

The Mutual Support Group Handbook

by Arnold M. Patent

*and Participants of the
Mutual Support Network*

Editor's note: This revised edition of the handbook was edited to bring it into alignment with the first edition of *The Journey*.

Commitment to Principle

I pledge myself to celebrate harmony, abundance
and support for everyone,
in a spirit of equality and grounded in commitment,
by living my life according to Principle,
which means unconditionally loving and supporting
myself and others just the way we are,
trusting the Universe as I live
in the moment from my peaceful center,
fully and freely expressing who I really am.

name

date

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The Purpose of the Mutual Support Group

As human beings, our most basic desire is to love and be loved unconditionally. Our natural inclination is to support one another.

However, given our years of training in the competitive adversarial model, we have learned to close our hearts and shut off our feelings, both to ourselves and others. Our beliefs in separation, scarcity and struggle have led us to fear and compete against each other. The result has been increasing discomfort and a growing sense of powerlessness, individually and as a society.

Many of us are now ready and eager to reconnect to our true selves —the powerful beings that we really are —and to assist others in doing the same. In reconnecting to who we are, we connect to our Oneness, which is the source of our power.

*“There is no one as powerful
as a person who feels
lo ved and supported. ”*

—Arnold M. Patent

The purpose of the mutual support group is to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which to practice giving and receiving unconditional love and support, reconnecting with our feelings and reclaiming our power. In such an environment, we learn to express qualities that lead to truly ful-

filling lives: inspiration, compassion, trust, openness, generosity, gratitude, humor, playfulness and creativity.

The mutual support group is founded on Universal Principles. These Principles are summarized in Chapter 19. When we follow these Principles, we are guided perfectly in enjoying and expressing the love, peace, harmony and abundance that is our natural state.

The following material can assist you in starting a mutual support group of your own. It takes only two willing people to start a group and the self-love to stay with the process.

Suggested Guidelines for Support Group Meetings

Be sure to go over the following guidelines with everyone who wants to be part of a support group, and review the guidelines periodically. If there are any guidelines your group wishes to modify, it is suggested that you take the matter up before a meeting rather than during a meeting.

1. Be clear about the purpose for the support group: to create an environment in which to practice unconditional love and mutual support; to assist each other in connecting to our feelings and reclaiming our power; and to expand our level of trust in ourselves, in each other, and in the power of our Oneness.
2. Make the commitment to refrain from discussions and advice giving during the meeting. This is a most significant guideline and one that is often disregarded. Remember that we best support others in their personal empowerment by letting them deal with their unique challenges and discover their own solutions.
3. Agree on a starting time and length of meeting (usually 1 to 2 hours) and honor the agreement.
4. Rotate the meeting site, unless the meeting is held at a public facility, such as a business or community center.
5. Notify someone if you will be late or absent from a meeting.

6. Rotate facilitators.
7. Agree to follow the Support Group Format until all participants are fully familiar with the exercises. Thereafter, adaptations may be made by mutual agreement of the group.
8. Honor the confidentiality of personal matters brought up during meetings.
9. Be clear about participant and guest policies, and take time before meetings to inform new participants and guests about the group guidelines.
10. Support the purpose of the group by gently and lovingly reminding participants when the guidelines are not being observed.

Support Group Format

1. Following brief introductions, choose a facilitator for the meeting, or allow one to emerge spontaneously.
2. Center the energy in the group: hold hands, close eyes, quiet minds, focus awareness on feelings. As you open your eyes, make eye contact with each of the members in the circle before releasing hands.
3. Read the Invocation (p. A11) and, if you wish, the Power of Peace Meditation(p. A12).
4. Offer participants the opportunity to go through the Feeling Exercise (p. A14) or the Self-Reflection Exercise (p. A16).
5. State individual purposes (see p. A19 for explanation)
Acknowledgment: “ (Name) , I love you and support you in feeling inspired by your purpose. ” (See p. A18 about acknowledgments.)
6. State the group purpose (see p. A21).
7. Read one or two Universal Principles (Chapter 19).
8. Share success stories in applying Universal Principles.
Acknowledgment: “(Name), we celebrate your success(es). ”
9. Take a few moments to feel and express gratitude.
Acknowledgment: “We feel and expand our gratitude for the gifts of love we receive.”

10. The Positive-Reflection Exercise (or a variation) or the Self-Acknowledgment Exercise (see p. A23).
11. (Optional) One-Two-Three Laugh! On the count of three, participants join in spontaneous laughter.
Laughter is one of the simplest ways to open our energy fields, open our hearts, and release our judgments.
12. Requests for support in consciousness (see p. A25).
Acknowledgment: "(Name), I love you and support you unconditionally just the way you are in all your power and magnificence."
13. Closing: hold hands, close eyes, allow the group energy to expand. Participants may either bring into consciousness silently or name aloud people to whom they wish to send this loving and supportive energy.
14. Set next meeting. Make announcements.

Note: The sequence of this format may be modified to support the continuity of energy within a particular support group.

The Invocation

At the beginning of each meeting, someone in the group volunteers to read the Invocation. The purpose of the Invocation is to remind participants of the support that is always available and to provide an opportunity to consciously connect with this support. It is also meant to connect participants with the Oneness of which we are all a part. The group is free to modify the Invocation if participants wish and if everyone feels more comfortable with the modifications.

*We open to the support of al in the Universe,
including our Infinite Intelligence, the God Presence,
in assisting us in awakening;
in assisting us in opening our hearts,
and inspiring and empowering us to support
each other so that we may all
experience the truth about ourselves.
We ask for support in consciousness
in feeling our connection
with the essence of everyone and everything
in the Universe at all times,
so that we can truly know and feel
We Are One.*

The Power of Peace Meditation

The Peace Meditation is a gift from Grady Claire Porter. One person may read the whole meditation, or each participant might read one or two statements. Both readers and listeners are encouraged to connect with each statement at a feeling level.

There are two things that will alert you to begin the Peace Exercise. First, at any time you feel you wish to change *anything or anyone*, you are giving yourself the opportunity to experience the power of peace. The second is justification. At any time you feel you must justify anything, to yourself or anyone else, you are telling yourself you are ready to practice the power of peace.

Now be clear on this. Change and justification are not bad. The desire to change and justify is not bad. Both simply come into your experience to support you in doing what you love to do —*being the power of peace*.

*I feel, with unconditional trust, that I am
the whole of the Universe, and all that I see is Me.*

*I feel, at my deepest level,
the power of being who I am.*

*I feel the willingness and the readiness to
exercise the power of being who I am.*

*I feel the gentleness of my own power,
and the absolute certainty of knowing
that my power is the power of peace.*

*I feel the conviction and trust of my Self so totally
that I no longer need to project anything
but absolute and unconditional love.*

*I feel, in totality, the infinite variety
of my beingness.*

*I feel the warmth and peace of
unconditionally loving my own infinite Self.*

*And, at this deep feeling level,
I this moment yield to the power of my Self,
totally trusting my unconditional love and support
for all of Me, and accept all that I see
as the expression and experience of this power.*

The Feeling Exercise

We are feeling beings. Through our feelings, we connect with the God Presence, which is the source of our power, our creativity and our abundance. The Feeling Exercise can assist us in reconnecting to the feelings we have repressed. It is one of the simplest and most direct methods of reclaiming our power.

Try practicing this exercise on a consistent, day-to-day basis, until feeling our feelings fully and freely again becomes our natural way of being.

Close your eyes and scan your body. Notice how you are feeling.

Then:

- 1. Feel the feeling free of any thoughts you have about it. Feel the energy, the power, in the feeling.*
- 2. Feel love for the feeling just the way it is. Feel love for the power in the feeling.*
- 3. Feel love for yourself feeling the feeling and feeling the power in the feeling.*

As you begin the process of feeling your feelings free of labels, descriptions or judgments, first notice the energy in the feeling. The energy has a vibration; feel the energy vibrate through your body. Then notice the intensity of the energy as it vibrates through your body. Finally, feel this intensity of energy as power—your own power.

During a support group meeting, the Feeling Exercise may be used in various ways. The group may choose to go through the exercise silently together. One participant may lead several others through the exercise while the rest of the participants send loving support, after which participants switch roles. Or if one participant is experiencing very intense feelings, he or she may ask to be supported by the entire group in going through the Feeling Exercise.

Note: The word “love” has been so misused in our society that some people may have an initial aversion to the word. Let your intuition guide you. You might, for example, replace the word “love” with “compassion” or “acceptance.”

The Self-Reflection Exercise

When someone in a support group is experiencing very intense feelings around a particular circumstance or situation and feels the need for greater support from the group, another group member can volunteer to gently and lovingly guide the person through the following 11-step procedure. The other members provide additional support by listening with unconditional love.

The person who volunteers to take a participant through the exercise (it may or may not be the group facilitator) reads the following statements or questions, being sure to allow plenty of time for the participant to respond to each statement.

1. Describe the situation in as few words as you need.
2. Are you willing to let go of your interpretation of this situation as being either bad or wrong?
3. Close your eyes and focus your awareness on how you are feeling ... Can you feel the feeling? Can you feel the energy, the vibration, in the feeling?
4. Can you feel this energy as the Power of God that you are experiencing and expressing?
5. Can you feel love for yourself just the way you are as the Power of God? Are you willing to receive support in feeling love for yourself just the way you are as the Power of God? Can you feel the support coming in?

- 6 Are you willing to accept that what you are experiencing is a reflection of the state of your own consciousness?
7. If there is someone else or others involved in the situation, can you accept that you invited them to support you in reclaiming your power?
8. Can you see and feel the perfection of what is, just the way it is?
9. Take a few moments to visualize and feel the powerful and loving being that you truly are. Connect this powerful and loving being with the powerful and loving being of everyone involved in the situation.
10. Focusing on your heart, allow this feeling of power and love to expand ... When the power and love has expanded sufficiently, let it embrace the situation and all those involved in the situation, including yourself.
11. Feel deep gratitude for yourself for the ingenuity, resourcefulness and commitment you dedicated to hiding your power so that you could explore the human experiences you came here to have. When you are ready, you may open your eyes. If you wish, you may share any insights that have come to you.

Note: If a person has difficulty with any of the steps, suggest that he or she stay with the feelings, open to support in feeling love for the feelings, and continue with the exercise at a later time.

Acknowledgments

One of the cornerstones of the support group process is the use of acknowledgments to express or to send love and support in a very direct, focused way. The words used are less important than the heart-felt intention behind the words.

After a participant has stated her purpose, shared a success story or asked for support in consciousness, the other members acknowledge the person by sending loving energy to her —through their eyes, hearts and hands —as they make a mutually-agreed-upon declaration of support, such as those suggested in the Support Group Format.

Individual Purposes

In becoming aware of our individual life's purpose, we each connect, at a feeling level, with our unique role in the Universe. The more expansive and inspired our purpose, the more supported and empowered we feel in expressing our full potential.

To begin the process of becoming aware of your purpose, let yourself grow quiet and go through the three steps of the Feeling Exercise. In a state of deep self-love and peacefulness, ask yourself, "What is my purpose for living?"

Allow the answer to come to you. Let it be as expansive as you can imagine. The words you choose need not be flowery or poetic; what is important is how inspired the words make you feel. Also, the simpler your purpose, the more powerful it will be.

Some examples of individual purposes:

- My purpose is living with an open heart.
- I feel and trust the power that I am.
- My purpose is radiating joy.
- My purpose is loving myself unconditionally just the way I am.

In a support group meeting, some participants may have prepared statements of purpose while others may choose to have their purpose come to them in the moment sponta-

neously. Whichever method is chosen, be aware that your statement of purpose provides the greatest benefit when you connect with it every day, and particularly whenever something is troubling you. As you connect with your purpose, you expand the awareness of your importance in our Universe, and your life takes on a new meaning. When you connect with your purpose, you know that you have found the inspiration that makes your life seem worthwhile.

Your individual purpose will continue to inspire you as you revise it periodically.

Group Purpose

Whenever two or more people choose to join together as a group, one of the first and most essential exercises the participants can take part in is to define their group purpose. In the same way that a person's individual purpose creates the inspiration for her life, the group purpose creates the inspiration for the life of the group.

To arrive at the group purpose, participants join in a short meditation and allow a feeling to emerge from a place of peacefulness and connectedness. Each participant then chooses one word that expresses this feeling: love, joy, peace, commitment, power, harmony, trust, fun, Oneness, etc. From this input, the group develops a simple statement of purpose with which everyone resonates, allowing as much time as necessary to achieve consensus. This may happen in one meeting or it may take several meetings, but be sure to keep this a priority item on the agenda until everyone feels inspired and in alignment with the purpose. The creation of a group purpose that inspires each member is the foundation for the group.

Some examples of group purposes:

- *Joyfully playing together as the God Presence.*
- *Being at peace with what is just the way it is.*
- *Supporting each other in opening to the flow of the Power of God as our abundance.*

As with individual purposes, be sure to revise the group purpose periodically so that it continues to inspire all participants.

Our Group Purpose:

The Positive-Reflection Exercise

Participants focus on one person at a time. In turn, each participant looks the recipient in the eyes and says, “The positive qualities I see in you that you reflect for me are ...” and completes the statement with several qualities that spontaneously come up, such as kindness, vitality, joyfulness, wisdom. The recipient merely says, “Thank you,” and the exercise continues until everyone has had an opportunity to receive recognition from all participants.

Note: Be sure to give each recipient a few moments to take in and feel the effect of these loving words before going on to the next person.

Variations

If there is not enough time to do the full exercise, each participant can recognize just the person to his left, going around the circle to the right. Or the exercise may be shortened by stating just one quality per person.

As another variation—and a most powerful one—bring a mirror into the circle, and let each participant do the Positive-Reflection Exercise eye-to-eye with her or himself.

The Self-Acknowledgment Exercise

One person goes around the circle, acknowledging each participant but using his own name every time. For example, Peter would look at Jill and say, “Peter, I love you and support you unconditionally just the way you are in all your power and magnificence.” The exercise continues until everyone has had a turn making this self-acknowledgment to all participants.

Requesting Support in Consciousness

Everything that we see and experience is a projection of our own consciousness. Unencumbered by beliefs, our consciousness expresses our Infinite Intelligence, the God Presence. Asking for support in consciousness is a way of accessing this unconditionally loving part of ourselves. We frame each request in terms of Universal Principles. Some examples:

“I ask for support in consciousness . . .

. . . in fully feeling my feelings, feeling love for my feelings, and feeling love for myself just the way I am. ”

. . . in knowing that I am the God Presence and fully and freely expressing my unique talents. ”

. . . in feeling my feelings around shortage, remembering that abundance is our natural state, and feeling gratitude for all that I have. ”

. . . in generously giving and gratefully receiving love and support. ”

Additional Exercises

The Daily Five -Minute Support Group

This is a wonderfully supportive activity that can be done by couples, families, and in group living situations. If young children are involved, the words can be modified and simplified to make them more easily understood. The Five-Minute Support Group can also be conducted over the telephone.

Each morning, the members of a household come together to make and acknowledge requests for support. In the evening, they reconvene briefly to share their experiences in light of their requests.

The Mirror Exercise

Because we can never truly love and support another more than we love and support ourselves, the most valuable contribution we can ever make is to love ourselves and to continually deepen our feelings of self-love. The Mirror Exercise, done individually on a daily basis, offers a profoundly simple way to increase our love for ourselves.

Stand or sit in front of a mirror. Look at yourself eye-to-eye. Go through the three steps of the Feeling Exercise. Continue looking at yourself until you feel deep love for yourself. Say, "I love you and support you unconditionally just the way you are in all your power and magnificence" or whatever other words you feel inspired to say.

In the beginning, the reasons not to feel love for yourself will predominate and draw your attention away from your feelings. Keep returning your focus to your feelings and to feeling love for yourself. Consider just a small amount of self-love to be a big accomplishment. Little by little and with persistence, the willingness to feel more love for yourself increases. Your heart does open a little more and you do connect a little more deeply to the love that is your essence.

The Forgiveness Exercise

By practicing forgiveness toward those we have judged or are judging as being unloving, we loosen the attachment of the judgment to the feeling, the energy in the feeling is set free, and that energy is then available to us as pure love.

When we are willing to release our judgments of another, we are in fact releasing our judgments of ourselves. Thus, our willingness to practice forgiveness is truly a gift of selflove.

The following exercise can assist you in feeling forgiveness, and ultimately deep love, for anyone you are ready and willing to forgive. Take your time with each step. Be willing to go through the process as often as necessary until you feel deep love for the person (who is really yourself).

For this exercise, you will want to call on the support of the God Presence.

- 1. Begin by going through the three steps of the Feeling Exercise.*
- 2. When you feel a sense of peacefulness, self-love and support, bring into your conscious awareness a person for whom you hold strong judgments.*

3. *Ask the God Presence to assist you in feeling the feelings that are connected to these judgments. Feel the feelings as deeply as you can.*
4. *Ask the God Presence to assist you in feeling love for these feelings. Allow your heart to open and embrace these feelings.*
5. *Feel deep love for the God Presence.*
6. *Ask the God Presence to assist you in feeling forgiveness for this person. Allow your heart to open as wide as you can.*
7. *Let this feeling of forgiveness expand into deep love for this person. When you are ready, embrace the person in this deeply felt, open-hearted love.*
8. *Feel appreciation for yourself for the lengths you have gone to hide your power in this judgment so that you can have this and other human experiences.*
9. *Feel your connection to the Oneness that you are.*

Note: Both the Mirror Exercise and the Forgiveness Exercise may be used in a Support Group. One person volunteers to guide another through the steps of each exercise while the other participants silently offer their loving support.

The Feeling Exercise, Steps 4-6

After you have practiced the first three steps of the Feeling Exercise so that they have become automatic for you, and you are fully at peace with feeling your feelings just the way they are, you are ready for the advanced phase of the Feeling Exercise. The first three steps are the same. These are followed by:

4. *How would you like to feel? Feel the most wonderful feeling you are ready to feel.*
5. *Feel love for this feeling. Feel love for the energy, the power, in the feeling.*
6. *Feel love for yourself feeling this feeling. Feel love for yourself feeling the power in the feeling.*

Note: The power in your feelings can only be accessed by your willingness to feel your feelings just the way they are. Prematurely doing Steps 4-6 of the Feeling Exercise may result in a superficial connection with your feelings, which will keep you separated from your true power. As with all aspects of this work, your honesty with yourself is important.

Background and Support Group Materials

Mutual support groups, based on Universal Principles, have been in existence since 1981. These groups meet weekly in towns and cities throughout the world.

The founder of these groups is Arnold M. Patent. After 25 years of practicing traditional law and attempting to reach harmonious and peaceful results, Mr. Patent turned his attention to practicing Universal Law, a system based on principles of harmony and peace. During this latter career, he has led seminars and written books on Universal Principles.

Mr. Patent's current focus is on spiritual coaching. The basis for this coaching is covered in *The Journey*, which describes his personal experience with the process he uses.

Arnold has also written, *You Can Have It All, Money and Beyond*, *Bridges To Reality* and a children's book, *The Treasure Hunt*.

He has a website (www.arnoldpatent.com) on which he answers questions submitted by viewers. He is happy to answer any questions that you may have.