10 Steps to Finding a Great Accountability Partner

***Contents modified from: www.covenanteyes.com**

The most important question is: Who should receive your Accountability Reports?

1. Understand relational accountability.

Before you can choose a good partner, you have to know what accountability is all about. Accountability is the ability and willingness to give an account to someone else of your actions and motives. There are several key aspects of this definition:

• Ability: This is what Accountability Software gives you. It summarizes what you do online into an easy-to-read report and automatically sends it to your Accountability Partner.

• Willingness: True accountability is not forced. It is chosen.

• Actions and Motives: Accountability is about being open about what I do and why.

2. Take personal responsibility.

When relational accountability is divorced from personal responsibility, you will be disappointed every time. It is not an accountability partner's job to change your life. You must completely own your mistakes, your messes, your weaknesses, your habits, your character. Many end up looking to accountability partners as scapegoats. "I didn't meet my goals because my accountability partners fell through." Wrong. If you are unwilling to own your shortcomings, how can anyone hold you to task on your goals?

3. Take stock of what motivated you to find accountability.

Were you struggling with porn? Were you venturing into morally "gray areas" online? Were you spending too much time playing online games and neglecting your family? Were you hoping to establish good habits? Did you want to serve as a good example to others? You should be able to state very clearly what your objectives are in very specific words.

4. Formulate two to four questions based on your motivation.

Your partner should know your goals, your weaknesses, and your biggest potential pitfalls. Get started by writing down a few questions you want your partner to ask you. Make the questions detailed enough that you can't answer them with a simple yes or no. This will help you talk about not just your actions but your motives as well.

Here are some examples:

• "What was the most tempting thing you encountered online since we last spoke?"

• "Tell me about a choice you made online this week that compromised your desire to be [insert character quality here]."

• "What on your Accountability Report should draw my attention?"

Having specific questions gives you a place to start and keeps you focused on the goals at hand. Eventually, accountability conversations can evolve from a routine list of questions to richer conversations about transparency, honesty, and character.

5. Find someone trustworthy.

You should choose someone you can trust to keep your Accountability Reports and conversations confidential.

6. Find someone challenging, not condemning.

Pick someone who will be challenging but not condemning. They shouldn't be timid, but willing to ask you questions. Good accountability partners are like coaches who are challenging you to live with integrity. The best Accountability Partners take their role seriously and responsibly. They are willing to be accountable for you just as you are willing to be accountable to them.

7. If needed, find more than one person.

One person might not give you all the support you need, so consider asking more than one person to be your Accountability Partner. By the way, if you're married, your spouse should know who your Accountability Partners are, and your spouse should determine whether he or she wants to receive your reports. It is good to be honest with your spouse about your online life. But remember, spouses occasionally can be too close to a sensitive situation to give you constructive feedback. Don't lean on your spouse in the same way as you do other partners.

8. Customize your Accountability Reports to match your goals.

Talk to your partner about how frequently they should receive your Internet Reports and how often you'd like to talk about them. You should tell your Partner which sensitivity level is best for your Reports.

9. Set up times to meet and/or talk.

How often do you want to meet with your partner? What makes sense given your goals? Talk to you partner and suggest a regular day and time to talk.

10. Tell your partner(s) how to challenge you.

Finally, tell your partner what you expect them to do if something questionable appears on your Report or if you admit to a failure.Your partner might see a questionable search you did online or website, or a questionable time you were online. Should they call, email, talk? Setting expectations gives your Partner an open door to have conversations with you. Remember, accountability will look a little different for everybody. What's important is that you and your partner find what works best for you. Accountability friendships are not an optional appendage to the Christian life. Accountability partners are not crutches for those who aren't "spiritual enough." Rather, accountability relationships are one of the ordinary means God has chosen to help us be Godward, to sanctify our hearts.