

Weekly Meeting Notes

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Arrive 30 minutes early to:

- **Set up the room—Have the group sit in a circle (not around a table)**
- **Review these meeting notes**
- **Prepare yourself by using the self-awareness skill:**
 1. **Ask yourself how you're feeling physically.**
Ask yourself if you are tired, hungry, in pain, etc.
 2. **Ask yourself how you're feeling emotionally.**
Ask yourself if you are sad, frustrated, angry, anxious, excited, etc.
 3. **Ask yourself how you're feeling about your relationships.**
Think about your relationships with God, family members, co-workers, friends, group members, etc.
 4. **Make a mental list of the feelings that are dominating you right now.**
 5. **Ask God to prevent you from carrying these feelings into the meeting.**

Greet your group members as they arrive.

Start the meeting on time (regardless of how many are present).

Lead the group in prayer.

Read the material below to your group.

What we're going to do is:

1. Report what happened over the past week
2. Set the plan for next week

Does anyone have questions before we start?

Each of us will tell the group:

- How many times we used the practice

- How we encountered God while using the practice

I'll start and then we'll go around to the left.

Don't embellish your stories. Be totally honest.

While you are sharing, make a point to make eye contact with everyone in the circle (don't talk directly to just one person).

When you're finished, turn to the person on your left and ask him/her if he/she'd like to share.

If someone doesn't want to share, just jump ahead to the next person.

If people don't have much to share, don't go offtrack; proceed with the steps below and end the sharing meeting. Don't begin a discussion about the current practice. People who are hesitant to do something have a tendency to want to talk about it in place of doing it. The goal is to keep the focus on actually *using* the practice.

If the sharing meeting ends well before expected and people want to stick around, start a discussion about a completely different topic.

When the sharing is over, reflect on what just took place (before you start talking about the plan for next week).

If someone shares something that you feel needs to be heard by your pastor, encourage the person to go talk to your pastor.

Let's talk about the plan for next week.

If starting a new practice:

The plan for the next week is to read the story, prepare to learn it, and use it three or four times.

If using the same practice for another week:

The plan for the next week is to use the practice four or five times.

Use the blank pages at the end of the steps to record what happens when you use the practice.

When we come back next week, we'll share our experiences again.

Let's close with a prayer.

Lead the group in a closing prayer.

Adjourn the meeting.

Most small groups have one or two members who don't complete the assignments, who miss meetings, or who discuss things that get the group offtrack.

If you're having these kinds of problems, go to:

www.essentialpractices.com/GroupTools