



Accountability Buddies in Secular Overeaters

Accountability buddies in Secular Overeaters are usually two members who agree to be mutually accountable in certain areas of our recovery. Sometimes this may be a one-way arrangement where one buddy supports the other. Unlike sponsors, accountability buddies can be at the same level of recovery. Buddies supplement our relationship with our sponsors and may provide interim support until we find a sponsor. When we have multiple members we are accountable to, we are not thrown off when our sponsor or go-to member is unavailable. We are, in fact, building a team of support.

Like sponsors, buddies provide motivation through sharing what's worked for them and acknowledging positive change. Buddies expect honesty and reliability. Buddies may remain singularly focused for the extent of the relationship, for instance, emailing a daily food plan. Buddies that practice more extensive sharing may morph into friendships or even a co-sponsorship. If trust develops, buddies can make space for challenging each other.

Examples of accountability buddy support

Buddies don't need to do everything on this list! In fact, it may help to just pick one item to focus on, and as you get to know each other better, you can add or fine tune the support you want as your recovery changes.

- Nightly text when dinner is done
- Morning action plan commitment
- Daily email of food plan
- Daily gratitudes
- Daily or weekly phone call check-in
- Meditating together on Zoom
- Nightly 10th Step call
- Phone call or text as needed for support

- Bookending (before and after calls or texts) a social event or a potentially triggering situation or a commitment to exercise
- Reading a secular recovery book together
- Getting together to write
- Studying alternative Steps or Traditions together

Establishing a relationship

Think of what you need in your recovery, your preferred mode of communication (e.g., by Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, phone, text, email or in-person), and how much time you have. Reach out after a meeting to someone you feel connected to or post an ad in the Chat for what you are looking for. During your initial interactions, share what you each would like, determine meeting times, length, mode, and how you'll divide the meeting time. Establish if feedback is acceptable and how best to give it. Discuss how you will each handle not hearing from your buddy. Agree to anonymity and confidentiality.

Keep in mind . . .

The goal is to walk alongside our buddies, not to continually nudge them in the "right" direction. We are not our buddy's therapist, higher power, or problem-solver. We maintain healthy boundaries by keeping to our agreement and speaking up when we'd like adjustments in the relationship. We also know that sometimes accountability buddies have life changes, leave program, lose abstinence, or stop communicating; even when this is hard, we remember that it's not about us. Having a buddy is good practice in identifying our needs, asking for help, setting boundaries, and respecting the needs of others, in other words, good skill-building!

Learn more at SecularOvereaters.org