

Traditional 12 step programs have learned the importance of being non-sectarian. To be inclusive, the 12 step movement has chosen to be *spiritual but not religious*. False Selves Anonymous is a new program, that at this stage relies on readings from different religious traditions understood to be in harmony with this 12 steps program.

Recommended Readings for FSA

- **Falling Upward:** *A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* - Richard Rohr
- **Immortal Diamond:** *The Search For Our True Self* - Richard Rohr
- **The Naked Now:** *Learning to See as the Mystics See* - Richard Rohr
- **Breathing Underwater:** *Spirituality and the Twelve Steps* - Richard Rohr
- **Open Mind, Open Heart** - Thomas Keating
- **The Human Condition:** *Contemplation and Transformation* - Thomas Keating
- **Divine Therapy and Addiction:** *Centering Prayer and the Twelve Steps* - Thomas Keating
- **Full Catastrophe Living:** *Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness* - John Kabat-Zinn
- **Coming to Our Senses:** *Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness* - John Kabat-Zinn
- **The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions** - AA World Services Inc.
- **The Power of Now:** *A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment* - Eckhart Tolle
- **A New Earth:** *Awakening to Your Life's Purpose* - Eckhart Tolle
- **The Miracle of Mindfulness:** *An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation* - Thich Nhat Han
- **Being Peace** - Thich Nhat Han



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False Self Anonymous- A 12-step program for Spiritual Growth



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FSA-False Selves Anonymous

– is designed to be a program of recovery from *the false self*. It is a safe place where each person may share their experience, strength, and hope in an effort to become more unconditionally loving. Here participants seek freedom from ineffective emotional programs for happiness which have created patterns of addiction, co-dependency, low self-esteem, control, fear, and denial.

False Selves Anonymous is a 12 step program of spiritual growth. It emphasizes deepening contemplative practices such as mindfulness, meditation, and centering prayer, seeking stronger connection with the self we are meant to be which is filled with peace, hope and unconditional love.

The goal of this practice is a closer relationship with God – and a more intuitive consciousness. Becoming more trusting and aware of the spiritual truth within – individuals may learn to intuitively follow that spirit instead of old thought patterns and emotional programs.

Emotional Programs of the False Self

The false self is a natural part of the human condition, but also one that creates great suffering in our lives. There are three major centers of motivation of the false self:

1. Security and survival.
2. Esteem and affection.
3. Power and control.

Because of a natural process through which we felt deprived of meeting these emotional needs in our past, they persist as desires that we compulsively seek to satisfy in our lives. Over time, we develop sophisticated emotional programs to satisfy these desires. These programs include addictions of all sorts, such as co-dependency and attachments to both things and to the roles we play in life.

The false self includes all compulsive thought. For many people this thought is constantly seeking happiness in the future or the past. In contrast, the true self feels peace, has no compulsive thought, can rest in the moment with God, and can be led by the spirit.

Guidelines for Centering Practice

If you have an established practice or method for meditation or centering prayer that you prefer, you are free to use that. Otherwise you may find these guidelines helpful:

1. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within. A one or two syllable word or phrase works best. It is best not to change this word during the meditation.
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.
3. When engaged with your thoughts (including body sensations, feelings, images and reflections), return ever so gently to the sacred word.
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a few moments.

The Importance of Intention

It is important to establish a sacred space where everyone takes seriously their intention to share and to listen with unconditional love. Nothing that is shared is unimportant or stupid. In this part of the meeting, "Crosstalk" and "feedback" are discouraged. Crosstalk can be: giving unsolicited advice, making 'you' and 'us' statements, interrogating, debating, criticizing, controlling or dominating.

In our meetings we speak about our own experience, and we listen with empathy to what others share. We work toward taking responsibility in our own lives, rather than giving advice to others. Crosstalk guidelines help keep our meeting a safe place. No one should feel pressured to share. Speak only if you want to.

The Serenity Prayer

**God, grant me the Serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
and Wisdom to know the difference.**

Meeting Outline

Handout the brochure

1. INTRODUCTION

Leader: “Good evening and welcome to False Selves Anonymous. My name is _____. I am your meeting leader tonight. We ask those with cell phones and pagers to please turn them off or to silent ringing for the duration of the meeting, so we can keep our focus on the meeting without interruptions.” ... “So that we can get to know each other better, let’s take this time to introduce ourselves by first name only.” (Meeting leader introduces self and then introductions continue around the room.)

Volunteers: (read)

- *General FSA Statement*
- *Emotional Programs of False Self*
- *The 12 Steps of False Selves Anonymous*

2. **PRESENTATION:** 10-20 mins for a reading, lead share, or video about this program and practice

3. CENTERING PRAYER:

Introductory Comment by Leader: “Contemplative prayer and meditation is the foundation of this practice. We practice prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God’s will for us and the power to carry that out. We practice praying with intention to consent to God’s action and presence within in each moment, and let go of our reactive emotional programs. Although this type of prayer seems simple, its fruit becomes deeper with time and continued practice. It will strengthen both our awareness of the Divine Presence in every moment, and our capacity to consent to God’s will in our lives. As we learn to let go of the false self and all the thoughts, sensations, and emotions associated with it, we have a greater capacity to listen to the Divine Presence which is directing, advising, and comforting us.”

- **Volunteer:** (reads) *Guidelines for Centering*

Practice and meditation

- **Leader:** Introduce 20 minute meditation period and end with bell/singing bowl.

4. PERSONAL SHARING:

Leader introduces personal sharing with strict time limit stated at beginning. Max 40 –60 min.

- **Volunteer :** (reads) *The Importance of Intention*
- **Leader:** Introduces a contemplative question which is used to help deepen personal intention
- **Leader:** Opens the meeting for individual sharing either about the contemplative question or any other insight or feelings that are emerging (for groups of over 6 people sharing is tag style, with the speaker choosing the first person, and so on)
- Give 5-10 min final warning for those who have not shared to have an opportunity before closing

6. CLOSING:

Leader: Confidentiality reminder –“ we ask that you respect the anonymity and confidentiality of each person in this meeting. We ask that what you see here, what is said here, when you leave here, let it stay here.”

- Offering/donation opportunity as appropriate.
- **Leader:** “Our group benefits from the experience, strength and hope of each member of the group. Is there anyone who would like to do a lead share, or share a specific reading about this practice next week?”
- Announcements and sign-up sheet
- **Volunteer:** (reads) *12 promises of FSA*
- **Leader:** Thank you - to volunteers
- Invitation to continued conversation / hospitality
- Brief silence and Serenity prayer in unison

The 12 STEPS of FSA

Step One “We admitted we were powerless over our false selves’ emotions, opinions and dramas, our false selves – that our lives had become unmanageable.”

Step Two “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

Step Three “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.”

Step Four “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

Step Five “Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

Step Six “Were entirely ready to have God remove these defects of character.”

Step Seven “Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.”

Step Eight “Made a list of all persons we had harmed and willing to make amends to them all.”

Step Nine “Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.”

Step Ten “Continued to take personal inventory of our selves and our lives, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”

Step Eleven “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God.”

Step Twelve “Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps we carried this message to other seekers, and sought to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

The 12 Promises of FSA

1. I can expect real change in my life by committing to my spiritual journey. As I make an honest intention to consent to God’s will, I progress toward a more intuitive consciousness

2. I know a new unconditional love and acceptance of circumstances, other people, and myself and understand that I am genuinely lovable, loving, and loved.

3. I know a new sense of belonging and a joy beyond all understanding. The feelings of emptiness and loneliness begin to fade.

4. I find peace even in the midst of emotional turmoil. I know that everything is all right, regardless of appearances to the contrary.

5. I know a new freedom from my pain and anger. I can choose not to react to others with my anxiety, pain, or destructive conditioning.

6. I trust the guidance I receive from the divine presence. I learn to listen for God’s will in everything I do. I no longer need to rely on others to provide my sense of worth.

7. I learn to be both firm and gentle. I act with courage, integrity, and freedom.

8. I gradually experience serenity, strength, and spiritual growth in my daily life. I have a pervasive sense of gratitude and love for the world, and I hold a posture of open-hearted generosity toward others.

9. I become more patient in the face of trials and tribulations. I am able to rest within my uncertainty. I am no longer controlled by my desire for pleasure or my fear of pain.

10. I have a new sense of interior freedom which has given birth to effortless self control. I have strength to do what I am called to do, rather than respond to my daily desires or destructive habits.

11. I find my place in a loving and supportive community of fellow seekers learning to rest in the knowledge of our true selves

12. I acknowledge that I am a unique and precious creation-- a child of God with a special purpose on earth.