

Way of Mastery Forums

Help Manual for Beginners

Welcome to the Way of Mastery forum, home to our online ashram, online courses and meeting space for event participants...

This help guide has been put together to assist those who are less familiar with the internet, using internet browsers, and our forums in particular. We have included information to assist you with the overall usage of the forum and explanations about accessing commonly used forum features. Please note that not all features of the forums are covered as this is intended as a beginner's guide only.

For online help while using the forums, please visit the **"Help Forum"** and leave a message so our webmaster can see it and attempt to assist you.

Topic 1 – Recommended Software:

- Please try and keep your internet browser software up-to-date with the latest version available.
- Regarding Internet Explorer, Microsoft tends not to release full versions of the latest of its browser for download, though it does release updates and patches for the version you have running on your computer. This means that people using pre-WinXP Windows versions, for example, may find it hard to update their Internet Explorer to the current available version. Fortunately, there are alternative browsers that are available for free download:
 - o For Windows and Mac OSX users, Firefox is an excellent browser and our first choice: <http://www.getfirefox.com>
 - o Unfortunately, Firefox is not available for Macs running pre-OSX operating systems. Internet Explorer is, however: <http://www.microsoft.com>
 - o Also, Opera is available for both Mac and Windows users for all operating systems: <http://www.opera.com>
 - o Another choice for pre-OSX Mac users is iCab: <http://www.icab.de>

Our recommendation is only download an alternative browser if you are having difficulties with your current browser, and only then after you have checked that your problems are not caused by other factors such as cookies being blocked (see next section)

Topic 2 - Cookies, Firewalls and Anti-virus Programs

The forum software we use "remembers" who you are and your settings for your forum usage by use of what are called "**cookies**". "Cookies" are small files saved onto your computer by your browser while you surf the internet that hold information that pertains to the sites you have visited. For example, when you visit the Way of Mastery Forums and log in, the bulletin board requests your browser to save a small string of text in a file that identifies you for the time of

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your visit, so that the bulletin board can remember who you are and allow you to do the things that registered members can.

However, if the cookie is blocked in some way, you may be able to log in, but you could almost immediately be logged out automatically by the forums as your logon information is not being retained, and you will be blocked from posting to the forums just like all unregistered visitors.

Using antivirus or firewall software that is blocking web information like cookies can have this affect; you may have some settings that have tightened your internet security but may also be preventing the forum's cookies from being passed between the website and your browser. This behavior has also been noticed amongst users of AOL's branded browser using its default settings, for example. Browsers in libraries and internet cafes may also have cookie management protocols in place that can affect proper forum functioning.

If you have adjusted your antivirus or firewall settings and are still having problems, we strongly suggest that you download a second browser to your computer (if you haven't already) and install that onto your computer to use for the online ashram. Being a freshly installed browser it should have no embedded problems.

Hundreds of people use the forums successfully without a problem, and we have found in most cases people experiencing problems find that downloading a second, up-to-date browser fixes things immediately.

Finally, Way of Mastery is not responsible for the condition and management of the computer(s) you use to access the internet and hence the forums.

Topic 3 – Entering the forums

Once registered, the Way of Mastery Team will manually provide you with access to the appropriate forum. Then you can visit forum, access the teachings and materials included here, read posts from other members and join in the conversation yourself.

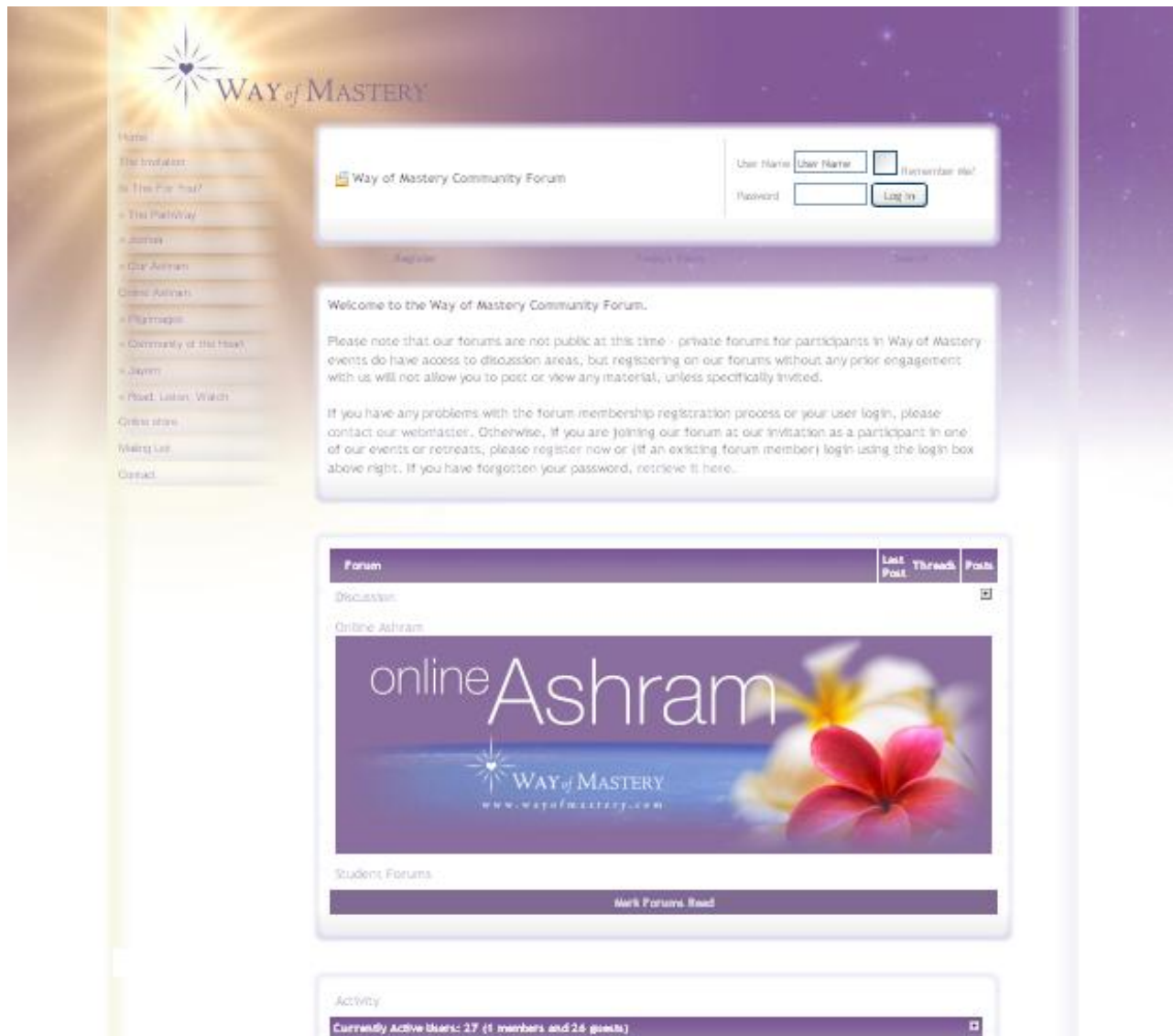
If you cannot view a forum that you were expecting to see when you entered it may be because you have not advised the Way of Mastery Administration team that your registration is complete (as would be the case for Palpable Forgiveness participants), or perhaps that we are waiting for confirmation of payment (as may be the case for Level 1 on-line ashram).

If this problem persists and cannot see a forum you have enrolled into please email admin@wayofmastery.com to advise your access is restricted and request entrance.

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Topic 4 – What you will see

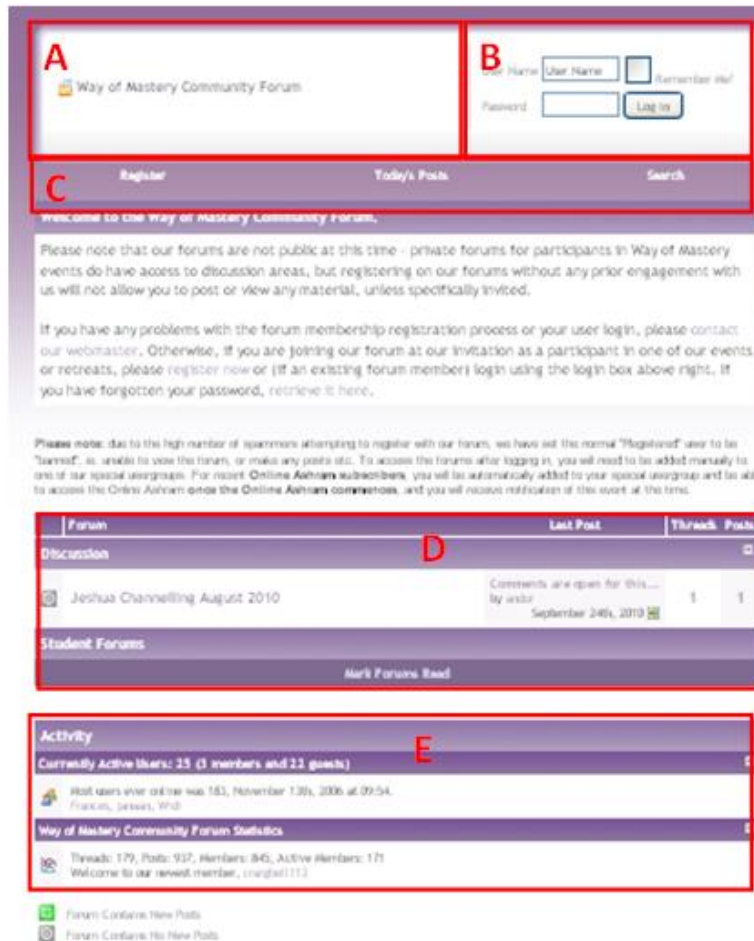
Once the forum's index page (main page) loads, you will be able to see the forum home page an example image or 'screen shot' is below. Please note the content of the forums is always being updated by forum members, forums can move or change title, and even the whole appearance of the forums can shift every now and then:



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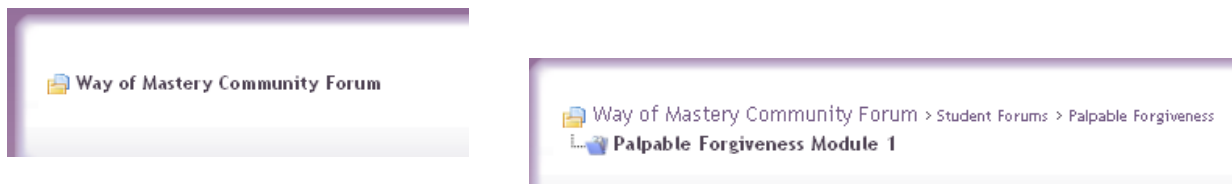
Topic 5 - Main Component of the forum

While the content and appearance of the forum can change slightly over time, the following components will always be visible:



A. Forum “breadcrumb” navigation section

This section updates itself automatically showing you where you are in the forums. In the first screen shot below we are at the entry point for the forum, in the second screen shot we have entered the Palpable Forgiveness Module 1 forum, located within the student forum:



You will use this tool allot to navigate around the forum. Click on any of the levels within this breadcrumb navigation to return to that location, just like windows explorer.

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B. Members login section

This is where you login to the forums. The first screen shot shows the login view. The second screen shot shows the view once a member has been logged in.

If working on your own computer at home you can set the forums to “remember” you so that you are logged in automatically when you return to the forum pages.



Also please note once logged in the forum displays other information that may be of interest to you (number of private messages, and last time that you logged in).

C. Options bar

Useful links for forum users. Also, please note that the options change once you are logged into the forum. These links are discussed more fully in a later section of this manual.

Before Login:



After you have logged in:

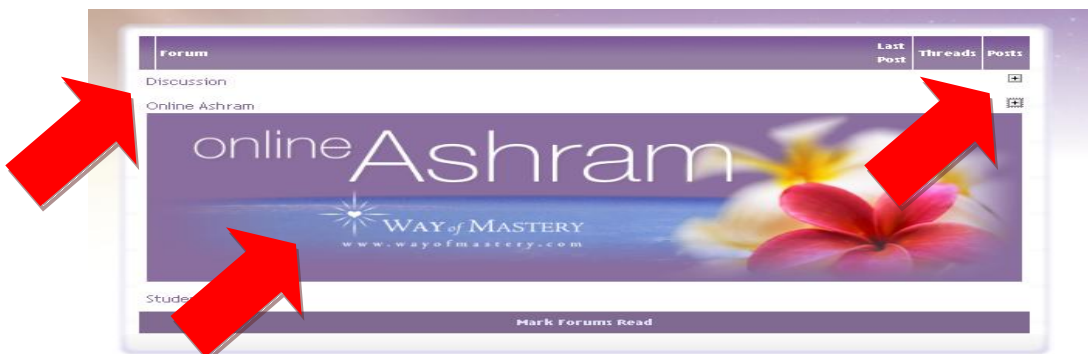


D. Activity Section

Shows different statistics a list of users currently on the forums, and other useful information.

E. Forums

These are the lists of currently available forums. Many of the Way of Mastery forums are private locations for specific guests, and as such when you are logged in you will be able to see **only** the forums you have access to.



To open the forum and view posts, click in one of the 3 locations

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Note that the top of the forums, showing the breadcrumb navigation section, the user login section and the options bar are always visible.

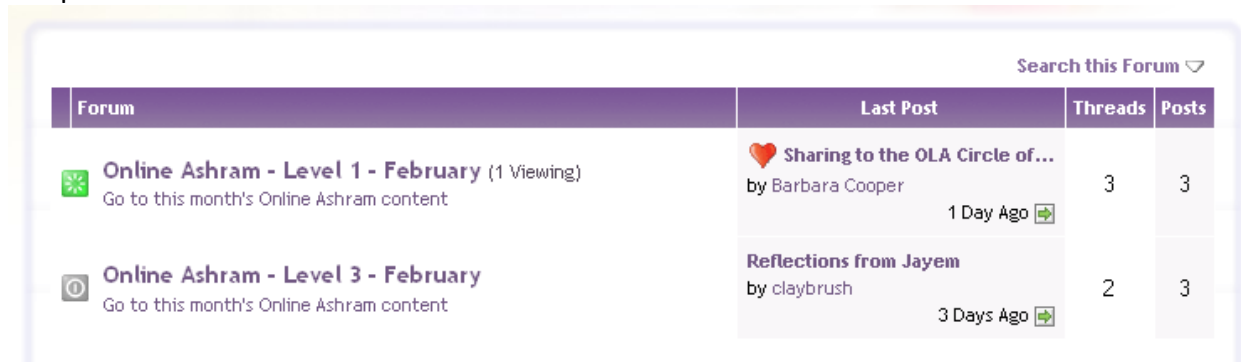
What is a Forum?

Forums work much the same as folders on your computer, like containers, except instead of files they contain messages left by a multitude of users, constructing conversations much like people do when they are talking together. Separate forums are created for different topics, to help separate discussions about certain subjects. Sometimes, when subjects are closely aligned, a sub-forum within a forum is created to keep the two slightly different topics close together.






For example the on-line ashram is one forum, however each month's teachings and communications are located under sub forums. Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 are each sub forums.

Forums are created and managed by the forum administrators (the Way of Mastery Admin Team), and cannot be created by forum members, though suggestions by forum members have resulted in new forums being created in the past.

When you first arrive at the forums you are able to see a list of forum names and brief descriptions of their content: this is called **"forum" view level**. There are also columns showing the latest post and its thread from within each forum, as well as counts of how many threads and posts there are within each forum. The forum view looks like this:



The screenshot shows a forum view with a search bar and a table. The table has four columns: Forum, Last Post, Threads, and Posts. There are two rows of forum data.

| Forum | Last Post | Threads | Posts |
|---|--|---------|-------|
|  Online Ashram - Level 1 - February (1 Viewing) Go to this month's Online Ashram content |  Sharing to the OLA Circle of... by Barbara Cooper 1 Day Ago  | 3 | 3 |
|  Online Ashram - Level 3 - February Go to this month's Online Ashram content | Reflections from Jayem by claybrush 3 Days Ago  | 2 | 3 |

Threads and Replies

Threads and **Replies** are the messages left by forum members. Threads are simply chains of posts, like threads of conversation. Any forum member can **create a new thread**, which really means that you are adding first message or post, which can then have replies added to it, like a chain. Threads can go on as long as people enjoy discussing one topic.

When you are viewing the forum from **"Thread / Thread starter" level**, threads are displayed by the subject of the first post and the user's name who created that post (once again, a column shows the last post made to each thread, with a shortcut, as well as columns showing

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the number of replies or posts are in each thread, and how many times these threads have been looked at.

Generally, it is good forum protocol to not split a thread by starting a separate conversation **within** the thread - it is much better to create a new thread for the new conversation topic elsewhere. Creating a concise and clear subject for the first post made in a thread is a good skill to develop, as this will help other members see what the conversation is all about and attract them to spend time visiting your thread and reading what is going on.

The **Thread / Thread Starter** view looks like this:

The screenshot shows a forum interface with a 'New thread' button at the top left. Below it are 'Forum Tools' and 'Search this Forum' dropdown menus. The main content is a table of threads:

| | Thread / Thread Starter | Rating | Last Post | Replies | Views |
|--|--|--------|--------------------------------|---------|-------|
| | + Reflections from Jayem Jayem | | 3 Days Ago by Jayem | 0 | 87 |
| | + Welcome Letter and the first Darshan Jayem | | 6 Days Ago by Jayem | 0 | 258 |
| | + Sharing to the OLA Circle of Friends of the Heart. Barbara Cooper | | 1 Day Ago by Barbara Cooper | 0 | 63 |

At the bottom, there is another 'New thread' button.

“Post” view level is when you can read the actual messages people have left within a single thread, and you can post a reply to the message here. The “Post” view level looks like this:

The screenshot shows a forum post in 'Post' view level. At the top left is a 'Reply' button. Below it are 'View First Unread', 'Thread Tools', 'Search this Thread', 'Rate Thread', and 'Display Modes' dropdown menus. The post header shows '9 Minutes Ago' and '#1' with a red '9' icon. The user's name 'Sandy' is displayed with a profile picture. To the right, the user's profile information is shown: 'Join Date: May 2005', 'Location: Gold Coast, Australia', and 'Posts: 3'. Below the name is the text 'Posting a message to the forum'. The main content of the post is 'The content of the message appears here...'. At the bottom right, there is a 'Reply' button with a pencil icon, and at the bottom left, there is another 'Reply' button.

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Navigating the Forums

Navigating around the forums is quite straightforward - to enter into a forum or a thread, simply click on its name. To get back out, either use your browser's Back button, or use the "breadcrumb" navigation at the top left of each page. Which looks like this:

Why is it called "breadcrumb" navigation?

In some fairy tales, lost children have been able to find their way home by leaving behind trails of breadcrumbs. Every time you take a step forward in the forums, a link is added to the chain of links, which show where you are, and every level you have descended through to get to your current position. Clicking on any of these links will take you back to that level, so while the "Back" button of your browser is useful, the breadcrumb navigation can act as a shortcut when you want to go back more than one step.

When at the top level of the forums, the breadcrumb navigation appears thus, with the name "Way of Mastery Community Forum". When in one of the lower levels, it displays the 'pathway' taken to access this location, as in the example below we are in the student forums, within Palpable Forgiveness, Palpable Forgiveness Module 1 and looking specifically at a thread titled "Posting a message to the forum":



While clicking your "browser back button" would take you back one level or step, so that we were in then Palpable Forgiveness Module 1 forum. Clicking the breadcrumb navigation allows you to select the specific level that you would like to visit. For example if you wanted to go directly to the student forums you would click that link.

If for example you were in this location, and wanted to visit the on-line ashram. You will note that the on-line ashram is not included within this list. This means that the 'pathway' you walked down to get here was not through the on-line ashram. Therefore you must return to the Way of Mastery Community Forum level and enter from there.

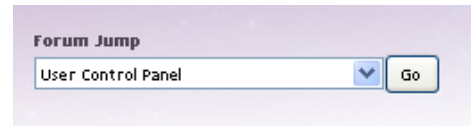
A couple more little navigation tips:

When you are looking at the post view level, you can click the "**Previous Thread / Next Thread**" buttons at the bottom of the page to navigate through threads one by one in order that they appear on the forum.

✧ [Previous Thread](#) | [Next Thread](#) ✧

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At the bottom of some screens within the forum there is an option called a “forum jump” click on the drop down arrow will reveal a list of all forum locations you are able to visit. Selecting one will take you directly to that forum location.



Important: Time Outs

When creating threads or replying to messages on the forums, please keep in mind that there is a limit to the time you will be able to work on your message.

The forum has what is called a “timeout”, which means that once it has detected that you have logged in, it sets a timer and gives you **25 minutes** to do something before it considers you gone and closes down the connection. However, the forum resets the 25 minute timer every time you ask it to do something for you - even visiting another page will reset the timer. As long as you have sent a request to the forum, it will keep your connection open.

Problems can occur, however, when forum members are replying to posts on the forums, or creating new threads, especially when their reply is lengthy. When people are composing their replies on the forums, they aren’t actually being active and resetting their clocks, as all the text is being typed into a window on their browser in their local computer - nothing is sent to the forum until “Post Reply” is clicked (or similar).

If you are working on an long reply (or you are a slow typist!) and you think it will take you longer than 25 minutes to write your message, we highly recommend that you first type your response on your local computer in a Word document, or if you don't have Word or something similar there is always some basic form of text document program included with computers.

With Windows you will find under "Accessories" in the program list Notepad, which is a really basic text program for just creating notes or there is also Wordpad, which permits basic text formatting. On Macs Simpletext can be used, or just a plain Scrapbook entry.

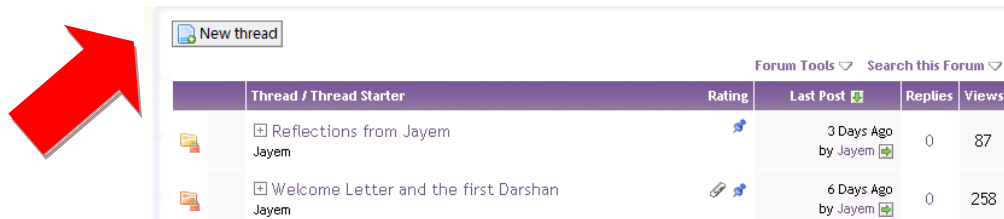
By preparing your long responses or posts in these programs on your own computer, or anything else that can store text, and then copying and pasting your finished result to the forum reply window removes the risk of losing your work when working on a reply.

An alternative solution to the timeout dilemma when working with long replies is to simply submit your reply or thread, even if it is not finished, and then edit it from there and add new text as you go, saving every 5 minutes. This ensures that your work is saved at the forums, and nothing can be lost. Previewing your post has a similar result, except your work is not saved at the forum until you finally submit it, so if your browser or computer crashes, or your internet connection goes down, while you are still haven’t submitted your work, you will lose everything most likely.

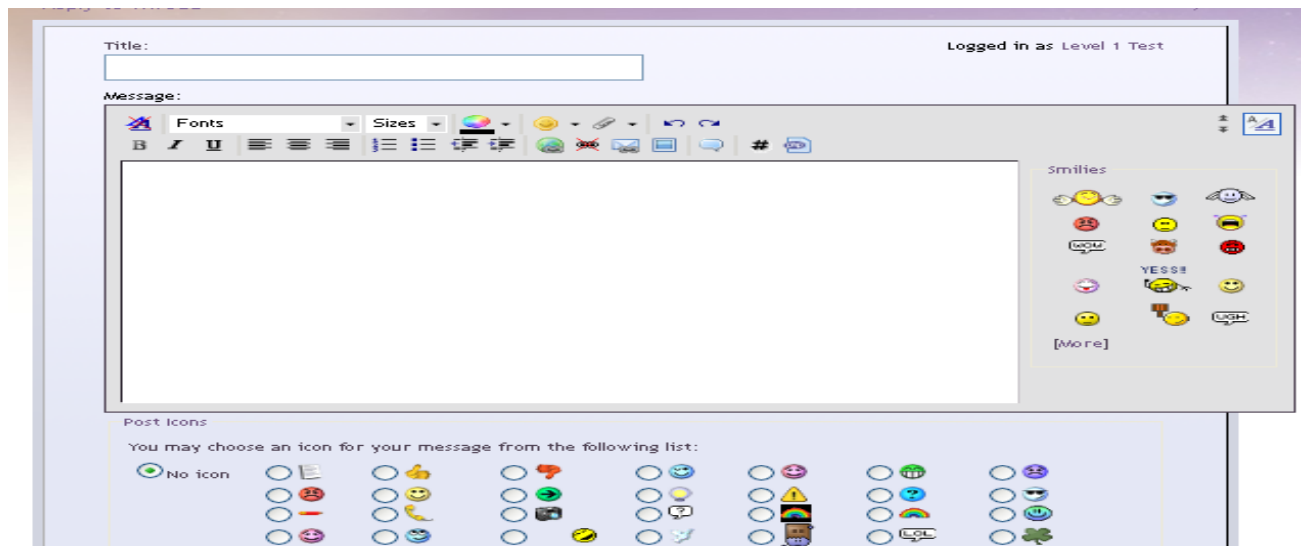
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Creating a New Thread

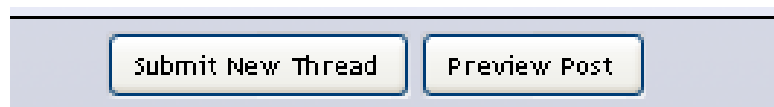
To create a new thread, you need to be at the **Thread /Thread Starter** view level within any forum. Along with being able to see any other threads if they exist, at the top and bottom of the list of threads will be visible the **new thread button**:



Click on this and you will be taken to the Post New Thread screen where you are able to type in a subject, and then the body text for your first post. Note that you can use the interface to format your text, and also add smilies (small icons) if you want.



At the bottom of the Post New Thread window are two buttons, Submit New Thread and Preview Post. The first will add your new thread without any delay, while the second one allows you to preview the post before saving it to the forums.



Replying to an Existing Thread

This is much the same as **Creating a New Thread** above, except that this time you need to be at the post-view level, and there, once again at the top and bottom of the series of posts, you will see a two **reply buttons** which will once again take you to the message editing screen:



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However, for replying to existing posts in a thread, you also have a **Quick Reply** option, at the bottom of the list of posts:

Views: 6

Reply

Quick Reply

Message:

Please click one of the Quick Reply icons in the posts above to activate Quick Reply.

Options

Quote message in reply?

Post Quick Reply Go Advanced

Step 1

Step 2

You need to click on the pencil icon (step 1) shown above to activate the message box. Type your message in here then click **“post quick reply”** to post or publish it (step 2). Quick replying does not require a title for your post, so if you prefer quick and easy messages, this is the best way to go for you.

More on the options bar

As we have covered basic forum navigation, posting and usage, we will now briefly cover the **options bar**.

As mentioned before, this options bar is one of the things that is viewable constantly at the top of the forum. However, the options are different before and after log in.

Before Login:



1. **Register** – For those who are not registered members to create a forum user name and password.
2. **Today's Posts** – Because the forums are closed locations, clicking on this icon only provides those posts which are for public viewing.
3. **Search** – For searching for a specific post, however, again only those that are set as public viewing, which does not include any of the information from the closed forum locations.

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After you have logged in:



1. **User CP** – (Or User Control Panel) In this section you can update your profile, add a profile photo, change your email address and password and much more. Simply click on the name to open the **User CP**.

Basically, this section covers all the options of your own particular forum experience. It is almost like a separate sub-section of the forum that is just about you and your settings.

You are able to edit your profile, upload a picture to your profile. Edit your avatar photo – which is the photo displayed each time you post a message. Edit your signature – the message displayed at the bottom of each of your posts. Change your email address, password and a series of other options.

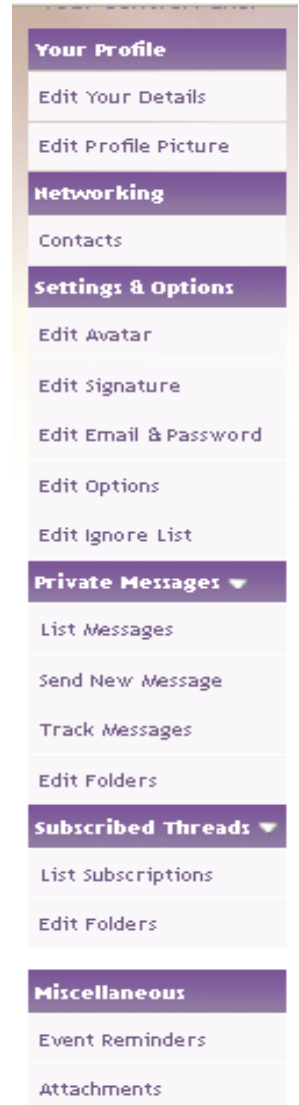
Probably the most important of all the things is private messages.

Click on either one of the links below Private Messages on the left or click on the Private Messages title to go to your In box and Sent Message box. The private message section operates much like e-mail, except that it only operates between forum members, and Private Messages never leave the forum. Users names act as their “mail address”, but you can only send a private message to those members who have enabled themselves to receive them (you can choose not to receive private messages if you don’t want them). Either go to the **Send New Message** page and typing in the name of the user you want to send a message to, then type your message, or while you are browsing the forums, if you click on any user’s name displayed next to their post, you will get a list of options and one of these will be to send a Private Message to this user - this latter approach is the quickest way, as you will be taken to your Private Message section and their user name will be automatically inserted for you.

The members log in section displays additional easy to see details about private messages here:



Welcome, Sandy.
You last visited: 5 Minutes Ago at 11:57
Private Messages: Unread 0, Total 0.



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- 2. New Posts** – Click on this section to view only the posts that are **new** since your last visit. Note: This will display all new posts from all forum location you are registered to view.



The threads below have not been updated since your last visit but still contain unread posts.

| | Thread / Thread Starter | Last Post | Replies | Views | Forum |
|---|--|--|---------|-------|---------------------------------------|
|  |   Comments are open for this topic andor | 9 Hours Ago by Sandie  | 3 | 370 | Jeshua Channelling August 2010 |
|   |   Sharing to the OLA Circle of Friends of the Heart. Barbara C | 18 Hours Ago by Barbara Cooper  | 0 | 30 | Online Ashram - Level 1 - February |

Showing 2 threads to 2 of 2

Click here to navigate directly to the message

Or click here to navigate to the forum where the message is posted.

- 3. Search** – Use this section to search for posts containing specific words, or posts from a specific user.
- 4. Quick Links** – Offers a variety of locations you can visit by clicking on them.
- 5. Log Out** – For when you want to leave the forum.

End Notes

There is much more to your forums than covered in this small manual. We have attempted to quickly cover the basics so that you can get into the most important aspect of the forums, posting and reading messages.

The most important thing we like to tell our forum users, especially those who are unfamiliar with the forums and the internet, is to not be afraid to explore the forum software - click on things, see what happens or where they will take you. Nothing can be broken, everything is completely safe, and the forums are designed to be explored and used fully in every aspect. But most importantly, if you have a question or are lost about something, don't be afraid to ask for help! We have a **Help Room** forum in which you can post questions and receive answers from our webmaster. Please try and read through the existing threads first to see if your question has already been answered. Finally, please don't hesitate to contact our webmaster directly on: webmaster@wayofmastery.com