

Self-Moderated Book Groups – General Orientation and Getting Started

This doesn't apply to everyone. Some students are enrolling with a group of people they already know. Some of you are not interested in meeting with a group every week. That's fine. Most of the points below apply primarily to those of you asking us to introduce you to others to form a self-moderated book group during this course.

Decide and Commit. At the beginning, it's important to determine whether you want to participate in a weekly book group. A group can support you, create accountability and community, and help you achieve deeper embodied understanding and learning. This does take time and commitment. It's better not to attempt it than to begin and then not follow through.

Leadership. When you are introduced to one another, each group will benefit from *practical* leadership in accomplishing some key tasks you will need to agree upon to begin. You perform a service by stepping forward and helping with the following tasks:

Schedule. We introduced you to people with some availability within a 3-4 hour block of time on a particular day, but you will have to decide on a specific meeting time. It is almost always best to establish a particular day and time for your meetings. We all live busy lives, and we live all over the globe. It can be tricky to nail down times that work well for everyone. Please try to be flexible so your Book Study Group can function and flow. **Note:** A useful online tool for scheduling is available at <http://doodle.com>

Set it up. It will also be important for a member of the group to set up your group meetings, either by video — Zoom, Skype, Adobeconnect, for example. Or audio (Freeconferencecall.com, Maestroconference.com).

Communicate. It helps to (a) state clearly exactly when you will meet and how everyone will connect, and (b) to acknowledge that you've got it, and that you will be there.

Terry suggests three kinds of leadership roles for any practice group; it's often good for these roles to rotate: (1) The *Integrity Holder* helps schedule the meetings, reminds people beforehand, keeps track of time and points out when people drift off topic. (2) The *Facilitator* prepares for the session, welcomes everyone to the meeting, leads an initial centering process, and helps deepen the discussion. (3) The *Historian* role is optional in this course, but many groups find it helpful to record what they discuss and learn. If you take notes and on occasion feel you have an experience that might be of benefit to Terry and his team, please share with them! These roles are described in more detail in the Book Study Group Practice Guidelines.

Other Logistics:

Inexpensive international calling options:

i. Video:

- Skype (available at <http://skype.com>, if you don't have it.)
- Zoom, which is the stable professional platform that hosts the Course Sessions with Terry (available at <http://www.zoom.us>) Note: someone will need a \$15/month paid Zoom account in order for you to be able to meet on this platform for longer than 45 minutes. The free account allows for 45 minutes.
- [Adobeconnect](#)

ii. Audio:

- Freeconferencecall.com
- Maestroconference.com
- Internet phone cards (many are available; just search for your region)
- Other services are sometimes helpful, such as Rebtel <http://rebtel.com>

- #### iii. Recordings:
- In general you won't need to record your Book Study Group meetings, as long as everyone is present. However, if someone is unable to attend a meeting, a recording is helpful. Freeconferencecall.com and Zoom.us provide cheap or free audio recordings. Someone present will need to have an additional program (available for up to US\$20) to record a Skype session.

Your Responsibility for Your Optional Book Study Group Experience. Terry will supply deepening questions and sometimes these will include practices. He may on occasion offer suggestions for exactly what to do in your meetings.

However, your Book Study Group is an extra and recommended option, additional to the course itself. It is an opportunity to meet other people with this shared interest. We hope you will encounter people of unusual courage, intelligence and maturity, and that you will have a wonderful experience. Nevertheless, these groups will be your responsibility and your experience will not be supervised or managed by Terry or his team. We are not guaranteeing that you will be able to form a Book Study Group. We are just doing our best to help you find other interested participants.

If a book study group doesn't succeed, members can use our Facebook group to invite people to connect to form a new study group. We will help if we can, but we make no guarantees. We cannot moderate conflicts between partners. We realize making these introductions could open up the potential for an unsuccessful attempt, which might tend to feel like rejection. It is also possible that a few people will not have a good experience with their book study group partner(s). We believe such bad experiences will be rare. Even so, we encourage you to relate to this opportunity as a possible extra value that might or might not materialize, to practice openness without being careless, and to relax attachment and reactions if things don't work out perfectly. And we hope it will work out as a wonderful plus for you! Thank you!

Also, while we assume that all course participants have sincere and noble aspirations in using this forum, we have not screened anyone. Therefore, proceed at your own risk, and please use good judgment about sharing additional contact info such as your phone number or Skype address.