

MOTION TO THE RDG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

To Officially Endorse the Reordered Inquiries as the Recommended Default for New Participants

April 2026 • Submitted by members of the RD Community • Add your signature at sign.rd.rocks

Dear Global Sangha and Recovery Dharma Global Board of Directors,

On page 1 of the Recovery Dharma Inquiry Workbook, the very first inquiry asks newcomers to do this:

Make a list of and think about the things you've done that caused harm to people in your addiction — without minimizing or exaggerating.

For most newcomers, this question arrives before self-compassion has had time to take root — while they're still finding their footing in early recovery. A 2020 survey of 211 RD members¹ found that about 7 in 10 carry a mental-health diagnosis — most commonly depression or anxiety. Both make people more vulnerable to having trauma activated. One member stated: "I tried to participate in an inquiry circle based on the original [1st] question and dropped out after the first meeting." The book itself flags the risk: *"The questions may bring up shame, guilt, or sadness; or, for some, they may potentially activate trauma."*²

We totally get it — the book was rushed to publication. The published inquiries didn't have time to be tested or piloted for feedback. Even the authors hadn't completed them. There was no Trauma-Informed Committee to approve each question. The team did their best with what time they had — we're lucky to have the book at all. But over the past 7 years, steady feedback has shown the published inquiries are unnecessarily shame-inducing and trauma-activating. And understandably, we simply haven't prioritized these concerns at the global level.

And we've watched the consequences cascade. When members can't get through the inquiries, it isn't just one member missing out on personal recovery. The whole sangha loses mentors — in a young program already short on them. The book is explicit: members can become mentors only once they've done *"significant work on their inquiries."*³ **For this motion, we'll take "significant work" to mean having completed all 12 sections of inquiry — a reasonable, even generous, interpretation.** By that standard, the 2020 survey suggests no more than 3 in 10 members qualify — and the real number is certainly lower, since the survey only tells us who *engaged with* the deepest sections, not who finished them.

Meeting after meeting, newcomers ask, “How do I find a mentor?” — and few in those rooms can answer. It isn’t a recruitment problem. It’s structural. The published inquiries exacerbate mentor scarcity by the program’s own rule: to mentor you must complete the inquiries, yet there aren’t enough mentors to help you complete them.

I’ve completed the inquiries 25+ times and co-facilitated 25+ Inquiry Circles. The pattern is consistent. With the published inquiries, members hit a wall at the very first question — overwhelm, shame, activation. When we switched to the **Reordered Inquiries**, the wall disappeared. People built momentum. They finished. A 2026 Trauma-Informed Inquiry Clinical White Paper finds the same: the 1st Noble Truth and Wise Intention/Amends sections carry the **highest** trauma-activation risk in the inquiry set, and Wise Understanding the **lowest** — recommended as the entry point.⁴

RD peer-reviewed research points the same way. A 2023 study of RD members⁵ (n=209) looked at what most strongly predicted long-term recovery progress. The biggest factor was **feeling supported by other members** — peer support ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < .001$). The second-biggest was **how often** someone meditated, not **how long** ($\beta = 0.26$ for frequency; duration had no effect). Regular structured engagement matters more than intensity. Inquiries are RD’s deepest structured engagement — and the published sequence interrupts it on page 1.

A 2024 study of RD members found that the strongest predictor of positive recovery outcomes was **emotion regulation** — the ability to handle difficult feelings without being overwhelmed. It mattered more than mindfulness, time in recovery, or demographics.⁶ The most striking case study in peer recovery research is NA in Iran, documented by Galanter, White & Hunter (2019).⁷ Iran NA began in conditions almost identical to ours: brand-new, with almost no experienced mentors.

The biggest thing they changed? They made **completing inquiry-work** (stepwork) the milestone their community celebrates. And they retired daycounting. The result: NA in Iran today has **~22,000 meetings — nearly as many as the entire USA, with about a quarter the population** — making it the fastest-growing NA fellowship in the world. To me, that isn’t just a statistic. That’s real people, just like us, who got their lives back and were restored to their communities — all because a program prioritized what really matters in recovery. When a community organizes itself around the work of self-inquiry, the program doesn’t just deepen personal recovery. The sangha and fellowship blossoms, in depth and in numbers.

One great thing about this motion: **the solution already exists** and is known within some sanghas. The **Reordered Inquiries** (Eugene, OR Sangha)⁸ start with Wise Understanding —

the gentlest section — and approach the heavier harm-inventory questions only after a stronger foundation is cultivated. They're paced into 20 intentionally bite-sized weekly sessions, so people don't burn out from too many questions at once, and the hardest sections are given more time to work through. They include an optional 60-second somatic grounding tip before each section. They've been time-tested, refined with community feedback, but as of yet, have spread only by word of mouth.

Surprisingly, **the Reordered Inquiries are already on recoverydharma.org** — but buried on page 2 of Menu > About > News, where almost no one finds them. The official Inquiry resources page at <http://recoverydharma.org/resources/inquiry> would be the ideal place to feature them, so members can find them as easily as the published inquiries.

The Dharma is a wheel, not a straight line. Recovery is the same. Neither truly begins in any one place. To keep the inquiries in their current order — heaviest question first — is to choose convenience over compassion, reluctance over recovery, and choose what is easy rather than what is right. The Reordered Inquiries are how we turn the wheel. Let's turn it.

THE MOTION

(1) We move that Recovery Dharma Global officially endorse the Reordered Inquiries (with grounding exercises) as the **recommended default sequence** for new participants, and that this endorsement be communicated through RDG's newsletter and any future publications of RD literature.

(2) We move that the Reordered Inquiries be added as the featured resource on the official Inquiry page at recoverydharma.org/resources/inquiry/. It should be as simple to find as the published inquiries are.

(3) We move that the orphaned Inquiry page is added back to **Menu > Resources > Inquiry**

No new committee is required. No book update is needed. All the work is done, well-tested, and community-loved. Simply empower members to complete their inquiries and empower others more.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to our global community.

With kindness, compassion, appreciation, and joy,
The undersigned:

#	Name	Sanghas / Service	Briefly describing their experience	Inquiry Circle Participant ?	Signed
1	Thomas T	Founder of Inquiry Circles • Founder of RD.Rocks • Former VP, Recovery Dharma Global • RD South Bay	The Reordered Inquiries are pretty genius— the third week in is a lightly reworded Wise ‘Self’-Speech, aimed to help us investigate our inner self-talk, helping us develop self-compassion to get through the rest of it.	Y	4/30/2026
2	Michael L	Founder RD Belmont	Mixing up the order is helpful. Feeling like one has permission to do so is helpful. Having a re-ordered list of questions, helps support the mutual development of the different branches of the path.	Y	5/1/2026 9:55:36
3	Tessa L	RD South Bay • Facilitator	I tried to participate in an inquiry circle based on the original question and dropped out after the first meeting. We didn't have enough trust as a group to fully explore this question in depth on the first meeting. I'm now in a circle based on the reordered inquiries and we are going strong. The difference is real.	Y Y	5/1/2026 12:27:13
4	Armeen G	RD South Bay • Facilitator	My experience working the reordered inquiries has been inviting, helpful, and transformative. Coming from a 12-step program, it was a shock to me to see that the regular 1st inquiry in the book jumped to what is essentially an inventory - a daunting task for anyone. Reordering, the RD inquiries is a huge help to newcomers and old-timers alike to make sure that they are supported through the process and are not overwhelmed at any point. I fully support this motion.		5/1/2026 12:25:25

5	Stephon L	RD LA • RD Summit Videographer	I did the 12 steps several times and did the inquiries in Refuge Recovery which were very overwhelming, and my reaction was relapse many of the times. I did the Reordered Inquiries and felt safer, more self-compassion. I highly recommend the Reordered Inquiries.	Y	5/1/2026 13:34:29
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6	Chambers D	RD South Bay • Tech Person	I am really enjoying as we progress through the reordered inquiries.	Y	5/1/20 26 9:41:30
7	Juan T	RD South Bay • Facilitator		Y	5/1/20 26 12:44:29
8	Khoa N	RD South Bay • Facilitator		Y	5/1/2026 12:23:29
9	Jon S	RD South Bay • Facilitator		Y	5/1/2026 12:46:28
10	Andrew S	RD South Bay		Y	5/1/2026 14:15:29

References

Community-submitted as dana/service to Recovery Dharma groups worldwide.

1. LaBelle O. (2020). *Recovery Dharma 2020 Demographics Survey* (n=211). Positive Psychology, Recovery & Relationships Lab, University of Windsor. <http://demographics.rd.rocks>.↵
2. Recovery Dharma Global. (2023). *Recovery Dharma* (2nd ed.). <http://recoverydharma.org/book>.↵
3. Recovery Dharma Global. (2023). *Recovery Dharma* (2nd ed.). <http://recoverydharma.org/book>.↵
4. Tran, A. Thomas & RD.Rocks Community. (2026). *Trauma-Informed Inquiry in Recovery Dharma: A Clinical White Paper*. <http://osf.io/ekuw7/>.↵
5. LaBelle O, Hastings M, Vest N, Meeks M, Lucier K. (2023). Mindfulness, meditation, and peer support in recovery capital among RD members. *J Subst Use Addict Treat*. PMC9992926. <http://labelle2023.rd.rocks>.↵
6. Wang V, Stone BM, Vest N, LaBelle OP. (2024). Emotion regulation predicts recovery capital beyond mindfulness in Recovery Dharma. PMC11643395. <http://wang2024.rd.rocks>.↵

7. Galanter M, White WL, Hunter BD. (2019). Cross-cultural applicability of the 12-step model: NA in the USA and Iran. *J Addict Med.* 13(6):493–499. <http://iran.rd.rocks>.↵
8. Eugene, OR Sangha. (2025). *Reordered Inquiries* (with and without grounding exercises). recoverydharma.org/commlib3 & recoverydharma.org/reordered-inquiries-without-grounding-exercises. Latest version @ <http://reordered.rd.rocks>.↵