

Choosing Your Sponsor

Why Sponsorship?

By this time you may have gone to meetings and heard lots of talk about working the Steps, a power greater than ourselves and getting a sponsor. You may also have become aware that Cocaine Anonymous is based on the Twelve Steps of Recovery. But, if you're like many of us were, you're not sure what is meant by working the Steps, finding a Higher Power or getting a sponsor.

Many of us would not have been able to stay clean and sober were it not for the special one-to-one relationships with our sponsors.

C.A. may at first seem unfamiliar. During the early days of sobriety, it's a good idea to get a sponsor. At first, you might have a lot of questions and concerns, and a sponsor can devote more time to your individual questions than regular meetings allow. Sponsors can introduce you to other people at meetings. It might help you feel more comfortable at meetings to be with someone who knows his or her way around.

Although people at meetings respond to our questions willingly, that alone isn't enough. Many other questions occur to us between meetings; many of us find that we need constant, close support as we begin learning how to live sober.

What Is A Sponsor?

A sponsor is a clean and sober addict who shares with you how they maintain their sobriety by working the Twelve Steps. The sponsor's primary tools are his or her experience, strength and hope.

There are no specific rules, but a sponsor should probably be sober for a year or more and be enjoying his or her new life as a result of the Twelve Steps.

A sponsor was once a newcomer too, and has used the C.A. program to deal with problems similar to those the newcomer is now facing.

Sharing the lessons of what he or she has learned staying sober is what a sponsor is all about. On a one-to-one basis, a sponsor can share his or her experience, strength and hope in living a happy, joyous and free life.

Sponsors are not professional counselors and are not certified to offer legal, psychiatric or medical advice. Nor is a sponsor someone upon whom we can rely to get us jobs, clothing or food. Sponsors have been down the rocky road before and often can suggest where you can obtain the professional help you might need. Do not hesitate to call your sponsor. It may be hard at first to pick up the phone—we do not find it easy to ask for help. But remember, a sponsor has been there and knows how you feel.

Finding A Sponsor

Some of the ways we have gotten to know people and found a sponsor are:

- Listening to the feelings being shared at meetings.
- Asking members of the fellowship for their phone numbers, then actually calling and talking to them.
- Going to coffee after meetings with other sober addicts.



- Sharing at meetings.
- Asking others to recommend someone as a sponsor.

When choosing a sponsor, remember that this does not have to be a life-long relationship. Many of us have had different sponsors at different times in our sobriety. Others have had the same sponsor since early sobriety. The point is that YOU must take the initiative and reach out.

A Discussion of Sponsorship

In C.A., experience has shown that it's best for men to sponsor men and women to sponsor women. This custom promotes quick understanding and reduces the likelihood of emotional distractions, which might take the newcomer's mind off the purpose of Cocaine Anonymous.

At times, we may feel uncomfortable with what our sponsor suggests. But remember sponsors have traveled the road before and are sharing their experience with us to help us through difficult times.

Which sponsor is best for you? No one but you can answer that question. Sponsors may share interests similar to yours, but may also be totally different. It's best to attend meetings and listen to what experienced individuals have to say about living the steps with strength and hope. Again, a sponsor only shares his or her experience, strength and hope. By sharing our difficulties with our sponsor on a one-to-one basis, it makes day-to-day living a lot easier and our struggle less lonely.

Remember, sponsors have lives outside C.A. They have families, jobs and other responsibilities. Although a sponsor will do whatever he or she can to help you maintain your sobriety, there will be times when a sponsor is truly unavailable. So what are we to do? Check listings for the next C.A. meeting, read the steps and literature, contact the local C.A. office, or pull out those telephone numbers of other recovering addicts and call. Keep an active telephone list of recovering addicts with you and above all CALL. Your call will be helping the other person as much as it helps you. Other recovering addicts know what you are experiencing and will sincerely help you through the rough times. But before you can get help, you have to reach out and ask for it. It's there, ready and willing to be shared.

A person may have more than one sponsor. Someone with two or more sponsors has a wider range of experience available to him or her. Others, however, feel that having only one sponsor promotes a more focused approach to the C.A. program.

It is never too late to get a sponsor. Whether you are a newcomer hesitant about "bothering" someone, or a member who has been around for some time trying to go it alone, sponsorship is yours for the asking. We urge you: DO NOT DELAY. We in C.A. want to share what we have learned with other addicts because experience has taught us that we keep what we have by giving it away.

Most members of Cocaine Anonymous owe their sobriety to the fact that someone else took a special interest in them and was willing to share a great gift with them. A C.A. member often finds that getting a good sponsor, talking frankly and listening can make the whole program open up as it never did before.

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