

Transparent

Building accountability



Guide



RELATING
with God's people

Part of Gold Hill's 'Take a Step' discipleship pathway.
www.goldhill.org/disciple

This guide gives you all you need to know to start meeting with someone to be accountable, to step forward in your walk with God further and faster than by yourself. Sometimes this is called an 'accountability partner', and it is that. But it can be so much more than that. The purpose is to create a space where you are as transparent as possible, opening up to God as you open up to someone else. It is deep, true friendship, and can be life-changing.

Step 1: Ask someone

The whole purpose is to open up with someone in your life and your faith, so it cannot be a solo thing. Normally it will just be you and one other, but there might be a good triplet to consider. You do not want more than that. You will want to pray about this, and consider these questions:

- Who do I trust to be able to open up to about things?
- Who is in a similar stage of life, so this is a genuine partnership rather than an unequal relationship?
- Who would be able regularly to be available at the same time as me?

Once you know, speak with them, saying this is something you would value and they came to mind. Ask them if they would value this kind of thing, and ask if they would pray about it and let you know.

Step 2: Practical plans

Once you've organised 'who', the next thing is to think about 'how'. It is best to make a clear plan and try to stick to it. Vague decisions tend to lead to vague actions, so be specific:

- When will you meet?
- How often will you meet? And for how long?
- Where will you meet? (Will it be in person, or digital?)

Make that plan, and then when you first meet properly discuss the next step.

Step 3: What is on the agenda?

Different people approach things differently, and it's important you are on the same page. We would recommend a combination of:

- **Prayer together** (sharing needs and praying together)
- **Accountability** through sharing sin and struggles (some suggestions of how to do this are below)
- **Bible-reading** (reading the same parts of the Bible between meeting)
- **Prayer for your mission-fields** (you can share who it is you are seeking to show Jesus to, pray for them and encourage one another in this)

Step 4: Decide how to open up

If this is about transparency and openness, it's good to have a plan for that. A really helpful way to do this is to ask set questions of one another every time you meet. This gives an open space and means you can agree together what is on the table and what is not.

For example, 'Life Transformation Groups' (accountable relationships that are part of *Church Multiplication Associates* in the USA), use these questions*:

1. Have you been a testimony this week to the greatness of Jesus Christ with both your words and actions?
2. Have you been exposed to sexually alluring material or allowed your mind to entertain inappropriate sexual thoughts about another this week?
3. Have you lacked integrity in your financial dealings, or coveted something that does not belong to you?
4. Have you been honouring, understanding, and generous in your important relationships this past week?
5. Have you damaged another person by your words, either behind the person's back or face to face?
6. Have you given in to an addictive behaviour this week? Explain.
7. Have you continued to remain angry toward another?
8. Have you secretly wished for another's misfortune?
9. What is your personal accountability question?
10. Did you finish your Bible reading this week and hear from the Lord? What are you going to do about it?
11. Have you been completely honest with me?

These precise questions may not be the best for you, but they could act as a base from which to work and then you create your own structure for sharing.

Step 5: Commit, and review regularly

Once you have made your plan, stick to it for a good while. Allow the pattern of meeting and sharing to bed in, and to have a chance to make a difference. Over time, ask each other whether what you are doing is the most beneficial and whether any alterations might make it more helpful.

* Recorded by Neil Cole in 'Church 3.0' (2010), p133-134



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