

How Do I Find True Allies?

True, personal allies can often surprise you. They come in many forms, but over half of those that have been mentioned by others in crisis have one common quality. They have an emotional investment in your personal wellbeing. They aren't interested in your situation; they are interested in you. They are interested in how you are doing and not how the situation is going.

1. Former mentors can be one type of surprising type ally. They may see you as a part of their legacy and as a chance to again play a key role in your life. If they're retired, they may have a more balanced perspective of your field and what has a more lasting importance in life. If you feel embarrassed to approach them, view it as it being a favor to them. It tells them you value them and that you trust both their judgement and their confidence.

2. Very close, but lost old friends can be another emotionally invested ally. Like your closest confidant in graduate school, or the Best Man in your wedding who long since moved to the other coast. There was once a connection there that could be dusted off and polished. They understand the true you. You are each "the road less traveled" to the other one.

Strangely, while these first two allies know you very well, the third ally doesn't. They know you, but just not very well. They might live across the street, be the husband of your wife's friend, go to your church, do contract work for you, or be the girl scout leader in your daughter's Scout Troop. They really don't know you, but they do know what you're going through. They've gone through a similarly traumatic struggle that gives them experience-based empathy. They have a former life where they tackled alcoholism, struggled with their sexuality, lost their profession, or been in jail.

3. Empathy allies are the type of ally you might never have unless you're finely tuned into their invitation. They say "We should grab lunch sometime," your wife says "Carol said her husband has gone through something similar and you should call him sometime," or they write "Here's my home number; give me a call sometime." But you'll never meet empathy allies if you wait until "sometime."

Former mentors, lost old friends, and empathy allies all have three things in common:

1. They are emotionally invested in you
2. They are silently cheering for you to get back on your feet
3. They are waiting for your call.

Call them now. It's time.

Finding True Allies: The Action Step

<p>Your Three Types of Personal Allies</p> <p style="text-align: center;">---</p> <p>You should distinguish personal allies – those who care for you as person – from business or professional allies. Here are 3 types of personal allies.</p>	<p>Who Should You Contact?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">---</p> <p>Difficult for you as it seems, who’s at least one ally in each group you should talk to within the next two weeks?</p>	<p>By What Date?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">---</p> <p>What day within the next two weeks will you contact them?</p>
<p>1. Former Mentors</p> <p>You’re a part of their legacy, and now it’s their chance to help you again. You feel embarrassed to contact them, but instead you should frame it as a favor. You’re saying, “I value you, I value your opinion, and I value your trust.”</p>	•	•
<p>2. Very Close, Long Lost Friends</p> <p>They were your closest confidant in graduate school, or they were the Best Man who moved to the far coast. They know the true you even if you haven’t spoken in years. You are each “the road less traveled” to the other one.</p>	•	•
<p>3. Empathy Allies</p> <p>You don’t know it, but these people secretly survived an unrelated trauma (like alcoholism, career loss, jail, bankruptcy, etc.). They’ve reached out by asking you to lunch, by giving you their home number, or by telling their wife to tell your wife to give them a call. You probably overlooked their invitation. Now’s the time to call back.</p>	•	•