



Buddhist Recovery Network

FAQ

Version 1.1 Dated November 21st, 2013

© 2013 Buddhist Recovery Network



Frequently Asked Questions

What does the Buddhist Recovery Network actually do?

The Buddhist Recovery Network supports the use of Buddhist teachings, traditions and practices to help people recover from the suffering caused by addictive behaviors.

Open to people of all backgrounds, and respectful of all recovery paths, the organisation promotes mindfulness and meditation, and is grounded in Buddhist principles of non-harming, compassion and interdependence.

It seeks to serve an international audience through teaching, training, treatment, research, publication, advocacy and community-building initiatives.

Which Buddhist school or tradition are you associated with?

The Buddhist Recovery Network respects and celebrates all of the Buddhist traditions.

How can Buddhism benefit those in recovery?

There are many ways Buddhist practices can strengthen and deepen sobriety and prevent relapse. Buddhist meditative practices can help us become more aware of, and let go of, habitual patterns of behavior. It is no coincidence that meditation is specifically referenced in the eleventh of AA's Twelve Steps. Vipassana meditation has been used successfully for the treatment of addictive behavior among prison populations in a number of countries. Buddhist practice can also help us become more aware of the impact of our actions on others, and help cultivate a stronger ethical foundation. The Buddhist influenced school of Naikan in Japan for example has been successful in helping those in recovery through a structured approach to self-reflection. Buddhism can help to provide a social support network for those in recovery through involvement with community Buddhist Centers. Buddhist artwork and writings can also heighten appreciation of values such as tranquillity, clarity, purity and simplicity. The Buddha pointed to clinging (the foundation of addiction) as the cause of suffering. His Eightfold Path is designed to free us from clinging, so it is a perfect vehicle for addicts to recover.

What did Dr. Bob and the early AA members think of Buddhism?

AA literature is filled with references to using any spiritual approach a person sees benefit in to aid in the journey of recovery. The very first AA group in Akron, Ohio, of which Dr. Bob was a member, published pamphlets in the 1940's which demonstrate how they thought to best use recovery principles and practices. They are called the *Akron Pamphlets*, and AA co-founder Dr. Bob himself was the editor. In the Akron Pamphlet called 'Spiritual Milestones in Alcoholics Anonymous', they describe a number of different ways of finding or interpreting 'God' or 'Higher Power'. They directly give their thoughts on Buddhism in this paragraph from that pamphlet:

“Consider the eight-part program laid down in Buddhism: Right view, right aim, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindedness and right contemplation. The Buddhist philosophy, as exemplified by these eight points, could be literally adopted by AA as a substitute for or addition to the Twelve Steps. Generosity, universal love and welfare of others rather than considerations of self are basic to Buddhism.”

The Akron Pamphlet quoted courtesy of [Akron Area Intergroup Council of Alcoholics Anonymous](#).

Are you presenting a different recovery path from AA or NA?

The Buddhist Recovery Network does not present itself as a separate recovery path in competition with other recovery paths. It seeks to explore and celebrate the vast ocean of inspiration that the Buddhist traditions can offer those in recovery. Buddhist practices may be pursued as an adjunct to other support people may be receiving.

Who are you ultimately trying to reach?

We are trying to reach an international audience of those who are in recovery, those seeking help in overcoming addictive behaviors, and those who are trying to help those in recovery. We have academics and researchers among our founding members as well as practitioners and Dharma teachers.

We seek to respond to a natural curiosity from those in recovery who intuitively see potential for Buddhism to enhance their recovery. We are not missionaries seeking to promote Buddhism as a religion.

In addition to this we hope to help those in the West understand the value of Buddhism in the recovery process and to help Asian Buddhists understand how to apply Buddhist teachings and practices to the treatment of addiction.

Do I need to be a 'Buddhist' to become involved in the Buddhist Recovery Network?

The Buddhist Recovery Network is open to people of all backgrounds. You do not need to identify as a 'Buddhist' to become involved. Some of the Network's organisers and Advisory Council members do not consider themselves to be Buddhists, but all possess an altruistic motivation to help people recovering from the suffering caused by addictive behaviors and a belief in the efficacy of certain Buddhist practices to assist in this process.

How can I get involved?

There are many ways such as:

- i. *Become a Member* - Establishing a membership base and building a community of supporters is vital for the Buddhist Recovery Network to flourish, and in turn to strongly promote the values and approaches it stands for within the wider community. You can easily become a Member online through our secure payment system. Please refer to our [Membership page](#) for more details.
- ii. *Make a Donation* - We are deeply appreciative of donations and bequests provided to the Network to support our work. You can easily donate online through our secure payment system. Please refer to our [Donating page](#) for more details and donate online.
- iii. *Volunteer* - we are looking for people who possess various skills. Please refer to our [Volunteering page](#) for more details and register your interest.
- iv. *Organise a Meeting* - set up a meeting for those in recovery in your local area and let us know about it. We will list these meetings on www.buddhistrecovery.org. Prior to listing we will seek certain reassurances to ensure we are comfortable with the format and approach. Meetings held in association with established teachers and Centers should experience no difficulty being listed.
- v. *Publicise* our website www.buddhistrecovery.org in your printed material and by cross-linking.

Please contact paul@buddhistrecovery.org if you are interested in any of these opportunities.