

# ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS

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*Accountability is the ability and willingness to give an account to someone else of your thoughts, feelings, well-being, actions and motives.*

**Stress, Shame,  
Secrecy &  
Self-Loathing**

*...are the Lifeblood  
of Addiction*

## What are Accountability Partners?

- Accountability Partners (APs) are people selected by you to check-in with regularly by phone, text, face-to-face, etc. to help you be accountable for your goals, and to get you out of secrecy, shame and isolation in overcoming your compulsive/addictive behaviors. APs are part of your support system.
- APs are people to share the good with as well as the difficult things going on in your life.
- Your AP should know your goals, your weaknesses, and your biggest potential pitfalls.
- All information shared with an AP is to be kept confidential so that you have a trusted, safe place for sharing your real self.
- Good APs are not cops looking for you to slip up, but trusted and compassionate coaches designed to challenge you to live your life with honesty and integrity.
- APs are there for you to connect with and account to when there has been a slip (preferably within 24 hours), so that the slip doesn't gain unnecessary power.

## Why Do I Need Accountability Partners?

- Because stress, shame, secrecy and self-loathing feed compulsive/addictive behavior, connecting with other people breaks down these emotions by being "seen" and "heard" by another.
- Being on your own with the addiction is like being alone with a madman. Instead, reaching out to others has divine power, even releasing calming chemicals in the brain.
- Having APs helps you exit the "alone zone" of isolation, and the isolation of your own suffering.
- APs help you be honest and transparent with yourself and others.
- APs are not ultimately responsible for changing or fixing your life, but are there to help you take responsibility and full accountability for yourself and your actions.
- APs provide reinforcement to bridge the gap between therapy appointments or 12-step meetings by providing day-to-day support and a means of accountability with ongoing struggles and temptations.
- Common conditions that lead to slips that warrant connection with APs are: **B – L – A – H – S – T** -- Bored, Lonely, Angry, Hungry, Stressed, Tired.
- Daily contact with your AP is intended to be preventative, so that you already have a good relationship there and are already in the habit of checking in prior to a slip--even when you may not be in crisis or in danger of slipping at that time.

## How Do I Set Up Accountability Partners?

- Ideally you want to set up at least three AP's as soon as you can. It's good to have a few different people to connect with and account to, so that none of them get burned out, and so that you have multiple options.
- Good options for APs might be:
  - a sponsor from your 12-step meetings--someone that is further down the road of recovery than you
  - a fellow addict in active recovery
  - a trusted friend or family member
  - an ecclesiastical leader

- A spouse may not be the best option as an AP especially if there is still a lot of pain for them. It can also make it difficult for them to stay out of their own co-addictive patterns of preoccupation with your actions.
- As you begin to determine who your APs might be, make it a matter of prayer and trust the process that the right people will come to mind and be willing to help.
- Share this information with your APs to be sure they understand what you are asking of them.
- You may want to set up specific times or ways that you will check in with your APs.
- You may want to determine specific questions that you will share with your AP when you connect. Some ideas may include:
  - a summary of the temptations you have faced and the choices you have made that day (slips or close calls)
  - a discussion of concrete solutions to guard against the thoughts and actions, etc. that make you vulnerable to slips.
- You might also use the following prompt (F-A-C-E) for the content of your contacts with your AP or for process writing:
  - **F**eelings -- identify what you are currently feeling as well as the significant feelings experienced during the day/week. Better connection with your emotional state helps you better deal with your triggers.
  - **A**ccountability -- Share your "Top Lines" (positive, healthy behaviors) and "Bottom Lines" (negative, self-destructive behaviors).
  - **C**urrent -- Share current stressors--events, changes, adjustments, relationships, responsibilities, etc. both positive and negative. These all have an impact on one's healthy or destructive lifestyle.
  - **E**ncouragement -- Highlight the positives. Sometimes there is such a focus on dealing with negatives that it is important to practice recognizing and celebrating the positive things.
- Another prompt is S-T-I-F-S to mindfully pay attention to the following and share with your accountability partner or in process writing:
  - **S** - Situation
  - **T** - Thoughts
  - **I** - Impulse
  - **F** - Feelings (and the meaning you give them)
  - **S** - Sensations
- The key is to just get started with an AP, even just one person that you begin a daily texting dialog with where you share your thoughts, observations, etc. just to increase your personal connection to others.

*One Day at a Time! • One Temptation at a Time!*

(Rev 10/2016)