

## Tuesday Morning 6:45am Heart to Heart Freedom Group Information

This is a Freedom Group that emphasizes the Twelve Steps. The group consists of a commitment to working the program. So what is “the program”? Here are the basics:

### The Five Commandments (5 C's)

1. **Pray in the morning.** Every day, ask God for his help to stay free of unwanted behaviors and thoughts. Make a decision that you will surrender and pursue recovery today.
2. **Read recovery literature daily.** The Bible is your daily guide in life, but it is not recovery-specific material. See the list below or ask a counselor or other group members for suggestions.
3. **Call and speak with someone in your recovery group(s) daily.** One call each day is the minimum. If you attend multiple groups, you should make at least one call per group per day.
4. **Attend meetings.** Attend as many Freedom Group, SA or AA meetings as you can each week. One per week at a minimum.
5. **Prayer at night.** Thank God for the grace you received today and evaluate your progress.

Work the **101 Freedom Exercises**: These exercises provide you with insight to keep you free. You should work at minimum one a week, and more in early recovery. Many work through these with their counselor or sponsor.

Work the **12 Steps**: As a guide, you can read Doug Weiss' *Steps to Freedom*, the *SA White Book*, and the *AA Big Book*. It is also highly recommended that you find a sponsor, someone who is working the steps ahead of you and who has at least six months of sobriety. You should work and present about one step each month. Refer to “Guidelines for Presenting Steps” for further guidance.

Especially if you are an Intimacy Anorexic, but even if not, we recommend that every day you initiate the **Three Daily's (3D's) (prayer, feelings exercises and affirmations)** with someone (your spouse if you are married) to build intimacy. If you are unsure of what this is, feel free to ask your counselor or the group.

That's it. That's the program. Not much, but if you diligently work the program you will be free AND you will have a better life. But there is a warning... “half measures avail us nothing.” Maximized thinking is the key to success.

We ask all newcomers to this group to commit to attending every week for 16 weeks.

Books strongly recommended for the 1<sup>st</sup> 6 months of recovery. There is much good recovery material, but not all of it is most useful in the early months of sobriety. These books should be considered the primer for recovery.

*The Final Freedom : Pioneering Sexual Addiction Recovery (978-1881292371)*  
*101 Freedom Exercises: A Christian Guide for Sex Addiction Rec (978-1881292234)*  
*Steps to Freedom: Christian 12 Step Guide for Sex Addiction Recovery (978-1881292050)*  
*Intimacy Anorexia: Healing the Hidden Addiction in Your Marriage (978-1881292265)*  
*Intimacy Anorexia: The Workbook (978-1881292227)*  
*Intimacy Anorexia: The Steps (978-1881292241)*  
*Alcoholics Anonymous: The Big Book (978-1893007178)*  
*The SA White Book (978-0962288708)*  
*Helping Her Heal (DVD)*

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**Check-in:** Use the check-in time to get current. The group exists so we can help each other. That can only happen if there is complete honesty and complete trust. What is shared here stays here.

**Feedback:** Permission must be granted before feedback can be given. Remember, we cannot work another's program, but we can be supportive and offer accountability.

The purposes of feedback may include:

- To share our experience, strength and hope, not our advice. To offer encouragement or grace.
- For a reality check (sometimes addicts like us are not seeing reality).
- To help focus/clarify an issue.

Reasons to NOT give feedback:

- Condemnation.
- To hear ourselves talk.

Feedback is often most effective and constructive when offered in context of a relationship with the person, built through meetings, calls, etc., which is why those giving feedback should be *actively* working the program themselves.

## The Twelve Precepts of the Tuesday Morning Freedom Group

1. We are a gathering of men *intentional* in their recovery. *We are a group of men intent on claiming God's redeeming gift of sobriety while engaging with our whole hearts, minds, bodies, and spirit in recovery through Jesus Christ. It is He who redeems us from this addiction. It is we who lay hold of that redemption.*
2. We understand at all times that we are at war – both with the evil one, and with our old nature. We are God's warriors and we must choose to fight. God will honor the efforts of those who do. We also fully understand that we are not alone in the battle. God is our Commander, and we, the formidable force through which he operates. We fight together and we cover each others' backs. No one is in this alone!
3. We are a 'step group', a step group based on the principles of the twelve step program. We know what the steps are, and what they mean to us. We work at our own pace, but in *purposeful pursuit to do them, and then to live them*. We claim the privilege to authentic recovery through working the steps as if our lives depended on them ... and we recognize that they do!
4. We understand that recovery cannot be sustained without enjoying each other and the group in the process. We fully acknowledge that being an intentional group does not mean we are dismal. Even amidst our addiction, we are men who are real. We are also men to contend with.
5. We are **not** responsible *for* each other's recovery. *But we are responsible to each other and to God*. Sometimes that will look like exhortation and facing consequences, and sometimes it will be compassionate listening to the out-pouring of someone's heart. We respect the need for everyone to check-in and will maintain awareness of when the group needs to end. We understand that relationships are further developed and nurtured outside this group.
6. We honor this group and our own integrity when admitting to our own offenses and defects of character. As a group, we may challenge, but we will never shame.
7. We remember that we are not only recovering from something, but to something (our redemptive vision). This redemptive vision for us may look like leading a meeting or leading people to meetings. It may be launching a ministry or setting up the room. It may be in recovery writing or quietly being there when another buddy needs us. Whatever it might be, we form that redemptive vision and work toward it. Without it, we know that in forever looking back, we are likely to stumble on the pebble just in front of us.
8. We are intentional in the conduct of our group. We recognize that ours is not a theology huddle where nuances of Scripture are debated. To be sure, the Word is a critical part of our recovery and we embrace it both inside and outside our group. But just as Jesus set aside his time to pray and rest and do miracles, we set aside this time to *specifically and purposefully pursue what we need to maximize our recovery*.
9. We do not administer or dispense legal or medical advice in the meeting. We understand that these topics are individual issues, and are a diversion from the issues of the heart. We recognize that there is time during the week to discuss such topics.
10. We are a group that is in purposeful pursuit of recovery. The initial commitment is 16 weeks. Attendance is not to be considered 'optional.' Commitment to this group means it is given utmost priority. If we absolutely cannot attend, we call someone in the group to let them know.
11. We are responsible for establishing our own consequences and reporting on them. We understand that without appropriate consequences, loss of sobriety is not only possible, it is probable.
12. We recognize that trust and intimacy can only grow in a place of safety. We uphold that the group is a place where any addict can come and reveal his story in confidence. As such, we never divulge either the identity of others or their story outside of the group. In all ways, we respect and uphold confidentiality.

## **When And How Often Should I Present A Step?**

The guideline is about *one step per month*. The pace at which you ‘do steps’ varies by individual circumstances and the step itself (some steps are much more intensive than others).

### **Remember:**

- *Don't shortchange your recovery by 'rushing a step' just to get it done. This is not a competition. Real recovery can only be achieved by really working the step'.*
- *Don't shortchange your recovery by 'stalling' or 'avoiding' the step either. Many of us try to be perfectionists, leading to feeling overwhelmed and never getting around to it. Or, we have difficulty working the step itself and are afraid to ask others for help. In either case, we find ourselves months later still having not progressed.*
- *Working the steps does take time, thought and effort. "My life is busy" is NOT a reason to not be diligently working the steps. Everyone's life is busy – the difference is between those who make their recovery a priority and those who choose not to. Remember, when we were addicts, we frequently found plenty of time in our busy schedules to act out. You will make time to do what is important to you.*
- *In any case, the group will be perceptive enough to know when these are occurring. Besides, you have to provide a status of what you have accomplished toward your step at check-in time each week so it is difficult to hide.*
- *Ultimately, this is your recovery and your life. If you have chosen to walk through your steps here with us, we will be here to help you walk through them in a timely and appropriate manner.*
- *If you are ready to present a step, say so at check-in. Be intentional and don't hide behind 'if there is time'.*

## What Are The Guidelines For Preparing And Presenting My Step?

The real step work is performed outside the group, between you and your sponsor or other group member. Presenting a step in detail to the sponsor or other person in recovery allows an exhaustive search of one's heart and specific feedback which may take hours or even days.

For presentation to the Freedom Group, prepare a summary of this step with emphasis on:

1. **Communications of Feelings:** Identify how you felt as you were doing the step. Did you feel abandoned? Fearful? Free? Lonely? Vulnerable? Use words that will most effectively communicate what you really felt. One point to remember: common present day vernacular like 'Awesome', 'Blown Away', 'Sweet', 'Good' or 'Bad' are not a legitimate or clear communication of feelings (but, admittedly, they are good avoidance words).
  2. **Being Alive, Engaging, and Emotionally Present While Giving the Step.** Make the presentation come alive by being present in the moment as you are practicing and giving the step. Remember what it felt like as you were 'surrendering to God', or 'making your list'. Make your step presentation relevant, not only to your recovery, but to others.
  3. **Communication Of What You Learned and How You Grew From 'Doing the Step' (Learns and Grows).** Communicate what you learned about yourself and your recovery in this step, and what you learned that may help you in your day-to-day life, and your future.
  4. **Adherence to the Time Limit.** Determine how much time you need for presentation (generally 5, but no more than 10 minutes). If you do not come close to the time limit, you may not be fully 'presenting' your step. Few of us choose our thoughts and words carefully enough to communicate only what really needs to be said. For this reason, we also will hold you to staying within the timeframe you chose. Think about the step well enough that you can present it meaningfully yet concisely.
- **PITFALLS TO WATCH OUT FOR IN SHARING A STEP**
    - **Deflection:** Referring to someone else or someone else's story while sharing our step such that it allows us to escape showing ourselves to others.
    - **Meandering:** Allows us to use up time so that we don't have to show ourselves. Folks who meander will almost always lose points in the 'aliveness and engaging' category.
    - **Pontification:** Hiding behind a lot of \$5 words. Makes us sound more important than we are and allows us to hide behind something we are not.
    - **Excessive Religiosity:** Sounding holy; using Christian buzzwords/phrases that allow us to escape from showing ourselves. It is easy to say "*Man, I really feel blessed by God! He is so awesome! There is no way I could have done this step without Him!*" But harder to say "*It felt as though I was sitting quietly in the lap of God as I wept and realized how much I had hurt both my wife and my God. I felt so close to Him then!*"
    - **Using 'We' and 'Us' and 'You'.** You are giving the step, not us. "*We feel tempted when...*", should be replaced with a more personal "*I feel tempted when...*". To state otherwise is a 'sharing of ownership' allowing escape from individual responsibility.

## **How Do I Present My Step?**

1. Arrive at the meeting on time or early and notify the facilitator that you have a step ready to present.
2. You are responsible for keeping within the time limits. There is no group timer. We each are responsible for our own behavior.
3. You begin by identifying the step number and reading the step itself.
4. You present your step in whatever format and style you have prepared (reading it from notes, verbatim from paper, from memory, or conversational style, etc.). Remember, this is your step and your recovery, so present it in the style that feels right. However, you should not engage others in conversation while presenting your step.
5. When you have completed your presentation, say so, and the group leader will call for ratings and feedback from the other regular group members.
6. If you desire additional feedback from what was presented in the meeting, get together with others after group or through phone calls.
7. Consider the scores and the feedback in whether or not you need to re-present your step at a later time, or use the feedback in future steps.

## **How Do I Score Someone Else's Step Presentation?**

*Scoring a step is very subjective and done differently by each of us.* The scores we give sometimes depend upon things like how hungry we are, whether we have had a bad day at work, or are sleepy. However, one of the reason we each score the step in a group setting is to smooth out these variants so that the presenter can receive a *general impression* of both a) was his step work complete enough, and b) did he effectively communicate what was needed.

*Rating is scored on a basis of 1 (leaves much to be desired) to 10 (excellent).* And for those who have a hard time making decisions, only whole numbers are allowed (e.g., no 9.3793 scores) and for those who are into rebellion, no scores above 10 please.

*Generally, a score of 8 or above indicates that you thought the person* effectively communicated what he needed to, and you felt the step was complete.

*A score of 7 or below means that you felt there was a lack of communication* of one or more of the categories below, and that the presenter should re-assess whether he has adequately performed the step, or look at how his communication of the step in the group could have been clearer or more effective.

*When we go around the room for scoring,* you may provide feedback as well, but please be generally brief. Further detail can be provided outside the group.

*Some of us will want to please and avoid conflict* and provide a score that will make the other person feel good. However, we are in recovery for our very lives, and we do our brothers in recovery absolutely no good if we provide a 'false score' (good *or* bad). Rate honestly (but not harshly).

*Here is what we are listening and looking for when a person is giving his step.*

1. *Did the Presenter Communicate Feelings?* Did the person communicate his step in adequate 'feeling' words and not just facts and events. Did you get the essence of how he felt in doing the step, or did he avoid or otherwise shut off communication of his feelings?
2. *Was the Presenter Fully Engaged and Emotionally Present While Presenting His Step (Alive and Engaging)?* Were you drawn into the presentation, or did it leave you flat. Was it relevant to you and your recovery? Did it engage your interest? Did the person present his step in such a way that he was clearly fully alive and engaged in what he was saying?
3. *Did the Person Communicate What He Learned and How He Grew From 'Doing the Step' (Learns and Grows)?* Did the person clearly communicate what he learned in the process of doing his step and how it will help him in his future recovery? Did the presenter relate his step experience back to his 'real life' so that you got an idea how he might apply the experience to his day-to-day life?
4. *Did the Person Adhere To His Time Limit?* Did the presenter end his step presentation within, but close to the five / ten minutes?