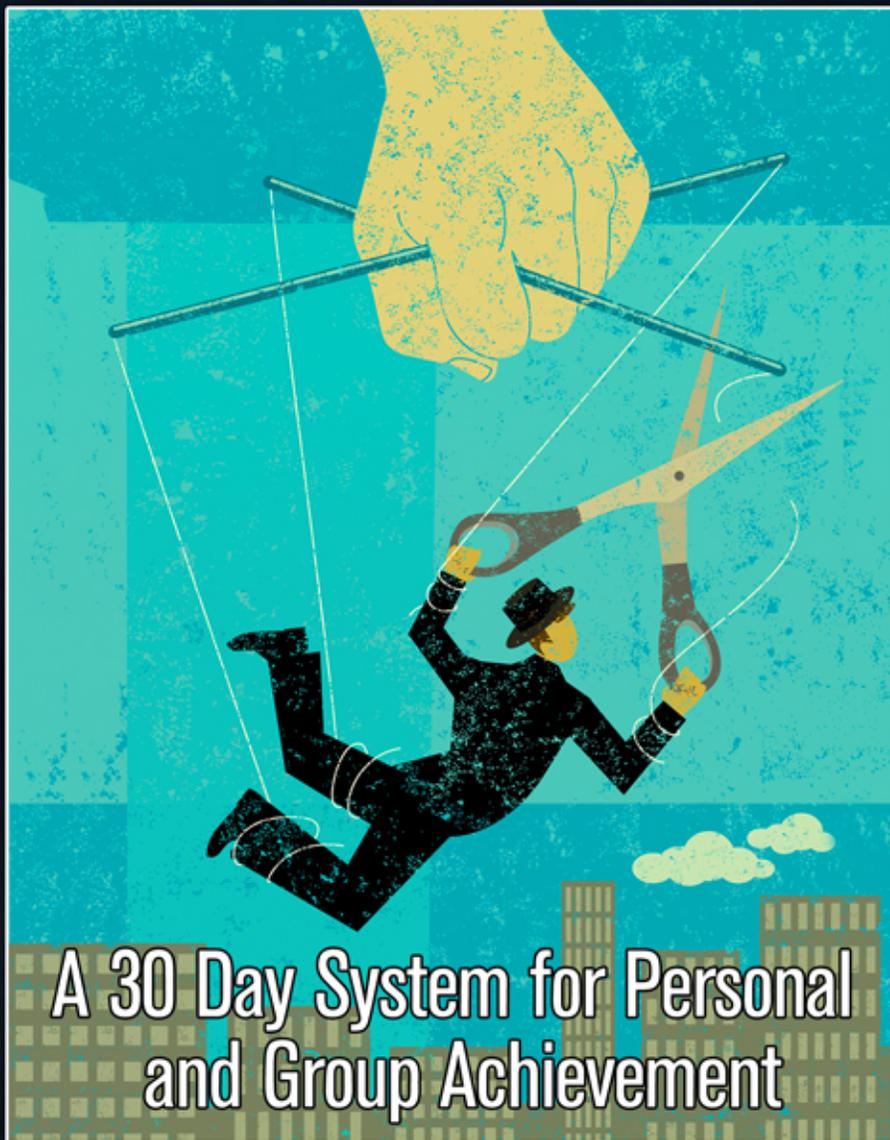


# THE HABIT MASTERY TEAM LEADERSHIP PROGRAM MANUAL



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## THE TEAM LEADERSHIP HABIT MASTERY PROGRAM

### Thought Habits: The Root of All Achievement

The thoughts we continuously think – whether it be about the past, present or future – will eventually attract “like” circumstances. Therefore, if our predominant thoughts or feelings are about a habit we desire to engage in, or NOT engage in, that is what we will get more of. The same thing happens when we resist, fear or hate something: We get more of it. Why? Because what we focus our energy and attention upon, we attract.

*If you want to help someone change, don't focus on what they're doing wrong. Stimulate their desire to focus on what they want...*

#### **These Ideas are the Core...**

These three ideas are at the heart of The Team Leadership Habit Mastery Program, so let me repeat them again in a slightly different way. To create lasting change:

**First:** Don't try to change or fix yourself. By focusing too much on your problem, you'll only get more of it.

**Second:** Shift your focus. Think about what you want, instead of what you don't. Give your energy – thoughts, feelings, words, actions – to what you want to experience and create. And that's what you'll begin to feel inside yourself and have show up in your life - If you are consistent.

**Third:** To help someone else, stimulate (and support) the same thinking in them.

## **The Habit of Focusing on What's Right/Good/Positive...**

Change doesn't come from trying to control our behavior, "break" our bad habit, or force ourselves to stop by criticizing, "guilting" or beating ourselves up. Instead, it comes through *releasing* our unwanted behaviors – by stimulating and growing the mental habit of focusing on what we want in our life.

These same principles are beautifully illustrated in a book called *Whale Done*, by Ken Blanchard, Thad Lacinak, Chuck Tompkins and Jim Ballard. The book is about how professional trainers train killer whales to do those amazing feats at top aquariums. What it basically says is that the way to train a whale is not to focus or give any energy to what it is doing wrong, because it will simply ignore you – or eat you! The key is to focus on and acknowledge what it is doing 'right.' In other words, look for the behaviors you want to grow, then give the whale positive reinforcement when it makes progress in that direction.

Intuitively that makes sense, right? Yet this idea is hard for most of us to actually put into practice. Why? Because we've become so focused on what people are doing 'wrong,' AND trying to fix or correct ourselves and others, that that's what we give our energy or power to – and as a result, we get more of what we do not want.

The key to this approach is shifting our focus onto what we want, and away from what we don't want. By growing these thoughts, feelings and behaviors, they will gradually begin to replace what we are doing now (that we don't want) and give us the experiences that we seek.

### **Keys to Change: Release and Redirect**

Most of us don't find it easy to change our thinking. It's kind of like the air we breathe; it's so natural to us that whatever thoughts come to us seem like "just the way we are." That's why shifting our focus from what's wrong, bad or negative about ourselves, our lives and our habits will take time and practice. It will also

take some new ‘habits of thinking’ that most of us aren’t used to as yet. So let me describe what I mean by that.

1) Whatever kind of habit(s) you have that you do not want, it’s there because you are actually holding on to it and won’t let it go. I don’t mean that in a harsh or judgmental way. You simply don’t realize that by your continuous thinking about it, you’re actually holding on to it.

The reasons you’re holding on could be many. Perhaps you felt hurt at some time in your life and are using this habit to reduce the pain; or you developed a negative belief or image about yourself and this behavior helped you to feel better. Maybe your habits makes you feel so much better than you normally do, and you haven’t found anything else to make you feel as good; or you feel so negative about yourself that you keep using this behavior to avoid those other feelings. I’ll explore some of these later on, and give you opportunities to reflect, reinterpret and let them go. However , what’s important right now is that your constant thinking about your bad habits is what’s keeping it with you.

2) In order to be free of your habit, you’re going to have to let go of those thoughts and consciously focus on something that has nothing to do with your “bad habit,” and has a higher vibrational feeling. However, you can’t force yourself to do this. It has to be a ‘free choice.’

3) “So how do I stop myself from thinking about what I’m thinking about?” Well, you can’t. When we try to stop ourselves from thinking about something, we’re actually giving more attention, thought or energy to it. It’s like the statement, “Try not to think of your favourite color.” By trying not to, you often can’t help but do it.

And that’s how we get stuck. By trying harder and harder, we get even more stuck. And that’s insanity: Doing more and more of something we think will bring us a desired result, but doesn’t. Yet we keep on doing it. In fact, with our habits it’s not only NOT getting us the result we want, it’s actually locking in our thoughts

and feelings further, and creating the opposite experience from what we're intending. That's even more "insane."

4) So how do we shift our thinking? It starts with *awareness* and *noticing* what our thoughts are in the moment.

I'd like to illustrate this by one of my marathon experiences. After I got 'injured,' whenever I'd run I would start to experience some pain in my knee. As soon as I'd feel it, my thinking would be something like, "Oh shoot, it's there again." Or, "Oh \$()&%^, here we go again." I knew better; I was already somewhat aware of the power of our thoughts and beliefs. But it's the way our mind works. When we feel powerless, that's where our thoughts go – to our problem. As a result, I'd begin to focus on my "injury" again. And I would keep thinking that way for 5, 10, even 20 minutes – until some part of my mind would say, "I'm doing it again! I'm focusing on the pain being an injury. Enough already!"

The reason I tell that story is, it's about awareness. My intention before running was to watch my thoughts, to see when I was focusing on the pain, and shift it when I was able to. But being a beginner at thinking this way, my mind kept forgetting. So that was my experience: I'd remember, then I'd forget. I'd realize what I was doing, and then I'd forget again. That's what's so crazy about our thoughts. You can be right in the thought habit that's keeping you stuck, and not even know that you're in it. But as soon as you notice it, you're beginning to turn it around.

So that's stage one: Watch it, notice it. Pay attention to whenever you're doing your unwanted habitual patterns, or are thinking about them.

5) When you notice that you're doing or thinking about your habit, use this as an opportunity to re-direct your thoughts onto something else, that is at a higher vibration. Almost anything will work here. You could focus on your gratitude for something in your life, like your dog, your kids, your spouse or partner. In my earlier recovery days, I'd think about being able to help another addict. More

recently, I have envisioned this book being read, or being in schools and teaching kids about unwanted habits. And when I'm running my marathons, one focus that works well for me is to imagine how I will be feeling having finished being 'injury free.'

The key is to redirect our thoughts onto something we want or appreciate, instead of focusing on what we don't want or on what upsets us. So it's not saying to ourselves, "I've got to stop thinking about my problem, and here's why." It's about choosing thoughts that actually make us feel better inside. Even if you don't feel that way immediately, at least you're moving in the right direction – of putting your focus on something other than your bad habits, what you don't want, or trying to stop thinking about what you don't want. (Got that? <smile>)

6) It's also important, when you notice yourself choosing more empowering thoughts, to acknowledge yourself. We spend so much time thinking about what we're do "wrong" or trying to correct and fix ourselves, that acknowledging what's "right" is a significant step in creating this new mindset. Give yourself (and others) credit and appreciation for making progress. Just like the whales, you too need positive reinforcement. So start noticing what you ARE doing, instead of fighting yourself for what you're not doing.

### **Letting Go of Negativity**

Many people, when they are engaged in time-wasting, life draining habits have a lot of negative thinking going on inside –thought habits that they're often not aware of. For example, they might focus a lot on what's wrong with other people.

This could include blaming, complaining or criticizing others in their family, at work or in the world. They may frequently give advice to or try to fix others (or one person in particular). Or they may continually be trying to correct, improve or fix themselves.

If any of these hit close to home, just know that I'm not trying to point fingers at you specifically. Millions of people fit that description! Once again, it's simply like the air we breathe or the water we drink. It's part of being human. And most of us aren't even aware that we're doing it.

Those who do research on such things say that our mind has between 50,000 and 75,000 thoughts a day – and that the majority of those are negative. If that's true, it means that most of us have tens of thousands of negative thoughts each and every day causing our negative feelings. NO WONDER there are so so many people with so many different negative habits in our society!

If that's our situation, what kind of change would be realistic? I'm not telling you to give up judging completely, or that you should never have a negative thought. You're human. I'm simply saying that we all have a 'habit' of thinking that way. Can you see the value of developing a new habit – of choosing to see events and people more positively, acknowledging others more often for the good they do, or looking at what's right in your life and being grateful? Would that be a habit worth developing?"

One positive thought alone isn't going to dramatically alter your feelings. But it's a *starting point*. It's one practical step you can take. And by doing it many times, it will grow that new habit or muscle within you. That's why each chosen thought makes a difference.

The same thing applies to our behaviors. I don't tell people to stop doing their bad habits, simply because I know that does not work; it's not practical or realistic. They've been saying that to themselves already.

### **Helping others in a way that works**

*"Love is the ability and willingness to allow those that you care for to be what they choose for themselves, without any insistence that they satisfy you."* - Wayne Dyer

Sometimes people call or come to see me about someone in their life who has a serious habit which they label an addiction. It might be their child or spouse, another family member, a friend or co-worker. Hearing them talk, I can tell how much they want to help this person change. Yet what they're doing just doesn't seem to be working.

As I listen more closely, or watch them interact with the person they're concerned about, it becomes obvious what's happening. Underneath their desire to help, they're actually trying to fix or control the person they care about. As a result, the other person isn't feeling loved or accepted as they are. They're feeling pressured to change. Their resistance is growing. Both parties are feeling frustrated. And nothing much is being accomplished.

If any of this rings true for you, I'd like to share some insights into how you can be more effective in Leading (vs "helping") someone who's important to you.

### **Insight #1: It's Not YOUR Choice**

Let me use an example of parents and kids to show what happens. When an adult comes to me with their child, often the parent believes that they are the one 'in charge.' Their language and attitude sound something like this: "I know what's best. This is what my child should be doing. And I'm upset or frustrated that they're not doing it."

Here's what I need to gently keep telling them until they get it. "You actually have no control over your child. You think you do. You may even use your authority or power to get them to do what you want. But whatever they do is *their choice*. They might lie about it to get you off their back. They might conform to please you (at least while you are looking!) But the truth is, you have no power over them. They are going to do whatever they are going to do."

When we try to control someone else – especially a person who's hurting inside and exhibiting what we are calling bad behaviors – we are actually contributing to their feeling worse about themselves. Our judgment or criticism adds to their

negative thoughts and feelings, and makes them want to escape those even more. And the way they do that is through their destructive habit.

So here's the paradox. Out of love or concern for your child (or someone else in your life), you want to stop them from doing a behavior because it's having negative consequences. Yet your worrying, criticism and control are adding to their pain and bad feelings. So *your fear about what will happen to them* might actually be provoking them to do their habit even more! Strange, isn't it?

Now please don't misinterpret this. I am NOT saying that it is wrong to care about or be concerned for someone else. What I am saying is that there are better ways to "help".

### **Insight #2: Leading People vs Controlling them**

When you try to control someone who has a bad habit or an addiction, it sets off alarm bells inside them. (I know this from personal experience.) You see, we already KNOW we have a problem. We've tried our best to control it, and have failed. Your trying to fix us only reminds us of that; and being told what to do makes us even more sensitive and resistant. All this just locks in our behavior even more. And it becomes a vicious circle...

I've come to believe that the choice to change has to be 100% our own for it to be successful. That means nobody is trying to make us do something. There's no pressure, force, guilt, manipulation or intimidation behind it. So when we "authentically choose" new behaviors, it comes honestly from inside of us.

What I've found, time after time after time, is that when people are pressured to change they often relapse or go back to their old habits. But when people freely choose for themselves, there's a higher probability that they're going to succeed.

So what can you do to Lead someone to make this decision for themselves?

**Insight #3: Redirect *Your* Thinking**

When you criticize someone or try to correct their problem – or find yourself thinking about how bad it is – you are focusing attention on it. The more you do this, the more you are going to attract thoughts and experiences that show you “how bad it is.” And the problem will grow in *your* consciousness as well.

To help them, what you need to do is make the same kind of shift I talked about earlier – from focusing on what you *don't* want to what you *do* want. And here again is how that works.

Whenever you notice yourself having negative thoughts about someone else's behavior, gently redirect your attention from what you're worried about to what you are committed to cause. Begin to look for the positive aspects in the situation. See the good in what the other person is doing (like steps they're already taking to deal with their habit). Or try seeing their behavior as the best way they know how, at this moment, to make themselves feel better. You will know that you've shifted your thinking when *you* feel better inside.

As you do this regularly, your vibration and behavior will start to change. You'll become easier to be around. You'll say things that are more understanding. The other person will feel more accepted, and may start sharing what's going on for them. In both conscious and unconscious ways, your thoughts will begin attracting and creating what you want.

**Insight #4: ‘Stimulate Their Wanting’**

This is a brilliant insight that comes from the work of Abraham-Hicks. When you want to encourage a new behavior in someone else, “stimulate the wanting of the other.” What that means is, help them grow the motivation and desire *within themselves* to go towards what they most want.

That doesn't happen by pointing out what they're doing wrong. This simply stimulates their thinking about what's wrong and what they don't want. So go the other way...

Look for behaviors in the other person that you want to support, encourage and reinforce. (It's like the whale trainers I described earlier.) Ask about what truly makes them feel good inside, what kind of life they'd like to live, and how they would feel if they were. In helping them focus on what's positive for them, you'll contribute to raising their vibrations – and your own at the same time.

'Stimulating the wanting in others' is also what I sometimes do in my coaching. For example, I'll say to someone: "Just imagine that you don't have your unwanted habit or addiction any more. It's gone. Now what would you want? What would you want your life to look like?" If I were to just say, "Hey, sugar is bad. Don't do that," their logical response would be, "Yeah, but what am I going to replace sugar with?" That's why stimulating their desire for something better is so much more effective.

### **Insight #5: Be the Change You Want to See**

Another powerful way to make a difference with someone else is by looking at YOU.

I believe that we are like mirrors for each other. When someone is doing something that bothers us, it reflects something in us that we are uncomfortable with. Our reaction is usually to fix, change or control the other person. But this is actually a way of avoiding what's going on in us.

When I work with parents who are concerned about their kids' behaviours, I encourage them to look at what's going on in their own lives. To consider, with full confidentiality and anonymity, what unproductive habits, compulsive behaviors or addictions of their own that they could be responsible for transforming. And then I teach them new habits that they can use for themselves.

Some people are quite shocked to find that their unproductive habits have to do with trying to dominate, bully or control others (especially their kids) – in order to gain a false sense of control in their own life. But this is very common. Many of us

use fixing others as a way of avoiding being responsible for our own choices and actions. However, this is where our true power lies.

By reclaiming your hopes and dreams, and transforming *your* unwanted habits and ‘power killing’ thinking, you will become an authentic example for others. Ironically, you will also be making the biggest difference possible for the people you care about – when you shift from “fixing” them to growing and expanding **YOURSELF!**

Ghandi once said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” Well I like to adapt that by saying it this way: “Be the change you want to see in others.”

## Guidelines for Group Meetings

You've been through the program. You've seen the presentation, attended the workshops, and made the commitment. Everyone has buddies and participates in the program as equals. So where do you go from here? What do you do during the next 28 days and in the weekly group meetings?

You will choose someone to chair the group meeting. It is ideal if no single person chairs more than one meeting.

The success of your Habit Mastery Group depends on each member of the group being responsible for keeping the weekly meetings on track with the format, even if they are not officially ever in the role of chairing a meeting.

And remember, the group's purpose is to support each member of the group in Mastering their Habits, and experiencing the Power of Choice.

### Group Meetings: Scheduling/Timing

#### First Meeting

Your first meeting should ideally take place within 24 hours after we've delivered the program. Sometimes that's not possible, but hold it as soon as you can and do everything possible to have it occur during the same week (e.g. no more than 48 hours). Sooner is better in order to keep as many people on board as possible.

Make your meetings from 60 - 45 minutes long. The more time the better, especially at the beginning of the program while you're all learning how to run them, and in order to give people adequate time to share their experiences around keeping their word.

Schedule more time for Meeting #1 (75-60 minutes), to allow for the extra time it is going to take in this meeting to schedule the next four weekly meeting days and times. First, see who shows up, and then ask, "Does anyone have any meeting date & time suggestions which they would like to have the group vote on for consideration?" "Who else?", "Any other suggestions?".

Find out what works best for the group as a whole by having people vote on the suggestions that are given.

#### Future Meetings

You will be holding **five** meetings in all: the initial one (just after we deliver/setup the program) plus four more, about one week apart. The total length of the program will be just over 28 days.

Whether you decide to hold more meetings after that is up to the individual participants.

### **Group Meetings: Purpose/Overview**

The purpose of the group meetings is to support participants in developing new habits of thinking and behaviour, especially in these two areas:

- 1. Creating, choosing and acknowledging interpretations/thoughts that are right-good-positive.**
- 2. Honouring our promises and commitments.**

Meetings simply provide a structure to support doing this.

You made a number of promises that are written on the accountability forms you used with your teams. These may have included: meeting/talking with your buddy once a day (for no more than five minutes); making apologies; drinking water; exercising; counting unwanted habits; taking small actions towards something that is personally important to you; not telling people what you think they should do; not giving advice; not coaching or “motivating” others, etc.

The meeting structure gives people an opportunity to be acknowledged for the promises that they did or did not keep each week. The purpose is to reinforce (or make alive) the **habit of honouring our promises and commitments** by allowing people time to share what it was like keeping their promises. Those who didn't keep their promises are also acknowledged for telling the truth, etc, but the meeting format does not allow for them to speak about their experience with, or reasons for, not keeping a promise.

As a reminder, the meetings are not intended for counselling, fixing, coaching, motivating or giving advice. If someone in particular feels they need additional help not specifically related to the Habit Mastery Program (e.g. referral to a time-management seminar, therapist, counsellor etc. ), this should be done outside of the meetings/program. And again, in an ideal world, it is best that no advice for outside support be given to anyone (during the 28 day program) unless the participant is the one who initiates the request for such outside support.

### **A Reminder about Counselling and *Sticking to the Program***

Many of us have been trained, taught, or are most comfortable when we try to counsel, advise, help or motivate others. Such training and skills are highly valuable but are detrimental to the success of your Habit Mastery program. Here's why: Using these processes/skills within this particular group tends to unintentionally invoke some members of the group to focus on their *what's wrong-bad-negative* thinking, and it often occurs to them that you are trying to “fix” them—even when that is not your attention. Please know that it is definitely not our intention to invalidate you, or your counselling or therapeutic expertise!

The Power of Choice & Habit Mastery Program is simply about supporting people in developing the habit of creating empowering meanings (thinking) about *what's right-good-positive* in themselves, the world, and others (no matter what the circumstances), and to also master the behaviour habit of honouring their promises and commitments. It's not about group (or individual) therapy or counselling. That's why it is absolutely critical that you stick to the structure as closely as possible.

Once again, the traditional *problem-fixing* approach is useful for many people, but in this program, we don't want to risk stimulating anyone's default *wrong-bad-negative* thinking. Doing so could result in people invalidating themselves, or feeling bad. That's why we've designed the program this way—to help people feel better inside by choosing their thinking and keeping their promises. We've also noticed that such participants prefer to slip into their familiar role of counsellor/therapist, as a way to avoid being responsible for keeping their own promises and commitments to the program. Thanks for trusting us - and thanks for understanding.

### **Group Meetings: What Do We Do?**

Here are some guideline/instructions for what to do in all five of your meetings, and how to deal with other issues that may come up during and between meetings.

#### **General Guidelines**

**Who should run meetings:** Each group member should prepare to lead the first group meeting by studying this manual before the first meeting. The person who actually ends up chairing the meeting won't be known until about five minutes before the meeting begins. If, just before the meeting begins you are energetically and emotionally **ready to look for, and acknowledge *what's right-good-positive***, then volunteer to chair the meeting.

If you've just had a bad day or are focused on what's wrong with yourself/others, or something in your life, please don't lead the group—because your energy may negatively impact the group. (Don't make yourself wrong if this is how you feel, though! Just let someone else lead the meeting.)

**How do we support the meeting leader:** If the chairperson stumbles or misses something, don't make them wrong! Gently step in and assume the role of co-leader by acknowledging what you see might be missing for the meeting format to be followed with 100% integrity. As a fellow group member, you might say something like, "I think we forgot to acknowledge the people who didn't keep their promises." (Etc.)

**Choose to create interpretations/thinking about what's right-good-positive, and then acknowledge it.** Doing so creates an atmosphere in the room where everyone feels safe and appreciated. If you are not leading the meeting, remember to not make the leader wrong-bad-negative in your attitude. No matter what the leader says or does, **support the meeting leader by choosing to create interpretations/thoughts about what's right-good-positive**

**about the meeting leader, and acknowledge them for that.** When everyone does this, people look forward to coming back to the next meeting.

**Key points to remember:**

**1) The three steps: 1) Nothing's wrong-bad-negative. 2) What meaning could you choose to create that is right-good-positive? 3) Acknowledge it.** Use these steps for yourself during the meeting. When you start interpreting something as being “wrong”—and we all do—catch yourself and start saying these steps to yourself silently. You can even say them out loud and make a joke about it, if that feels right. (“Nothing’s wrong. Nothing’s wrong.”) If you are leading the meeting and still can’t seem to **create and choose thoughts that are right-good-positive** in nature, ask the group for their support: “Hey guys, I’d like to ask someone else to lead the next section of the meeting format. Who could do that for me?”

**2) Honouring our commitments and promises, ahead of our reasons and excuses.** If you haven’t kept your own promises between meetings, don’t judge yourself—but don’t hide the truth either! That would just make you feel bad; and other participants will feel it when you’re hiding the truth anyways. Raise your hand to acknowledge when you didn’t keep a promise. Stop yourself if you start giving reasons or excuses and acknowledge out loud, “Oops. I just caught myself making an excuse. We’re here to support each other in keeping our promises—not talking about why we didn’t—though there is nothing “wrong” with reasons and excuses, talking about them takes the group off our purpose. Would someone else like to share about what it was like to have kept one of the promises they made in the program?”

If someone else starts talking about their reasons/excuses, say something like: “Hey Jim, listen, nothing’s wrong here. Seriously!!! And, the meeting format is about sharing what it was like keeping our promises, rather than giving energy to our VERY VALID reasons, justifications and excuses for not keeping our promises.” If someone really needs to talk about a personal issue, simply say, “If there’s something more you want to share about that, let’s talk about that outside of this program and after the meeting, so that we stick to the meeting format.”

If you are not chairing the meeting but notice the chairperson is either allowing or personally talking about their own very valid reasons, justifications or excuses for not keeping a promise, support the group by stepping in as per the paragraph above.

**Buddy Issues:** *(This applies before your first meeting – and any time during the program.)*

One of the questions asked in the program is: “What do I do if I’ve lost my buddy, or my buddy didn’t show up?”

For whatever “reasons,” sometimes buddies become unavailable. They don’t call their partner at the time they said. They’ve pulled out of the program, or whatever. Stuff happens.

When this happens, remember first to not speak negatively about any member of the group for what they did or did not do. **Practice, develop and master the habit of making people right, even when you know they are wrong!** Help participants find another buddy on a temporary basis to support them in keeping their promise of “talking with someone in the group on a daily basis, for no more than five minutes.” Since the accountability structure is KEY to the individual’s success, do what you can as a group to ensure that everyone has a buddy to communicate with, every day. But ultimately, you be responsible for making this happen for yourself no matter what circumstances you have to deal with.

If someone’s buddy actually does leave their group, then set them up with another person or group that freely chooses to have them join. (I’ve given more instructions near the end of “Meeting #1” below.)

## **Instructions for Meeting # 1**

Schedule more time for Meeting #1 (60-75 minutes), to allow for the extra time it is going to take in this meeting to set up the structure for your future weekly meetings. Your first meeting will look something like this. Feel free to use any of the language or script that appears below. You don’t have to say it word-for-word—find what works best for you. (And don’t make yourself “wrong” for not knowing exactly what to say!)

### **Introduction**

“Hi, everyone. Thanks again for being in our Habit Mastery Group—and welcome to our first meeting! I want to acknowledge all of us for being here. I know it took a lot to attend the workshops and come today. So thank you. We honoured our word. We said we were going to be here today and we are. That’s amazing.

Since we’ve got limited time, let’s get right into it.

### **Create the Structure for Your Next Meeting(s)**

There will be four more (i.e. five in total), approximately one week apart. Does anyone have any meeting date & time suggestions which they would like to have the group vote on for consideration?” “Who else?”, “Any other suggestions?”.

Find out what works best for the group as a whole by having people vote on the suggestions that are given.

[Make sure you also schedule a room, and ensure it’s available for all four weeks to follow.]

It would be ideal if the weekly meetings could last **60 to 45 minutes**, to give the group time to cover all the promises. However, arrange these to fit your group's size and circumstances.

### Next...

What we're going to do is go through the promises we made in the program, and acknowledge which ones we kept and which ones didn't. We'll go through as many commitments as we have time for. We'll also get opportunities to make new promises for next week, remembering to keep them ridiculously simple and thus setting ourselves up for success. The meeting format only allows for us to share about our experience keeping our commitments, rather than our reasons or experience of not doing so.

Don't worry if you didn't keep any of your promises. This isn't about making any of us wrong. It's about supporting each other in mastering **The Two Primary Habits** of the program: First, developing the **thinking habit of choosing to interpret "what's right-good-positive."** Second, developing the **behaviour habit of honouring our commitments and promises**, ahead of our very valid reasons and excuses for not doing so.

### REVIEWING OUR PROMISES

#### **1) Talking with Our Buddy/Buddies**

[Note: If your first meeting is less than 24 hours after the program was delivered, buddies may not yet have had the opportunity to talk. In this case, leave this section for Meeting #2.]

"So, let's start with our promise to talk with our buddy (or buddies) each day, for no more than five minutes. Please raise your hand if you talked to your buddy each day since the workshop. [Some hands will go up.] Thanks for acknowledging that.

Next, those of you who didn't talk to your buddy like you said you were going to do, please raise your hand to acknowledge that. [Hands go up.] Okay, great. Thanks for acknowledging that.

[Note: Please acknowledge both groups equally. There's "nothing wrong-bad-negative," about not keeping our promises, so don't see the people who kept their promises as being more "right-good-positive," then the people who did not.]

"Now what we'd like to do is hear from some of you who kept your promise. What was that like for you, or what did you get out of keeping this promise? [Have a couple of people share.]

For those of you who didn't keep your promise but would like to share, I want to remind you that we're only going to hear from those people who kept their word in a particular area. We do that to avoid empowering our reasons, justifications and excuses about why we didn't. That doesn't mean that our reasons, justifications and excuses aren't valid. They really aren't wrong, bad or negative. In fact, we can choose to see them too as being right-

good-positive, and perfect! It's just that when we talk about them, it can bring the energy of the group down, resulting in more people honoring more of their reasons and excuses between now and our next meeting. Let's not give this energy in the group.

**2) Talking to one of their team-mates for Five Minutes or Less**

“Okay. For those of us who talked to one of our buddies, how many of us kept our word to keep the conversation to five minutes or less? Please raise your hands to acknowledge that. [Hands raised] Okay, great. And who didn't? [Hands go up] Great. Thanks for acknowledging that.

For those of us who kept this promise, what was it like, or what did we get out of doing this? We'd like to hear from a couple of you. [People share their experience.]

**3) No Fixing/Coaching/Guilt Tripping**

“Next, those of us who talked to our buddies and did not give any advice, did not guilt trip, coach or take on the role of being a counsellor or therapist, or do any of those conversational things we said we wouldn't do, would you raise your hands to acknowledge that? [People raise hands] Thanks again. Great!

And those of us who found ourselves, at least once, not keeping that promise and giving advice or trying to fix or change our buddy, will you raise your hands? [Hands raised.] Okay, thank you for telling the truth about that. Awesome!!

We'd also like to hear from some of you who didn't give any advice to your buddy. In other words, you just acknowledged what was right-good-positive and didn't try to fix them. What was that like for you? [A few people share.]

[Note: This same structure is followed for reviewing all promises. It's very rare that you're going to get through all of the promises, because of the time available and the number of people in some groups. Go through as many promises as you can. It's more important to cover more of our promises, than have everyone speak on each one.

Remember: When someone starts talking about reasons/excuses, and the chairperson “forgets” to do it, you speak up and gently remind them that this time is meant to reinforce “keeping our promises,” and not talk about our very valid reasons and excuses about why we didn't. And be careful not to make reasons, justifications or excuses *bad-wrong-negative* because they are not!! Nothing has any meaning save the meaning we give it.]

**4) Drinking Water:**

“Please raise your hand if between last meeting and today, you drank the minimum amount of water you promised you would drink each day. [Hands are raised.] Okay, thanks for acknowledging that. And please raise your hand if you didn't drink the amount of water you said you were going to drink each day. [Hands go up.] Great. Thanks for acknowledging that.

Those of you who did drink the water you said you would, we'd like to hear from you. What was it like, or what did you get out of keeping that promise? [Select a few people to share.] Okay great. Thanks for sharing.

Now back to those of us who didn't drink the amount of water we said we would. Remember that we committed to set daily promises/daily habits that are so ridiculously tiny (yet just slightly more than what we were doing before being in the program) so that we'd minimize the risk and temptation to honour a reason or excuse instead of our word. Let's look again to see if our promises followed this criteria...

[Reminder: Use the word "promise," not "goal." The word "goal" is often interpreted by many people as being something they may or may not reach *someday*; but a promise is something we're committed to. "Goals" are often larger than we think we will really achieve. These promises are intended to be so ridiculously small (but still just outside your comfort zone) so as to optimize our mastering the habit of honouring our promises and commitments. This habit is actually more valuable than you drinking any amount of water. The "water" habit is merely an opportunity to practice developing the *honour my word-commitments-promises* habit.]

"If we didn't do what we said we would do around drinking water, let's use this as an opportunity to practice the thinking habit of interpreting right/good/positive meanings, which could look like an opportunity to re-promise something smaller. Maybe we could create the interpretation that this is an indication that the commitment we made was a little too ambitious and see this as an opportunity to adjust, re-promise or promise something different. If that's true, chose to create the thought that "nothing's wrong-bad-negative!" Let's reduce our commitment (but still make sure it is just barely outside our comfort zone). And always remember, this program is so not about drinking water! It may include making promises like drinking water, but for the greater purpose of us creating a structure to support us in practicing, developing and mastering the more important habit of **honouring our word, promises and commitments**.

If you'd like to, please take a moment now to share with your buddies (or someone else if none of them are here) what your new promise is going to be. Also, write this new promise down on your sheet. And make sure your buddies write down your new promises on their sheets to support you in being accountable.

### 5) Physical Exercise:

"Next, please raise your hand if you did the minimum amount of physical exercise each day that you said you would. [Hands are raised.] Okay, great. Thank you for acknowledging that. And those who didn't, please raise your hand to acknowledge that. [Hands go up.] Great. Thanks for telling the truth. That's awesome.

For those who did, we'd like to hear from a few of you. What was it like, or what did you get out of keeping your promise? [A few people share briefly.] Okay great. (Acknowledge them)

For those of us who didn't do our daily exercise, follow the exact same process we just talked about with the drinking water.

**6) Apologies:**

“Next are our apologies. Who kept their promise to apologize to the person you promised you would? [Hands are raised.] Great, thanks. Who didn't? [Hands go up.] Great. Thanks for telling the truth.

For those who did, what was that like for you? Would anybody like to share? [People share briefly.] Okay great. Thanks for that.

Those of us who didn't, here's an opportunity to re-promise. Maybe you want to re-promise to still talk to this person. Or maybe you realized this was just a little too outside your comfort zone, and you'd like to honour your word by picking a different person to apologize to. Decide who you will apologize to this week, and write it on your sheet.

**Remember:** the benefit to us in making apologies – and taking steps to make it *right* with this person – is to honour ourselves by listening to our conscience, and take the appropriate action to clear away some of the guilt or bad feelings we have in our life, so that we feel better about ourselves.

This isn't about our being “bad” or “good” because we did or didn't apologize. The purpose of every aspect of this program is to cause ourselves and others to feel more peaceful inside so that we don't have as much of a need to escape our uncomfortable feelings by engaging in our unproductive/unwanted habits or avoidance behaviours.

Now if you can't think of anyone you authentically want to apologize to, here's what you can do instead: Pick someone you could acknowledge for something specific they did that you feel had a right-good-positive impact on you.

The value we all ultimately get out of this program, is directly related to the progress we make in mastering the thinking habit of consciously choosing to interpret “what's right-good-positive,” instead of allowing our default thinking take us down the path of focusing on what's wrong-bad-negative with others, the world, or ourselves. So, for those who are willing to consider committing to make this type of promise, ask yourself: “What's right-good-positive about someone in my life that I haven't acknowledged them for yet?” This is an opportunity to thank someone for something they've done to contribute to our life—someone we've perhaps taken for granted and never thanked for something they did that was *right-good-positive*.

So before the next meeting, the program encourages you to either do an apology or an acknowledgment. Decide what you want to commit to, write it down on your form, and remember to ask your buddy/buddies to write your promise down on their forms too.

### 7) Something Important We've Been Putting Off:

“Another thing we'll be doing each week is taking a small step towards something that's important to us in our life. If you remember, it could be a dream or a goal we've been putting off, or let die. Something we've given up on, or been avoiding doing that our conscience knows would make us feel better if we took some action in the direction of getting the ideal result accomplished.

[Note: If the group wants to review this step in more detail, there's more information about it below.]

“Okay. Who kept their promise to take an action towards something you've been putting off? Please raise your hand. [Hands go up.] For those who didn't, please raise your hands to acknowledge that. [Hands are raised.] Great! Thanks for acknowledging that!

We'd like to hear from a couple of you that did take that step: What was it like for you? What did you get out of doing it? [People share] Thank you!

For this week's promise, here's what we are all suggested to do. Pick another *ridiculously small* action towards something that's important to us. It could be the same thing as last week that we want to take another action on. Or it could be something completely different. It's our life, our choice—so choose whatever we feel is important to us right now, that we've been putting off, or would like to do more than what we are currently doing.

Remember: This is an action we're promising to do before we go to bed tonight. So choose something so ridiculously small that we can't possibly fail, knowing that we always have the freedom to do more than we promise; but we don't have to. What's important is not how big the step is, again, it's about being insightfully honest with ourselves that the promise we choose to make, will have the greatest probability of us achieving our **higher purpose of practicing, developing and mastering the habit of keeping your promises and commitments**.

Take a couple of moments to choose an action that would move us in the direction of getting something accomplished that we feel is important to us. Write it down, tell your buddy—and ask your buddies to write it down on their sheets as well.

#### **Background for this Step:**

Here's a little more information to remind you of one of the intended benefits of this step.

We all have areas in our lives where we're not doing the things we really want to be doing or making progress in what's important to us. This could have been a dream or a goal we've let die, something we've given up on, or something that would make us feel better if we just took some action on it.

In this section, get present to something we feel uncomfortable about having put off. Then pick one ridiculously simple step—something so simple that people might even laugh at us if we said that’s **all** we’re going to do. (Remember, we can always do more than we promise, but we never have to!)

Here’s a small example. Say we have a huge email inbox or a messy room. Every time we go into our inbox or our room we feel “Ugghhh...” Our energy drops and we feel uncomfortable. But we keep putting it off because it seems like such a huge job. Maybe what we’re going to promise is that today, before we go to bed, we answer one email or pick up one sock and put it in the clothes hamper. It’s that kind of thing.

Here’s another: Some of us might be saying to ourselves, “I want to get a better job.” So what is one ridiculously small step we could take towards that? Maybe it’s going home, opening a new Word document on our computer, and typing the word “Resume” and then saving it. And that’s it! We’re welcome to do more, but that’s all we have to do to keep our commitments to our self and the group.

One of the “reasons” we put things off is that getting the result accomplished seems as difficult as climbing a mountain—so big or outside our comfort zone that compared to climbing a mountain or doing nothing, we choose doing nothing. But there’s another choice. That’s why we ask ourselves to chunk it down and take one ridiculously simple step *before we go to bed tonight* (the day of the meeting).

In **next week’s** meeting (and each week during the program), we will be given the choice: to either take another step on this same area of our life, or work on something entirely different, that we have also been putting off dealing with. It’s whatever feels right to us, in that moment, at each meeting. It’s always our life and our choice.

### **OTHER ISSUES FOR MEETING #1**

#### **Counting One of Our Unwanted Habits:**

Before our first meeting, we (or our organization), may want to buy some small memo pads, one for each member of the group. Before we give them out (at Meeting #1), give the following instructions.

“This is an optional part of the program for those that feel this would be valuable for them. For the rest of the program, we’re now given the option to pick one of our unwanted habits to count for the simultaneous purpose of **practicing, developing, and mastering our mental habit of choosing to interpret *what’s right-good-positive*** in a more challenging moment to do so, while at the same time, we are in the process of quantifying how much we engage in our unwanted habit. Each time we notice ourselves doing the unwanted habit, we write something down in this notebook to help us measure it, while at the same time choosing to interpret a possible meaning of what we are doing as being *what’s right-good-positive*. Then at the end of each day and each week, we take a look at how many times (or how often) we engaged in our unwanted habit.

If for any reason, this optional part of the program occurs trivial, or insignificant, please know that, for many that follow through on taking it on, the benefits can be profoundly valuable. Following through on this commitment will cause us to become more conscious, aware, and responsible for when we're choosing our unwanted behaviour, and at the same time, give us the opportunity to consciously choose to **practice, develop and master the mental thinking habit of choosing to interpret *what's right-good-positive***, during a time when invoking this empowering thought habit is perhaps the most beneficial (and challenging) for us.

This may sound counter-intuitive, but even the best addictions experts agree that shame and guilt not only don't help, they keep the habit engrained. Now, are we saying that it is good to do drugs, harm yourself, etc? Of course not. We are asking us to use this opportunity, where we would normally start beating up on ourselves, to practice choosing more empowering thoughts.

Also, starting tomorrow: In our daily conversations with our buddies, please ask our buddy (if they said they would do it) if they kept their promise to count their unwanted habit.

#### **Background Info – Tips for Counting:**

- 1) If we have multiple unwanted habits, for this exercise, count only ONE of them.
- 2) Pick the unwanted habit that feels right for us to work on. Is one better to pick than the other? Yes. Do the one we want to work on for no reason; not the thing you "should" be doing. However, always remember that the real purpose of every promise we make in this program, is that it gives us a structure by which we can practice, develop and master the far more valuable **habit of honouring our commitments and promises**. So if we are uncertain which unwanted habit to count, make our final decision based on which one we are most likely to succeed in consistently honouring our commitment and promise to notate it - in whatever way we say we are going to notate it – each time we notice ourselves engage in it.
- 3) Make counting easy for us. Say we want to cut down on what we're eating. If we had to count everything we eat, that could be way too far out of our comfort zone, and put us at risk of not following through on the **primary behaviour habit of keeping our promises and commitments**. So perhaps pick one type of food we're eating consistently and that every time we eat it, we feel bad. It could be chips, Coke, Pepsi, candy bars, whatever...
- 4) There is no right way to count, so count it in any way that works for us, providing that we feel certain we will consistently follow through. Make our counting method so ridiculously simple, so that we are guaranteed to do it every day. The notebook is only there if we feel it will help. Use it, or use ANY way of counting that we can also mark down, and total, at the end of the day and week.
- 5) If we feel that "counting our habit is too complicated," come up with a different, less complicated way to count it. Once again, this part of the program too is an opportunity to

create a structure to support us in **practicing, developing and mastering the more important habit of honouring your promises and commitments**. Setting ourselves up to succeed at **honouring our word as a habit**, is possibly more valuable than whether we succeed at counting or even reducing any unwanted habit. Why? Mastering the habit of keeping our promises give us access to being free of all unwanted habits, whereas breaking free of just one habit for the sake of breaking that one habit, although awesome, might only be getting rid of a symptom, rather than empower the source of our power to choose or not choose any and all unwanted habits.

6) Keep the notepad (or whatever tool we are using) with us at all times, so that when we notice ourselves doing *it*, we immediately write something down. That's one of the objectives of counting: to be more aware of our choice to do our unwanted habit. If we are counting how much we use the internet at home, have the notepad by the computer and write down what time we started on the computer and what time we paused. Then count the hours and minutes for the day, and then total them at the end of the week.

7) "What if my habit is something I only do once a week?" Since most of us have more than one unwanted habit, consider picking another habit that we're doing more frequently, like on a daily basis. If we're only doing something occasionally (like once a week), the counting exercise is less useful. And it could be too hard to reduce the habit from once-a-week to zero. Instead, by counting something we do on a daily or more frequent basis, we have more opportunities to see ourselves succeed. But ultimately choose what is going to support us in developing the two most important habits of thought and behaviour we keep emphasizing.

8) "What if my unwanted habit is doing something too little?" (i.e., "under-eating") Then count the foods we are eating. But when others are promising to decrease what they're doing, our promise will be to increase it. Again, commit to a ridiculously small amount—like taking one additional bite of a carrot every day (as an absolute minimum, knowing we are always free to do more than what we promised, but that we don't have to)

### **Enhancing your Results by Inviting Others into the Group**

At each meeting, remind everyone that the group is open to others who may want to join, and that teaching others deepens our own *Mastery*.

Note: If someone does want to join the group, someone in the group should meet and pre-screen them to make sure they're clear about what the group is/does, and what they would be committing to if they were to join. Each Habit Mastery Group decides on the process by which new members may be accepted into the group.

### **Questions/Issues that Come up in the Group:**

***Buddy Issues: "My buddy didn't show up, or has left the group."***

During Meeting #1, remember to address this issue with participants. You could say it something like this:

“It is possible that at some time during this program, one of our buddies doesn’t call or show up for one of their appointments with us. For some of us, our buddy may actually leave the program. If either of these happens, here are some tips on what to do:

1) If our buddy doesn’t call or meet us when they said they would, call them 10 minutes after our arranged time to remind them of our commitment with them, and don’t make them wrong.

2) If we can’t reach them, also don’t make them wrong. If they didn’t keep their commitment, that’s their choice—and we can choose to interpret the meaning of their choice as being completely valid. Stuff happens! Give them the freedom to do whatever they want to do, and use their broken promise as another opportunity for us to choose to **practice our thinking habit of interpreting what’s right-good-positive rather than negatively judge them (or ourselves)**. But also don’t use this as an excuse for us not to keep our daily promise to be accountable to a member of the group. The bottom line in this program is to honour our word (even when we can’t always keep it), no matter what the perfect reason, circumstance, justification or excuse our mind comes up with to tempt us into not honouring our promises (because it’s often easier to do that).

3) The promise WE made is to communicate with at least one person in the group on a daily basis and share what promises we kept/didn’t keep. So find a way to do that. Talk to someone else in the group and tell them that we need a temporary buddy to talk with, because we could not get a hold of our buddy. (And don’t gossip about our buddy.)

4) If our buddy actually leaves the group, bring it up at the meeting, and ask if someone would allow us to join their group or buddy up with them individually. Buddy groups can be two to four people.

Remember, the purpose of talking with buddies is to support us in **developing the habit of honouring our promises and commitments**. So do whatever we need to do to be responsible for our commitments—and make sure we communicate our results with someone every day, no matter what!

### **Other Questions:**

In general, don’t get into answering a lot of questions from the group. This takes away from the time we and others have to accomplish the group meeting objectives and can put the group at risk of turning into counselling/advising. It’s also a subtle way for us to avoid being responsible for our own integrity by focusing on the problems or questions of others. Stick to the meeting format as closely as possible!

Use these as general guidelines:

- 1) Leave most questions to the end, to see if they get dealt with in earlier sections.
- 2) Unless the question needs to get answered for the benefit of the whole group, defer it until after the meeting.

## Meetings #2 through #5

- 1) All meetings will have the same basic format. Follow the pattern above for Meeting #1, altering the language where appropriate.
- 2) If we didn't cover some sections/promises last week, BEGIN the next meeting with these so every type of promise gets honoured.
- 3) A reminder about the “**Something You've Been Putting Off**” section. Each week, we are given the choice: to take another step on the same area of our lives that we did last week, or on an entirely different issue. It's whatever is important to us in the moment, at each meeting. Also, remember that our *ridiculously small* action needs to be done before we go to bed tonight.
- 4) At each meeting, briefly review the core distinctions:
  - **Nothing's wrong-bad-negative.** Develop the thinking habit of creating meanings that are right-good-positive. Acknowledge those positive interpretations.
  - **Honouring our word, promises and commitments.**

### These points might be helpful reminders:

- a) Because our habitual thought patterns tend to be *wrong-bad-negative*, the Habit Mastery Program asks us to interrupt those patterns by continually remind ourselves that no matter what happens, we can choose to interpret or create meanings that there's *nothing wrong-bad-negative* and we're here to habitually **look for and acknowledge what's right-good-positive.**
- b) Developing the above thinking habit and attitude creates a really safe space where people know that they don't have to lie to fit in; and (at least in this program) that they get the opportunity to create for themselves and others the experience of unconditional acceptance. This is ultimately what will keep people coming back to the group meetings and staying in the program.
- c) Honouring our word, promises and commitments, rather than reasons/excuses, increases our self-esteem. It also ensures that the energy of the group is inspiring and best supports everyone in getting the results they are committed to.

## Counting Exercise: Instructions for Meetings #2 through #5

This exercise changes from week to week, so here are the instructions for each meeting.

**Note:** Make sure you **acknowledge the counting exercise at EVERY meeting**. This exercise supports participants in being responsible for how much they have caused their unwanted habit to decline, and how much success (in this particular aspect of the program) they are causing for themselves. For many people, getting results in this area is the only reason they entered the program, so this needs to be consistently acknowledged at every meeting.

## Meeting #2

“Please raise your hand if you counted your unwanted habit every day this week. [Some people raise their hands.] Thank you. Now raise your hands if you didn’t. [People raise hands.] Thank you as well.

For those of us who did do our counting commitment every day, who would like to share what that was like, or what you got out of doing it? [A few people will share.] Thanks!

For those who want to take this one on, in addition to continuing to count our unwanted habit this week, we’re also going to make a commitment to reduce it by a small amount. But don’t get worried...”

Before we select how much to reduce, remember that, in this program, it’s got to be *so ridiculously easy* that we’ll have *almost* no excuse that our mind will buy into for not doing it. Once again, set ourselves up for total success. For example, say we smoke 100 cigarettes a day. Maybe our promise will be not to smoke more than 99 or 99 ½ every day. Or if we’re on the internet for five hours a day, then maybe reduce it to 4 hours and 59 minutes each day this week. Or if we’re drinking 20 soft drinks a week, maybe we’ll reduce it to 19.

We’re always allowed to do less if we want to, but we don’t have to. That’s the key. Set the number just slightly outside of our comfort zones, but set it small enough that we have the least possible chance of not keeping our bottom-line commitments.

Decide what our *reduction* promise will be for the next week and write it down on our promise sheet.

Also, in our buddy conversations, when appropriate, start asking our buddies two questions:

- 1) Did you count your unwanted habit? And
- 2) Did you keep your promise of reducing your unwanted habit?

Make sure we add this second question to our accountability form, so we’ll remember to ask it.

***Tips for this week:***

1) Keep our unwanted habit private. Don't ask our buddies what theirs is. Some of us have unwanted habits we feel embarrassed or ashamed of - so no one is ever encouraged to share any details about their unwanted habit. That's one of the promises that was made to us before we agreed to be part of this program.

2) If any of us really wants to share what our unwanted habit is and how much we're reducing it, say:

“We're not encouraging anyone to share their unwanted habit with someone else, because it might make the other person feel that they have to reciprocate, and tell you what they're working on. Or they might feel they have to lie.

So, if we feel we really, really want to share your unwanted habit with our buddy – even though we're not encouraging anyone to do that – make sure our buddy gives us permission to do this with them first, AND that they don't feel obligated to tell us what their unwanted habit is in return.”

### **Meeting #3**

“Please raise your hands if you consistently counted your unwanted habit (if that is something you said you would do). [Hands are raised.] Great. Thanks for that. Please raise your hand if you didn't count your unwanted habit consistently (if that is something you said you would do). [Hands are raised.] Okay. Thank you for acknowledging that.

Now, please raise your hands if you kept your promise of reducing your unwanted habit, in the amount you said you would. [Hands get raised.] Thank you.

Please raise your hands if you *didn't* keep your promise of reducing your unwanted habit, in the amount you said you would. [Hands are raised.] Great. Thank you for acknowledging that.

For those of us who DID reduce our unwanted habit, what was it like for you, or what did you get out of accomplishing that? [Have a few people share.] Thank you.”

### **Meeting #4**

Repeat the instructions for Meeting #3. And afterwards, please add:

“Last week, if we consistently kept our promise of reducing our unwanted habit, we can now reduce it even more—IF we want to. Again, make a ridiculously small promise. Set ourselves up for success, in growing our habit of keeping our commitments and promises. NOTE: The program only suggests we consider doing this IF we succeeded every single day last week.”

### **Meeting #5**

Repeat the instructions for Meeting #4 and add even more acknowledgement and celebration. Acknowledge each other for the positive changes and actions we've noticed in each other.

If possible, schedule more time for Meeting #5 (90 minutes) to allow for extra time to acknowledge one another. Some groups bring in food as an additional reward for being in the program.

Each of us can freely choose to end our participation in the group, to continue, or to create/modify a new structure that supports us in a way we would like to move forward.

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That's it!

## **Quick Meeting Outline (60-45 minutes)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

### **REVIEWING OUR PROMISES/COMMITMENTS**

- 1) Daily accountability with one of our Buddy/Buddies**
- 2) Communicate with our Buddy/Buddies for no more than Five Minutes**
- 3) No Fixing/Coaching/Guilt Tripping/Giving Advice**
- 4) Drinking Water**
- 5) Physical Exercise**
- 6) Apologies or Thank You/Acknowledgments**
- 7) Something Important We've Been Putting Off:**

### **COUNTING AN UNWANTED HABIT**

### **SUPPORTING OTHERS**

### **QUESTIONS AND ISSUES**

### **SETTING UP NEXT MEETING(S)**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY SCOTT GALLAGHER

**Q:** What happens if we don't keep our promise to decrease our unwanted habit or have kept our promise but only for part of the time?

**A:** It's perfect! Not keeping our word, promises or commitments, is an opportunity to practice, develop and master the mental habit of creating meanings that are *right-good-positive* vs. *wrong-bad-negative*.

One of the things you could ask yourself is, "When you promised to decrease, did you set the commitment too big?"

I'm not saying it's the case, but I'll tell you what I used to do. Instead of decreasing from 100 to 99, I would promise myself that I would go down to 50. I would promise something unrealistic, and then I would fail. Then my mind would say something like, "Ah I knew this was going to happen. There is something wrong with me. I'm screwing up again." And then, "Screw it. I might as well forget the whole thing."

In this program, always set promises that are so ridiculously simple that you minimize the risk of not keeping your word.

If it was too much, and you didn't keep your promise one day, it is common for our minds to make ourselves feel bad and wrong, which drives us to want to engage in our unwanted habit(s) even more!

The other thing to look at is: how consistent you were with the other promises of the program. Were you honouring your promises with the other parts of the program consistently?

**Q:** Can my apology be something about not keeping a promise?

**A:** Absolutely, if it was a promise to someone else. Remember, the primary purpose of the apologies in this program (aside from **practicing, developing and mastering the primary thinking and behaviour habits**) is to reduce or eliminate some of the guilt we have about it. Ask yourself if apologizing will likely accomplish that.

**Q:** What if my buddy isn't around, or doesn't show for our meeting?

**A:** You have promised to have daily accountability with at least one member of the group. So even if you lose all your buddies, you can still be responsible for fulfilling on that promise.

Find somebody else and communicate your results with them. Worst case scenario, and only as a last resort, you could check in with a friend or family member outside

of the program. Don't allow another person's actions/choices to be your excuse for not honouring your word.

**Q:** What happens after the meetings and 28 days are finished?

**A:** When the 28 days are up, each member gets to decide for themselves.

We needed to have a rigorous structure of daily accountability to be of maximum service to everyone in the group as a whole; but now that we've done it for 28 days in a row, we are in a better position to recreate what feels right for us to continue individually. So what we could do is say, "Listen, what I'm thinking of doing is...I'd like to maybe talk to someone every other day or every third day."

Whatever you decide to do, you create your own structure. Write that structure down, and have someone else write your structure down in their calendar to support you in being accountable.

And if you notice that any day goes by that you didn't keep one of your promises, don't wait for your scheduled call. Communicate with your buddy right away and just say, "Listen I just want to let you know I did not do what I said I was going to do in this area."

If you don't tell someone right away when you didn't keep a promise, it may start to drain power from you. And then you start feeling bad, which can make it easier for your brain to justify breaking other promises and commitments, and eventually lead to you quitting the program.