

MY ACCOUNTABILITY CONTRACT

Reprinted with permission from the Sought Out, Inc. newsletter, Vol. V, No. 2, Summer 1998

Because of my desire to become mature in Christ, (attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ, Eph. 4:13), and recognizing that I cannot develop without the aid of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-31, especially verse 26), the following questions need to be asked of me on a weekly basis:

1. Have I had devotions (prayer and Bible study) every day this week (Ps. 27:4; Ps. 119:9-11)?
2. Have I honored the Lord with all that I put before my eyes (this includes movies, videos, the Internet, and print material) (Phil. 4:8)?
3. Have I entertained fantasy or false intimacy in my life and have I "acted out" (i.e., masturbation, internet surfing) as a result? What type of fantasy or trigger produced that acting out (2 Cor. 10:4-5)?
4. Have I honored God in my vocation and related responsibilities during the week (2 Tim. 2:15)?
5. Have I honored my spouse and family with my words, actions and deeds (Eph. 5:25, 28)?
6. The following questions need to be asked on a weekly basis.

7. Have I been totally honest in answering all of the above questions (Col. 3:9)?

Thank you for being a friend, for loving me regardless of my answers, and for being Christ's representative in my life as I mature and grow in my faith. I submit my answers to you honestly because I know I can trust you. Our signatures below are a symbol of our covenant with each other and with God. We hold each other accountable for this present hope of being delivered and for our future hope of eternity with Almighty God!

Name _____ Date _____

Name _____ Date _____

When I refused to confess my sin, I was weak and miserable, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.

Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. Therefore, *let all the godly confess* their rebellion to you while there is time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment. For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory

Psalm 32:3—7 New Living Translation (italics added)

Accountability is an important factor in our growth as Christians. But how do you start? What are some steps you can take to set up an accountability relationship?

Choose a Model

While there are many forms of accountability relationships, a one-on-one model is a practical choice if you have an immediate need for accountability in your life.

In a one-on-one relationship, another person agrees to meet with you regularly, ask you accountability questions, talk with you, share insights with you, and pray with you.

Choose a partner

An accountability partner has been described as “God with skin.” S/He extends mercy freely, but also holds up the true standard of God’s Word.

Pray and look around you for a godly, same-sex person who displays a willingness to understand and offer support. This is a great time to practice humility – and to discover that someone who doesn’t share your specific weaknesses can still understand.

It’s okay for both of you to be in some kind of recovery, just not recovering from the same issues. For more insights into the hallmarks

of good accountability partners, see Safe People by Drs. Could and Townsend.

Choose questions

What behaviors need to be addressed? And to what degree? It is important to distinguish between goals you are working towards and “zero tolerance” issues. See “My Accountability Contract” (Sought Out newsletter, Summer 1998).

Scheduling considerations

Plan to meet in person.
Plan to meet in a safe, neutral place.
Be sure to schedule your next meeting before leaving the current one.

Other Considerations

Establish your limits and expectations – and communicate them to your partner.

Ask questions like:

- How accessible do you want to be?
- Is it ok to call you at home? ...At work? ... To leave a message if you’re not there?
- When are good or bad times to call?
- When is too early/late to call?
- How often can you meet?

Ideas for Partners

Accountability gets thoughts out into the open, so...

- ✓ Get your partner thinking! Listen. Ask questions about anything you don’t understand.
- ✓ Encourage your partner to talk about any areas s/he couldn’t report unqualified success in. “Why do you think you’re doing that? What are you going to have to do to change your behavior?”
- ✓ Provide an objective viewpoint. Challenge questionable beliefs and confront thinking that is clearly wrong. Encourage a focus on truth.
- ✓ Celebrate successes. “See how much better you’re doing now!” Help your partner focus on the improvement, rather than on how far away the goal seems.
- ✓ Challenge denial. “I could be wrong, but what I think I’m hearing is...”
- ✓ Share helpful problem-solving information.
- ✓ Share your faith when your partner’s doesn’t seem to reach.
- ✓ Help a discouraged partner apply a scriptural truth: “I know you know this verse, but let’s see if it applies to this situation.”
- ✓ Inspire each other.
- ✓ Persist. Persist. Persist.

BUILDING TRUST

“The WORD became flesh and dwelt among us...full of grace and truth.” – John 1:14

WHO CAN I TRUST?

TRUSTWORTHY PEOPLE

extend grace to themselves and others by...

- Valuing spiritual growth more than appearing religious
- Being open to feedback instead of being defensive
- Being humble instead of self-righteous
- Earning trust instead of demanding it
- Expecting to continue to grow and mature

TRUSTWORTHY PEOPLE

face truth and speak truth by...

- Admitting weakness rather than thinking they have it all together
- Not just apologizing; CHANGING
- Dealing with their problems
- Seeing and admitting their faults
- Raking responsibility instead of blaming others

HOW CAN I MONITOR MY OWN TRUSTWORTHINESS?

TRUSTWORTHY PEOPLE

faith truth and speak truth by...

- Being willing to confront instead of flatter
- Being consistent in their commitments

TRUSTWORTHY PEOPLE

extend grace to themselves and others by...

- Forgiving instead of condemning
- Relating as equals, not in parent/child roles
- Being a positive influence
- Keeping confidentiality

TRUSTWORTHY PEOPLE

are pleasant to “dwell” with because they...

- Put a “premium” on sharing and intimacy
- Care about your needs and boundaries
- Can let go of their “stuff” to respond to yours
- Encourage independence instead of enmeshment

Accountability Questions

1/28/00 Version

Zero tolerance questions

1. Have I entertained idolatrous or envious “hear-hungers” (i.e. did I continue to look longingly at/for images – real, electronic, or in print) instead of renouncing them when they arose? What heart issue was involved? Did I pray through this with the Lord?
2. Have I “acted out” with either fantasy or masturbation?
3. Have I been isolating, escaping, or medicating in other ways?

Goals

4. Have I missed more than 2 days/week of simple devotional Bible reading?
 - a. Have I had at least 2 contemplative prayer sessions/week?
 - b. Have I had a least 2 (goal = 3, must do 2) listening prayer sessions/week? Did I schedule these into the week/day?
5. Have I engaged in negative self-talk this week? What was I feeling guilty about?
6. Have I been avoiding dealing with anything this week? Have I tackled the things I was going to this week?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
7. Have I had at least 3 (goal = 4; must do 3) good work-outs this week?
8. Have I been in bed at a reasonable hour?
9. Am I faithfully developing and using my mental health/life-planning network (therapist, accountability partners, prayer journaling, reading, prayer partner)?
10. Have I spent at least 1 hour/week information-gathering, pursuant to career direction?
11. Have I set aside time for friends this week?
12. Have I been totally honest in answering all of these questions?

QUESTIONS ACCOUNTABILITY FRIENDS ASK ONE ANOTHER

From "Rebuilding Your Broken World" by Gordon MacDonald

1. How is your relationship with God right now?
2. What have you read in the Bible in the past week?
3. What has God said to you in this reading?
4. Where do you find yourself resisting Him these days?
5. What specific things are you praying for in regard to others?
6. What specific things are you praying for in regard to yourself?
7. What are the specific tasks facing you right now that you consider incomplete?
8. What habits intimidate you?
9. What have you read in the secular press this week?
10. What general reading are you doing?
11. What have you done to play?
12. How are you doing with your spouse? Your kids?
13. If I were to ask your spouse about your state of mind, state of spirit, state of energy level, what would the response be?
14. Are you sensing any spiritual attacks from the enemy right now?
15. If Satan were to try to invalidate you as a person or as a servant of the Lord, how might he do it?
16. What is the state of your sexual perspective? Tempted? Dealing with fantasies?
17. Where are you financially right now? (things under control? under anxiety? in great debt?)
18. Are there any unresolved conflicts in your circle of relationships right now?
19. When was the last time you spent time with a good friend of your own gender?
20. What kind of time have you spent with anyone who is a non-Christian this past month?
21. What challenges do you think you're going to face in the coming week? Month?
22. What would you say are your fears at this present time?
23. Are you sleeping well?
24. What three things are you most thankful for?
25. Do you like yourself at this point in your pilgrimage?
26. What are your greatest confusions about your relationship with God?

Accountability and Personal Growth



Cornelius Bekker
School of Leadership
Studies

INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS

Center for Student Development
Regent University



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



The word *discipleship* and
the word *discipline* are the same word
-- that has always fascinated me.
Once you have made the choice to say,
"Yes, I want to follow Jesus," the question is,
"What disciplines will help me
remain faithful to that choice?"
If we want to be disciples of Jesus,
we have to live a disciplined life.

- Henri Nouwen



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



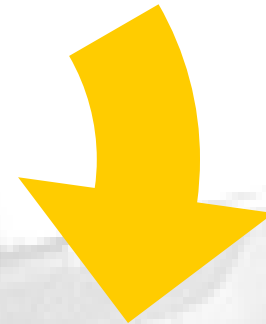
Workshop Outline

**Spiritual Formation
and Personal Growth**

**Dynamics of
Spiritual Formation**

**Models of
Voluntary Honesty**

Accountability





INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Spiritual Formation and Personal Growth

The quest for Spiritual Formation falls in the academic field of spirituality.

The Oxford Dictionary defines “*spirituality*” as the quality or condition of being spiritual.

In turn it defines “*spiritual*” as devout, holy, pious, morally good.



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Spiritual Formation and Personal Growth

Christian Spirituality is about
a process of formation.

We are formed by, and in, Christ.

It is a form of Christ-[ening] –
being clothed with Christ,
and so being transformed.”

Leech, K 1980. Spirituality and Pastoral Care. London: SPCK.



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Spiritual Formation and Personal Growth

Christian Spirituality
is "one's unique and
personal response
to the call of Christ
through the Spirit
in the world of inner and
outer realities."

- Roy Fairchild, San Francisco Theological Seminary



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Spiritual Formation and Personal Growth

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that they might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

(Romans 8:28-29 - NKJV)

© Merton Legacy Trust
Used by Permission



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Spiritual Formation and Personal Growth

The Quest for con-[trans]-formation is the quest to find our truest identity in Christ.



“Who are you Lord,
and who am I?”

— Francis of Assisi



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Dynamics of Spiritual Formation

“And we all,

with unveiled faces,

beholding the glory of the Lord

as within a mirror

are being transformed into the same image

from glory to glory,

just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

(2 Corinthians 3:18)



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Dynamics of Spiritual Formation

“And we all, (community)

with unveiled faces, (accountability)

beholding the glory of the Lord (devotional focus)

as within a mirror

are being transformed into the same image

from glory to glory,

just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

(2 Corinthians 3:18)



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



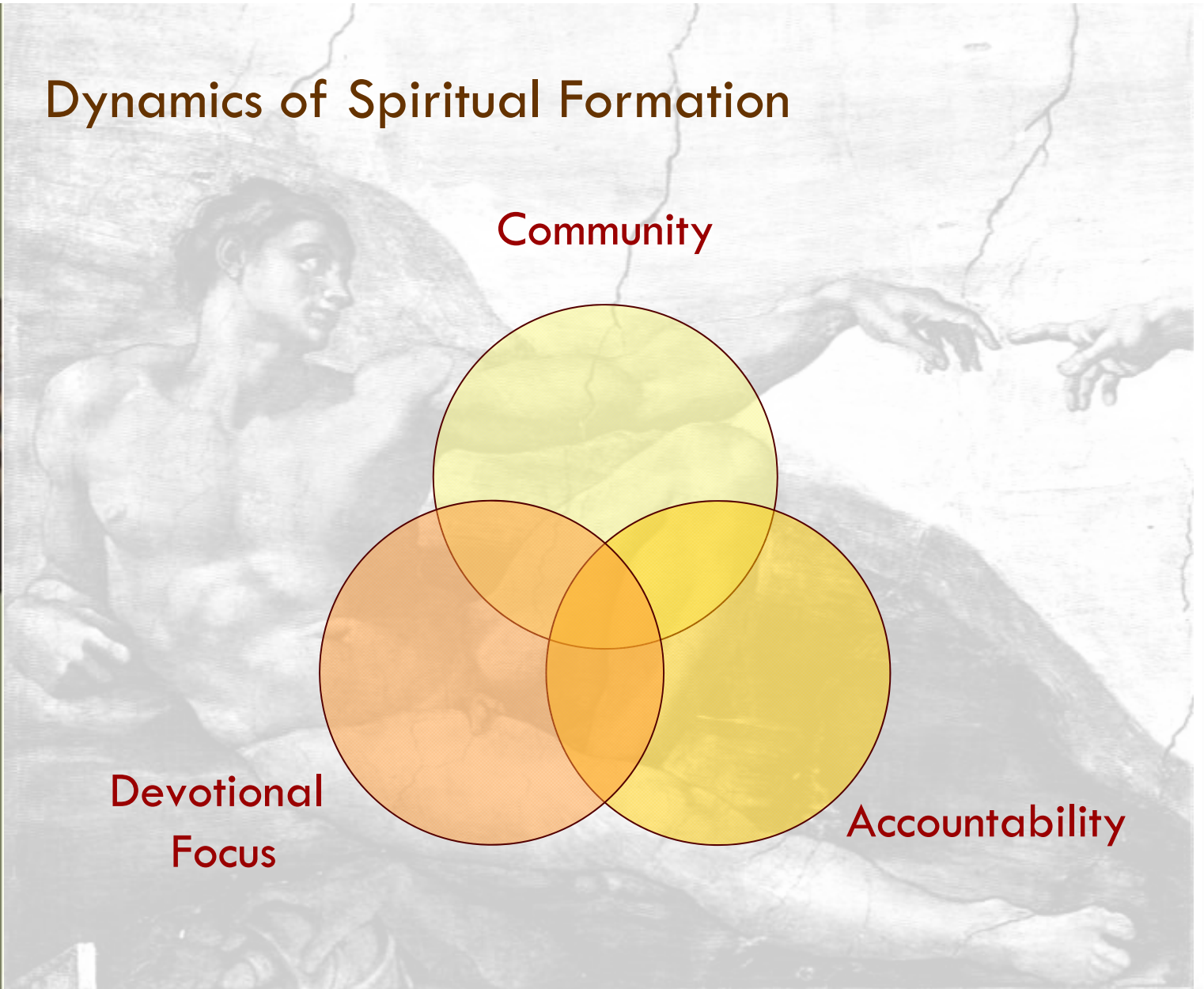
Dynamics of Spiritual Formation

Community



Devotional
Focus

Accountability





INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Dynamics of Spiritual Formation

Within the discipline of community are the disciplines of forgiveness and celebration. Forgiveness and celebration are what make community, whether a marriage, a friendship, or any other form of community.

- Henri Nouwen



C
o
m
m
u
n
i
t
y



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Dynamics of Spiritual Formation

**We make
ourselves
real by
telling the
truth.**

-Thomas Merton



A
c
c
o
u
n
t
a
b
i
l
i
t
y



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Goal of Transformation

“And we all, (community)
with unveiled faces, (accountability)
beholding the glory of the Lord (devotional focus)
as within a mirror
are being transformed (process)
into the same image (icon)
from glory to glory, (process)
just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (Agent of Change)
(2 Corinthians 3:18)



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Goal of Transformation



© Merton Legacy Trust
Used by Permission



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Accountability

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

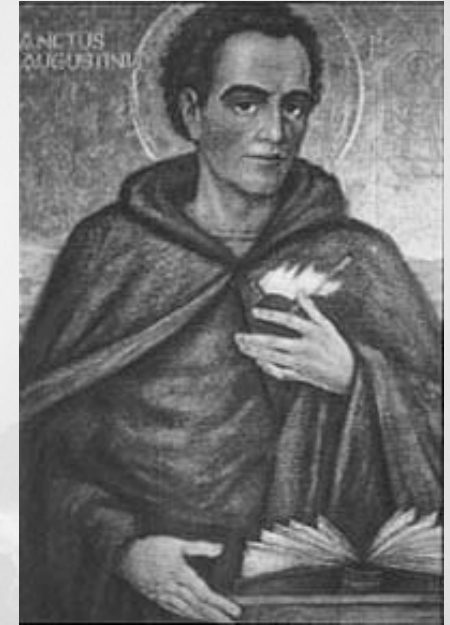
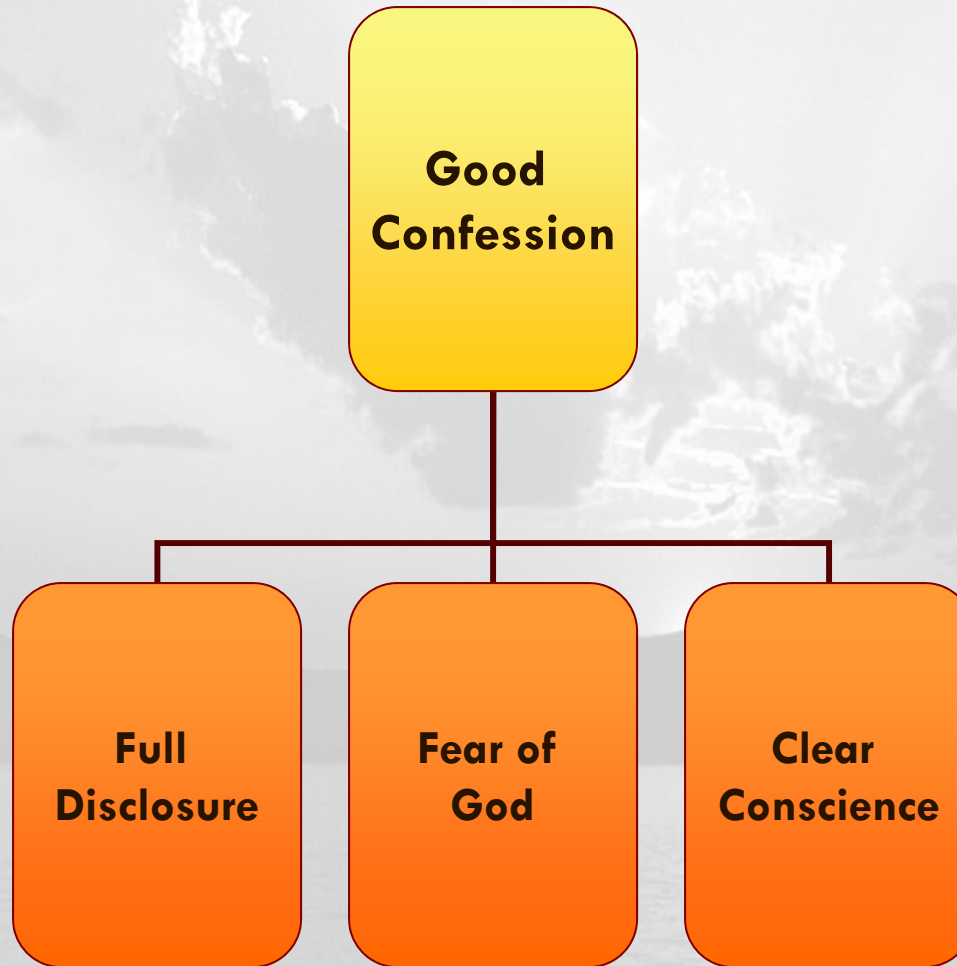
- James 5:16



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Accountability



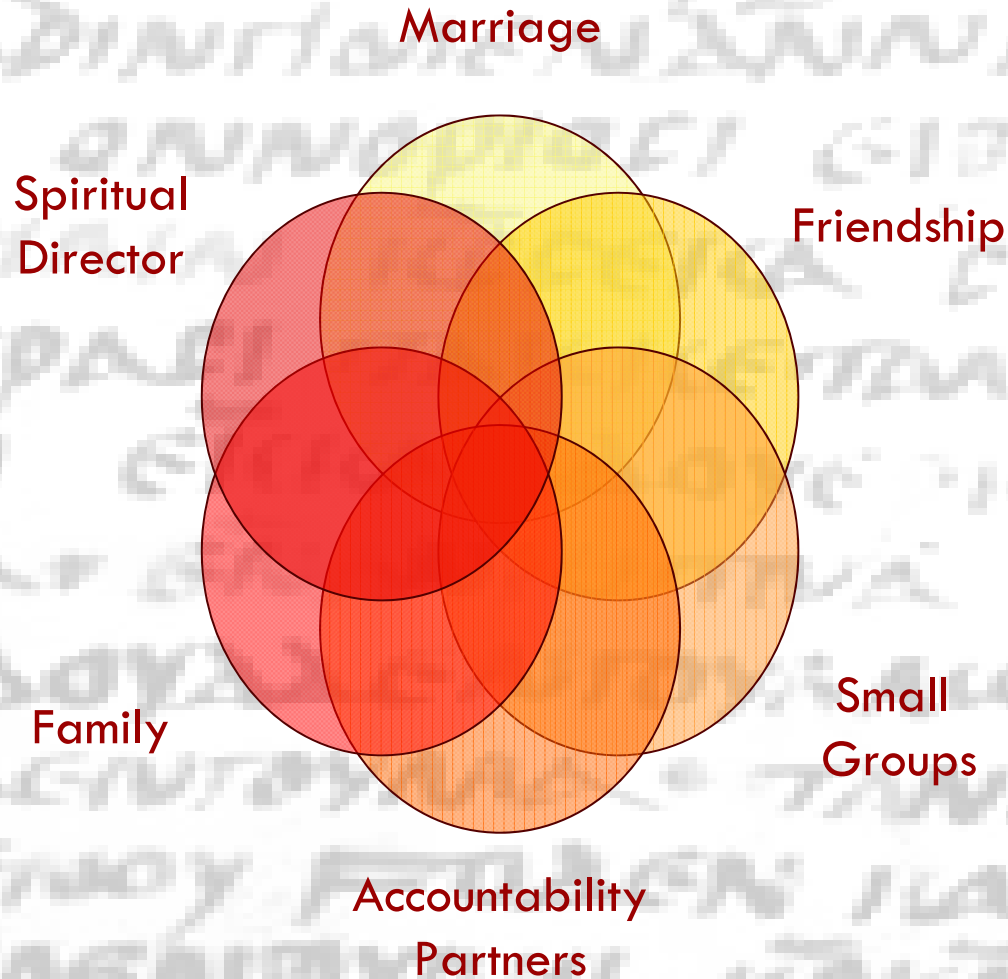
Augustine of Hippo



INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



Models of Voluntary Honesty





INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS



There is healing in being known in my vulnerability and impatience and weakness. Suddenly I realize that Henri is a good person also in the eyes of people who don't read books and who don't care about success. These people can forgive me constantly for the little egocentric gestures and behaviors that are always there.

- Henri Nouwen



Accountability and Personal Growth



Cornelius Bekker
School of Leadership
Studies

INNER
RESOURCES
FOR LEADERS

Center for Student Development
Regent University

What is accountability?

- Method for realizing goals too important to entrust to your own motivation
- A special kind of friendship
 - Goal-focused
 - Regular
 - About receiving feedback you NEED (vs. WANT)
 - Based on mutual respect
 - Not necessarily reciprocal, but reciprocal is good
 - Is NOT enforcement

Setting up a relationship

- Identify your goals
 - List of questions
 - Can start informally – *You mentioned... How's that going?*
- Select your model
- Select your people – *“God with skin”*
- Identify your parameters
- Start

Getting started

- In what areas of my life do I need accountability?
 - What are my specific goals?
- Who do I know who is a potential accountability partner?
- What specific action steps will I take to pursue accountability?
By when?

Accountability and Personal Growth

Please give us your [feedback](#)