

OA Desert Recovery

Tool: SPONSORSHIP
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By Roni B

I've been in Program for 24 years. Sponsorship has been my strongest tool ever since I started. First, that unique vulnerability that is based in trust. That trust was created when I read my first 4th Step to my sponsor. It's as if I unloaded all my years of shame and self-hate onto someone else. Someone who knew what it's like to hate themselves because their word to themselves was no good. "The diet starts today. Tomorrow. Monday. The first of the month or the first of the year." Nothing worked. Ever. Until I met someone who dug food out of the trash. And stole money to buy food. And she told me I don't have to do that anymore.

Then, the unique relationship I create with my own sponsees; where I have the privilege of taking their shame and self-hate away from them. When I share with them that I dug food from the trash. And I stole money to buy food. But I don't do that anymore. Because of them. Because of Program. Because of you.

I can't keep it unless I give it away. And that one-on-one relationship is my favorite way.

By Patti S

Omigosh, I finally reached the bottom of my dis-ease. I needed help. There she was. It was suggested I do the Steps so I joined an OA group doing the Steps.

Being in another 12-Step program, I knew how to do these Steps! So a year went by and I was still in my disease! No abstinence, hardly any meetings. I was lost! I called her! What a concept! Baring my soul, I started listening. I shared about me and my recovery in another program!

OA is so very special and unique in the way we approach food. My abstinence has been defined...for 5 months now! Shocking! Going through the holidays with my Higher Power, sponsorship, the Steps (which I'm willing to do), sharing and now even calling others! What a freedom, one day at a time.



By Michael A

My guys are guy wires. Recently the food was talking to me. It went on for several days. Thank God, I knew what to do: I called my sponsor.

He listened and then asked (he always asks): “Would you like some feedback?”

When I said yes, he asked another question: “What would happen if you relapsed?” I said, “This may sound strange but the first thing I thought of was my sponsees—how my relapse would affect them. Isn’t that odd?”

He said, “No, not at all. Makes perfect sense. This is a selfish program. When I sponsor, I’m the prime beneficiary. It may help them but it most certainly helps me. Sponsoring keeps me settled, keeps my feet on the ground, keeps me grounded in the program.”

I laughed and said, “So it’s like my guys are guy wires.”

Today I give thanks for my sponsor. It’s impossible to overstate what a blessing he is in my life. And I give thanks for my sponsees. They keep my feet firmly on the ground.



By Becki B

At about two years in recovery, I was trying to sponsor a teen who was using our sessions as a way to get out of the house. I bumped into a lady at an assembly, who stringently informed me that a sponsor takes someone through step, up to step nine, with instructions on Steps 10, 11, and 12. A sponsor is not a taxi driver, a babysitter, an innkeeper, a mother. A sponsor only shows how to live the program.

I sponsor by asking of a sponsee what my sponsor asks of me. Since this is done virtually, each day, I write:

- my gratitudes (Step 11)
- a disturbing event for that day (Step 10)
- my response to daily meditation (Step 11)
- food log (Step 1 honesty)

Also, when life upsets me, and I feel anger, fear, or guilt, I write about it. Then, I email this to my sponsor. I never get commands. Instead, I get questions on how I will handle the situation, to arrive at serenity, so that I don't turn to food.

By Michelle S

The word “sponsor” does not appear in the first 164 pages of the AA Big Book; instead, it describes working with another alcoholic to put the program into action over one hundred times in the first 88 pages. That is how I think of my relationships with my sponsor and my sponsees – we are compulsive overeaters working together to put the OA program into action.

We decide what works for us. With my sponsor, I read program-approved literature every morning and email her my thoughts – what the reading was saying, what it means to me, how it applies to my life in the past and today. Her response back is centered on how it affects her and guidance on any issues I wrote about. The answer is always in the Steps and the Principles, and we learn from one another and grow together. She is always available to guide and support me, and I always want to support *her* recovery.

My sponsees like having a weekly time where we talk on the phone. Sometimes we talk about how to apply the Steps and Principles to specific situations, sometimes we are sounding boards for each other about actions we took, and sometimes we read and discuss literature. I also know for sure that we will always support each other’s recovery.

By Janet R

"I tell people I sponsor to listen to each person as if you are going to write a novel about what they are saying. Each person's share is important! We have to be taught to pay attention. It does not come automatically for us because we are too self-obsessed (if it's not about ME, then why pay attention?!)"

By Judy G

About making amends, my wise sponsor said, "Remember, you do not want to have to make amends for your amends!" Have a sponsor who will sit with you and, together, you can come up with a plan. Thank God I knew I needed a sponsor to show me the way. God will always show you the way, but a lot of time, 'the way' is through your sponsor and the rooms."

By Joy V'M

When I first came back to OA, I was abstinent during the meetings, but the rest of my days were spent pretending that I didn’t obsess over food. It took a dedicated and loving sponsor six months later to hold me close and walk me through the Steps and the rest of this program. I couldn’t have done it without her. I know. I had tried to do that for decades. Because of her dedication and caring ways, my life changed beyond my wildest dreams!

March’s topic will be “**MEETINGS.**” We look forward to receiving your submissions about how meetings have helped you achieve abstinence. Your submissions will be gratefully received when you send an email to Judy G at newsletter@oasouthernaz.org by March 12th. Please send your articles as Word documents and not in PDF. Thanks! ~Judy