

## Peer Support Un-sponsored: 12 Steps for People of Conscience\*



Are you as tired as I am of all the meaningless posing, game-playing and keep-up-with-the-Joneses rat-race? Does the political maneuvering for power and control make you feel heart-sick and despondent for the future of our species...? Do you feel overwhelmed by the momentum of dog-eat-dog self-interest that's over-writing everything else on the planet that matters?

For me at least, it's getting harder and harder to go this alone. The weight of the poverty, neglect, injustice and oppression is wearing me down. I long for support from others of conscience to live and hold true to my values when the chips are down and the stakes are high.

I love the idea of people supporting each other to live well. But I'd like to get beyond the customary 12-Step program focus on disability and disease. The fact is life is hard for all of us. There are a zillion reasons for getting keyed up or breaking down. The point, for me at least, is how we can support each other to keep the faith and live our principles in the face of all the challenges.

With that in mind, I'd like to start a peer support group that's about living with integrity, honoring human rights and creating a world-wide sense of human family.

Interested...? Let's talk!

Sundays 8-9 PM EST (starting 6/11/17)

Join Us:

Pick an option --

- By phone: 331-205-7196, no pin (To block caller ID - Dial \*67 first)
- Toll-free (if you need it): 855-661-1243 (no pin)
- By computer (use a headset for best results), click: [uberconference.com/peerlyhuman](http://uberconference.com/peerlyhuman)
- International local access numbers: <https://www.uberconference.com/international>

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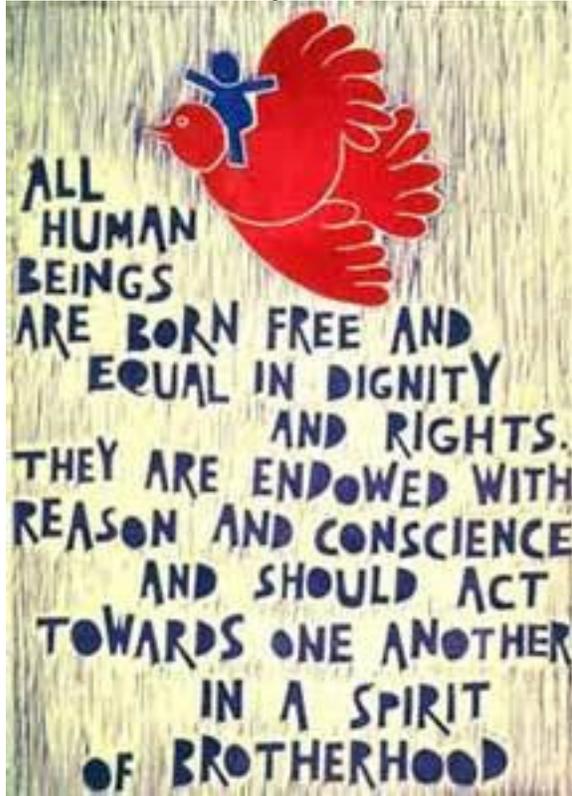
\* Posted by Sarah Knutson on 4 June 2017, available at:

<http://peerlyhuman.blogspot.com/2017/06/peerly-human-community-peer-support-for.html>

## Creating Communities of Conscience

Here is what I've come up with so far. It's offered as a starting point. The hope is to draw like-minded others and develop a consensus on language, values and approach as we go along.

### About Our Community



We are a community of respect and regard for all members of the Human Family. We welcome people from every walk of life and with every kind of life challenge. Our primary purpose is to live with dignity and conscience in harmony and equality with other human beings. The only requirement is a willingness to respect the dignity and conscience of other community members.

We are not a healthcare, social service or public safety organization. No one may attend in a professional capacity, only as a peer. We don't manage, therapize or police each other - and we don't call in outside authorities to do this. Above all, we cherish and protect our common need to find acceptance and belonging in a community of valued peers.

We support these efforts with our own energy and resources on a voluntary basis. We have no experts or paid staff. We do the best we know how in any given moment. Our sole ambition is to learn together and to share with others who are willing to join us on the human journey.

## How it Works

The following Steps and Principles offer a common process for individual and group development. Our intention is to track the general outline of traditional Twelve Step programs, like Alcoholics Anonymous, with which many people are familiar. A significant difference is that we see problems as a natural part of the challenge of living. Accordingly, no admission of illness or disability is expected or required.

A second difference is that our practice is a matter of personal conscience and values. Individuals may incorporate religion or spirituality if they wish, but secular understandings are entirely sufficient and just as welcome.

Finally, our community recognizes that social factors - like trauma, poverty and human rights abuses - play a significant role in human development. We see individual and social well-being as inextricably intertwined. We believe that everyone, everywhere deserves access to the basic material, social and developmental resources that all of us need in order to live and be well.

## Twelve Steps for People of Conscience

The following steps offer a shared process for supporting dignity and conscience:

- 1 We acknowledge that life is difficult and sometimes overwhelming.
- 2 We dare to hope that our deepest needs and longings can somehow be addressed.
- 3 We become willing to listen for our own Truth with open hearts and open minds.
- 4 We take an honest look at ourselves and our life to date, letting experience and conscience be our guide.
- 5 We share what we find - both strengths and challenges - with others who we hope will prove worthy of our trust.
- 6 We become aware of our highest values, as well as attitudes and actions that are no longer working.
- 7 We let go of out-moded ideas and habits and try to live by Principles that truly inspire us.
- 8 We examine the impact we have we have had - both helpful and hurtful - on ourselves and others throughout our lives.
- 9 We take credit where credit is due and look for ways to set things right where we come up short.
- 10 We reflect regularly on our values and practice them in real life.
- 11 We continue to develop our understanding and vision as members of the Human Family.
- 12 We demonstrate in our lives the meaning and purpose we find as a result of our 'peerly human' learning and growth.

## Twelve Principles for Group Relations

The following principles promote harmony and equality in our group interactions:

- 1 We set aside social labels, reputations and roles.
- 2 We meet each other, first and foremost, as human beings.
- 3 We listen to understand, rather than to judge or enlighten.
- 4 We learn from the diversity of our abilities, experiences and beliefs.
- 5 We notice and celebrate what we share in common.

- 6 We honor our differences and explore what they mean for us.
- 7 We do not condemn, condone or make excuses.
- 8 We grapple with the reality of pain and suffering.
- 9 We grieve for losses and what could have been.
- 10 We reach out to others who share similar struggles.
- 11 We put hard-won lessons to good use by making the world a better place.
- 12 We support each other to live with dignity and conscience as valued members of the Human Family.

### Some Slogans for Practicing Dignity and Equality

Here is some collected wisdom to guide our practice:

- 1 Everyone has a right to their own reality - valued on par with others.
- 2 Everyone has a right to their own emergency - but not to impose it on others.
- 3 Offer others the same dignity and regard you want to receive on your worst day.
- 4 We speak for ourselves.
- 5 There are no experts.
- 6 One person one vote. (i.e., No one speaks for others, their experience or for the group as a whole.)
- 7 Nothing about us without us.
- 8 Open, honest, direct communication.
- 9 Relating is more helpful than helping.
- 10 Share the air – step up, step back.
- 11 A good example is worth a thousand words.
- 12 Vote with your life for the world you want to live in.
- 13 If it gets your goat, you get to vote. (i.e., Issues are negotiated openly and honestly by everyone who is affected.)
- 14 You have to pay to play. (i.e., Private impacts are accountable to personal conscience. Relational impacts are accountable to relationships. Group impacts are accountable to group conscience.)
- 15 Put people first. (In making decisions, the real needs of the people involved go before existing protocols, rules or regulations.)
- 16 Principles before personalities.
- 17 The highest authority is human rights.
- 18 Human rights are the universal language.
- 19 No Pros, No Cops, No 911.
- 20 We don't police each other.
- 21 We don't manage each other.
- 22 We don't therapize or psychiatrize each other.
- 23 Safety is a quality of trusting relationships - not a risk management strategy.
- 24 All voices are real.
- 25 All voices matter.
- 26 Vulnerability rocks.
- 27 If it's not working for all of us it's not working.
- 28 Human rights make good boundaries for everyone.