***How to start your own***

***WELLcome support group***

Personal growth and healing require **role models, encouragement, verbal outlets, education, acceptance/forgiveness,** and **support**. You can ramp all of these factors up in your own life by making all these experiences part of a WELLcome group that you can start yourself. You can find below some suggestions for putting a group together. Feel free, of course to modify or omit as many of these as you like, and add your own ideas to make this a group that you and those you invite will be comfortable coming to.

1. Pick one or two **times and places for the group**, explaining that those who want to come will decide where and when the group meets, through a **group text or group email**, and they can add suggestions of their own.
2. Thinking of what might attract the most people, and repel the least, describe what **refreshments** might be served.
3. List **which people** you want to invite.
4. Decide if there are any on this list you might want to approach as a **leader or coleader** for the group.
5. **Agenda and timeframe**: Decide on a timeframe to suggest for the meetings, usually 75–90 minutes. Outline how you think that time might best be spent. The most important part would be each person sharing how they have done since the last meeting in relation to the goals they have set. Perhaps those who wish can take turns opening the meeting by sharing five minutes of inspiring educational content that has blessed them, that they think would bless the group.
6. Propose some rules or **guidelines for the sharing**, that would keep the discussion comfortable and kind, yet honest. Some recommended guidelines are:
   1. Give **no advice** to others, unless it is asked for
   2. Keep your **sharing brief**, like 15–30 seconds ideally, and less than two or three minutes.
   3. **Don’t interrupt**, or talk over others when they are sharing.
   4. **What is said here stays here.**
7. Select a **chairperson or moderator** for the group, perhaps a rotating responsibility, to remind group members about these guidelines, and how best to share for the benefit of all concerned.
8. **Don’t confess juicy specifics in your behavior or other people’s** (your spouse or partner, your parents or children, your boss or coworkers, etc.). Leave out specifics like exactly where, when, who was there, etc. Just say the kinds of things you did and said, what you believe about it, what was in your heart at the time, and what remains in your heart now. E.g., *“I’ve been having some financial insecurity, and I made some foolish and selfish purchases, and then lied about them, covered them up. When my partner found out about them, I felt afraid and ashamed, and still do.”* If people don’t mention specific things they did, or words that were said, no one will need to worry about confidentiality in the group, and no one will be tempted to gossip, because what was confessed could’ve been done or experienced by anyone.
9. Try to use the terminology and dynamics of **WELL’s model and outline**, so people can remember it, and relate what’s being said to their own experience.