

Confidentiality Statement for Authentic Spiritual Conversations

We want us all to be comfortable in this group and to trust that if we choose to talk about personal or intimate things, these will not be shared with others outside of the group. We will all certainly want to share our experiences in this group with people outside the group, and we can do this respectfully by focusing on our own experience. We can honor each other by not sharing names, locations, or specific details about the content of what others have said with people outside of the group. So, for instance, we could say something like this, “Wow. I went to a meeting and there was a person talking about conflicts at a church and it made me realize that my frustration with my religious group has stemmed from my own judgmental thinking about them...”

There are two additional forms of confidentiality that we would like to include. We request that we do not discuss the content of other people’s sharing even with current or former members of the group. This kind of confidentiality keeps us out of the murky waters of gossip. Further, we request that we be cautious and respectful about the personal content of someone’s sharing even with the same person. While it may seem caring to ask someone about their health or relationship issue that they shared about, it can also occur to the person as invasive to bring it up outside of the context of the meeting. If the person mentions it first in a conversation, then we can feel more assured that the person is comfortable talking about the topic with us at that time. Another respectful approach would be to ask permission first. For instance we might say, “I have some experience with the health issue you brought up and I wonder if you would feel comfortable talking about it with me some more.”

