

Going Through The Steps

A.A. Sponsorship Pamphlet by Clarence Snyder 1944

This is the first pamphlet ever written concerning sponsorship. It was written by Clarence H. Snyder in early 1944. Its original title was to be "A.A. Sponsorship...Its Obligations and Its Responsibilities." It was printed by the Cleveland Central Committee under the title: "A.A. Sponsorship... Its Opportunities and Its Responsibilities."

PREFACE

Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is a potential sponsor of a new member and should clearly recognize the obligations and duties of such responsibility.

The acceptance of an opportunity to take the A.A. plan to a sufferer of alcoholism entails very real and critically important responsibilities. Each member, undertaking the sponsorship of a fellow alcoholic, must remember that he is offering what is frequently the last chance of rehabilitation, sanity or maybe life itself.

Happiness, Health, Security, Sanity and Life of human beings are the things we hold in balance when we sponsor an alcoholic.

No member among us is wise enough to develop a sponsorship program that can be successfully applied in every case. In the following pages, however, we have outlined a suggested procedure, which supplemented by the member's own experience, has proven successful.

PERSONAL GAINS OF BEING A SPONSOR

No one reaps full benefit from any fellowship he is connected with unless he wholeheartedly engages in its important activities. The expansion of Alcoholics Anonymous to wider fields of greater benefit to more people results directly from the addition of new, worth-while members or associates.

Any A.A. who has not experienced the joys and satisfaction of helping another alcoholic regain his place in life has not yet fully realized the complete benefits of this fellowship. On

the other hand, it must be clearly kept in mind that the only possible reason for bringing an alcoholic into A.A. is for that person's gain.

Sponsorship should never be undertaken to -

Increase the size of the group

For personal satisfaction and glory

Because the sponsor feels it his duty to re-make the world

Until an individual has assumed the responsibility of setting a shaking, helpless human being back on the path toward becoming a healthy useful, happy member of society, he has not enjoyed the complete thrill of being an A.A.

SOURCE OF NAMES

Most people have among their own friends and acquaintances someone who would benefit from our teachings. Others have names given to them by their church, by their doctor, by their employer, or by some other member, who cannot make a direct contact.

Because of the wide range of the A.A. activities, the names often come from unusual and unexpected places.

These cases should be contacted as soon as all facts such as: marital status, domestic relations, financial status, drink habits, employment status and others readily obtainable are at hand.

IS THE PROSPECT A CANDIDATE?

Much time and effort can be saved by learning as soon as possible if -

The man* really has a drinking problem?

Does he know he has a problem?

Does he want to do something about his drinking?

Does he want help?

*The masculine form is used throughout for simplicity, although it is intended to include women as well.

Sometimes the answers to these questions cannot be made until the prospect has had some A.A. instruction, and an opportunity to think. Often we are given names, which upon investigation, show the prospect is in no sense an alcoholic, or is satisfied with his present plan of living. We should not hesitate to drop these names from our lists. Be sure, however, to let the man know where he can reach us at a later date.

WHO SHOULD BECOME MEMBERS?

A.A. is a fellowship of men and women bound together by their inability to use alcohol in any form sensibly, or with profit or pleasure. Obviously, any new members introduced should be the same kind of people, suffering from the same disease.

Most people can drink reasonably, but we are only interested in those who cannot. Party drinkers, social drinkers, celebrators, and others who continue to have more pleasure than pain from their drinking, are of no interest to us.

In some instances an individual might believe himself to be a social drinker when he definitely is an alcoholic. In many such cases more time must pass before that person is ready to accept our program. Rushing such a man before he is ready might ruin his chances of ever becoming a successful A.A.. Do not ever deny future help by pushing too hard in the beginning.

Some people, although definitely alcoholic, have no desire or ambition to better their way of living, and until they do..... A.A. has nothing to offer them.

Experience has shown that age, intelligence, education, background, or the amount of liquor drunk, has little, if any, bearing on whether or not the person is an alcoholic.

PRESENTING THE PLAN

In many cases a man's physical condition is such that he should be placed in a hospital, if at all possible. Many A.A. members believe hospitalization, with ample time for the prospect to think and plan his future, free from domestic and business worries, offers distinct advantage. In many cases the hospitalization period marks the beginning of a new life.

Other members are equally confident that any man who desires to learn the A.A. plan for living can do it in his own home or while engaged in normal occupation. Thousands of cases are treated in each manner and have proved satisfactory.

SUGGESTED STEPS*

The following paragraphs outline a suggested procedure for presenting the A.A. plan to the prospect, at home or in the hospital.

QUALIFY AS AN ALCOHOLIC*

1. In calling upon a new prospect, it has been found best to qualify oneself as an ordinary person who has found happiness, contentment, and peace of mind through A.A. Immediately make it clear to the prospect that you are a person engaged in the routine business of earning a living. Tell him your only reason for believing yourself able to help him is because you yourself are an alcoholic and have had experiences and problems that might be similar to his.

TELL YOUR STORY*

2. Many members have found it desirable to launch immediately into their personal drinking story, as a means of getting the confidence and whole-hearted co-operation of the prospect.

It is important in telling the story of your drinking life to tell it in a manner that will describe an alcoholic, rather than a series of humorous drunken parties. This will enable the man to get a clear picture of an alcoholic which should help him to more definitely decide whether he is an alcoholic.

INSPIRE CONFIDENCE IN A.A.*

3. In many instances the prospect will have tried various means of controlling his drinking, including hobbies, church, changes of residence, change of associations, and various control plans.

These will, of course, have been unsuccessful. Point out your series of unsuccessful efforts to control drinking...their absolute fruitless results and yet that you were able to stop drinking through application of A.A. principles.

This will encourage the prospect to look forward with confidence to sobriety in A.A. in spite of the many past failures he might have had with other plans.

TALK ABOUT "PLUS" VALUES*

4. Tell the prospect frankly that he can not quickly understand all the benefits that are coming to him through A.A.. Tell him of the happiness, peace of mind, health, and in many cases, material benefits which are possible through understanding and application of the A.A. way of life.

SHOW IMPORTANCE OF READING BOOK*

5. Explain the necessity of reading and re-reading the A.A. book. Point out that this book gives a detailed description of the A.A. tools and the suggested methods of application of these tools to build a foundation of rehabilitation for living.

This is a good time to emphasize the importance of the twelve steps and the four absolutes.

QUALITIES REQUIRED FOR SUCCESS IN A.A.*

6. Convey to the prospect that the objectives of A.A. are to provide the ways and means for an alcoholic to regain his normal place in life. Desire, patience, faith, study and application are most important in determining each individual's plan of action in gaining full benefits of A.A.

INTRODUCE FAITH*

7. Since the belief of a Power greater than oneself is the heart of the A.A. plan, and since this idea is very often difficult for a new man, the sponsor should attempt to introduce the beginnings of an understanding of this all-important feature.

Frequently this can be done by the sponsor relating his own difficulty in grasping a spiritual understanding and the methods he used to overcome his difficulties.

LISTEN TO HIS STORY*

8. While talking to the newcomer, take time to listen and study his reactions in order that you can present your information in a more effective manner. Let him talk too. Remember...Easy Does It.

TAKE TO SEVERAL MEETINGS*

9. To give the new member a broad and complete picture of A.A., the sponsor should take him to various meetings within convenient distance of his home. Attending several meetings gives a new man a chance to select a group in which he will be most happy and comfortable, and it is extremely important to let the prospect make his own decision as to which group he will join.

Impress upon him that he is always welcome at any meeting and can change his home group if he so wishes.

EXPLAIN A.A. TO PROSPECT'S FAMILY*

10. A successful sponsor takes pains and makes any required effort to make certain that those people closest and with the greatest interest in their prospect (mother, father, wife, etc.) are fully informed of A.A., its principles and its objectives.

The sponsor sees that these people are invited to meetings, and keeps them in touch with the current situation regarding the prospect at all times.

HELP PROSPECT ANTICIPATE HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE*

11. A prospect will gain more benefit from a hospitalization period if the sponsor describes the experience and helps him anticipate it, paving the way for those members who will call on him.

CONSULT OLDER MEMBERS IN A.A.*

These suggestions for sponsoring a new man in A.A. teachings are by no means complete. They are intended only for a framework and general guide. Each individual case is different and should be treated as such. Additional information for sponsoring a new man can be obtained from the experience of older men in the work.

A co-sponsor, with an experienced and newer member working on a prospect, has proven very satisfactory. Before undertaking the responsibility of sponsoring, a member should make certain that he is able and prepared to give the time, effort, and thought such an obligation entails.

It might be that he will want to select a co-sponsor to share the responsibility, or he might feel it necessary to ask another to assume the responsibility for the man he has located.

IF YOU ARE GOING TO BE A SPONSOR...BE A GOOD ONE!

(* These headings were not in the original draft for this pamphlet. They were added for the first, and subsequent printings.)

Before beginning the steps the sponsor must first qualify the person who has requested to follow the path. Find out if they really are alcoholic and, just as important, if YOU feel that they willing and ready to go to any lengths to change their lives and not drink forever.

(Page 142, Big Book: "Will he take every necessary step, submit to anything to get well, to stop drinking forever?")

Ask your prospect 3 qualifying questions:

Do you think you have a drinking problem?

Do you want to do anything about the problem?

What are you willing to do about it?

If you get the answers: (1) yes, (2) yes, and (3) anything, and you feel that the person is ready to follow directions without question, you both are ready to continue all the way.

If you feel that they are not ready, tell them so and go on to the next person. (Page 96, Big Book: "To spend too much time on any one situation is to deny some other alcoholic an opportunity to live and be happy.") The program and your own recovery are not dependent upon winning friends and influencing people.

If you feel that they are ready, then you start. There are five phases to the Steps:

STEP 1: ADMISSION,

STEPS 2 and 3: SUBMISSION,

STEPS 4, 5, 6, and 7: CONFESSION,

STEPS 8 and 9: RESTITUTION,

STEPS 10, 11 and 12: THE LIVING STEPS, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

STEP ONE:

Who's boss -- them or the alcohol? (The above qualification should pretty much answer the first half of the step)...That our lives had become unmanageable, not only our drinking -- all phases of our existence were and are unmanageable.

It stands to reason that if we can't manage our lives and we are acting in a manner that is not very sane (unmanageability is not sane living) then we have to take...

STEP TWO:

Come to believe that a power GREATER than ourselves, something other than us can manage our lives. A power that can bring sanity back to the way we live. Who are we to believe that WE are the greatest?

When we did Step 1, we admitted that we couldn't manage our own lives. When we took Step 2, we said that someone greater than us could manage us and restore us. We needed new to have a new manager, a living, loving God.

STEP THREE:

We made the decision that we needed to come under new management since our own management got us nowhere. So we turn our wills and lives over to the care of our new manager -- Jesus.

He will take care of us and manage our lives since we admitted in Step 1 that our lives were unmanageable, and in Step 2, that He could restore us to a manageable state and sanity. At this point both of you get down on your knees...

Both on knees, the sponsor says:

"Jesus, this is ___(name)___, he is coming to You in all humility to ask You to guide and direct him. _____(name)_____ realizes that his life is messed up and unmanageable.

_____(name)_____ is coming to You Lord in all humility to ask to be one of your children -- to work for you, to serve and dedicate his life to You and to turn his will and life over that he may be an instrument of Your love.

Person repeats after sponsor:

"Lord, I ask that You guide and direct me, and that I have decided to turn my will and life over to You.

To serve You and dedicate my life to You. I ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ. I thank you Lord; I believe that if I ask this in prayer, I shall receive what I have asked for. Thank you Jesus. Amen."

Now that we have gone under new management, we believe what it says in the Big Book at the end of the Steps in How It Works:

A: We were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives,

B: No human power could RELIEVE our alcoholism,

C: GOD COULD AND WOULD IF HE WERE SOUGHT!!!!

Then we have to take an inventory.

STEP FOUR:

Take a searching and fearless moral inventory. We must find out what we've got, what we need to get rid of, and what we need to acquire. There are 20 character defects to ask about -- the individual wrongs are not necessary to go over, just the defects that caused them.

Going over the questions, you ask that the person be honest and admit his defects to himself, to you, and to God (where two or more are gathered in His name, there shall He be.) By admitting, the person also takes.

STEP FIVE:

The inventory is of our defects, not our incidents. Here are the defects:

Resentment, Anger	Fear, Cowardice
Self pity	Self justification
Self importance, Egotism	Self condemnation, Guilt
Lying, Evasiveness, Dishonesty	Impatience
Hate	False pride, Phoniness, Denial
Jealousy	Envy
Laziness	Procrastination
Insincerity	Negative Thinking
Immoral thinking	Perfectionism, Intolerance
Criticizing, Loose Talk, Gossip	Greed

Now that you've admitted these defects, ask, "Don't you want to get rid of them?" These same defects caused your life to be unmanageable. How can you ask God to get rid of the THINGS you did in your past? YOU CAN'T!!

You can ask to get rid of the defects, which caused you to act in the manner you did by taking...

STEP SIX:

You were ENTIRELY ready (not almost, not just about, not partially) to have God remove ALL (not some) of these defects. He cannot remove things that have already happened. You are ready to get rid of ALL of them, even the ones that are fun.

REMEMBER, YOU TURNED YOUR WILL AND LIFE OVER TO GOD IN STEP THREE.

Now comes...

STEP SEVEN:

On your knees you ask that these defects be removed, these shortcomings listed in your inventory... Both on knees, the sponsor says:

"Lord, here is your child, ____ (name) _____. He is coming to you in all humility to humbly ask your forgiveness, believing that anything he asks in prayer, he humbly shall receive.

Person repeats after sponsor:

"I, ____ (name) _____, humbly ask you oh Lord, to remove my shortcomings and forgive me, my sins and trespasses, and ask in all humility that you will remove my defects and shortcomings because I am one of your children and I truly believe.

Thank you Jesus, Amen."

Sponsor: "Your sins are removed in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

Both: "Thank you Jesus, Amen."

STEP EIGHT:

You make a list of all persons you have harmed, starting with yourself, family, friends, employers, employees, etc. If the person was involved in the occult, God's forgiveness must be asked.

We discuss briefly this list, and ask if they are willing to make restitution and amends. (Since the sponsor is boss - you really don't ask... it is assumed.)

Then restitution is made to all as soon as possible, except in certain instances where it is turned over to God. They will have done

STEP NINE:

by making restitution. After doing these 9 steps, your slate is wiped clean. You are reborn as it says in the Big Book on page 63, "We were reborn."

II Corinthians 5:17 says,

"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, all things are made new!

STEP TEN:

We continued to take personal inventory every night: did you harm anyone, have you done something wrong? Do you deserve a gold star or a black mark?

You ask forgiveness honestly, and all is forgiven by the Lord -- clean slate. When you are wrong, promptly admit it. When you don't, use the inventory at night to do so.

Deal with your life by the four absolutes:

ABSOLUTE LOVE, ABSOLUTE HONESTY, ABSOLUTE UNSELFISHNESS, and ABSOLUTE PURITY.

Did you act out of Love?

Were you honest?

Were you unselfish?

Were your motives pure?

All things must be based on these four things...

STEP ELEVEN:

Prayer is talking to God -- meditation is listening to Him. Pray, go to church, read the bible, read the Big Book. Get to know the Word of God so that you will understand it when you meditate. Thy will, not mine, be done!!!!

STEP TWELVE:

A spiritual awakening is THE RESULT of working, doing, and LIVING, ALL of the 12 Steps! Then you have this message to carry to others.

There is no message unless you have done the first 9 Steps and are living the last three. You can't give what you don't have. You must practice these principles in ALL your affairs.

Now it is your responsibility to give this message to others as you have received it. Not changed, watered down, or how others may want it in their lives. If they want what you have, they must do what you did.

It is now your legacy to hand down, AS IT WAS GIVEN TO YOU -- NO OTHER WAY!!!!

It is recommended that two people work with the newcomer through the steps whenever possible, so that both may learn as well as give.

There is no easier, softer way -- this is it. This is the PROGRAM OF RECOVERY as it was in the 1930's in Ohio, as Dr. Bob gave it.

You can and DO recover, you don't have to stay sick -- you can and do get WELL!!! This is the solution; this is HOW IT WORKS.

Don't trudge the Happy Road to Recovery; walk with your head high, knowing that through you, God will help others to RECOVER as you have.

May God bless and be with you.