

Inner Wisdom:

We honor the right of all people to draw ideas, support and guidance from whatever practices, beliefs and sources they choose. Thus, in our groups we respect everyone's way of defining inner wisdom for themselves.

Vital Cycles welcomes many different beliefs regarding religion and spirituality as a key part of the foundation of the program. Thus, Vital Cycles credits each individual with the personal autonomy to define their inner wisdom and recognizes the inherent wisdom in all people regardless of their belief structure. To that end, Vital Cycles members neither proselytize our own beliefs nor attack the beliefs of others. All belief structures are equal.

In our process of healing from the effects of trauma, it may be necessary for some of us to share in a way that speaks to current or past belief structures. Such sharing supports a healing process so long as it neither promotes nor attacks the specific belief structures of each other. Vital Cycles strives for tolerance of belief structures that may be at variances. We ask that members be gently aware of the potential for variances in the group and strive to respect not only their own beliefs but the beliefs of others.

Example 1: Fernanda has recently found a rich and supportive religious community that has embraced her and has given her a venue for community involvement. She shares at a Vital Cycles group about the importance of that community to her, the value of feeling part of the group and the value of finding and enhancing her understanding of her personal theology. However, in her sharing, she avoids “promoting” that new community to others in the group.

Example 2: Bill is an atheist, a considered position developed after years of theological exploration. He shares, from time to time, about the rigidity of the theological beliefs with which he is raised, but in his sharing, avoids attacking the beliefs of others.

Example 3: Pedro has become a fervent member of a well-defined religious community. He has started to speak with Vital Cycles members at break about the possibility of their attending his new religious community. In addition, in his sharing, he invites other members to join him, and presses the opportunity upon them. After considered discussion, the Vital Cycles group discusses with Pedro the nature of the violation of boundaries and asks him to cease proselytizing.

Example 4: Sara found great strength in the religious beliefs that she was trained in her youth, and continues to find them a bulwark of strength. As she reflects upon the concepts of Inner Wisdom, she realizes that she has routinely discounted the beliefs of others in her group, in an unconscious desire to maintain her loyalty to one of the few positive attributes of her childhood history. As she focuses on this insight, she determines to be less judgmental of others in the group.

Example 5: Aiko was raised in what he came to believe was a restrictive religious environment in his childhood. He began to speak about his perceptions at his Vital Cycles group, but was careful to phrase his commentary about his childhood religion in the first-person singular, so that he would not offend others in the group who might have different belief structures. He found that focusing on the “first-person singular” actually facilitated his own clarity of thought and insight.