

## WHAT IS A SPONSOR

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We of Heroin Anonymous find it essential to have a sponsor. A sponsor is a person who has completed the 12 Steps and is living a sober life. He or she is a person who can offer guidance and support in recovery. With their experience in living the 12 Steps, a sponsor can offer many suggestions in how to approach daily life situations and how to address those instances where one's sobriety is at risk. A sponsor's responsibility is to take you through the 12 Steps and to provide support when needed. This support does not include providing you with a job, lending money, or giving you a place to live. Some sponsors have been known to provide assistance in these areas; however, it is not their responsibility.

When faced with daily problems, calling your sponsor can be quite helpful. A sponsor is not someone who wishes to control your every move. It is not a sponsor's responsibility to decide where you should work, whom you should or should not date, whether or not you should remain married, or where you should go to meetings. A sponsor is not someone who will give you advice, but rather, someone who can share their experience on how they resolved a similar problem, provide some suggestions, and offer emotional support.

Experience shows that calling a sponsor on a daily basis is extremely helpful. Calling your sponsor when things are going well is strongly suggested. Persons who do this tend to develop the discipline of reaching out and are much more likely to call someone when life becomes difficult.

One thing to consider when choosing a sponsor is to ask yourself if a potential sponsor has what you want. By that, we do not mean material possessions or popularity. Does this person seem to have stability in their life? Do they seem to be at peace? Do they have joy in their life? Do they seem to deal with life's problems in a constructive manner? Does this person have the ability to listen, to offer suggestions rather than give advice? The length of sobriety of a potential sponsor is less important than the quality of their sobriety, which may be more important in helping you choose the appropriate sponsor.

Here are some questions you might ask your potential sponsor to see if this person could be the appropriate sponsor for you:

- Do they have a sponsor?
- How often do they speak to their sponsor?
- When was the last time they went through the Steps?
- How many meetings do they attend?
- What Step are they on?
- Do they maintain the disciplines of prayer/meditation/evening review?

Here are some other suggestions for sponsorship:

Do not lend money to your sponsor.

Do not allow your sponsor to hold onto your money.

Your sponsor should not date your former spouse/girlfriend/boyfriend.

You should not have a sexual relationship with your sponsor.

Do not work for your sponsor.

Find a same sex sponsor.

Do not rely on your sponsor to keep you sober.

An appropriate sponsor is someone who has a genuine concern for your sobriety and your best interest. An effective sponsor is someone who is willing to take you through the 12 Steps, is willing to listen, and wants to help the suffering heroin addict. Sponsorship is vital to permanent recovery. It teaches us to be of service to others, and helps reduce our self-centeredness. A sponsor who is practicing the 12 Steps in their daily life simply wants to help other heroin addicts develop a drug free lifestyle and to let you know that you are not alone.

There is an expression you will hear in some of our meetings:

“I cannot keep what I have if I do not give it away.”