

Spiritual Friends Living Out-of-Area



Many FCM members live out-of-area in Florida and other states. These members don't live close enough to attend FCM events in person in Tampa, St. Petersburg, or Naples. Although FCM members are able to participate on-line for Dharma workshops, intensives, retreats, and a variety of social interactions, this Spiritual Friends Living Out-of-Area group offers the opportunity for members to develop Dharma friends. Members of this group have found sharing their practice with other FCM members to be a wonderful way to support study and practice of the Dharma while building trusting relationships and connection with Dharma brothers and sisters. This spiritual group meets every Sunday at 8:00 a.m.

Format: After inviting the bell, the call begins with one member sharing a Dharma "nugget," which consists of about a 5-min reading of a Dharma text or teaching chosen by the reader. There is a nugget schedule, so that everyone in the group is included in the rotation and has the opportunity to facilitate the call and choose and share the nugget once every two months or so. After the nugget, the call is open for members to bow in as they are moved to do so and share around their practice for the past week and/or response to the nugget. They follow the deep sharing/deep listening format of speaking from the heart, with no cross talk. Usually everyone on the call shares, even if only for a moment to check in and pass. At the end, the facilitator dedicates the merit and invites the bell.

If you are interested please consider the following guiding questions to determine whether this spiritual friends group is right for you:

- Am I an FCM member who lives far enough away from Tampa, St. Pete, and Naples to make regular, in-person attendance at weekly sangha impractical?
- Do I have an established meditation practice and experience with foundational practices of mindfulness, including deep sharing and deep listening? New members are encouraged to take Mindful Living Path classes, intensives, and FCM retreats to establish their practice prior to participating in a Spiritual Friends phone sangha group.
- Do I regularly practice with the FCM community in person or via Zoom for Sunday Meditation, and/or intensives, classes and other events?
- Can I make at least a four-month commitment to participate? Conflicts such as travel or being on retreat arise for everyone causing us to miss occasional calls. But we ask you to put the meeting dates on your calendar and make participation in the weekly call a priority for at least 4 months before deciding if you wish to continue in the group. Your regular attendance helps support other members and builds a climate of trust in our group.
- Do I commit to maintain the confidentiality of what is shared in the meetings by its members, and to follow all the guidelines of deep listening and sharing?

If you are interested in joining the Spiritual Friends Living Out-of-Area group, please contact Robbie Tisch at robtisch@comcast.net to set up a time to talk and consider whether this group is a good fit for you and if space is available at this time.