

Pick One- Sponsorship Reading

Instructions:

- 1. Pick one reading from the attached pages.***
 - 2. The Chairperson will ask you to read it at the end of the meeting.***
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Page 25, describes the Spiritual Toolkit and spiritual experience: *“When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of*

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which we had not even dreamed.

*The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective **spiritual experiences*** which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life..."*

Page 89 & 159, explains why we give it away to keep it: "PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE shows that **nothing** will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics!" **Page 159 continues this thought...**"*Though they knew they must help other alcoholics if they would remain sober, that motive became secondary. It was transcended by the happiness they found in giving themselves for others."*

Page 14 & 15 Bill describes what his sponsor said originally: *"My friend had emphasized the absolute necessity of demonstrating these principles in all my affairs. Particularly was it imperative to work with others as he had worked with me. Faith without works was dead, he said. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us it is just like that."*

The Original Way Group- group conscience summary on sponsorship: A spiritual experience that can conquer alcoholism is the result of working the steps with a sponsor. Sponsors can be found in a couple basic ways:

- 1.) Newcomers approaching sponsors.
- 2.) Sponsors approaching newcomers.

Cleveland AA Founder, Clarence S is an example of a newcomer approaching his sponsor. He was faced with either losing his wife or going to see Dr. Bob. He physically drove to Akron and approached Dr. Bob for help. Clarence went on to write the first pamphlet on AA Sponsorship which emphasizes carrying the message.

Ebby, Bill and Bob are examples of sponsors approaching newcomers. Ebby physically carried the message to Bill in Towns Hospital. Bill searched for and drove to Dr Bob in Akron. Dr. Bob took 5000 people through the steps in 15 years. When faced with cravings to drink the founders carried the message to other alcoholics. This kept them sober. It is the reason AA has grown rapidly. It can be vital to happiness in sobriety.

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Page 97 - The Foundation Stone of helping others is emphasized.

*Never avoid these responsibilities, but be sure you are doing the right thing if you assume them. Helping others is the **foundation stone** of your recovery. A kindly act once in a while isn't enough. You have to act the Good Samaritan every day, if need be. It may mean the loss of many nights' sleep, great interference with your pleasures, interruptions to your business. It may mean sharing your money and your home, counseling frantic wives and relatives, innumerable trips to police courts, sanitariums, hospitals, jails and asylums. Your telephone may jangle at any time of the day or night. Your wife may sometimes say she is neglected. A drunk may smash the furniture in your home, or burn a mattress. You may have to fight with him if he is violent. Sometimes you will have to call a doctor and administer sedatives under his direction. Another time you may have to send for the police or an ambulance. Occasionally you will have to meet such conditions.*

Page 98, which Discusses Trusting God.

Job or no job—wife or no wife—we simply do not stop drinking so long as we place dependence upon other people ahead of dependence on God. Burn the idea into the consciousness of every man that he can get well regardless of anyone. The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house.

Page 123-124, where it describes how we use our “dark past” to help others.

*The first impulse will be to bury these skeletons in a dark closet and padlock the door. The family may be possessed by the idea that future happiness can be based only upon forgetfulness of the past. We think that such a view is self centered and in direct conflict with the new way of living...[Further Down Page 124] Cling to the thought that, in God's hands, the “**dark past**” is the greatest possession you have—the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert death and misery for them.*

Page 18, where it explains how we can “approach” newcomers.

*“That the man making who is making the **approach** has had the same difficulty. that he obviously knows what he is talking about, that his whole deportment shouts at the new prospect that he is a man with a real answer, that he has no attitude of Holier Than Thou, nothing whatever except the sincere desire to be helpful; that there are no fees to pay, no axes to grind, no people to please, no lectures to be endured...”*

Early Members Stories Describing Sponsorship

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Page 219-220, A Vicious Cycle, An early member wouldn't ask for help but gets sober when a sponsor carried the message to him.

I seriously doubt I ever would have asked for help, but Fitz, an old school friend of mine, had persuaded Jackie to call on me. Had he come two or three days later, I think I would have thrown him out, but he hit when I was open for anything. Jackie arrived about seven in the evening and talked until three a.m. I don't remember much of what he said, but I did realize that here was another guy exactly like me; he had been in the same laughing academies and the same jails, known the same loss of jobs, same frustrations, same boredom, and the same loneliness. If anything, he had known all of them even better and more often than I. Yet he was happy, relaxed, confident, and laughing. That night, for the first time in my life, I really let down my hair and admitted my general loneliness.

Page 229 - THE VICIOUS CYCLE, explains how the steps were laid out in the Big Book.

Around this time our big A.A. book was being written, and it all became much simpler; we had a definite formula that some sixty of us agreed was the middle course for all alcoholics who wanted sobriety, and that formula has not been changed one iota down through the years.

Page 243-244 Jim's Story, He finds hope when his sponsor comes to him.

About seven that evening my sponsor walked in, Charlie G....After Charlie had talked a while, I knew that this man had something. In that short period he built within me something that I had long since lost, which was hope.

Page 263 - He Sold Himself Short, A founder describes how Dr. Bob took him and 5000 other people through the steps in 15 years.

Dr. Bob led me through all of these steps. At the moral inventory, he brought up several of my bad personality traits or character defects, such as selfishness, conceit, jealousy, carelessness, intolerance, ill temper, sarcasm, and resentments. We went over these at great length, and then he finally asked me if I wanted these defects of character removed. When I said yes, we both knelt at his desk and prayed, each of us asking to have these defects taken away. This picture is still vivid. If I live to be a hundred, it will always stand out in my mind. It was very impressive, and I wish that every A.A. could have the benefit of this type of sponsorship today.

Page 287 - The Missing Link, Explains how the message was carried to him.

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The idea that religion and spirituality were not one and the same was a new notion. My sponsor asked that I merely remain open-minded to the possibility that there was a Power greater than myself, one of my own understanding. He assured me that no person was going to impose a belief system on me, that it was a personal matter. Reluctantly, I opened my mind to the fact that maybe, just maybe, there was something to this spiritual lifestyle. Slowly but surely, I realized there was indeed a Power greater than myself, and I soon found myself with a full-time God in my life and following a spiritual path that didn't conflict with my personal religious convictions. Following this spiritual path made a major difference in my life.

Page 289-290, Fear of Fear, This woman gets confronted by her sponsor in early AA.

As we walked back through the hall, I, for the first time in my life, said to another human being, "I'm having trouble with my drinking too." She took me by the hand and introduced me to the woman that I'm very proud to call my sponsor. This woman and her husband are both in A.A., and she said to me, "Oh, but you're not the alcoholic; it's your husband." I said, "Yes." She said, "How long have you been married?" I said, "Twenty-seven years." She said, "Twenty-seven years to an alcoholic! How did you ever stand it?" I thought, now here's a nice, sympathetic soul! This is for me. I said, "Well, I stood it to keep the home together, and for the children's sake." She said, "Yes, I know. You're just a martyr, aren't you?" I walked away from that woman grinding my teeth and cursing under my breath.

Page 365 - Tightrope, Explains why a "Hard Sell" wouldn't work for him.

I did not fall in love with A.A. at first glance. The man who took me to my first meeting later became my first sponsor, and he had to put up with objections, arguments, questions, and doubts—everything a trained but very muddled legal mind could throw at him. He was gentle with me. He did not push his opinions on me. He had the sense to see that I was so afraid and so used to being alone that I could not face a "hard sell" approach. He listened to my questions, answered some, and suggested that I could best answer others myself. He refused to argue but was willing to explain and share his own experiences. I had asked him to be my sponsor before I knew what he did for a living and felt I could not back out of the relationship when I discovered he was a minister.

Page 366 - Tightrope, Tells what an early AA sponsor told his sponsee about Self Will.

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My sponsor was a living damper on my intolerance. But even more, he told me that it would be all right for me to doubt God, that A.A. was not a religious program and, to belong, I did not have to adhere to any set of beliefs. He suggested that for me a good starting point would simply be recognition of the fact that I had failed in running the world—in short, acceptance of the fact that I was not God. He also suggested that I might try occasionally to act as if I believed. Somewhere I had heard that it is easier to act yourself into a new way of thinking than to think yourself into a new way of acting, and this made sense in the context of “acting as if.”

Page 373 - FLOODED WITH FEELING, A sponsor suggests some “Controlled Drinking” to a newcomer.

From time to time I would tell the truth. I said in a meeting that I was afraid to get a sponsor because I was afraid he might ask me to do something. I left that meeting with a phone number. I called it, and sure enough, my new sponsor started leading me through the steps, using the Big Book. I called him every day. I told him that I just didn't want to be an alcoholic. He said it didn't matter what I wanted. The question I had to answer for myself was whether I was or I wasn't. He even suggested that I could try a little controlled drinking if I wasn't sure. I knew I had never been able to do that. I didn't have to do any more “research.” All I really had to do was review the drinking I had already done.