WILL
DEVELOP AND CULTIVATE THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH."**