

---

# Desert Recovery

---

## Sponsorship - The Shorter Road to Recovery

My sponsor is a tough-love gal, long term program and guides me in the steps. She's been around for years and the first time I heard her speak, I knew she was the one I wanted. She had the program, understood how to use the steps daily, and believed that the LOVING God she had created for herself in Step 2 would, in fact, help her in every situation life might have in store for her.

Sponsors are the guides for this program, and we get to pick if we want to take the long road to recovery or the short road. The long road was my first way, then I finally came to realize that compulsive overeating could and would kill me. I became willing to go to any lengths for my recovery.

Those are type types of people I like to work with. I am a sponsor. I am not a therapist, marriage counselor, banker, baby-sitter, or nurse; BUT you can count on me in bad times for support, and with skills on how to use the steps in living life on life's terms.

Sponsors usually become our friends if we work with them long enough. They stroke us in our spiritual growth, and give us perspective on how the program really works.

It takes time and practice to develop trust, but I have years ahead of me now that I am in recovery. I cannot express how important it is to work with a sponsor through all the steps. Once you get into a pattern of 10-11- and 12, you might not need daily contact.

God is the greatest sponsor of all. It is my higher power that I turn to first, then my sponsor, then the group. I give thanks for this program, thanks for those who sponsor, and

gratitude that God now does for me what I could not do for myself.

- A 15 year veteran  
Tucson Area OA

## WHY HAVE A SPONSOR?

I attended my first 12-step meeting 30 years ago. I would be diligent about attending for a while, then the disease would take control and I would again believe I could do it on my own. I'd quit for a while, and then life would become difficult again. Each time the pain inside got too intense, I'd return to the meetings, looking for the unconditional love and acceptance there for me. I played around with the program until five years ago. The key to committing to the Program and recovery was getting a sponsor. She helped me get some discipline back in my life. She helped me work the 12 steps. The gifts I have received from using this special tool of sponsorship are:

- 1) **Honesty** with myself, with others and with God. As my sponsor has said many times, "You can say anything if you say it gently." A written daily 10th step and a daily sharing of it with my sponsor keeps me on track with a daily inventory.
- 2) Even when life gets tough, listening to others share at meetings hearing their daily struggle, their experience, strength and hope gives me **Hope** as well.
- 3) I have **Faith** that the Program works. Nothing else in my life helped me to feel the peace of mind and happiness I have today. My faith comes from pursuing God's will in my life daily. I do the footwork, and he provides the results.
- 4) Today I have the **Courage** to live and accept reality on a daily basis. Before joining



OA and getting a sponsor, I never remember wanting to live. Working the step with my sponsor gave me back my life. I am grateful for a rich, contented, happy life one day at a time.

5) OA and my sponsor helped me develop the **Integrity** to identify and stick to my values. Sometimes that meant letting go of a job or relationship. Working the steps taught me how to be responsible for myself and my choices in life.

6) Today, I am **Willing** to go to any lengths to get to a meeting, write a daily 10th step inventory, call my sponsor daily, read my daily meditation in the morning and evening, sponsor others in the program, and ask God on a daily basis to show me His will for me.

7) **Humility** has been a difficult lesson for this self-centered arrogant child of God. Today I am grateful I don't have all the answers. I don't have to be perfect. God loves me just as I am. My sponsor helped me see, "I don't have to DO to BE."

8) The **discipline** of using the tools of recovery daily keeps me on the track, centered and balanced. Even on the "blue funk" days, I'm willing to work all the tools. I know in my heart that "this too shall pass." It works for others and it will work for me.

9) The daily giving and receiving of **Unconditional** love and acceptance from my sponsor and sponsees are like a daily reminder of God's love for me.

10) Some nights I'm just too tired to work my 10th step and read my meditations. Then I remember a sponsor in Virginia saying "Take only 5 minutes to write 5 lines. That's all God asks of us." I also **Remember** how painful life was before recovery. That's enough to convince me I don't need to make any excuses, and just do it.

11) The slow awakening of my beautiful,

God-created soul comes through daily **Awareness** shared with me by others in the program.

12) The greatest **Service** I can give to others is to "pass on" what my sponsor has given me. She is not a "god." She is just another OAer who is willing to share her experience, strength and hope with me one day at a time.

Get a sponsor as soon as possible -- it's the **KEY** to recovery in OA.

- Carol E., Tucson Area OA

## GETTING/BEING THE PERFECT SPONSOR

Why do compulsive personalities always want rules?

A sponsor must have worked the first five steps (perfectly, of course). A sponsor is someone who is fully recovered (I can't sponsor anyone if I've slipped in the last 21 days -- where did that ubiquitous twenty-one days come from? What magic occurs after three weeks?).

My sponsor *has* to have the same socio-economic background and religious beliefs. *Must* have the same type of "abstinence," *must* have the same lifestyle and attitudes.

These are some of the things I am most often asked about sponsorship. Some more questions are: When is someone ready to sponsor? How do you sponsor (nazi drill sergeant or Pollyanna nice)? Is it OK to call the sponsee? How often should a sponsor be called? Is it OK to socialize with a sponsor?

Everybody wants rules, the *perfect* way to give and receive sponsoring. Well, there is no perfection only progress.

I think one of the best ways to find



information and guidelines, not rules, is to read chapter seven "Working With Others" in the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous). Also, the description of a sponsor in the "Tools of Recovery" pamphlet is basic. The pamphlet, "A Guide to the 12 Steps for You and Your Sponsor" is another valuable guide.

The bottom line is: The *only* thing I can ever give is what I've got, my experience, strength and hope. "Talking the talk" and being phony is just as bad as waiting to be perfect before I offer myself to others.

For me, the key to great sponsoring is setting my ego aside and letting God use me as an example. Sometimes it's even an example of what not to do. If so, I know I've served some greater good.

Sponsoring is a tool, not a popularity or beauty contest. It's not the end of the world (or your program) to try out a sponsor -- kind of a test period, before deciding to make a committed partnership. And if and when it's necessary, either person can "re-negotiate" the partnership.

Be flexible and remember the thought for the month: The truth will make you free -- but first it will piss you off!

- Reprinted from the SOAR Newsletter  
June, 1988

### "Hello, I'm Bingeing"

I was awakened around midnight with a call. "Hello . . . I'm bingeing." At first I thought about how late it was, then I said "You must want to stop, because you called me. Why did you call?"

"I don't know. I'm sick. I'm broke. I want to throw up" she said.

"I know you're feeling pretty ugly right now. I've been there. I want you to remember when you hang up tonight that no matter if you keep on eating, or purge, or give up and

go to sleep, I want you to think of me laying here thinking beautiful thoughts about you. I love you." She started to cry. Silence. "I don't believe anyone can love me like this," she said.

I separated thoughts for her, describing to her that I loved the human being she was. I didn't love what the disease was doing to her, I didn't love that she was full of junk food and crying, but that I loved her sheer honesty when she said "I'm bingeing. Help me!" But that was all in my head, not over the phone at midnight when I was in the throws of the disease. "You're being open and honest," I said.

I pretty much took over the phone call then, confirming that I did love her, that I loved her openness, her growing pains, assuring her I would be thinking of her. By "thinking of her" I meant I would ask my Higher Power to watch over her in her journey, ask Him to strengthen her willingness to love herself as He loves her, and so many other loving thoughts.

She had stopped crying. She committed to throw the rest of the food down the drain. I waited in silence as she did this. I told her I wanted her to recover, that it's not easy but it's simple. "I want to see you at a meeting tomorrow," I said, "so I can give you a big hug." She said "I need to be there, God knows." "How about meeting me for dinner beforehand?" I asked. "Oh, gee, would you really?" We firmed up our plans and said good-bye. I went right back to sleep, thanking God for the phone call that kept me abstinent.

- Cocoon Newsletter  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Next month's topic will be the 12 steps. If you have any stories of experience, strength and hope to share regarding working any of the 12 steps,, please submit it by the second week of the month to Lisa [redacted]

[redacted], Tucson [redacted] 5



## Help Us Celebrate Your OA Birthday!

Fred C.

July 29

3 years



**Are You Available for Late-Night Outreach Calls? If so, Call Lisa at [REDACTED] We Will Print a List of Names in Next Month's Newsletter of Individuals Who Can Help Those in Crisis Late at Night.**

## QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT

## TUCSON OA INTERGROUP

GROUP	SECOND QUARTER	YTD
Came to Believe	\$ 22.68	\$ 52.68
Eastside Stop-Off	30.00	205.00
Easy Does It	-0-	-0-
Free to be Me	39.15	39.15
Freedom	65.50	125.50
Going Sane	-0-	-0-
Gratitude	28.00	49.00
Green Valley	-0-	-0-
Highsteppers	-0-	9.06
Honeymooners	-0-	-0-
I'm a Miracle	-0-	-0-
Just for Today	102.24	220.18
KISS	-0-	-0-
Marana	-0-	-0-
Men's Group	8.00	8.00
Northern Lights	100.00	250.00
Oasis	-0-	-0-
Omni	-0-	50.50
Pink Cloud	12.00	39.50
Positive Pitch	-0-	-6.80
Promises	-0-	11.52
Recovery (Mon)	-0-	-0-
Safe Place	68.50	95.50
Sat. 4th Step	-0-	-0-
Sat. Study Group	173.47	173.47
Sierra Vista	-0-	100.00
Silhouette	20.85	45.85
Steps into Reality	-0-	-0-
Sunday Big Book	-0-	15.00
Sunday Sanity	67.00	118.55
Warm Fuzzy	175.00	175.00
Welcome Home	-0-	-0-
Intergroup 7th	40.15	77.16
OA HOW (phone)	201.25	227.56
Interest Earned	15.99	39.15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1169.78</b>	
Opening Bal.	2130.89	
<b>TOTAL CASH</b>	<b>\$3300.67</b>	

EXPENDITURES:

Region III Contribution	40.00
WSO Contribution	40.00
Answering Service	157.50
Delegate Expense	882.19
Newsletter	504.69
Telephone Committee	11.60
Secy/Treas. Expense	47.68

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1683.66</b>
Delegate Reserve	2000.00
<b>CASH AVAILABLE</b>	<b>(342.99)</b>