

I Propose We Work Together To Develop a Meeting Plan / Curriculum For Local Groups

Post by “Elayne” of December 12, 2018 at 4:08 PM

My first attempt at a local Meetup is scheduled for Jan 20. I have 10 people signed up so far for the group, most of whom I know, and 5 coming to the first meeting, at a local coffee shop. Two are family members whom I know will come, and based on past experience with meetup, 1-2 of the others will come.

In advance of the meeting, I am messaging with the members I haven't met personally, so they understand what we will be doing.

In the first meeting, I plan to give a basic overview and invite attendees to talk about why they joined and what they would most enjoy doing to learn about and practice EP together. How often they think they could meet, where, etc. Because there is so much misunderstanding and controversy out there, I am going to right off the bat tell them that I am taking the position described here, and why-- because I have no interest in belonging to a group of stoic types and agree personally with the principles as described here. If someone wants to start a different group for the other, they can do it. I'm going to tell them how EP is different from the other philosophies-- why it isn't stoicism, humanism, buddhism. I'm going to tell them that although I'm new at EP, I've actually been practicing my own version of it for long enough to be certain it is the best way to live-- but that because I have not read as much as experts have, we will also be learning together. I do think I have a pretty good intuitive sense of when something is veering off in the stoic/ platonic/ buddhist/ etc weeds-- it will sound wrong. But I will also come here and double check. I never mind saying "I don't know but I will see if I can find out", and I will use that phrase liberally!

The materials I would like to use for that first meeting are the summary handouts from this site, the comparison with stoics, and the full cup.

The longest running, most successful reading group I belonged to met weekly for about 3 hrs. The first 1.5 hrs were discussion about a short section of reading-- 50 pages or so. And then we went to a different location for the social part and to eat. Having those two parts be in different locations really helped us stay on track for the first segment, because we knew we would get a chance to talk about whatever subject we wanted to bring up afterwards. It helped us become more bonded as friends. We had game nights every so often as well. The main coordinator moved away, and unfortunately the rest of us did not pick up the slack. I was working 80-90 hrs a week at that time-- never again!

So my proposal to them is that we will take 45 min to 1 hr to discuss particular topics, which will involve some reading in advance but not necessarily using one book from start to finish. I

obtained permission from the publisher to copy DeWitt and lend one section at a time to members who are not able to purchase their own copies. And then have time for just socializing, getting to know each other better.

I had initially thought to start with the [Principal Doctrines](#), singly or in small groups. But now I am thinking it is better to start with the Canon. So the second meeting would be 15 min or so on the basics of the Canon, for which I would like to read some of what you have written here, if that is ok. Then some discussion in the group on their reactions and if they have had life experiences which relate to the topic. The second meeting on Physics. The third on Ethics. By then I think we will have some idea how the group is going to do-- how deeply they want to go. I have looked at the topics for the Sydney meetup and that will be very helpful. It would be awesome if at some point we all read DeWitt together. Also would be great to do our own philosophy outlines and share them with each other. Or we can just circle back then and spend time on elements of the Canon in depth over several meetings, Physics, Ethics.

As we get new members, I think I will need to meet with them separately first, to give the beginning handouts and some overview.

In general, I want the group to learn together, to relate the principles to our lives in the present and discuss how we are practicing EP/ support each other in that practice, and to have pleasure while doing so. I am doing this because it matters in my life-- it affects what and how I decide to do things. So it always needs to stay attached to what we are each doing day to day.

This site is incredibly helpful, and I hope it is ok to print the handouts/ articles and read appropriate sections out loud. Until I have educated myself more fully on the subject, I feel it is wiser to use material from people who know it better. Maybe one day I will have something to contribute! I'll encourage them to join this site too.

Thoughts?