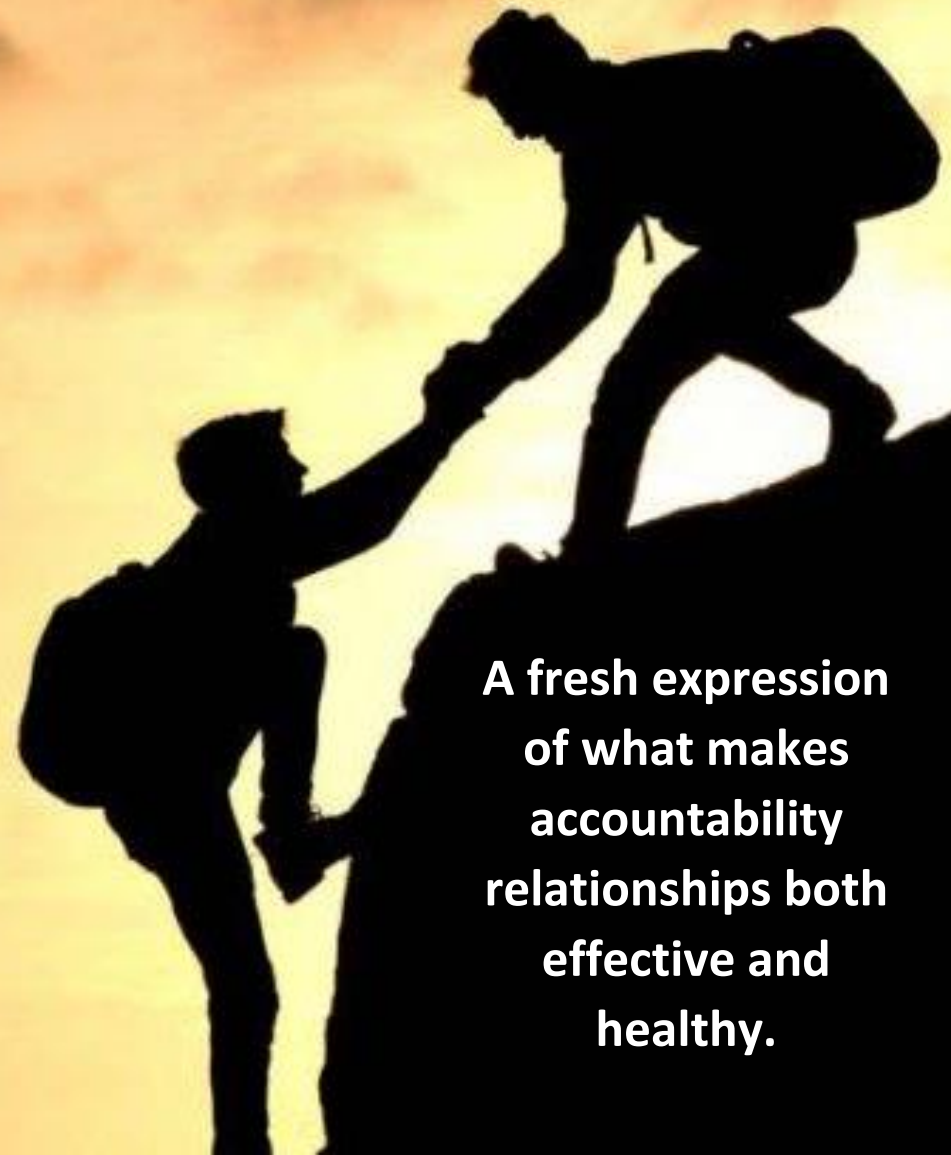


Allies



**A fresh expression
of what makes
accountability
relationships both
effective and
healthy.**

An Ally relationship is...

...more than a weekly meeting for an hour over breakfast or coffee.

...being available to another, bearing one another's burdens, and confessing sin one to another.

...a safe place to unpack our brokenness and move toward lasting and complete freedom and experience joy.

...a unique opportunity to be encouraged in our beliefs, spirituality, and all aspects of our walk with the Lord.

An **Ally** is not merely someone to whom we confess our faults and weaknesses. An **Ally** is someone who is there *to remind us of the person we are being made to be.*

An **Ally** is not someone who calls us *out* on our sin, but someone who can call us *up* to the person we are being made to be.

We have adopted **Ally** as a term to replace that of “accountability partner” to shrug off the baggage of being viewed as “confronting one another on major issues of life.”

The SWI team steps away from this narrow idea of “accountability partner” and transitions to that of an **Ally relationship** as described above. However, some of the best literature on this topic uses the old terminology. So, to help us describe what an **Ally relationship** is and how it works, we will draw from some of this literature.

In the book *Surfing for God: Discovering the Divine Desire Beneath Sexual Struggle*, Michael Cusick describes three kinds of accountability. Cusick's analysis of these three styles of accountability is critical in helping us understand what we want and what we do *not* want in our **Ally relationships**. The following three pages unpack this for us.

Cop Accountability

In this case, our chosen accountability partner represents law enforcement, and we are the law-abiding citizen with a proclivity for exceeding the posted limits of appropriate behavior. When we exceed the lawful limits, we turn ourselves in to a law enforcement officer, who issues the appropriate citation.



With the cop accountability strategy, I believe that by sharing my sin with someone, I will have greater incentive to choose what is right. It's about the avoidance of shame. This form of accountability is a gospel of sin management that is all too common, and fraught with problems.

One is that this approach relies on external reinforcement. When removed, the compulsive and addictive behaviors return. Also, this form of accountability never deals with the heart. Jesus, on the other hand, said that sexual immorality begins in the heart (Matt. 15:19). Very rarely do I hear people discussing their hearts with one another. We don't have a language for it.

Also, the person who lives under the cop accountability approach will eventually fail in one of two ways. They will suffer from a chronic sense of failing to measure up, which only serves to reinforce shameful core beliefs. Or they will succumb to pride (similar to the Pharisees of Jesus' day) resulting from their mastery of sin. Neither of these directions addresses what's actually going on. And they reinforce a gospel of sin management.

Excerpted from [*Surfing for God: Discovering the Divine Desire Beneath Sexual Struggle*](#) by Michael Cusick. Copyright ©2012.

Coach Accountability

In this case our accountability partner plays the role of an instructor, trainer, and coach, who helps us manage our lives so we can keep moving forward. We are second-string players on God's team with a pretty good shot of making it to the spiritual big leagues. When we fail to perform well, we check in with the coach, who encourages us from the rulebook, sends us back in the game, and tells us to keep our eye on the ball.



This approach implies that if we give it enough effort, time, and attention, we can earn a victory over sin and make our lives work. This "try harder" emphasis concerns itself less with sin management and more with the relentless effort to be good. It is a gospel of inspiration.

Excerpted from [*Surfing for God: Discovering the Divine Desire Beneath Sexual Struggle*](#) by Michael Cusick. Copyright ©2012.

Cardiologist Accountability

Every person needs *cardiologist accountability* because it is transforming. We often lack a safe place to talk about our brokenness. We have no language to talk about our heart and our inner world.



We need someone to ask us questions not only about our behavior but also about our hearts. We need a friend who will ask us questions about the lies we believe and help us interpret the stories that contribute to who we are today.

In the cardiologist approach we move from accountability to accessibility. We expose our hiddenness, but more than that, we acknowledge our brokenness. Instead of trying to manage our sin, or be inspired to obey, we recognize our need for transformation. We begin to allow God, and a few others, to walk into the messiness of our lives, and we learn that we are more than the sum of our brokenness.

Cardiologist accountability does not require a professional therapist or counselor. It begins with the assumption that our whole lives, including our brokenness, are the soil in which God grows us. The only requirements for becoming a cardiologist of this kind are *a healthy curiosity, a desire to be a caring friend, and a willingness to grow in your understanding of the process of spiritual transformation.*

Excerpted from [*Surfing for God: Discovering the Divine Desire Beneath Sexual Struggle*](#) by Michael Cusick. Copyright ©2012.

We call this *ALLIES*.

Finding an Ally

Think about someone who cares about you, your soul, your relationships, and your walk with God. Who would love you and extend true grace – not simply a pass. Who would also speak truth, both biblical truth and truth about you. Who would ask the deeper questions, not “what did you do,” but “what was going on in you before you acted out, what were you believing and feeling?” Who would help you bring your struggle to the Lord in godly sorrow and help you receive His love and forgiveness. – Who might that person be? That person would be an excellent ally.

Some helpful guidelines:

- Periodic meetings would be good – whether on the phone, Skype or face-to-face.
- Experience shows that groups of 2-4 allies are best. Ask a same-gender friend(s) if he/she is willing to be your ally.
- Let your ally know what your big struggles and temptations are. Pornography, fantasy, masturbation, late-night TV, romance novels, etc.
- Let your ally know what your triggers are. What are you feeling just before you are tempted to act out?
- If you have fallen or are tempted – call your ally quickly, do not delay. You would be the one responsible to take the initiative in this case.
- If you are tempted or have fallen, your ally would be wise to ask what the triggers were and what you did with the triggers. (Flee, bring to Lord, pursue appropriate ways to meet those desires, act out, etc.)
- Your ally can help you bring your struggle into the light, confess and experience God’s love and forgiveness.
- While it’s fully your responsibility, if your ally hasn’t heard from you in a while, as a good friend, they would want to call and check in with you.

ALLY DISCUSSION GUIDE

- You need to decide your personal convictions. You and your ally can discuss how to apply them in the everyday. (i.e. – put computer in public part of house, install Covenant Eyes, decide not to read romance novels or watch certain television shows or movies) View things like this as helpful, not the law. Proverbs exhorts us to not walk down the street of temptation – this is called wisdom.
- We must remember that ultimately, we are responsible before God and He is the One who has given us everything pertaining to life and godliness. A brother or sister in Christ as an ally may be one gift He may give you to help in the area of sexual wholeness.
- Also, while this paper addresses the area of sexual brokenness, for many of us, the issue is not sexual, or not only sexual. Therefore, feel freedom to use this format to bring other things into the light, like marriage, anger issues, bitterness, fears, doubts, overeating, workaholism and so on.
- Finally, **as Allies you are NOT expected to be someone's counselor.** As you dive into this type of relationship there may be issues that come up, whether present or from someone's past, that you feel unprepared or unqualified to handle on your own (e.g.- childhood abuse). Before you begin this type of relationship you should discuss together what you will do if these things come up – ensuring that your ally doesn't feel abandoned if you share that you feel they need more support than you can offer. This does not mean you are ending your ally relationship; it simply means you are adding someone else into the picture.

1. **What would be your goals for this Ally relationship?** (Mt 6:22,23; John 3:19-21; Eph 5:8-13)
2. **How much interaction would you like? How often?** (Phone, face-to-face, Skype, combo, weekly, monthly, etc.)
3. **What are the things you struggle with most?** (pornography, romance novels, fantasies, sexual activity outside marriage, same-sex thoughts/behavior, masturbating, etc. Include enough detail to make it clear what the struggle is, without tempting your ally. **You don't want to educate to evil!**)
4. **What other areas in life would you like to be included in our alliance? Marriage issues, singleness, workaholism, bitterness, fears, doubts, eating habits, anger, shopping, whatever?**
5. **As far as you currently know, what are the things that trigger you to temptation?** A certain person, a certain activity or time of day, feeling rejected, lack of success, shame, alcohol, etc. (Pr 27:12)

Typical for men: **HALTS** - Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired, Stressed.

Typical for women: **HALTED** - Hopeless, Anxious, Lonely, Tired, unEsteemed (worth) and unDesired.
6. **What posture would you like me to take as your Ally? Proactive? Reflective? Firm? Assertive? Etc.**
7. **Are there cultural situations that present unique challenges that were not present in your passport country?**

8. Can we discuss things like:

- a. What are you learning about treating the opposite sex with respect and purity, not objectifying? (1 Tim 5:2)
- b. What are you learning about how God intends for beauty to draw you to His heart? What was it like growing up in your home?
- c. How do you feel your developmental years affected your view of God and yourself?
- d. What are you doing to enjoy life?
- e. What new stressors are entering your life?

9. Would you like to “just hang out”?

If Allies only spend time together “doing accountability” then their relationship will likely begin to feel like a sin-hunt. Having times when you “hang out” (or whatever the cool word is now) is vital to Allies providing the long-term protection desired when people enter into these kinds of relationships.

10. Would it be helpful to open the Word together? If so, where would we look? Suggested verses 9:9,11; Eph 5:3; 1 Thess 4:3,4 & 7; 1 Cor 6:18-20; Rom 12:1,2; Ps 73:25,26

11. How will you handle technology? Would Covenant Eyes be beneficial? Consider solutions for computer, Netflix, tablet, smart phone, etc. (Jas 5:16)

12. What boundaries would you like to put in place and how can I support you in respecting them? Put computer in public part of house, install Covenant Eyes, decide not to read romance novels or watch certain television shows or movies, get rid of smart phone, where your eyes go, not be alone with a certain person, whatever... (Job 31:1)

13. What about emotional boundaries with others? Are they appropriate? Think about things like: are you sharing intimate information with someone other than your spouse (if married) or if single with a married person? Are you keeping things

secret? Do you find yourself often thinking about daydreaming about a certain person in an inappropriate context?

14. What about “inadvertent pornography”? Pornography that comes at you – internet, TV, advertising, public places, etc. – things you do not pursue but that land on your door. (1 Pet 5:8) What boundaries would help?

15. Would you want to read a book together?

Possibilities for men: *Surfing for God* by Michael Cusick; *Samson and the Pirate Monks* by Nate Larsen; *The War Within* by Robert Daniels, *On the Altar of Sexual Idolatry* by Steve Gallagher

Possibilities for women: *Sex and the Soul of a Woman* by Paula Rinehart (for Christian women wanting to strengthen convictions), *Sexual Sanity for Women* by Ellen Dykas (for women who know they struggle and want help), *Surfing for God* by Michael Cusick (to help women understand their heart longings), *Every Woman’s Struggle* by Stephen Arterburn and Shannon Ethridge, *What are you waiting for?* by Dannah Gresh (especially for young women ages 13-22)

16. Who or what is getting too much airtime in your thought life right now? Asking this question is a great way to become self-aware of our thoughts, which is very important for addictive behaviors. Too often it is passivity towards our thought life that allows temptation to gain significant momentum before we begin to resist it as temptation. Knowing you will be asked reminds you to pay attention.

17. What are you passionate about in the coming weeks, months, or year? How is it going? Your Ally should already know, but if they do not, then they must know what “it” is before they can ask the question.

18. How would you like me to pray for you?