

BECOMING A SPONSOR: What does it mean to you to become a sponsor? What's in your way of doing it? In general, the comments about what keeps people from becoming a sponsor were a variety of fears and the weight of expectations in time, energy and the amount of recovery they are supposed to have.

Fears:

- Not good enough; not sane enough; not enough recovery; not enough to offer
- Comparisons: I could never give what my sponsor gives to me
- Fear of the unknown and what will be expected of me
- Low self-esteem
- Perfectionism – belief that it requires some level of mastery I have yet attained; I need to have all of the answers (or at least more than I have now)
- That it will require more intimacy than I believe I'm capable of
- That I will fail in some way
- Fear of commitment and revealing oneself
- I don't have enough time
- Difficulty setting boundaries

Comments in Response to the Fears of becoming a sponsor:

- A sponsor is not someone else's Higher Power; don't know God's will for anyone else: How will you rely on a loving God as the one authority in your service as sponsor?
- Lighten it up: Do we put too much emphasis on it and see it as too big of a responsibility? Too many expectations?
- Avoid "stinky thinking": It is not a position that requires perfection or knowing all the answers
- Sponsorship is a convenient sounding board, not your Higher Power
- Agree to meet once and then see how it feels
- Offer to be a temporary sponsor until they find a permanent sponsor
- Progress not perfection
- At some point, everyone was new, so you can give to someone what you can give and it's OK.
- Can end relationship at any time if not working
- You do not need to do this alone
- A greater amount of time in the program does not equal more wisdom than another...it doesn't guarantee a smart, healthy, perfect sponsor
- Sponsoring is service, period!
- Focus on your assets and what you've already gained rather than your fears, negative attitudes and defects
- Working with someone else is a reminder of what we need to do and keeps us connected to the program

What defines "ready"?

- Comments varied from "one day more than the person asking"; to "if you are asked, you are ready"; to "completed steps 1 – 4"; to "needing to have done all of the steps"; to "having at least a couple of years in the program".
- So, do people need to wait to sponsor until they are confident they have enough time, energy and recovery? If so, what does that recovery need to look like?
- This is where the comments varied the most, so let's start by reading from the literature:

****Read from brochure: *When am I ready to Sponsor? Pg 7***

How does one know they are ready to sponsor?

- You don't! It takes willingness, courage to try and awareness of what your expectations are and what your hesitation is.
- Have you found yourself wanting to give newer people the comfort, compassion, gifts or wisdom that you've received and helped you so much?
- Do you notice your previous attitudes and challenges in new people?
- Do you feel grateful for the progress you've made? Do you want to make further progress?

Additional Comments sent to me:

- Experience in the program is not a requirement - years in the program does not guarantee a good sponsor
- Nowhere in the literature does it state a *requirement* to have a sponsor in order to be a sponsor, nor does it say anything about length of time in the program or having worked any or all of the steps.
- Perhaps a person closer to the pain can identify and listen better?

****As we move into discussing "Being a Sponsor", Read *Hope for Today*, pg 132**

Comments from forum:

- *There are no set rules/requirements on how to BE a sponsor*
- *Fear of getting engulfed*
- *Couldn't self-identify as ready do needed encouragement*
- *Comparisons: people's outsides look good in Marin, so when we compare our insides, we fall short*
- *Everyone has their own threshold to cross in becoming ready to sponsor; Sponsors can help people to cross it*
- *Let it begin with me—if someone asks, just let it BEGIN with me. If someone reaches out to you, you don't have to be their permanent sponsor, but it's important to give some assistance in their finding one.*
- *Learn HOW to say no: don't leave someone hanging. Reach out a hand and invite them to a fellowship gathering of lunch; introduce them to another potential sponsor*
- *Don't take self-care too far: be open*
- *Important not to talk beyond your experience: If you are new to sponsoring, tell the person asking.*
- *Starting a relationship with someone that's brand new – it's more like research than certainty.*
- *It's OK to limit participation to our own experience, strength and hope*
- *In AA, sponsorship is an exercise in getting out of yourself; In Alanon, it is an exercise in being in relationship without getting out of yourself.*
- *Ready to be a sponsor defined as: Someone asks you; you are ready to take a risk; your sponsor says you are ready*
- *Remember, you don't have to do this alone*