



Say What You Mean: 12-week Online Course

Buddy FAQ

It's common to have questions about the buddy relationship and partner practice. We hope this short FAQ will help answer some of the most common questions that arise.

Does my buddy need to be taking the course?

Yes. The partner practices are specific communication training exercises. We anticipate that you will get the most out of them, and they will go the most smoothly, if you do them with someone else taking the course.

How do I find a buddy?

There are two ways to find a buddy. You can find someone else by posting in the group forum, or if you prefer that we match you up with someone, use our "Find a Buddy" form. Links below:

- Join Forum then navigate to the "Find a Buddy" post: <https://bit.ly/joinforum-21>
- Use our "Find a Buddy" form here: <https://forms.gle/4K1uLF7iDmDR4ocLA>

Should I buddy with my spouse/partner?

It's up to you, but the general encouragement is to choose a buddy that is NOT your spouse, partner, or a close family member. There is less charge and history with someone you don't know, so it tends to be easier to work on issues related to close relationships without the other person getting stimulated or reactive. That said, if you already have very good communication and conflict resolution skills in your primary relationship, and are NOT looking to work on that relationship in the course, it can work to have your spouse/significant other as a buddy!

Do I need to meet with my buddy in person?

No. It's totally fine to do the exercises remotely. We recommend using a video chat if you are able: Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, WhatsApp, etc.

What is the expected time commitment per week for buddies?

We recommend a minimum of half an hour per practice session with your buddy. Some exercises towards the middle of the course may require up to 45 minutes.

Does my buddy need to have the same experience level as I do?

This is really up to you. Some people prefer to practice someone who is at a similar skill level (be it beginning, intermediate or more advanced), while others enjoy sharing and learning across skill levels. If you have a preference, just indicate that when you post for a buddy.

What about other preferences I have for my buddy?

It's helpful to feel relaxed and at ease with your buddy, and sometimes sharing certain life experiences is important or supportive of this. If it's important to you to partner with someone of the same race, gender, sexual identity, class, education background, or any other characteristics, please include that in your post.

Can I have two buddies?

Absolutely! If you have the time and energy, and would like the extra practice, you are welcome to have two or even three buddies in the course.

What do I talk about / do when I meet with my buddy?

All of the instructions are provided in the weekly practice assignment. Please download the handout and review these prior to meeting with your buddy.

What should I do if I have a conflict or argument with my buddy?

First, you don't have to become best friends with your practice partner. While some people do develop a meaningful friendship, it's not necessary to do the exercises, learn, or benefit from the relationship. It also doesn't have to be the "perfect fit."

It's also common to have disagreements or conflict at times with your buddy, or to get into an argument over something related to the assignment. If this happens, we encourage you both to take a step back and do some reflection on your own. Use the tools you are learning to get clear about what matters to you, and to try to get curious about what matters to your buddy. Do your best to give them the benefit of the doubt and empathize with their feelings and needs. If you're willing and able, try to use the tools to discuss what happened and work things out. Take turns listening to each other, reflecting back what you hear and *really* trying to understand one another. It's an invaluable opportunity to put the tools into practice! Of course, if things don't work out, you are always welcome to part ways and try to find another buddy in the forum.