



Wisdom Years Weekend Frequently Asked Questions Participants

1. Who attends the Wisdom Years Weekend?

This weekend is attended by men who are at least 50 years old and from all backgrounds regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, or economic status. The ages of the men who attend typically range from the early 50's into the 70's. There is no maximum age.

2. Why do men attend this weekend?

Men attend this weekend for all different reasons. Some men attend this weekend because they want to explore and decide how they can live the second half of their adult lives with greater meaning. Others want to change something in their life, but they don't know where or how to start. Some men have done previous personal growth experiences and want to try something new. Some men want to connect with other men in order to feel less isolated. Others want to learn how to better communicate with their loved ones. Each man comes with a different story.

3. What happens on the Wisdom Years Weekend?

All activities occur in the context of a group of between 20-26 men, consisting of up to 18 participants and 8 staff. This weekend incorporates communication exercises, journaling, and discussions.

4. What are the advantages of participating in the Wisdom Years Weekend?

Exploring important issues as part of a group deepens the experience. Men are particularly susceptible to isolating themselves and embracing the belief that "I am the only one who is experiencing this." This weekend provides the validation and healing that comes from the realization that one's concerns and stories are shared and accepted by others. Helping and supporting other men is empowering, providing for personal growth.

5. Is this weekend safe for Gay and Trans men?

Yes. In every program, Victories welcomes and celebrates all who identify as men across the whole spectrum of sexuality.

6. Is financial assistance and/or payment plans available to attend the weekend?

Victories does not want financial obstacles to stand in the way of a man who is ready and willing to do a weekend. We invite men to ask for the assistance they need. Financial assistance and payment plans are available. Interested participants should contact the Victories Office for more information.

7. Is it normal to feel nervous before attending a weekend?

You are going off to meet a group of strangers and to talk about your life and your feelings. For many, this is not a "normal" way to spend the weekend. Apprehension is a normal and healthy response to the unknown. Over the weekend, men access their own inner strength in a safe place, under the guidance of other men, and with the powerful support of new friends. By Sunday, men often feel very different emotions - accomplishment, confidence, and hope.

8. How will I know if I am ready to attend this weekend?

Men are ready for this weekend when they decide to make an important change in their lives and/or desire to accelerate their personal growth.

9. Will I be pushed into sharing what I don't want to?

We encourage all men to participate fully in the weekend, which includes sharing your own life experiences and emotions. Your participation in any of our processes is voluntary, and we will always respect your decision about participation without undue pressure or shame.

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10. Is this therapy?

No.

11. I am in a 12 step program. Is this weekend right for me?

Victories does not offer professional psychological or psychiatric services or addiction counseling, nor are its programs specifically designed to address the issue of addiction. This weekend is not appropriate for men who are working to manage active addiction. However, men who are in a 12 step program and/or consistently working with a therapist or counselor will find the weekend to be an additional space of compassion and support.

12. What about confidentiality?

All men attending the weekend — participants and staff — are asked to sign a confidentiality agreement stating that they will not disclose the statements or experiences of another man.

13. Who staffs the weekend?

Each leadership team is composed of two senior leaders and six other staff. Everyone on the team has attended our weekend programs and received training in the group processes. Men are chosen for leadership based on their own personal growth, integrity, compassion, and commitment.

14. What is the weekend schedule?

We ask the men to arrive by 5:30 PM on Friday so that they can be checked into their rooms. The program begins at 6:30 PM shortly before dinner. Friday and Saturday's formal activities end by midnight. Sunday's program concludes after lunch at approximately 2:30 PM. We allow enough time in the evening for a good night's sleep.

15. Are accommodations and meals included?

Accommodations are in shared (2 men per room) or private rooms, but private rooms cannot be guaranteed. Electricity is available for men who need to bring CPAP machines. Bedding and towels are provided. Dress is very casual. All meals and snacks from dinner Friday to lunch Sunday are provided, and meals are taken communally. Dietary needs can be accommodated if communicated to the Victories office in advance.

16. Are there any rules or expectations that I should know about?

We believe that the weekend experience is enhanced when men take a break from the cares of the everyday world and focus on themselves.

- Upon arrival, men are asked to put away their watches, cell phones, and other communication devices for the entire weekend, unless there is an emergency or health concern.
- To keep men focusing on themselves, we ask them not to talk about their jobs, politics, religion, or sports.
- Smoking is not allowed indoors, and alcohol and other intoxicants are prohibited on the weekend.
- For the emotional and physical safety of weekend staff and participants, all items that might be considered weapons (guns, pocket knives, etc.) are not permitted on the weekend or on the grounds.

17. What happens after the weekend?

One way to continue the work of the weekend is to join the Personal Growth Group. Victories will provide trained facilitators for the first six months to help start the group. There is an additional \$150 fee to participate in the group.

18. Does Victories require men to subscribe to any particular set of beliefs? Does it have a religious component or affiliation? Victories is a secular organization and has no religious component or affiliation. We welcome men of all religious, spiritual, and secular persuasions.