

# What is a Contact?

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In SAL 12 Step, we define a **contact** to be “reaching out to your sponsor or another man who is working on his own recovery.”

For support, guidance and accountability in recovery.

But what does that *mean*, exactly?

For some men, a live phone call is the only thing that counts as a contact. For others, a text can be a contact. For all men, our needs with each contact differ even from one time to the next. With the help of your Higher Power, you will know what needs to count as a contact for you each time you make one. Also, get some guidance from your sponsor and therapist.

As you consider this, please sit with the following questions:

- What is my intent in making this contact?
- Am I reaching out for connection or am I reaching out in distress?
- Am I reaching out from a place of vulnerability and authenticity?
- Does the format I am using allow me to hide my feelings? Would another format enable me to express myself more clearly?
- Do I need immediate feedback from another man in recovery to help me take responsibility for my own actions or help me become grounded?
- Am I growing in how I contact others, or do I resort to the “same old” ways I have always reached out?

What other men in recovery in SAL have to say:

- “If I am feeling shame, I will count any contact with someone in recovery as a contact. But, as I thought about it, I feel like the intention behind the contact matters.”
- “A phone call to talk to a fellow or leave a voicemail is powerful in helping me get out of my own head, by saying it out loud.”

- “It is important to take the step of dialing the phone #. Stepping into the uncomfortability and awkwardness of making a phone call is a big part of my surrender process.
- “I realize I must take the step to reach out and not be a victim wondering why others aren’t reaching out to me.”
- “A contact is pulling myself out of isolation, despair and victim mode.”
- “Whenever I receive a phone call from either my sponsor or someone else in recovery it helps me in my own recovery and is a welcomed experience.”
- “Reaching out requires vulnerability, I must call and discuss my issues so I can process.”

What are some of the benefits of reaching out to SAL members and your sponsor? The following thoughts are from SAL members:

- Helps me grow.
- Helps me embrace the awkwardness of learning connection.
- Helps me to practice honesty and accountability.
- Helps me to get called out where I am wrong.
- Helps me come out of isolation.
- Helps me take responsibility for myself when I make an effort to share as much as I can with another member about what I am experiencing.
- Opens the door to a new set of relationships with understanding people.
- Helps me learn to be honest and to admit my behavior is not always commendable. When I am honest, I progress in my recovery.
- Helps the person I talk to.
- Helps ease my anger, resentment, and fear.
- Helps me to connect with my Higher Power.
- Helps me see my situation more clearly so I can make a healthy decision.
- Gives me a place to share happy news.
- Helps me recognize my intent and motives as to what I’ve said or done so I can stay true to the person I am trying to become and so I can set healthy boundaries.

**Support:** A sponsor provides emotional support to the individual in recovery. They understand the challenges and struggles associated with addiction and can offer empathy and encouragement during difficult times.

**Guidance:** Sponsors are usually more experienced in working the 12 Steps and can guide the sponsee through the program. They help the sponsee understand the principles of recovery, suggest appropriate actions, and offer insights based on their own experience.

**Accountability:** Sponsors hold the sponsee accountable for their actions and commitments in recovery. This includes attending meetings, working the Steps, and making necessary lifestyle changes. Knowing that someone is watching and caring can be a powerful motivator.

**Listening:** A sponsor is someone you can talk to openly and honestly about your thoughts, feelings, and struggles related to addiction and recovery. They provide a non-judgmental and confidential space for you to share.

**Sharing Experience:** Sponsors often share their own experiences, strength, and hope with the sponsee. By hearing how their sponsor has overcome similar challenges, the sponsee can gain valuable insights and inspiration.

**Practical Assistance:** Sponsors can help the sponsee navigate the logistics of the 12-Step program, such as finding meetings, connecting with other members, and understanding program literature.

**24/7 Support:** In some cases, a sponsor may be available for support and assistance at any time, especially in moments of crisis or relapse. Call 988 if you are dealing with thoughts of suicide.

It's important to choose a sponsor who you feel comfortable with and who shares a similar recovery philosophy or background. Sponsors are typically individuals who have successfully maintained their own sobriety or abstinence for a significant period of time and have a good understanding of the 12-Step program.

Keep in mind that the relationship between a sponsor and a sponsee is voluntary and based on mutual trust and respect. It's not a professional or therapeutic relationship but rather a peer support connection within the recovery community. The goal is to provide the support and guidance needed for the sponsee to work through the 12 Steps and maintain their recovery.