



Setting Out - RAFT to Freedom host script

Starting the meeting

- Please read out the segments in **blue only**. (Everything else is for the host's use.)

Before the meeting begins

- Make a co-host.
- Paste into the chat:
 - this week's self-reflection question
 - the link to this week's [extract PDF](#)
 - the link to this week's [chapter](#)
- Repost these if necessary when latecomers arrive.

On the hour

- Mute participants: *Participants* → *Mute All*.
- Begin the host script.

Welcome statement

- Welcome to the RAFT to Freedom community.
- This is a peer-led group for anyone who wishes to change their relationship with life's pain, difficulties and disappointments. Drawing on ancient Buddhist teachings – alongside insights from neuroscience, psychology, psychotherapy and philosophy – we explore practical ways to cultivate lasting well-being.
- Together we try out a wide range of tools, skills, perspectives, attitudes, and actions that are recognised as helpful in contemporary approaches to health and well-being.
- Whether you're here to work with a specific habit, or you're simply looking for a steadier, more peaceful mind, you are welcome. You don't need a

diagnosis, a label, or to identify as Buddhist to benefit from this programme. All that's required is an open, caringly curious mind.

- And importantly, this journey from suffering to freedom is guided by compassion for what it means to be human – not by fighting, rejecting, or trying to escape our humanity.
- As part of our shared practice, we keep things simple and let go of fixed identities by introducing ourselves by first name only. In that spirit, I'll introduce myself as and it's very good to have you here..

How the group works

- We hold two meetings each week: Tuesdays at 8pm UK time and Sundays at 6pm UK time. The Tuesday and Sunday meetings explore the same chapter through different self-reflection questions, so you are very welcome to attend either meeting or both.
- You can take part as much or as little as feels helpful: simply come along and listen, read the chapter, listen to the audio, try the suggested practice or explore the journalling prompts. Nothing is compulsory, and there is no pressure to do more than feels comfortable.
- You are welcome to join us at any point in the programme. There is no need to have been with us from the beginning. Although each week's chapter builds on what has come before, each meeting also stands alone.
- If you are new to RAFT, chapters 00 to 05 offer a useful introduction to the framework, and chapters 25, 34 and 51 may also help you find your bearings if the programme has already reached those stages.

A few practical notes

- If you're able, please mute your microphone when you're not speaking, and use headphones if you're not alone.
- We invite you to turn your camera on briefly at the start to help us connect. After that, you're welcome to have it on or off. If you're moving around, it can help to switch it off to minimise distraction.
- To help this feel like a safe space to share practice, hopes, and stories, we ask that:
 - the people you see here remain anonymous
 - what is said here stays confidential

Preamble to meditation

- Now we'll begin with a 10-minute Serenity breathing meditation. We'll then hear an extract from this week's chapter, followed by today's self-reflection question, which I've posted in the chat.
- We'll then have five minutes of silent contemplation and, after that, you'll be invited to unmute and share any reflections you would like to offer.

Serenity breathing meditation (10 minutes)

[Ring bell once – or, if no bell, simply begin.]

- For the next 10 minutes, there is nowhere to go, nothing to do, no one special to be.
- For the next 10 minutes, using mindfulness of breathing we are encouraged to cultivate serenity of body and serenity of mind - to practise calm and pleasant abiding in the here and now [pause]
- Settle into any posture that feels supportive.
- And if it's comfortable, let your eyes gently close, or rest your gaze softly.
- Soften the face... relax the jaw... let the shoulders drop.
- Take a full, deep breath in... [pause]
And a long, slow breath out... letting go of any held stress or tension, as best you can. [pause]
- Again, breathing in deeply... [pause]
And breathing out slowly... feeling the breath in the whole body. [pause]
- Now let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm and simply notice where you feel it most clearly - perhaps at the nostrils, in the rise and fall of the belly, or as a sense of the whole body breathing. [pause]
- Breathing in - we are fully aware of the whole in-breath [pause]
Breathing out - we are fully aware of the whole out-breath [pause]
- If you find it helpful, you might lightly note... "in"... [pause] ..."out". [pause]
- When the mind wanders, notice it kindly - and gently smile.
Make a friendly, non-judgmental note of "not-breath", and then return your full attention to the breathing.
- The Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh said - "Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy."
- So if it feels natural, you might soften into a small smile - smile inwardly and smile outwardly - and rest with this moment.

MUTE YOUR OWN MICROPHONE

After 10 minutes

UN-MUTE YOUR OWN MICROPHONE

To close: ring bell three times – or say: and when you're ready, gently come back.

Reading the extract

Read the first part of the extract up to the self-reflections and then read out the ***self-reflection*** you have chosen

Silent contemplation (5 minutes) - sharing the slide can be done at this point but it is optional

- Today's self-reflection question is in the chat - **read it aloud again**
- We'll reflect in silence for about five minutes. As you reflect, you might stay connected with the breath, and gently bring the question to mind.
- Be gentle with yourself. You're invited to befriend your practice – to befriend yourself.

[After ~5 minutes: ring bell three times – or say: “And when you're ready, gently come back.”]

STOP SHARING if you are sharing your screen

Individual sharing

- Sharing is always optional. You are warmly welcome to speak or simply to listen. As today's host, I'll share at the end.
- While someone is speaking, we offer them our full attention and allow them to finish without interruption.
- We listen with care and respect. Another person's share may naturally prompt a reflection of your own, and that is welcome, provided it is offered with the same care and respect.
- You're welcome to share whatever feels important to you right now. There's no need to have it all worked out.
- Please keep shares to around two or three minutes so that everyone who wishes has a chance to speak. If time allows, you're welcome to share again.

- **If not using breakout room**
 - To share aloud, please raise your hand - either physically or using the Zoom hand. If you would rather not speak, you are very welcome to share in the chat.
 - Who would like to begin?
- **If using breakout room (more than 20 people)**
 - As there are quite a few of us today, we'll begin in smaller breakout rooms and then come back together for a wider reflection.
 - You'll be assigned to a room automatically.
 - If Zoom asks you to join the room, please click 'Join'.
 - The room will be facilitated by the co-host or myself

Return from breakout rooms - if applicable

- Welcome back

If there is extra time left

- Would anyone like to feed back on anything that you found particularly helpful in your discussions together?
- Thank you

When there is around 10 minutes left of the session bring discussion to a close

The Appropriate Response Meditation (about five mins depending on time - sharing the image is optional)

- There will now be a 5-minute Wise-Heartedness meditation – an appropriate response to this week's practice.
[Ring bell once – or begin.]
- Take a supportive posture.
- Let your eyes close if comfortable, or rest your gaze softly.
- It can be helpful to imagine breathing in and out through the heart. You may wish to place a hand lightly over the heart area.
- You may find it helpful to recite one or more of these aspirations silently, like a gentle whisper in the background of the mind.

Say the appropriate phrases slowly, leaving enough time after each one for participants to repeat it silently to themselves.

Setting Out - *Daily-Intentions* ([slide](#))- Chapters 01 - 05 and 66

- May I greet today with joy and appreciation.
- May I greet today with friendliness and kindness.
- May I greet today with generosity and compassion.
- May I greet today with understanding and acceptance.

then say

- we can now extend these phrases outwards
- to the people in this zoom room....
- perhaps to all beings everywhere without exception
- May all beings greet today with joy and appreciation.
- May all beings greet today with friendliness and kindness.
- May all beings greet today with generosity and compassion.
- May all beings greet today with understanding and acceptance.

STOP SHARING if you are sharing your screen

Remember to Remember section:

- We have now come to this week's *Remember to remember* section.

Read the Remember to Remember section from the extract

Closing

- Is there any other business?
- RAFT to Freedom is entirely free, with no obligation to contribute. If you would like to support the project, you can do so by hosting or co-hosting, helping to start a meeting or discussion group, or contributing towards running costs via our website.
- All hosting materials are provided, with training and support available until you feel confident.
- Thank you for being here and for everything you have brought to the meeting. The formal part of our meeting is now complete.

- **When offering Open Deck** - this is entirely optional

- I'll be keeping the Zoom room open for **Open Deck** - an informal chat for anyone who would like to stay. You are equally welcome to say goodbye and leave whenever you wish.
 - [The host may state how long Open Deck will remain open. Confidentiality and respectful communication continue to apply.]
 - **Bringing Open Deck to a close**
 - It's time to bring Open Deck to a close now. Thank you everyone – it's been good to chat.
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- **When not offering Open Deck**
 - Please feel free to unmute and say goodbye. I hope to see you again soon.

[Always select **“End Meeting for All”**.]