

Some thoughts on becoming a Samaritan Volunteer

Written by a recent Eastbourne recruit

“Considering joining the Samaritans was not a spur of the moment decision. I was interested in becoming a volunteer but wondered would this be right for me? Or I guess more to the point would I have the right qualities the Samaritans were looking for.

Well I took the plunge and went along to an open evening to find out more. The crucial information I took away with me that made me decide to put in an application was that Callers to Samaritans need emotional support and that anyone of us at sometime in our lives are likely to need someone to listen to how we feel. We were told that a Samaritan Volunteer need not have any special qualifications except an ability to listen and commitment to give a minimum of four hours a week of their time.

Having been accepted I realised that every one of us started as equals no previous experience could have prepared me for the intensity of the Training. I understood when I started my period of observation just how important the preparation had been. Taking initial calls proved to be a challenge, with no idea what each call would bring and the uniqueness of each one I really had to draw on the skills learnt in training. Support from an experienced Samaritan and the opportunity to discuss how I felt was invaluable.

Becoming a Samaritan is not easy; it can be full of surprises, can challenge values and requires most of all the need to listen more than talk. I have learnt that being with a caller in distress on the phone or in person and listening to how they feel provides its own rewards and satisfaction having done the best you can”.

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