

THE PRACTICE

Renunciation: We understand addiction to describe the overwhelming craving and compulsive use of substances or behaviors in order to escape present-time reality, either by clinging to pleasure or running from pain. We commit to the intention of abstinence from alcohol and other addictive substances. For those of us recovering from process addictions, particularly those for which complete abstinence is not possible, we also identify and commit to wise boundaries around our harmful behaviors, preferably with the help of a mentor or therapeutic professional.

Meditation: We commit to the intention of developing a daily meditation practice. We use meditation as a tool to investigate our actions, intentions, and reactivity. Meditation is a personal practice, and we commit to finding a balanced effort toward this and other healthy practices that are appropriate to our own journey on the path.

Meetings: We attend recovery meetings whenever possible, in person and/or online. Some may wish to be part of other recovery fellowships and Buddhist communities. In early recovery, it is recommended to attend a recovery meeting as often as possible. For many that may mean every day. We also commit to becoming an active part of the community, offering our own experiences and service wherever possible.

The Path: We commit to deepening our understanding of the Four Noble Truths and to practicing the Eightfold Path in our daily lives.

Inquiry and Investigation: We explore the Four Noble Truths as they relate to our addictive behavior through writing and sharing in-depth, detailed Inquiries. These can be worked with the guidance of a mentor, in partnership with a trusted friend, or with a group. As we complete our written Inquiries, we undertake to hold ourselves accountable and take direct responsibility for our actions, which includes making amends for the harm we have caused in our past.

Sangha, Wise Friends, Mentors: We cultivate relationships within a recovery community, to both support our own recovery and support the recovery of others. After we have completed significant work on our Inquiries, established a meditation practice, and achieved renunciation from our addictive behaviors, we can then become mentors to help others on their path to liberation from addiction. Anyone with any period of time of renunciation and practice can be of service to others in their sangha. When mentors are not available, a group of wise friends can act as partners in self-inquiry and support each other's practice.

Growth: We continue our study of these Buddhist practices through reading, listening to dharma talks, visiting and becoming members of recovery and spiritual sanghas, and attending meditation or dharma retreats when we believe these practices will contribute to our understanding and wisdom. We undertake a lifelong journey of growth and awakening.