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THE BUZZ

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SPONSORSHIP from I.P. #11

One of the first suggestions many of us hear when we begin attending NA meetings is to get a sponsor. As newcomers, we may not understand what this means. What is a sponsor? How do we get and use one? Where do we find one?
Our Basic Text tells us that "the heart of NA beats when two addicts share their recovery," and sponsorship is simply one addict helping another. The two-way street of sponsorship is a loving, spiritual, and compassionate relationship that helps both the sponsor and sponsee.

WHO is a sponsor?

An NA sponsor is a member of Narcotics Anonymous, living our program of recovery, who is willing to build a special, supportive, one-on-one relationship with us. Most members think of a sponsor, first and foremost, as someone who can help us work the Twelve Steps of NA, and sometimes the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. A sponsor is not necessarily a friend, but may be someone in whom we confide. We can share things with our sponsor that we might not be comfortable sharing in a meeting.

WHAT does a sponsor do?

Sponsors share their experience, strength, and hope with their sponsees. Some describe their sponsor as loving and compassionate, someone they can count on to listen and support them no matter what. Others value the objectivity and detachment a sponsor can offer, relying on their direct and honest input even when it may be difficult to accept. Still others turn to a sponsor mainly for guidance through the Twelve Steps.

"Someone once asked, 'Why do I need a sponsor?' The sponsor replied, 'Well it's pretty hard to spot self deception...by yourself.'"

Sponsorship works for the same reason that NA works—because recovering members share common bonds of addiction and recovery and, in many cases, can empathize with each other. A sponsor's role is not that of a legal advisor, a banker, a parent, a marriage counselor, or a social worker. Nor is a sponsor a therapist offering some sort of professional advice. A sponsor is simply another addict in recovery who is willing to share his or her journey through the Twelve Steps.
As we share our concerns and questions with our sponsors, sometimes they will share their own experiences. At other times they may suggest reading or writing assignments, or try to answer our questions about the program. When we are new to NA, a sponsor can help us understand things that may confuse us about the program, from NA language, meeting formats, and the service structure, to the meaning of NA principles and the nature of spiritual awakening.

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Outreach Road-trips
Randy P. 320-250-6761

If you're looking for a way to give back what you've been so freely given, jump in and join one of the sub-committees.

At a meeting near you

SPONSORSHIP (Cont.)

WHAT does a sponsee do?

One suggestion is to have regular contact with our sponsor. In addition to phoning our sponsor, we can arrange to meet up at meetings. Regardless of how we communicate with our Sponsor, it is important that we be honest and that we listen with an open mind.

"We may worry that we are a burden to our sponsors and hesitate to contact them, or we may believe our sponsors will want something in return from us. But the truth is our sponsors benefit as much as we do from the relationship.

A Walk Through The Twelve Steps *by Doug F.*

May-June

The Twelve Traditions are what we adhere to in order to make the business side of our groups and our service bodies run smoothly. "Freedom for our groups spring from our traditions. As long as the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart all will be well (Basic Text 60)."

Tradition five speaks of the "primary purpose," which is nothing more and nothing less than "to carry the message to the "addict" who still suffers. It is certainly true that individuals are here to find freedom from addiction and a new way of life. Groups on the other hand are not addicted and don't recover. Our groups are responsible for planting the seed of recovery and bringing addicts together so that the magic of empathy, honesty, caring, sharing, and service can do their work. The purpose of this tradition is to ensure that this atmosphere of recovery is maintained (Basic Text 68).

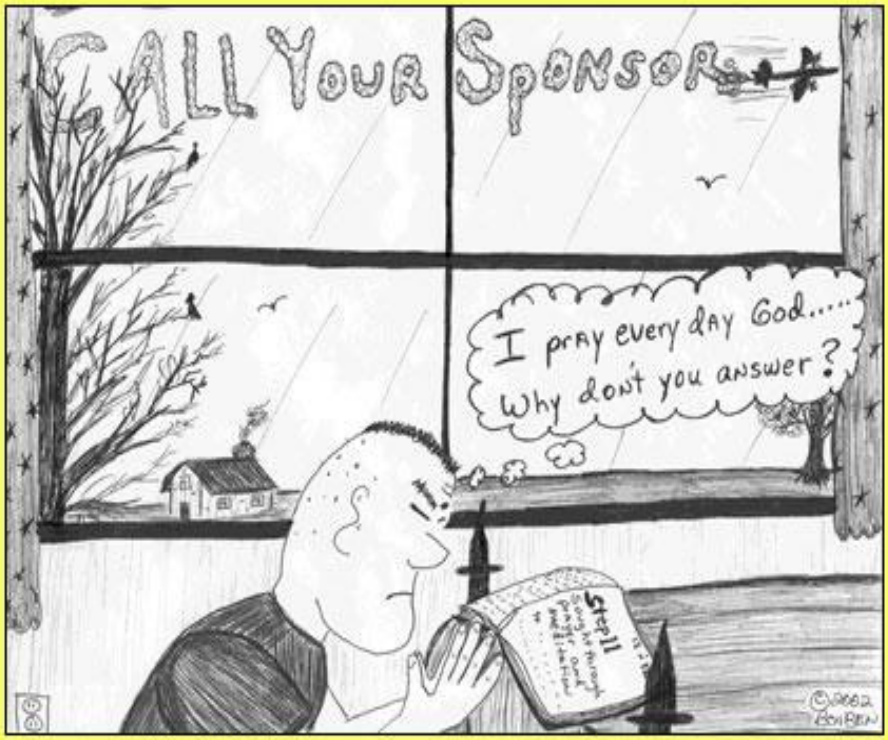
Tradition six speaks against our NA groups endorsing, financing, and/or lending the Narcotics Anonymous name to outside enterprise. The list includes, but it is not limited to halfway houses, detox centers, treatment centers and "clubhouses," for fear that problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose which is still "to carry the NA message to the addict whom still suffers." What is and what is not NA easily confuse people. Perhaps the most confusion exists when it involves a "clubhouse". Newcomers and members of long standing in recovery often identify the clubhouse with Narcotics Anonymous. We need to take special effort to let our recovering population know that these facilities and NA are not the same. An outside enterprise is any agency, business venture, religion, society, organization, related activity, or any other fellowship. Narcotics Anonymous is a separate and distinct fellowship in its own right. **"Our problem is addiction**." The other Twelve Step Fellowships specialize in other problems. Our relationship with them is one of cooperation **"not affiliation."** The use and display of literature, speaker, and announcements from other fellowships in our meetings constitutes an implied endorsement of an outside enterprise. To announce your self as anything other than an addict or to use jargon from other fellowships (sober) in the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous is in fact a double-edged sword. It is a reservation and an implied endorsement. For the individual this type of abuse can be devastating; for the group it can be disastrous. When we as a group waiver from our primary purpose, addicts who might have found recovery, die. (Basic Text 70).

Poetry Corner

The Essence of Friendship

To me there is no greater sin
than to go through life without a friend.
If I could dream a dream come true,
I'd dream of a friend just like you.
You make my day so happy and bright,
It's like a beacon in the night.

No matter what troubles may come my way,
My friend's strength is there to stay.
I know there is no need to fear,
Because I have a friend so dear.
If I possessed all the world's treasure,
The comparison would not be a fair measure.
The unconditional friendship you are giving,
Makes you the treasure of all things living.
Jerry G



Call Your Sponsor

If you have 10 years or more clean, and would like to do an NA version of "Dear Abby", please let the newsletter chairperson know

GRATITUDE PRAYER

"Our gratitude speaks, when we care and when we share with others the N.A. way, that no addict seeking recovery need ever die from the horrors of addiction."

Editor's Notes
In this issue we are exploring IP #11

Please leave a copy of the current Newsletter lay out with IP's or where a Newcomer might have access to it.

Next Issue

Points of interest from IP #12
Poet's Corner
A Walk through the Twelve Steps (July-Aug)
Calendar of upcoming events
Editor's Choice

Work Cited:

- **Sponsorship-revised IP #11**
- **A Walk through the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous (May-June) -Doug F.**
- **Essence of Friendship by Jerry G.**
- **www.recoverycartoons.com**

CMASC'S 20TH ANNUAL

FREEDOM CAMPOUT
JUNE 25TH, 26TH, & 27TH, 2010
CEDAR LAKE MEMORIAL PARK
UPSALA, MN
BRING THE FAMILY
FOR A WEEKEND OF FUN!

Appearing Saturday night,

For your dancing, and listening pleasure,

HOGWILD

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