



## What is a Contact?

In SAL12-Step, we define a **contact** to be “reaching out to your sponsor or another woman who is working on her own recovery” for support, guidance, and accountability along this journey to healthy living.

But what does that *mean*, exactly?

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

**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 woman 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 members in SAL 12-Step working their recovery have to say:**

- “If I am feeling shame, I will count any contact with someone in recovery as a contact. But, as I got quiet about it, I feel like the intention behind that contact matters.”

- “A phone call to talk or leave a voicemail is powerful in helping me get out of my own head so I can gain clarity again.”
- “It is important to take the step of dialing the phone number. 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.”
- “For me it must be a phone call. I have certainly had times where I hid behind a text or polo. But not every time. I think it really does take me being self aware in the moment. Even a willingness to self correct (if I send a text and then realize I am hiding, I’ll then make a call). No one size fits all in my opinion.”
- “I think intent is huge. I started out just texting because I had a lot of fear about calling. My sponsor helped me learn how calling shows that I am stating that I am important and that I matter. Intent was a big part of our definition. (I didn’t think counseling counted as a contact, but after talking, we realized it was the open heart we approached the appointment with, which made it qualify as a contact). I sometimes Marco Polo because it’s too late to call someone and I know I need to surrender.”
- “An actual call to a real person has much more potential for growth.”
- “A contact is pulling yourself out of isolation.”
- “I believe a contact would be where you actually connect and talk with someone about what is going on. So no messages, Marco Polo, etc. You go down a list until you connect with someone. There are wonderful blessings for both involved with an experience like this.”
- “Texting, Marco Polo, emailing, etc. are extremely easy for me; they become my way of hiding. I hit fear every time I think of calling someone, so I know that’s exactly what I need to do for my own growth.”
- “Reaching out requires vulnerability, I must call and discuss my issues so I can process.”
- “I use Marco polo for connection and a phone call for support.”

## **What are some of the benefits of reaching out to SAL 12-Step members and your sponsor?**

The following thoughts are from SAL 12-Step members:

- Helps me grow.
- 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 panic, anger, and fear.
- Opens my understanding and my Higher Power is able to speak to me; I hear Truth.
- Helps me see my situation more clearly so I can make a healthy decision.
- Gives me a place to share happy news.
- 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 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.
- Helps me to have a safe person that I can call and take accountability for my step work, what I've learned, and how I will apply it. This has helped me stay strong in my recovery work because I know I will be reporting this to my sponsor each day.
- Helps me stay self aware with my own sobriety and where I'm at emotionally.