

The Tools of Chapter 9

Attending Meetings

Meetings offer an opportunity to identify with other couples grappling with and resolving problems similar to our own. Meetings encourage communication and often bring couples closer together.

Sharing at Meetings

Being honest and vulnerable in front of our partners can be frightening but it's worth it. Many of us believe that our relationships recover in direct proportion to our willingness to share.

Making Phone Calls

Ask for telephone numbers of people you identify with at meetings. (Some meetings provide a "We Care" list.) Calling other members helps couples break out of isolation and can bring a new perspective to the relationship. The telephone can be especially helpful during a crisis.

Service

We help our relationship by helping others. Some ways are qualifying at meetings, greeting newcomers, setting up meetings, participating in business meetings, sponsoring other couples, service on a committee, attending GSB or Intergroup meetings, taking office, etc.

Calling a Moratorium

Destructive interaction can be stopped by dropping an inflammatory topic for an agreed upon time (15 minutes, an hour, a day) or by detaching from each other for that time. A moratorium is an opportunity to calm down and put the other Tools of the program to work.

Acting As If

In a dispute, try going on with whatever activities were previously planned, treating each other with courtesy and respect until the warmth of the relationship resurfaces and the issue can be calmly discussed.

Calling a Meeting-of-Two

Either partner can call a meeting-of-two at any time, anywhere. A formal meeting structure, with no crosstalk or inventory-taking, guarantees being heard, helps us learn to listen, and can bring us a new understanding of our partner.

Meeting with Other Couples / Meetings-of-Four

Interaction with other couples in the program can show us that our problems are not unique. Such meetings (formally structured or otherwise) can be beneficial in times of conflict and can help us break out of isolation.

Sponsorship

Sharing with a Sponsor Couple provides a fresh perspective on relationship issues. A Sponsor Couple can help us learn to use the Tools of the program, work the Steps, and develop a Recovery Communications Plan.

Working the Steps

The Twelve Steps are the foundation of our program and the path to recovery. Using the principles that restore individual lives to sanity can do the same for our relationship.

Prayer and Meditation

Prayer and meditation can deepen our trust and faith in our partner, as together we work on spiritual solutions to difficult problems. Practicing this tool, both individually and as a couple, ever reminds us that our relationship is in the care of a Power greater than ourselves.

The Slogans

Great wisdom compressed into easily workable ideas, the slogans are simple solutions for complicated people. Some that have proven especially helpful are:

We are allies
How important is it?
Let go and let God
Agree to disagree
Affirm my partner
Learn to listen
Keep the focus on myself
One day at a time
Live and let live
Courtesy, communication, commitment
We can start the day over at any time