

## The Profound Treasury Retreat West Study Group – by Jeff Fuller

During the 2019 Profound Treasury West Retreat in Crestone, Colorado, a number of participants expressed an interest in starting an online study group to provide continuity and connection between retreats. Our first online gathering took place in October of 2019; as of this writing (May of 2024), we're still going strong. In the following write-up I will do my best to share what we've learned along the way. The only prerequisite for our group is having attended a Profound Treasury Colorado retreat. We have found this to be very helpful in terms of building and sustaining a sense of community over the years.

### 1. The host

I volunteered to take on the role of study group host because I have the time, energy, and interest, as well as basic organizational and computer skills. I also have access to a paid Zoom account. (Members of the study group now chip in to cover the yearly cost of our Zoom "Pro" subscription – about \$160/year. The free "Basic" Zoom subscription is limited to 40-minute meetings.)

The basic role of the host is to:

- serve as the point person for email communications
- open and close the Zoom room at the assigned time
- oversee the selection of:
  - **content** (e.g., what books/chapters to focus on)
  - **frequency** (our group meets the first and third Thursday of the month)
  - **time slot** (we meet from 5:00-6:00pm Mountain time)
    - our Zoom room opens at 4:50 for those who want to connect before the meeting
    - at 5:05 we bow in; we then have a 5-minute sit until 5:10
    - we bow out at 6:00
    - the Zoom room stays open until 6:30 for anyone who would like to visit
  - **style** of the group (we do "slow reading" — someone volunteers to read one or two paragraphs of a text out loud, which we then discuss)
  - **prerequisites** (e.g., are participants encouraged/expected to read the material before hand?)

In addition to the above, the host may choose to:

- record each session for those who weren't able to attend
- send out email reminders a few days in advance of each meeting, which may include:
  - the material to be covered in the upcoming session
  - the link to the Zoom recording of the previous session
  - handouts related to the material being studied

### 2. The facilitator

The host may also serve as the discussion facilitator. This role can also be assigned to one of the participants, or it can rotate between participants. In our group we also ask for a volunteer to keep an eye out for anyone who has raised a hand but hasn't yet been called on by the facilitator.

The basic role of the facilitator is to:

- select volunteers to read
  - call on those who have raised their hands to speak
  - keep the discussion moving along, but without rushing
  - encourage the participation of everyone
  - create a welcoming space for all points of view
- It's fine for the facilitator to join (and occasionally spark) the conversation, but it's important that the facilitator not assume the role of expert. Keeping a beginner's mind is the most helpful attitude.