

ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS

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

*Shame, Secrecy
and
Self-Loathing
are the Lifeblood
of Addiction.*

What are Accountability Partners?

- Accountability Partners (APs) are people intentionally selected for you to check-in with regularly (daily) by phone, text, face-to-face, etc. to help hold you accountable to your healthy goals, and to get you out of secrecy, shame and isolation with the addiction.
 - 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.
- 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 your mind and be willing.
 - 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:

Why Do I Need Accountability Partners?

- APs help you be honest and transparent with yourself and others.
 - APs help you exit the "alone zone" of isolation, secrecy and shame, which feed compulsive behaviors and addiction.
 - 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.
 - Daily contact with your AP is intended to be preventative, so that you are already in the habit of checking in prior to a slip even when you aren't in crisis or in danger of slipping at that time.
- 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:

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.
 - Good options for APs might be:
- **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.
- 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.