

Kalyana Mitta Group Committee Report

Kalyana Mitta (KM) is a Pali term which means “spiritual friend.”

OBJECTIVES

The Kalyana Mitta (KM) Group Committee goals were to determine:

- What differentiates a KM group from groups such as group sits, introductory classes, support groups, and social groups?
- Who is interested in attending a KM group, hosting and/or facilitating a KM group, and when are they available to meet?

WHAT IS A KM GROUP?

The KM Group Committee determined that the following distinguishes a KM group from other types of groups, although there is some overlap with other types of groups:

- A typical meeting starts with short meditation (.5 minutes), check in (15⁺ minutes depending on the size of the group), a tea break (15 minutes), discussion time (1 hour+), and a closing meditation (5 minutes)
- Consists of 5-10 members who *might* meet for 2 hours, twice a month (up to the members)
- Meetings are peer led, although a teacher may be invited to speak
- Topics and study materials involve some aspect of dharma and practice and will vary and evolve out of the group's interests (could include articles, podcasts, videos, a book to read together, meditative nature walks, any number of possibilities)
- Unlike a study group, the KM group is focused more on participation by everyone on topics of interest and how to integrate dharma with our daily lives
- Includes time for sharing tea and getting to know one another

THE KM GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

The KM group committee developed and distributed a questionnaire to that included the following information:

- Who is interested in attending a KM group?
- Meeting time: On what days and times can people meet?
- Hosting: Who is interested in hosting a KM group in their home?
- Facilitation: Who is interested in facilitating or working with a co-facilitator for a KM group?
- Comments and suggestions about KM groups
- Personal information (allergies, unable to climb stairs, etc.)

Based on interests and schedules of the people who responded to the questionnaire, we came up with three potential KM groups. Sign-up sheets are available for each group. The members of each group will determine the start date, and other details.

(draft) Summary of our Spiritual Friends Committee:

We met on 8/5 from 6-7:30 and had a very productive meeting.

I'm including Dominique and Lany in this email. We hope to see you both at our next meeting on **Monday 8/12 5-6:30pm at Liz's house.**

In attendance were Jacqueline (chair person), Liz, Leslie, Karina, and Gayle.

We started off brainstorming on what is a Kalyanamitta group? (KM for short)

The basic information provided by Basia's committee was very helpful. We discussed many different types of groups, including book clubs, introductory classes, support groups, special interest groups, and social groups. The following is how we distinguished a KM group from other types of groups (although there is some overlap)

The type of KM group we are interested in offering:

- Peer led
- Topic oriented (some aspect of dharma and practice)
- Study group that is discussion based
- Time for sharing tea and community building
- Topics and study materials will vary and evolve out of the group's interests (could include articles, dharma podcasts, a book to read together, any number of possibilities.

We decided the ideal amount of meetings would be 2x/month or every other week, with possible one day per month off. The group could decide what days and times work best. If there is a large turn out, it could become two groups (e.g., an evening group and a weekend group.)

This type of KM group is different from a study group that delves deeply into one Buddhist text over many months. It is focused more on participation by everyone on topics of interest and how to integrate dharma with our daily practice. There will be no teacher or leader, unless we decide to occasionally invite someone to present something to the group.

I hope this captures the essence of what we talked about. Please feel free to add to this. The purpose of our next meeting next Monday 8/12 is to finalize a report of our committee's work to present at a September Sangha meeting. Also, to discuss how to go about starting our KM group and offering it to the sangha.

I look forward to working and getting to know all of you.

Metta,

Gayle