

## August SusVic Mini-intensive The Necessity of Making a Call: Which Call?

### The reasons for "I didn't make any calls this week."

Check in calls are hard. We expose ourselves to the view and light of our fellow brothers. The enemy says, "you will be rejected," If we push thru and call any way. We see the truth that the enemy just wants to keep us in the dark and alone. We are not rejected by God and our brothers but embraced, comforted and supported in our cleansing.

There is the time factor (only on some days)...where I am so busy that it is 8:30 in the evening when I am able to make calls.(From a retired group member)

Fear! I think fear is the biggest obstacle. But you justify it in your head as I don't want to bother that person.

For me, there is also pride. I don't want to appear weak or needy, even in front of my brothers who I know will still accept me.

I don't want to be a burden. Silly reason, because I never see my brothers that way, but every time I think I need to make a call, that's the first thing that hinders me.

I am unwilling to be seen and fully known in my brokenness and failures. And, "I can fix this on my own."

Fear of being looked down on: "Can't this guy figure it out he has all the tools?" I just listened to an old voicemail from my alcoholic friend that drank himself to death this morning. He had the same fears I do.

An aspect I find daunting is allocating points each week. Some others have discerned accurate numbers based on each week. You brothers are likely are more familiar with what gets what point. Blessings!

Phones weigh a thousand pounds.

One of the main obstacles for me is the 3 hour time gap.

Category of explanations/excuses/justification/minimization

Pride.... I can do it my self

Guilt...I can't believe I'm still struggling with this or that

Shame..... what will my brothers think.

Fear.... of the guilt/shame we "perceive" will come out way

Helplessness..... I just wanna give up, be done, be over

Busyness..... just gonna check in here in a minute/ hour/ end of the day. Then it doesn't materialize

Jim - back to your question. For me it is one or multiple of many reasons.

1. Courage to initiate a call;
2. Awkwardness starting the conversation;
3. The sense of needing to have a 'problem to discuss';
4. Not having a personal connection with the person - not knowing him well (this one is self fulfilling);
5. Not wanting to dwell on an issue;
6. Not wanting to talk, particularly at the point when you most need to;
7. Wanting to be alone, withdraw.
8. Not having a specific 'ask';
9. Not wanting to confront failure;
10. Laziness, selfishness - it takes effort to develop and maintain relationships.
11. Texting is easier.
12. Feeling threatened about 'opening up'.
13. The tomorrow that never comes(procrastination)
14. Fear of rejection (this has never happened, but the fear still remains.
15. I'll fix it myself - I'm Superman!

In regard to texting, it's a deceptive way of communicating. What I mean is that at least for me, I can deceive myself into thinking that I'm truly connecting with the other person when I'm not. It lacks hearing the other person's true emotional and mental state.

## Group discussions/insights:

When we aren't calling brothers regularly (at some level) we are perpetuating our use of acting-in strategies with our brothers on our call. "Acting in can be the stuff that happens while I'm trying to collect my thoughts and make a decision about what to do next. Still, I need to do the thing that comes next." Acting-in behaviors include minimizing, avoiding, blame-shifting, stonewalling, passivity, etc.

"While I know that we all deal with the same issue, I don't know that everybody is dealing with the same stuff that I am. Will this guy really understand my unique stuff? Will he judge me? This has never happened."

"It's hard to ask for help." "This is hard work; it is exhausting." "To verbalize is uncomfortable."

"Once you get past the crisis stage, 'Oh, yeah, I can do this myself.'"

"I won't make a call when my wife is around."

Changing group rosters: "I knew what my buddy was going to say. Then he stopped Sustained Victory and I didn't know who to call."

JWP: "It's easier to be the helper than the helpee."

## **The reasons for making calls**

### *1. Engaging in herd behavior*

Participation Agreement, p. 14, The Twelve Steps: A Spiritual Journey

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to fully participate with my family group in working the Twelve Steps. As a part of my agreement, I will:

- Make this workshop a priority in my life for the designated number of weeks.
- **Participate fully in the group's work, discussions, activities, assignments, and projects.**
- Share my experience, strength, and hope during the meeting.
- Study the steps as thoroughly as possible by scheduling extra time for step work, reading additional materials, attending other 12-Step meetings, and discussing the steps with more experienced members.
- **Maintain contact with my family group members between meetings in order to foster the**
- Support my family group members individually by giving them my respectful attention, emotional support, and spiritual fellowship.
- Be as honest as possible in all things, especially with regard to what I am learning about myself—past and present.
- Express my feelings about myself, my family group and its members, my recovery, and my relationship with God.
- **Accept any discomfort or unsettling behavior changes that I may experience as a result of working the Twelve Steps.**
- Humbly submit to the recovery process.
- Remember that God loves me and wants me to succeed and that my ultimate goal is to experience God's will in my life.
- Pray, meditate, and work the first three steps daily.

## Group discussions/insights:

What do you experience during the weekly group call? Comraderie, insight, wisdom

“I belong. I am fitting in because I belong.”

“Check-in calls are ‘heard’ behavior.”

The group is safer than a one-on-one call. “I’m less likely to be placed in the spotlight.”  
“When it’s just the two of you and you’ve just talked about a boundary break, the other guy has got to say something. That might not happen in the weekly call.”

## *2. Recognizing that I am in danger*

What prevents me from checking in at Exhausted or Relapse? Even when a group member checks in with a primary boundary violation, rarely does he report that he has experienced Exhausted or Relapse during the previous week. So that prompts the question: when do you consider the FASTER scale to prepare for your weekly check-in?

When was the last time you recognized that you were in \_\_\_\_\_ ?

- Restoration
- Forgetting Priorities
- Anxiety
- Speeding Up
- Ticked Off
- Exhausted
- Relapse

## Group discussions/insights:

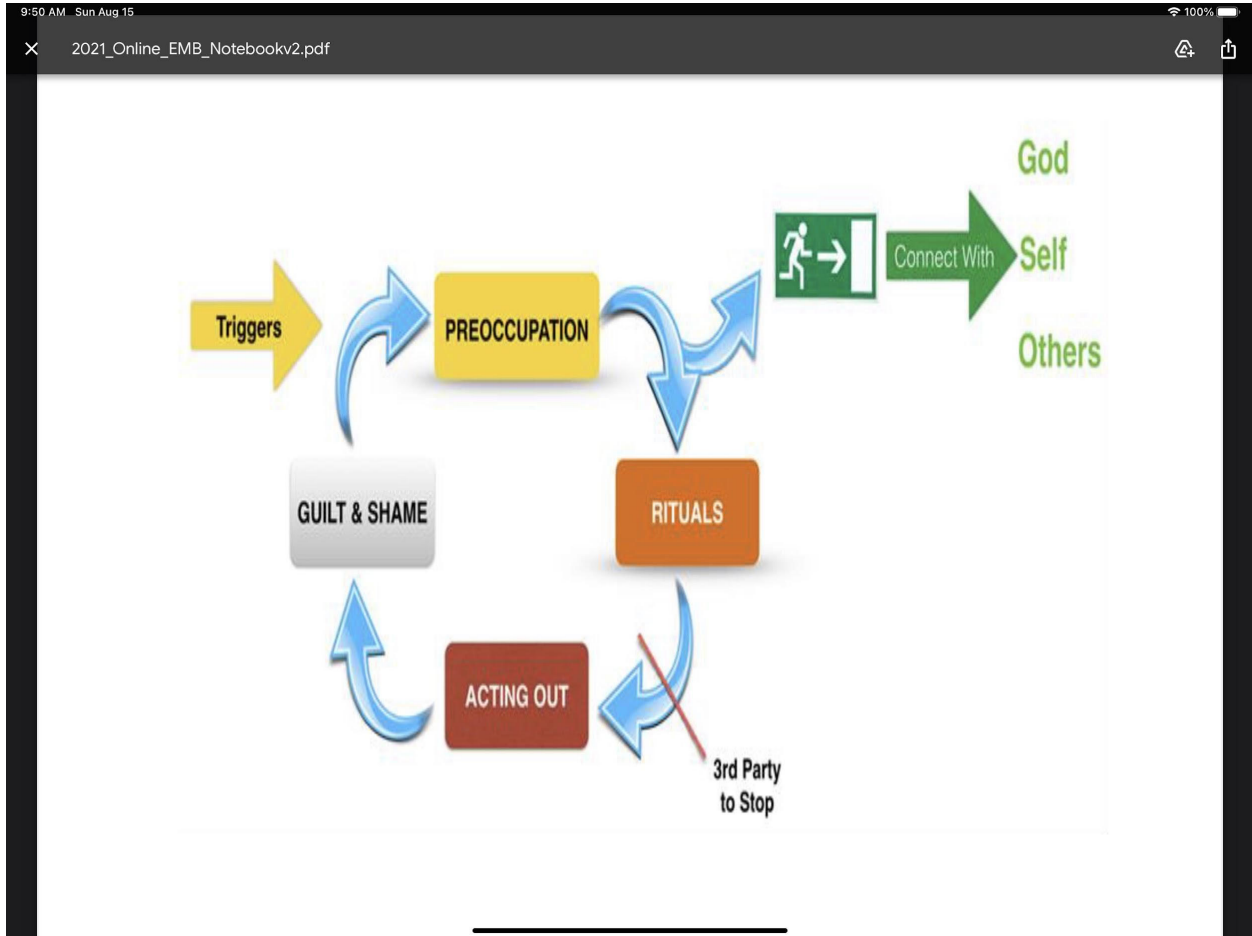
Group members rarely assess their current experience of life using the FASTER scale between meetings.

**Psalm 68:28**

**Summon your power, God;  
show us your strength, our God, as you have done before.**

John Calvin(commenting on Psalm 68:28): “Another lesson which the passage teaches us is, that more is required than that God should visit us at first with his preventing grace; that we stand constantly in need of his assistance throughout our whole lives. If this be true in literal warfare, where our conflict is with flesh and blood, it must be still more so in matters of the soul. It is impossible that we could stand one moment in the contest with such enemies as Satan, sin and the world, did we not receive from God the grace which secures our perseverance.”(Heart Aflame, June 9)

## How to make a call



### Group discussions/insights:

Preoccupation involves the mind, the emotions, and spiritual experience: shame messages, negative messages from myself and others, and doubts

### **FASTER SCALE**

#### **RESTORATION**

**F**orgetting Priorities  
**A**nxiety  
**S**peeding up  
**T**icked Off  
**E**xhausted  
**R**elapse

**Type of call**  
 check-in call  
 check-in call/care call  
 care call  
 combat call  
 combat call  
 crisis call  
 crisis call

**"self" message**  
 self-doubt  
 self-deprecating humor  
 self-pity  
 self-condemnation  
 self-loathing  
 self-loathing

## Group discussion/insights:

### Recognizing the features of the different kinds of call

1. Check-in: relationship building-you are gathering info about future calls; develop/deepen safety with a brother; cultivate shared language/experience: "How is it with your soul today?"
2. Care: unspecified fear/Jaws soundtrack; clarifying thinking/problems-you may not know: "I'm having a bad day...anybody got time to talk?"
3. Combat: assess triggers/recognize boundary compromises: "I'm under fire. I need help."
4. Crisis: finger poised above the mouse button/just clicked; disclose the boundary breaks/dissect the lies

Don't think of this call as one call, but part of a continuing conversation.

Making regular check-in calls is like developing "muscle memory."

Text to confirm availability, then call. "I need a call...anyone able to take a call?"

Schedule pre-arranged weekly check-in calls and keep the schedule.

Resist shaming a brother/being shamed by a brother or internal message

Don't be surprised if a call's purpose changes after it starts

Use the Attack Log to ask questions to help your brother become more self-aware; don't ask questions to help you "fix" him.

Suggestions for closing a call: "What are you taking away from our call?" "What are you going to do after this call is finished?"

G.K. Chesterton: "If something is worth doing, it's worth doing badly."

## **September mini-intensive: F.A.S.T.E.R. Scale personal quick-sheet**