

BEING A GOOD FACILITATOR

Facilitate means “to make easy.”

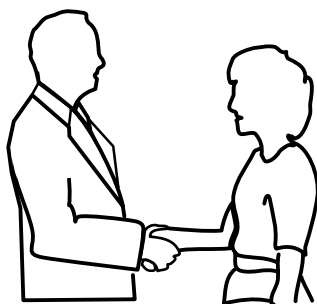
Your job is simply to make it easy for everyone to participate in the book study. That will make the group comfortable, enjoyable and helpful for everyone—including yourself.

Tips

- ◆ Create a relaxed atmosphere for the people who come.
- ◆ Treat everyone with respect, regardless of their background or experience.
- ◆ Consider having a co-facilitator to assist.
- ◆ Extend your heart.



Welcoming people and keeping in touch



- ◆ Greet people as they arrive. Extending your heart is a large part of facilitating. As one facilitator said, “The importance of the heart-to-heart connection and making people feel welcome cannot be overstated.” It also sets the stage for sharing ideas and lively discussions.
- ◆ The beginning of each discussion guide has either “Keeping in Touch” questions or a reminder to come up with your own. This helps everyone connect and build relationships

Introductions – some ideas for the first meeting

Facilitator’s introduction – things you say set the groundwork for people to connect

- ◆ Let people know why you are having the group. For example, “Sharing ideas with others broadens my horizons.”

- ◆ Maybe give some personal background like, "I'm a mom with two children and my hobbies are reading and gardening." Or, "I'm a house painter who enjoys reading whenever I have a quiet moment."
- ◆ Possibly comment on the author's style and effectiveness in presenting the information. For example, "The best I've read on the topic," or "It helped change my life for the better."

Group member introductions

Ask if people would like to introduce themselves and share something about their interest in this topic or why they came.



Reading the book

First meeting:

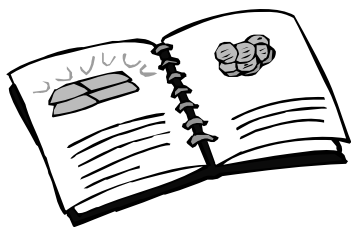
- ◆ Explain how people who need a book can get one.
- ◆ Pass out discussion guides, which have questions that cover some of the main ideas and give page references. (See "Using Discussion Guides" below.)
- ◆ A good way to start is to take turns reading the discussion guide questions and then the pages in the book covered by each question.

All meetings:

- ◆ Reading is a good way to emphasize or clarify a point. It also engages people if things seem to be getting off track.
- ◆ People can take turns leading the affirmations/meditations/prayers.

Using discussion guides

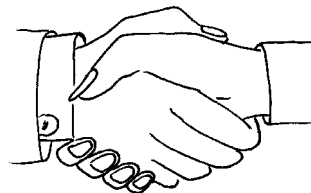
The discussion guides are simply aids. Let the conversation flow naturally.



- ◆ If the conversation wanders from the topic, you can return to the discussion guide questions but don't be concerned if all the questions aren't covered.
- ◆ Try to involve everyone and spend time on questions that are relevant to daily life.

Closing the meeting

- ◆ Thank people for coming.
- ◆ It's a nice idea to exchange phone numbers and/or email addresses. There is a sheet provided in the Facilitator's Guide to get everyone's contact information.
- ◆ Make sure the meeting time will work for everyone in the upcoming weeks.



GENERAL NOTES

Tips for good meetings



- ◆ Sitting in a circle or semi-circle creates an informal, comfortable atmosphere that helps people relax.
- ◆ Try to involve everyone in the discussion. If someone dominates the conversation, or steers things away from the topic, refocus the group on the discussion guide.
- ◆ If you can't answer a question that comes up, feel free to call 800-245-5445 and ask for Book Study Groups.
- ◆ Don't enter into counseling sessions. If someone has severe problems, refer them to a professional counselor or therapist.

There's no final exam!

What makes the ultimate difference is people integrating the material and creating positive change in their own lives.

Allow things to be different from what you want them to be or what you think they should be and see what happens!