



The Freedom Steps

For lasting freedom from
cycles of compulsion, addiction
and obsession

And
towards a
thriving life.



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Freedom Step 1

We came to see that a part of us had been making us act out an addiction or compulsion, to relieve pain and discomfort in our lives.

We found that other parts of us were working hard trying to manage, control, or change our actions.

As a result of these parts of us in conflict, we haven't experienced enduring peace.

We now feel safe to open and receive help from outside and inside ourselves, to bring about positive change.



The first of the Freedom Steps points to the tender quality of 'being with' our experience. This quality of clear, kind seeing ourselves (and allowing others to see us) leads us to begin naturally and effortlessly relaxing.

We find ourselves opening to what's happening within ourselves. We find we feel safe and curious enough to clearly see how it is we have been experiencing ourselves, others, and our lives.



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Freedom Step 2

Came to experience a natural, gentle, aware energy within us, which is our Self. Our parts became aware of it too: both the part that tries to criticise or control us, and the part that acts out our compulsion.

Both parts reveal to us what their positive intentions for us have been, and both came to hear and understand the positive intention of the other.

Both parts come to see that the solution to this inner-conflict which causes our addictive process is greater than both of them: it is Us, our Self, not either of these conflicted parts, that can guide us to a sustainable place of feeling wholeness and inner harmony.



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Freedom Step 2 is the practice of creating space and time to get to know the parts of us that have been most in conflict and whose conflict has kept our cycle of addiction and compulsion spinning on round.

We begin experiencing ourselves as greater and calmer than the sum of these battling parts.

As we do, so these parts relax and share what their positive intentions for us have been. They also become willing to listen and take in the positive intentions of the parts they've been struggling and fighting against ...



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... As this happens, we begin to feel more connected, more whole, and more like our Selves.

Freedom Step 3



The part of us that does the compulsive action concedes that it hasn't ultimately been successful in stopping the feelings of pain, fear, shame and worthlessness inside us.

The part of us that criticises or tries to control the compulsive actions concedes that it hasn't ultimately been successful in stopping the actions from happening.

Both parts of us become willing to relax their need to have ultimate control over us. They enjoy more ease as they allow our Selves to receive the inner and outer support and guidance we need to take the next step in our journey of freedom.

In **Freedom Step 3**, we see that the part of us that does the compulsive act and the part of us that criticises or tries to control our actions may have had a lot of **dominance** inside us. But do they have **power**?

Here, we make a suggestion to the parts of us that have been battling over our addictive habit: We put to them that there is this energy that exists within us. We may call it our Selves/the Mother/Father God of our understanding/Higher/Lower/Deeper Power/Spirit of the Universe/Source energy....

However we name it, we take a leap of trust that this is a replenishable power our whole internal family of parts can access and receive. Through this new faith, we discover the start of a new path that will guide us to our freedom. This path opens up a new type of inner power. It is a power that remains outside our experience whenever one part of us tries to dominate all others within us.





In this Freedom Step 3 we discover to what extent our parts know and believe that we and they can access this inner power and energy of our Self.

They have the opportunity here to see that this power could aid them in serving us in a more effective, fun and effortless way, in connection and collaboration with the other parts in our system.

In Freedom Step 3, we find out whether our parts are interested in opening to and receiving this new type of power to guide us.

If all parts of us are on board with doing so, then we know we have taken the Step, and are ready to move on to...

Freedom Step 4



Now that our active addictive part and our controlling/criticising part have relaxed their conflict, we have the space to direct our awareness deeper within, to address the experiences and relationships in our lives which have been causing us suffering.

We are guided through a simple, step-by-step process of creating space to be with the parts of us that may have felt unseen and unheard by us in the past.

We draw on the courage, support and guidance inside and outside ourselves that we require in order to discover and direct our energy towards parts of ourselves that have been most needing our warmth, friendly attention, and care.

In Freedom Steps 1-3, we identified an inner-conflict between some strong and often dominant parts of ourselves. Now that this conflict has begun to soften through ours and others' kindness and curiosity towards it, we gain more peace and space inside.

We can put this newfound peace and space to good use: In Freedom Step 4 we focus the light of our awareness towards the parts of us which have remained beneath the surface of our awareness.

The distraction and drama caused by our inner-conflict over our addictive & compulsive behaviours have previously kept these parts hidden from our own inner Self discovery. We may have had only limited success before now in being able to fully get to know these inner angry, frightened or hurting parts of ourselves.



Freedom Step 4 is like mining for gold. Awareness and gentleness make steady ground discovering and getting to know the parts of us burdened by our past. We find parts holding onto anger, shame, and fear about how we've been treated in past relationships. We discover that these burdens still hold sway over our emotional lives.

These are the things that have been keeping our addictive compulsive behaviour active under the surface. There is now sufficient trust in Self and the outer support around us to make it possible for us to at last meet, witness and hold space for these parts in a sustained way.



Freedom Step 5



We share the thoughts, feelings and beliefs revealed in Freedom Step 4 with someone who has the Self energy available to listen to us from their heart. This person is free from the influence of their own judgmental or critical parts, and can thus accept us just as we are.

In the presence of this person's calm, curious and patient Self, we are able to get to know any hurt or angry parts of ourselves better, hear their stories, and feel what they've been carrying.

We discover that when we join our Self energy with that of another, our parts feel even safer, more relaxed, more relieved, and more fully understood.

In order to find wellness and freedom, parts of us need the space, time, and opportunity to tell their stories. In Freedom Step 4, we went through a process of witnessing these parts ourselves. Through the process of Freedom Step 4, our parts have begun to trust the capacity of our Self to witness and understand them.



In Freedom Step 5, we can deepen this experience of caring for our parts by allowing them the opportunity to trust another person with the secrets and shame that have weighed down our souls and kept us stuck in burdensome cycles of addiction and compulsion.



We need to feel our feelings fully in order to release the heavy effect of upsetting events that formed troubling memories in our bodies and minds.

Parts of us may well need to be witnessed in this, in order to know that it is safe to do so. Our parts need to know that we are not mad or sick or inferior to others, that we will not be judged or rejected for what we've done to others or what was done to us. In this Step, our parts come to know that what they think and feel makes sense in light of what they've experienced.



With the non-judgmental presence of another, we see that we can revisit past hurts without being overwhelmed by our emotions or going back into the isolation of our addictive cycle.

We need to share this Step with someone who can listen to us with curiosity, patience, and compassion. It can be uncomfortable to be witnessed as we share all that surfaced in Freedom Step 4, and perhaps more besides. It takes courage to trust another, especially for those of us who have been let down in the past.

We take this Step because we know that the fear and shame that have prevented intimacy in our lives will lessen as we dare to share our thoughts, memories, and feelings with someone connected to Self energy themselves.

It is when our parts are seen, heard, witnessed and accepted as they are that the burdens of fear and shame begin to be unloaded.



Freedom Step 6

Some of the parts we discovered in Freedom Steps 4 and 5 carry the burdens of wrong beliefs we took on about ourselves through our earlier life experiences.

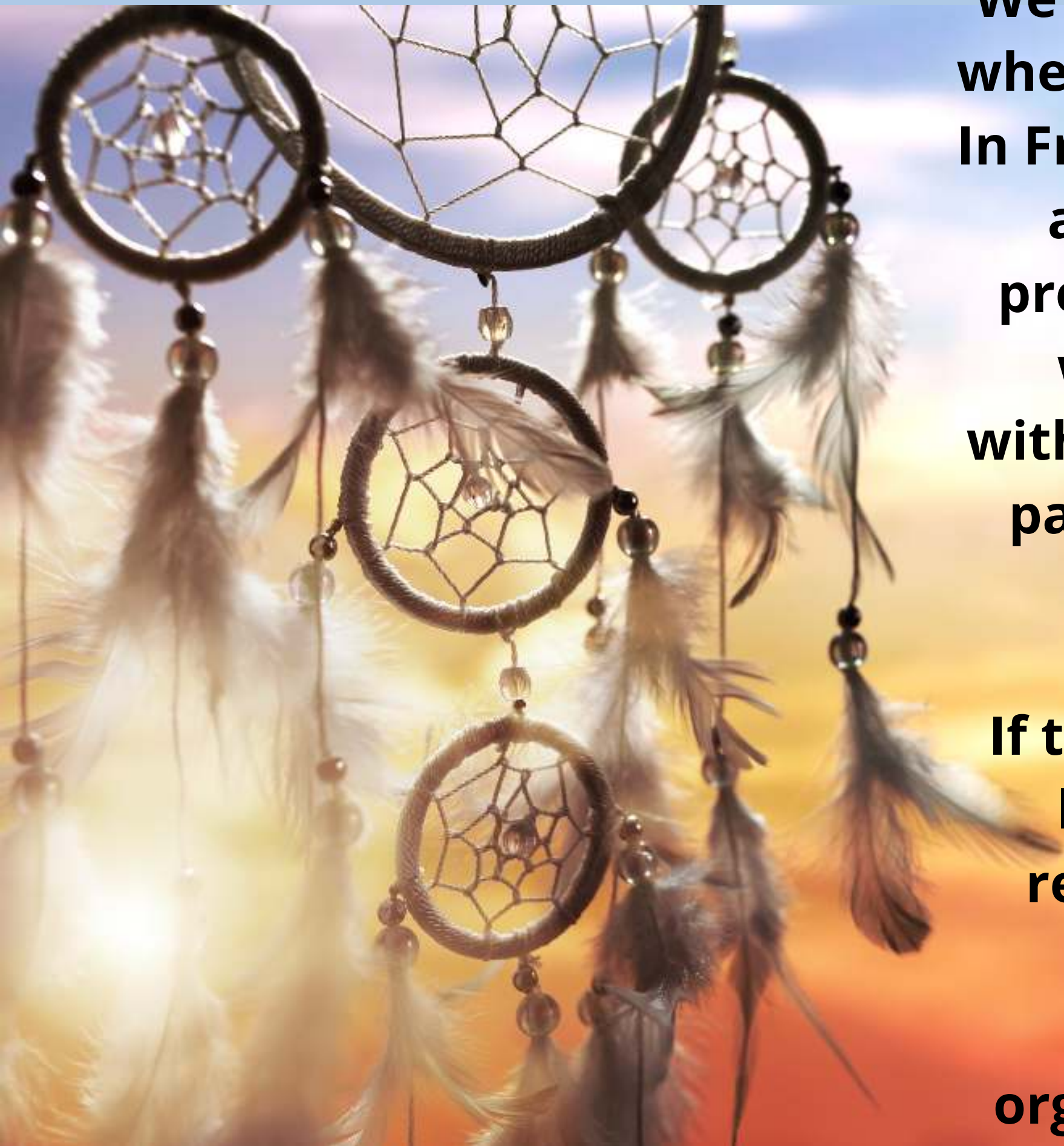
These parts now become ready for us to help them release these burdens.



In Freedom Steps 4 and 5 we embarked on a process of gently, steadily witnessing and connecting with the parts of us that are stuck at different points in our pasts. We learn of the burdened feelings and beliefs they have been harbouring about themselves, us, and others. We learn of the impact of moments in time when we didn't receive what we needed to feel safe to be ourselves.

Freedom Step 6 brings the opportunity to consider releasing these burdens now. Before doing so, we check inside: How do different parts of us feel about becoming ready to release these burdens now? Do they feel excited, hopeless, reluctant, anxious, joyful?





We can only be ready to release our past burdens when all parts of us are ready and willing to do so. In Freedom Step 6, we find out how parts of us feel about releasing the burdens revealed in the previous two Steps. How might life be different without the heavy weight of these burdens within? Freedom Step 6 allows the opportunity to pause and listen deeply to any doubts, fears or blocks our parts might be bringing.

If there is readiness from all parts to release the burdens but they don't know how to begin, reassure them that Freedom Step 7 will guide them. Meanwhile images, ideas or bodily sensations in Freedom Step 6 may arise organically to bring clues as to your own unique process of unburdening...

Freedom Step 7

Parts of us release their burdens entirely.

They then receive the qualities they need
for a joyful life going forward.



In Freedom Step 6, all parts of us become entirely ready to allow any burdens carried by our protective parts or our younger selves to be released.

This process of releasing burdens can take many forms; each part of us is unique in how this unburdening occurs. Some of our parts may release their burdens through our body: We may notice a visceral lightening, accompanied by shaking, movement, breath, or sound. When given time, space, curiosity, and patience, non-verbal parts know exactly what needs to happen through the body for burdens to be released.



Some parts of us may reveal the unburdening through certain images. You may find that offering your parts the option of harnessing nature's elements of air, wind, fire, earth, water or light can aid in the unburdening process. Parts will know intuitively which element/s to choose to support their burdens' release: to burn it, bury it in the ground, wash it away, have it float upwards, dissolved or sent to the light.



Afterwards, there is the opportunity for newly-unburdened parts to invite in new qualities to take its place. There may be positive qualities that got rejected, lost or forgotten back when the burden was taken in. Our parts will know what it is they want to reclaim; through releasing the burden, they are able to remember a time before becoming burdened, when they had access to those precious qualities within.

Once the part has experienced the nourishment of reclaimed qualities, it is important to check inside to ensure that all parts of us feel comfortable and agreeable to that which has occurred in Freedom Step 7. It's also important to check within regularly over the coming two weeks, to notice how the changes are being integrated and to listen to any new experiences or requests from within.



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Freedom Step 8



We find and connect with any parts of us that carry guilt or shame from past relationships. This may include any parts of us left believing we did harm to others, as well as those that feel we were simply not good enough as people. Often, strongly self-critical parts of us surface in this Step to give their opinions. We find ourselves able to listen to all parts' versions of events with curiosity and openness.

We distinguish between our guilt and our shame. Our guilt indicates our awareness of any negative consequences of our past actions. Shame is our belief that we are in some way inherently wrong or bad.

We help any parts of us burdened by shame to get free through the process of the Freedom Steps so far.

We explore whether guilt our parts carry might be released through making a connection with any of the people involved. We run the idea by all our parts, and seek support if needed from someone who understands this process, and can help us connect with qualities such as courage, confidence, and calm in making our decisions.



In this Step, we explore memories of our experiences in relationships with others. We warmly witness any parts of us that have been holding onto and weighed down by the sense that we have harmed other people, or that we have not been good enough. It can be a relief for the parts of us that have been holding onto these past troubles and hurts to tell their stories, and be met with our openness and understanding for how they feel.

Freedom Step 8 allows us a safe space to identify our shame. The burden of shame is a painful, even unbearable, one. It has been present at the heart of much of our addictive behaviour. It has driven our protective parts to find strategies to distract us from it, often using alcohol, food, or whatever has been the object of our compulsive desire. The distraction of our addictive cycle has felt easier to us than the discomfort of feeling the shame. Thus, unburdening from shame plays a major role in sustaining freedom from our addictive cycle in the long run.

Our parts have the opportunity in Freedom Step 8 and through the previous Freedom Steps to relax the contraction of any shame they carry. This occurs through witnessing our parts with unconditional acceptance and unburdening them of shame with the guidance and support of Freedom Steps 4 through 7.

The relaxing and releasing of shame enables us to identify a different inner-experience we may have: the appropriate feelings of guilt we carry for harms we may have caused others. In this Step, we explore the idea of approaching anyone we believe was negatively impacted by how we showed up back then.

We will know whether the idea of talking to such people is right for us through listening to our bodies, listening to all our parts, and seeking counsel from someone who can support us with this listening.

Freedom Step 9

We find that our parts feel safe, comfortable and connected to our Self-energy now.

Having taken Freedom Step 8, any contraction of shame we had about who we are has now softened and relaxed.

We feel ready to make contact with certain people in our lives in a spirit of reconciliation & courageous communication, which is speaking and listening from our hearts. before we meet with the other.

Any burdens we have been carrying in relation to another, through hurt or damaged relations, become lighter through this Step.



Through Freedom Steps 4 to 8, we released any burdens of shame we may have been carrying. We may now find ourselves feeling open and ready to approach someone in our life with whom we have suffered damaged relations in the near or distant past.



We understand that Freedom Step 9 is not an attempt to be unburdened by another person. We notice any parts of us that hope the other will grant us freedom from any shame still burdening us; we invite such parts to see us, and to trust us in this process. It is our own Self energy that frees us from false beliefs parts may have that we are anything but essentially good. The other person can only ever be a mirror for how we already feel about ourselves.

We find that there is a certain quality in the approach we make, the words we speak, and the way we listen to the other person in Freedom Step 9. We have found a way to connect and interact with the other person with calmness, confidence, and compassion. This is the natural and organic result of the grip of resentment relaxing and the shame, pain and fear we've been carrying finding release in the Freedom Steps so far.

It is healing for all people concerned and all their parts when we harness courage and clarity in Freedom Step 9. Our whole field of connectedness unburdens when we name what has been unnamed in a relationship, describe what we've been holding onto, and offer an apology for how parts trying to protect us have behaved in ways which hurt the other.

Although the purpose of this Step is not to seek unburdening for our own greater peace and freedom, we do find that, when we meet and serve others from Self in this way, this is the inevitable ultimate result.

Freedom


Step 10



We discover in ourselves a natural curiosity and desire to continue staying connected to the parts of ourselves we've begun to get to know in our journey of recovery so far. We take time each day to cultivate and maintain a relationship with the parts of ourselves that show up in awareness each moment, each day.

We may also find we continue to discover new parts of ourselves that we've not yet consciously met: parts who also need to experience the healing presence of our Self energy and that of others.

With this practice of staying in relationship with our internal world of different parts, we gradually experience a new way of life. We find that any reactions we have as we go about our lives can be used as gifts. Our negative responses to others, ourselves, and the events of our lives become guides that reveal to us the parts of ourselves that are most in need of our attention, curiosity and friendly, patient awareness.



Freedom Steps 1 through 9 have required our time, energy, and steady, consistent, action. We do well to take time now to look back over our journey so far with a sense of satisfaction and appreciation for maintaining this patient, focused attention to healing addictive cycles in our lives.

We are also wise to understand that no matter how deep and precious our healing experience so far may have been, our ongoing path of recovery may not always feel smooth and easy. Even after having profound moments of joy and relief at our newfound understanding and loving care for ourselves, there can be times of pain and challenge.

Through these challenges we are given opportunities to deepen our practice of kindly attention to our parts. This allows us to continue imperfectly experiencing a continued and growing freedom from the negative effect of addictive cycles in our lives.

It may be that we experienced a softening of previous protective strategies during the Freedom Steps so far. We may find that this leads to a newfound sensitivity in the face of life's challenges. From the desire to protect our vulnerability in what does not always feel like a kindly world, our parts may sometimes want to revert back to old protective habits in a renewed attempt to feel safe. This can include addictive or compulsive tendencies, as well as a wish to isolate from others and not share our feelings.

At such times, Freedom Step 10 guides us to create regular opportunities to connect with our inner resources and with the outer support system we've come to trust in. With time and practice of Freedom Step 10, we come to discover a rhythm of gentleness and self-respect in our lives, and a fuller awareness that even the strongest emotions and hardest times do eventually pass.

Freedom Step 11

We have come to see that to keep cultivating a connection between our Self and our parts in our lives and relationships is the most contented, liberated, and nourishing way to live.

In Freedom Step 11, we support this connection through quiet times going inside, being with people also practicing in this way, meditation, praying for guidance and with gratitude, journalling, creativity, journeying, pilgrimage, mindful movement, and any other spiritual practice that enlivens us and expands and deepens our inner-awareness.

We find that cultivating our connection with our Self energy in this way leads to a deep offering of our lives and decisions to this inner wisdom.

In this Step we continue getting to know our parts and, in so doing, we find the space and relaxation needed to allow this energy to nourish them and to guide us in our lives.



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Having journeyed through the previous Freedom Steps, we find ourselves well-placed to connect with and be guided by our intuition as to how we wish to practice Step 11. We give ourselves the freedom to experiment, explore, and find our own unique way.

We have reclaimed our spiritual authority, curiosity, and confidence. We know ourselves to be the only true experts of what nourishes and inspires us spiritually. Though we may find valuable support and guidance along our way, we no longer seek out 'experts' in our quest to enlarge our spiritual lives.

We have found a never-ending wellspring within of all the qualities needed to bring joy, hope, and wholeness to every part of our being. Our task in Freedom Step 11 is simply to create conditions for regular experiences of space, stillness, inspiration, support, and safety. This in turn allows hard-working parts of us to relax such that they and we experience the qualities of this infinite Source within and all around us.



Having awakened to the Source energy of Self within ourselves through the Freedom Steps, we find that the parts of us that acted out addictive behaviours have increasingly relaxed.

We open ourselves to opportunities to join in community with other people who have experienced the suffering of addictive and compulsive cycles, and to share our understanding and acceptance with them.

In order to remain connected to our Self energy, we practice being a channel for its infinite qualities in relationships with others, as well as staying in relationship with the different parts of ourselves. We find opportunities to share that which we have discovered is in infinite supply within. As we share the fruits of our recovery with others also in need of the changes these Steps bring, our peace and joy grows through our contribution.

The best way of serving others is to reflect to them our knowledge that they are neither broken nor defective, but have access to an infinite source of love within that can never be damaged. We discover that it nourishes both ourselves and others when we carry the message of hope and possibility for unburdening parts still trapped in the past, still carrying pain and shame. We share our knowledge that this is the route to true and lasting freedom from addiction.

Freedom Step 12



Freedom Step 12 reveals that continued contribution through serving others in our lives and communities, and through our work and projects that benefit the world, is the way to serenity and happiness that lasts.

In this Step we discover through experience how to balance serving our own needs with those of others.

When we experience this dynamic balance *we know it*, because our life 'flows'.

When our survival needs for food, water, fresh air, exercise, and money to pay for essentials is taken care of, and when we are nourished in our own spiritual lives through Freedom Steps 10 and 11, we have created a platform upon which we can allow our access to Self energy to benefit those around us.



**When we are nourished in our lives, the quality of our contribution increases.
We find we are able to behave appropriately in a wide variety of circumstances and
face challenges where once we may have withdrawn or acted-on-impulse.**

**We are of course human and therefore delightfully imperfect.
In Freedom Step 12, we now have the courage and calm to engage imperfectly with
this crazy, wonderful, wounded world and offer it our much-needed gifts we
discover within, as our intuition guides us.**





In summary, the
Freedom Steps
guides a path to
lasting healing
from
all addictive and
compulsive
cycles.



To find out more
about taking the
Freedom Steps with
Naomi's one-to-one
support and
guidance, go here.



Find out how to
apply the Freedom
Steps for healing
in the area of Food
and Body-Image



here.

Not sure of the best
next step for **you** in
your journey of
healing from addictive
or compulsive cycles
in your life? Reach out
and connect with me



here.



I can wholeheartedly recommend working with Naomi. I have felt deeply listened to and supported throughout the programs I have attended and feel more self-accepting and self-compassionate as a result.

Becky Lewis, Kendal, Cumbria, England



Thanks so much Naomi ... Just wanted to share how heard I felt and how important it is to be me to be hand-led back to listening to my inner child that has been so frightened ... I'm finding with the wonderful connections I have from the group program and from individual sessions that I'm being reminded again... to take time for resting and to connect with and listen to my parts ... reassure them that I want to hear them.... there is less shame and beating myself up now - just go do what I need to do and continue with less drama and more gentleness and love for myself...

Well wishes to all on their journeys!

Malasula Peace, Brighton, England

The Freedom Steps have set me free from years of accumulated shame and isolation. I finally feel like I belong in this world.

Charlie, West Chester, USA.

“Naomi’s teachings have opened the door to a transformational shift in my relationship with my body. She effectively and gently communicates a way to a deeply self-accepting relationship with all of the parts of my mind, including those that have used food consumption as a substitute for the deeper and more authentic care within I had been lacking. As my body image shame slips away, my increased awareness of feelings and sensations in my body now provides me with invaluable intuitive guidance as I continue my healing journey through all the previously distressed parts of my mind and being. I can truly say that I no longer feel the need to hide from myself. This is not just theoretical. This is actual experience. I am not the same. I have changed.”

Molly Derr, USA



"I would highly recommend Naomi for anyone struggling with an eating disorder or addiction. Naomi weaves together her background in somatic breath-and-movement-based psychotherapy, her own grounding in 12 Step recovery, and her skill as an IFS therapist to create programs, facilitate groups and support individuals to find freedom from addictive cycles. I value what Naomi contributes to the IFS community and I enjoy our ongoing connection as therapists specialising in the area of addiction recovery."

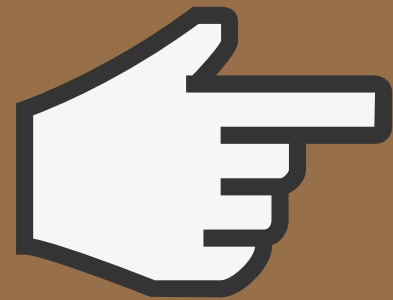


Mary Krüger, MS, LMFT, AAMFT supervisor and IFS Lead Trainer. She is founder of Rimmon Pond Counseling, LLC; an IFS based group practice located in the New Haven, Ct. USA. She also offers private therapy, consultations and workshops nationally and internationally.

“[Naomi Nygaard’s Freedom Steps] is a version of the Twelve Steps that I fully endorse.”

– Dr. Richard Schwartz, creator of the Internal Family Systems model.

Richard Schwartz, the founder and creator of Internal Family Systems (IFS), and Naomi's own guide and mentor over her many years developing this program, endorses the Freedom Steps Program and methods



[here.](#)



For more information about IFS, go [here.](#)

