

yourself, listening to your life as you speak, becoming mindful of your thoughts and actions. It's being able to say, "This is the loss I have suffered. This is what I have done with it. This is how I cope. And I want you to listen. I want you to see it. I want a witness."

Becoming accountable means simultaneously witnessing yourself while somebody else witnesses you with unconditional acceptance. It means hearing yourself testify with immunity from shame and any externally or internally imposed constraints. It means revealing to yourself, without any fear of judgment, all that is hidden in the hideouts of your heart. Becoming accountable is the courageous act of placing yourself in the presence of someone who will stand beside you and say,

**"Walk with me. Tell me.  
Let me hear your story."**

As directed by one teenager, "It seems to me that when I tell people I am going to do something I am more inclined to do it than just by telling myself."

I met Jonathan when he was thirteen years-old. Once my self-appointed little brother, now a twenty-one year-old young man, he wrote me an email disclosing some of his internal controversy:

*I am in one of those moods where I need to talk to someone and it seems like no one wants to listen, or they don't have the time. I need to get this off my chest. It feels like I am all alone out here. It's like no one I know feels the same way. It's kind of like I am too grown up to talk to my friends about it and no adult wants to talk to me because I am a kid. It just feels like I have nowhere else to go. Everyone says, "You're gonna be great one day. You have so much potential." No one says, "You ARE great." I wish I could call fear "excitement," even though it feels like fear but I am so afraid that I am going to grow up and fail in life and everyone around me will be disappointed. And then again, I'm afraid I'm gonna succeed. I want someone to love me for who I am but I have no idea who I am. Really am. I know who I want people to think I am but I don't think that is really me. I don't know what to do with my life yet. I don't know what I want to be when I grow up. I don't know where I'm going, but I know I'm on the ramp to somewhere. And I think that before I can figure out all the rest of that stuff I need to find me. I just need someone to listen.*