

Twelfth Step Within Committee Report

Phone Call Starters: We hope to have the final version posted on the REgion 5 Website soon.

Introduction

Ours is a disease of isolation and the telephone is one of our most important tools in breaking down isolation and feeling connected to our fellowship. But for some, it can be awkward to make phone calls. Some feel like they might be bothering the person, or that they might end up being on the phone longer than they intended. They don't know how to get the conversation started, and that hesitancy keeps them from making outreach calls. These conversation starters are offered to make it easier to use the tool of telephone calls.

First, start with our mindset.

- Fellows with abstinence and recovery know that 'together we can do what we could never do alone'. Calling a fellow is a form of service that benefits the caller and the called. As with many forms of program service, the person doing the service often benefits more than the recipient of the service. Make calls because it will strengthen your recovery and the fellowship you rely on.
- Don't worry about bothering someone. If it is not a good time, they will not answer. Be willing to be God with skin on and leave the outcome to Higher Power. If they don't answer, leave a message letting them know that program works (see examples below). Reaching out will benefit you even if the person doesn't respond. Everyone appreciates knowing others care and are concerned.

- Make it a habit to call others. Doing it regularly makes it easier. A great day might look like one with a call to a newcomer, a call to someone who has been absent or struggling, and a call to someone with solid recovery.

Setting up for a satisfying call

- Be ready to share something program related that you have been reading, working on, thinking about or heard in a meeting.
- Start by asking if they have 5 minutes for a program call. Honor that time.
- Don't take it personally if fellows don't call back. You have already received the benefit by making the call.

Calls to Newcomers:

We know newcomers come to meetings at different stages; some have “the gift of desperation”, some expecting a diet club, some turned off by spiritual talk, some wary etc. How do we welcome them while not overwhelming them?

- If you connect with a newcomer at a meeting, try to agree on a time when you will call them to answer questions. Don't expect them to call you. Share your name and number so they will recognize it when you call. Or text first to see if it is a good time for a call.
- Sometimes the newcomer is anxious to talk. It is OK to let them know how much time you have for the conversation on this day.

Conversation starters with newcomers

- After first meeting

- It was good to see you at the meeting. What ideas stayed with you after the meeting and what questions do you have that I might be able to answer?
- When I went to my first meeting, I was feeling... (desperate, discouraged, skeptical, afraid, etc.). What was it like for you coming to a meeting?
- How did you hear about OA? What are you looking for
- If they have been to a few meetings but still new
 - What is going well and what are you finding challenging?
 - Would you like me to share what helped me to find abstinence?
 - Have you noticed any changes in yourself as you start to work the program?
 - How can I help you be abstinent today?

Calls to someone you haven't seen for a while

Folks that have been absent may have a mix of emotions including shame, embarrassment and fear. They may not want to be contacted. We want to convey that the doors of OA are open to all with a desire to stop compulsively eating, and that recovery is possible and is worth the effort.

Conversation starters with someone you haven't seen for a while

- Hi, it's ____ from OA. I had you on my mind and heart and wanted to follow the prompting and reach out. Is this a good time? If yes, then use one of the following;
- How is it going with the food today?
- I haven't yet read today's reading in For Today or Voices of Recovery. Would it work for me to read that now, then we could share a comment or two about what the reading means to us?

- I plan on attending that meeting on _____. It would be great to see you there. Any chance of that?
- What can I do to support your recovery today?
- Is there anything you miss about coming to meetings? Is there anything we can do to welcome you back?

Calls to someone you know is struggling/in relapse

Conversation starters with someone in relapse

- I'm so sorry that you are in the pain of the disease. How can I support your recovery today?
- What is going well in your life today?
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General Conversation Starters

- I'm looking to strengthen my recovery today. What is something you have learned from the literature or a meeting that has enhanced your recovery?
- Can we read together from For Today or Voices of Recovery and share our thoughts about it?
- Share recovery challenges,: "I need to talk about food; you go first" "Here is what I'm not overeating over today".
- Thank them for service they are doing.
- Thank them for something about recovery that they shared at a meeting: "I appreciated the reminder of the principles, thank you"
- You have been on my mind and heart and I wanted to follow the prompting and reach out. Is this a good time?

Sample Voicemail Messages:

- I'm making outreach calls. Sorry we didn't connect today. Wishing all is well with you, your family and your program.

- I'm making outreach calls because it helps me stay abstinent.
Hope you are doing well today and I'm glad to be doing program with you.

Resources:

- Call 5 and Keep 'Em Alive from OA.ORG