



FOREVER FREE

GROUP LEADER TRAINING

LEADING

SHARE GROUPS &

COMMUNICATING

VALUE



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TRAINING

Forever Free Training

Leading Share Groups & Communicating Value

Welcome & Introduction

Today, we are focusing on how to confidently lead Open Share Groups and communicate value to everyone who attends Forever Free—whether that’s in a process group, at an event, or simply during a conversation.

The process of leading a share group is simple. It’s already mapped out for you, and you’ll be receiving a copy of that outline today. These directions are also located in the binder in your group’s room. By following the outline—BOOM!—you’re set up for success.

However, leading confidently and communicating value takes more than following a script. It takes intentional effort, spiritual maturity, and a heart aligned with the mission of Forever Free.

Leading a share group is an honor and a privilege. We are entrusted with souls seeking healing and freedom. That responsibility should never be taken lightly.

1 Peter 5:2-3 Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care but lead them by your own good example (NLT).

What Makes a Good Leader? (Whiteboard Exercise)

(Audience Participation – ask the group to contribute and list their answers on the board)

- **Prompt:**
 - What are some characteristics you’ve noticed in a good share group leader?
 - *Example:* A good leader actively listens without interrupting, shows empathy, and maintains confidentiality.
 - What about some negative traits you’ve observed?
 - *Example:* A poor leader dominates the conversation, dismisses others' feelings, or shares confidential information.
- **Personal Reflection:**
 - Which list describes you more?
 - Where do you need to grow?

- *Example:* Reflect on whether you listen more than you speak, or if you often interrupt. Identify areas for growth like patience or humility.

Good News: Even if you identify more with the negative traits, you don't have to stay there. Growth is always possible when we commit ourselves to it.

Philippians 1:6 **And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.**

The Heart of Leadership: Setting the Tone

As leaders, **we set the tone.** The health and transparency of the group often reflect the health and transparency of its leader. This is true in all areas of life—whether leading a Forever Free group, working a job, or simply living out your faith in public.

- **You Are Always Leading:**

- Your leadership starts long before the group begins.
 - *Example:* Greeting people warmly as they arrive sets a welcoming tone.
- People observe your behavior in the parking lot, the hallway, or during worship.
 - *Example:* Helping someone carry their materials or offering a smile to a newcomer shows kindness.
- Every action communicates something about who you are and, more importantly, who you represent—**Jesus**.
 - *Example:* Praying quietly before the group starts can demonstrate reliance on God.

- **Living with Integrity:**

- We can't drink alcohol at a restaurant and then claim to be a Forever Free leader.
 - *Example:* If someone sees you drinking, it could damage their trust in the program and God.
- We can't treat waitstaff rudely and expect others to believe we follow Christ.
 - *Example:* Thanking the server and leaving a generous tip reflects Christ's love.
- We can't refuse to share in our group and then expect vulnerability from others.
 - *Example:* Sharing your own struggles encourages others to open up.

Authenticity matters. We must practice what we preach.

Proverbs 4:23 Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

The Importance of Presence & Participation

As a Forever Free leader, you're not just leading when it's your week to facilitate—you're leading **every time** you walk through the doors.

- **Consistency is Key:**
 - Regular attendance shows commitment.
 - *Example:* Being there week after week helps build trust and accountability.
 - Engaging outside of your assigned group fosters community and trust.
 - *Example:* Attending worship or participating in events shows you're part of the larger community.
- **The “Un-Holy Huddle” Problem:**
 - When we only gather with the same people week after week, we unintentionally exclude newcomers.
 - *Example:* Always sitting with the same group can create cliques.
 - **Challenge:** Break the cycle.
 - Sit with someone new.
 - *Example:* Invite a first-time visitor to sit with you during worship.
 - Invite someone outside your usual circle into conversation.
 - *Example:* Introduce a newcomer to others in the group.

We must communicate that “**Every Soul Matters to God**”—and that starts with how we interact.

Romans 12:10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.

Know Your Group: Understanding Who You're Leading

To lead effectively, you need to know who's in your group.

- **Ask Yourself:**
 - Are they believers? Or non-believers?
 - *Example:* A non-believer may ask questions about faith that need thoughtful answers.
 - Are they new to recovery or seasoned veterans?
 - *Example:* A newcomer may need extra encouragement to share.
 - Are they court-mandated participants?

- *Example:* They may initially attend out of obligation but can find value through meaningful connection.
- Are they in leadership elsewhere in the church or community?
 - *Example:* Leaders may struggle with vulnerability and need encouragement to open up.

Tip: Meet people where they are.

- A non-believer may not understand surrendering to God to avoid relapse. Introduce them to **Jesus** first.
 - *Example:* Share your testimony about how Jesus transformed your life.
- A newcomer might need more encouragement to share openly.
 - *Example:* After group, tell them, "I really appreciated you being here tonight. We'd love to hear more from you next time."

1 Corinthians 9:22 When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some.

Encouraging Participation

Vulnerability is contagious, but it often needs a nudge.

- **If someone never shares:**
 - Approach them before or after the group.
 - *Example:* "Hey, I noticed you've been quiet. I'd love to hear from you next time if you're comfortable."
 - Encourage them to participate.
 - *Example:* Share how opening up helped you in your recovery journey.
 - Consider implementing a **"no pass" night** and give them a heads-up to prepare.
 - *Example:* "Next week, we're doing a no-pass night. I'd love for you to share something small, even if it's just how your week went."

Everyone has something of value to contribute. Sometimes, they just need permission and encouragement.

James 5:16 Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

Balancing Structure & Grace

Structure is vital in recovery, but so is grace.

- **Stick to the Format:**
 - Always read group expectations—even if everyone is familiar with them.
 - *Example:* "Let's go over our group guidelines before we start, just to make sure we're all on the same page."
 - Maintain consistent start and stop times to honor everyone's time.
 - *Example:* "We'll begin at 7:00 PM sharp and wrap up by 8:00 PM."
- **Extend Grace:**
 - Newcomers might not understand expectations—guide them gently.
 - *Example:* "Hey, just a heads-up, we try to avoid cross-talk during shares so everyone feels heard."
 - If someone is triggered or going through a rough patch, offer compassion.
 - *Example:* "It sounds like you're really struggling. Would you like to talk more after group?"
- **Address Issues Privately When Needed:**
 - If someone consistently disrupts or breaks expectations, have a one-on-one conversation.
 - *Example:* "I noticed you've been interrupting during shares. Can we talk about how we can make sure everyone feels heard?"
 - If multiple people are veering off course, address the group as a whole.
 - *Example:* "Let's remember to avoid cross-talk so everyone feels respected."

Colossians 3:13 **Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.**

Leading Beyond the Group: Newcomers Reception

Our responsibility doesn't end when the group concludes.

- **At the End of the Night:**
 - Announce the Newcomer's Reception.
 - *Example:* "If this is your first time here, we'd love to meet you at the guest center for a brief introduction."
 - Accompany any newcomers from your group to the guest center.
 - *Example:* "I'll walk with you over there—it's just around the corner."
 - If they have children, walk with them to pick up their kids first.
 - *Example:* "Let's grab your kids first, and then we'll head to the guest center."
 - Stay with them for a few minutes—introduce them to others and help them feel connected.

- *Example:* "This is Sarah—she's been part of Forever Free for a while now and can answer any questions you might have."

Remember: First impressions matter. Let's make sure every new person knows they belong.

Hebrews 13:2 Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!

Rebuilding Community

Even after several years, the pandemic has left many people socially isolated and anxious. Some have forgotten how to engage in meaningful conversation.

- **Challenge for Leaders:**
 - Step out of your comfort zone.
 - *Example:* Make the first move to introduce yourself to someone new.
 - Be intentional in connecting with others, even when it feels awkward.
 - *Example:* Ask open-ended questions like, "What brought you here tonight?"
 - Lead by example—smile, ask questions, and genuinely listen.
 - *Example:* Maintain eye contact and nod as they share to show you're engaged.

We are called to see others—not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

Final Thoughts: Leading with Purpose & Love

Being a Forever Free leader is not about perfection—it's about being real, being committed, and being willing to grow.

Galatians 6:9 So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.

Your leadership makes an eternal difference. Stay the course. Lead with love. Communicate value. And most importantly, point people to Jesus—the One who brings true freedom.

Let's pray: *(Close in prayer, asking for wisdom, strength, and compassion as leaders.*

Leading Share Groups & Communicating Value

Training Handout

1. Characteristics of a Good Leader

Positive Traits:

- Transparent & Authentic
- Compassionate & Approachable
- Consistent & Reliable
- Encouraging & Motivating
- Good Listener
- Keeps the Group Focused & On Track

Negative Traits:

- Inconsistent or Unreliable
- Unapproachable or Judgmental
- Self-Focused Instead of Group-Focused
- Avoids Difficult Conversations
- Lacks Transparency

Reflection:

- Which traits best describe you?
- What areas can you improve in?

2. Setting the Tone as a Leader

- Your behavior outside of the group matters as much as inside.
- You are always leading, whether you're on the schedule or not.
- Authenticity and integrity must be consistent in all areas of life.
- Engage with newcomers; don't just sit with the same people every week.

3. Knowing & Engaging Your Group Members

Questions to Ask Yourself About Your Group:

- Are they believers or non-believers?
- Are they new to recovery or experienced?

- Are they court-mandated participants?
- Are they leaders in other areas of life?

Encouraging Participation:

- Approach quiet members before or after group.
- Consider a "no pass" night and give advance notice.
- Reinforce that everyone's voice and experience matters.

4. Balancing Structure & Grace

- Always read group expectations to ensure consistency.
- Maintain start and stop times to honor time commitments.
- Extend grace when someone struggles or makes mistakes.
- Address issues privately when necessary.

5. Responsibilities Beyond the Group

Newcomer's Reception:

- Announce it at the close of each group.
- Accompany newcomers to the guest center.
- Walk with them if they need to pick up children first.
- Stay a few minutes, introduce them to others, and make them feel welcomed.

Rebuilding Community:

- Many people have anxiety about social interactions.
- Be intentional in making connections.
- Smile, ask questions, and genuinely listen.

Key Verse:

Galatians 6:9 So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.

Forever Free Group Leader Checklist

- ✓ Arrive early & be prepared
- ✓ Read & follow the group format
- ✓ Engage with newcomers
- ✓ Lead with authenticity & grace
- ✓ Encourage participation
- ✓ Keep the group on track
- ✓ Maintain structure & time boundaries
- ✓ Be a positive example outside of group
- ✓ Communicate the value of every person
- ✓ Stay connected to the mission: **Point people to Jesus**

Action Steps for Leaders

1. Identify one area where you can improve as a leader.
2. This week, sit with or engage someone outside your usual group.
3. Look for an opportunity to encourage a quieter group member.
4. Evaluate your consistency and integrity outside of group meetings.
5. Pray for wisdom and strength to lead effectively.

Final Thought:

Your leadership matters! Stay the course, lead with love, and always remember that **Every Soul Matters to God.**