

## Sponsorship Checklist

This is not meant to be an end all be all of what a sponsor should cover with a sponsee. This is only meant to be a guide. In doing these things outlined here, your sponsee will get sober if followed honestly and done truthfully. Feel free to use your own experience to add/modify/disregard the items below; these are merely what worked for us. Check each number off as you work through the list.

- 1) Draw the AA circle and triangle on the title page of the sponsees' Big Book.



Explain to sponsee that this is a 3 part program of Unity, Recovery, and Service. **Warn them – do not expect the results of all 3 parts of this program if you are only working 1 or 2.** Just going to meetings doesn't bring about a psychic change, nor does it keep one spiritually fit. Becoming a sponsor is the easiest way to do all 3 parts of this program: **working with another alcoholic requires all 3 of these at the same time.**

- 2) Write out an accountability clause inside the first blank page of the sponsee's Big Book. It should look something like this:

- a. I, \_\_\_\_\_, am willing to go to any length for victory over alcohol/drugs and my unmanageable life. I alone am responsible for my recovery by reaching out for help. I understand the AA responsibility clause, which states "When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I am responsible."

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- b. Before they sign this, read them all the things outlined in this checklist. This ensures the sponsee knows "what any length" means. It is a good idea to read them what is outlined in these pages before they sign their book.

- 3) Read all the forwards of the Big Book. Have sponsee underline everywhere it says "recovered" or "permanent" in regard to recovering from the hopeless state of mind and body. Sponsee should understand that we do **recover** (while we are not cured, we will not always be recovering!)
- 4) Read the Doctors Opinion. Have the sponsee underline all the phrases that are concerned with the fatal nature/malady, the hopelessness, difficulties, etc. There should be 10+ of these such phrases in the Doctors Opinion. When you find one of these, ask the sponsee if that sentence is true for them.
- 5) Read Bill's Story. Help the sponsee find all 12 steps in Bill's story. Ask them if there is anything in his story they are unwilling to do.
- 6) Read Chapters 2 & 3 with sponsee and complete the Chapter 2 & 3 worksheets so the sponsee can find their own truth as to why they are alcoholic.

- a. Ask the sponsee this question: ***Am I powerless over alcohol? Do I now see that because of "strange mental blank-spots" that I really have no defense against the first drink?***
- 7) Read "We Agnostics" with sponsee out of the book
- a. Ask sponsee the question on page 47 of the book:
    - i. ***"Do I now believe, or am I willing to believe, that there is a power greater than myself?"***
    - ii. Continue Reading until page 52
    - iii. Ask the sponsee if he relates to the **Bedevilments on page 52**, middle paragraph (this is the internal unmanageability, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of step 1)
    - iv. Continue reading until the end of the chapter
- 8) Start reading "How it Works" with sponsee up to page 60
- a. Ask sponsee question on page 60 of the book
    - i. ***Paraphrased for the 1<sup>st</sup> person – "Am I convinced that my life run on my will cannot be successful?"***
    - ii. Continue reading up until page 63 and recite the 3<sup>rd</sup> step prayer with sponsee
    - iii. \*Homework for sponsee should be to memorize the 3<sup>rd</sup> step prayer, saying it every morning for 30 days in a row until it becomes habit, and writing it over and over on a blank sheet of paper up to 10 times to help memorize. We don't surrender just once; we surrender every day, one day at a time.
    - iv. Continue reading up until the top of page 65
- 9) At this point, launch into the 4<sup>th</sup> step inventory workbook. Read all instructions/definitions listed in each section (Flaws, Assets, Resentments, Fears, Sex). Always have the sponsee list names/fears vertically, and then help them write out each one horizontally as you go through it.
- a. **The point of inventory is to face and be rid of those things that have been blocking us from God (smashing our ego).** This is not to beat up the sponsee or to humiliate them; it's to help them get rid of the stuff they are up against. The sponsee may not want to see their part in things; this is normal. Point out that you too had difficulties, but it got easier as you went along.
  - b. It is our experience that we do the whole 4<sup>th</sup> step packet, and then continue reading from where we left off on the top of 65 all the way to the end of the chapter. This adds clarity to the work we've already done, so the sponsee can realize precisely what the book has said in hindsight. Or these pages can be read as you move through each part of inventory. Whatever works best is all that is important.
  - c. The sponsee should be confronted with these questions:
    - i. ***Do I understand how resentments are fatal?***
    - ii. ***Do I understand how self-reliance brings about fear?***
    - iii. ***Do I understand how important it is to develop a sane and sound sex ideal and stick to it? And if I am having trouble, to check my motives?***

- d. Before finishing up this chapter, it is wise to read the second to last paragraph to the sponsee in this fashion:
  - i. “If (name of sponsee) has been thorough about his inventory, he has written down a lot. (name of sponsee) has listed and analyzed his resentments. (name of sponsee) has begun to comprehend their futility and their fatality. (name of sponsee) has commenced to see their terrible destructiveness. (name of sponsee) has begun to learn patience, tolerance, and good will towards all men, even his enemies, for he looks upon them as sick people. (name of sponsee) has listed the people hurt by his conduct, and is willing to straighten out the past if he can.

10) At some point either during the inventory process or shortly thereafter, the sponsee and sponsor should visit a Catholic Priest (or other such spiritual or religious authority) for confession. This does two things for the sponsee:

- a. It proves that the sponsee has laid aside prejudice towards religion and God (3<sup>rd</sup> step). It proves that the sponsee can take the suggestion from the book **“be quick to see where religious men are right, make use of what they offer.”**
- b. It also allows the sponsee to get rid of some of the darker things in his inventory (5<sup>th</sup> step). The sponsee does not have to do a 5<sup>th</sup> step with his sponsor. This allows for the sponsee to keep his darker secrets out of the AA rumor mill, which could ruin any alcoholic. We would all like to trust our sponsors implicitly, but it would be the height of arrogance to believe or assume that an AA sponsor can perform the same duty as a priest, and vow to keep all things in silence and confidence. **Those AA sponsors are out there**, however, the sponsee should be able to choose those things he is comfortable to tell someone in AA, and those things he is not.

11) Start reading “Into Action” from the book, pages 72-75, stopping after reading this sentence:

- a. **“We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past”**
- b. Ask the sponsee at this point to tell you his life story. Let him talk for a while. Let him know that he need not tell you everything, so long as he told the Priest when he went to confession those things which he is leaving out with you. If he feels comfortable telling you his darkest secrets, let him. But explain that this is sacred ground, and what is said between the two of you is private, confidential, and will not be repeated. This allows you to tell him some, or all, of your story too. Remember, we’ve all done terrible things while drinking/drugging, and this is about getting free of those things; however knowledge of rape, child molestation, or murder, to name a few, doesn’t help anyone. These things should be brought to confession and dealt with in those channels. If you must disclose something like this to your sponsor/sponsee, say something like *“I’ve also done/experienced something like what you are describing”*, or *“I don’t have any experience with that, but I can understand it”* and leave it at that. Perhaps if you and your sponsee form a trustworthy bond down the road, more can be revealed to each other. **But remember, do not disclose anything which could hurt you or someone else**

**without being cautious! Many AA's have had their confidence and trust broken by a loudmouthed, untrustworthy sponsor or sponsee. Take this vital step, but be careful!**

12) At this point, you and the sponsee should continue reading from where you left off on page 75.

- a. Are the 5<sup>th</sup> step promises coming true for the sponsee? (First paragraph)
- b. Returning home, can I be alone with God for an hour? (Second paragraph)
- c. Have I read the first 5 proposals (steps), being sure I've left nothing out? (Second paragraph)

13) We are now at Step 6. At this point, the 12x12 should be used to read both chapters concerning steps 6 and 7, since it covers both of these steps in much greater detail. After reading steps 6 and 7 from the 12x12, **the sponsee should be confronted with these questions:**

- a. Do I understand how the 7 deadly sins show up in my life, regardless of drinking and/or drug use?
- b. Do I understand the concept of why this step separates the men from the boys? That the ideal of step 6 is to move towards God's perfection with **all my defects/problems, not just alcohol/drug of choice!**
- c. Do I understand why I need to seek humility as a way of life?
- d. Do I realize that whenever I had to choose between comfort-seeking or character-building, I almost invariably chose comfort-seeking, and character-building was lost in the dust of the chase of what I thought I wanted/needed?
- e. Do I understand that character defects based on shortsighted or unworthy desires block me from those very objectives? (lust blocks me from love, sloth blocks me from success, greed blocks me from peace, etc...)

14) If we can answer to our satisfaction, we can now pick up Steps 6 and 7 in the Big Book (pg 76), and complete the 7<sup>th</sup> step prayer. The sponsee should ask God to remove all these defects which block his usefulness to his fellows, and any other defects that he feels objectionable or needs help with in his personal life, job, health, relationships, etc...

15) This brings us to step 8. The sponsor can read the sections concerning steps 8 and 9 out of the Big Book (76-83), as it uses stronger language when talking about and describing this step. This can be read all the way up to the last paragraph on page 83, which are the 9<sup>th</sup> step promises. Leave out the promises for now. At this point, a list should be created from the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and any other names/institutions the sponsee has harmed, emotionally or financially. Once the list is complete, switch over to the 9<sup>th</sup> step in the 12x12. Read how each name on the 8<sup>th</sup> step list should be divided into 4 categories. Use the attached 9<sup>th</sup> step worksheet to categorize each amend. Finish reading the 9<sup>th</sup> step from the 12x12.

16) At this point, the sponsee should learn what the AA beam is. The AA beam is first introduced to us on page 84 of the 12x12. It is not really described until we get to the first paragraph of Step 10 in the 12x12, which states this:

- a. Then comes the acid test: can we **stay sober, keep in emotional balance, and live to good purpose**, under all conditions? (The 3 components of the AA beam)
- b. The sponsee should also understand what the spirit of the 9<sup>th</sup> step is:
  - i. **“For the readiness to take the full consequences of our past acts, and to take responsibility for the well-being of others at the same time, is the very spirit of Step Nine.”**

17) Now the sponsee is ready to make amends. The easiest amends should be attempted first, then moving on to the more difficult ones only in Section 1 of the 9<sup>th</sup> step amends worksheet. Any amend that is not in category 1 should be discussed with the sponsor before attempting. Some amends will have to be done together with a sponsor. Some will have to be discussed with a sponsor at length before attempting. Some general guides to amends are as follows:

- a. The amends process is a marathon, not a race. God will put people in front of you, but make sure you make the amends right away. The book tells us not to talk prudence while practicing evasion.
- b. Some people you may not run into. It may be best to search them out directly and make the amend, without waiting for a chance encounter.
- c. An amend is not just about apologizing; it is about ending the bad behavior, and then trying to make whatever past wrongs right. Like it is said in the rooms, “Don’t apologize, just stop doing it!”
- d. An amend is also about having the best possible relationship with those you have harmed.
- e. **Do not make any difficult emotional or financial amend without discussing with your sponsor first!**

18) Once the sponsee has made a few easy amends (family, spouse, friends, etc...) it may be wise to now go back and read the 9<sup>th</sup> step promises on page 83 with the sponsee. The sponsee should be realizing some of these promises in his life. Now, pages 84-85 come to life. Read them. The Tenth Step in the Big Book is new language, not to be processed by the cognitive mind, but rather an awakened spirit. The sponsee should be confronted with these questions:

- a. What thought brings us to this Step? (Amends!)
- b. The 9<sup>th</sup> step promises happen when I enter the world of the spirit. Have I entered the world of the spirit? Am I on the AA Beam?
- c. Do I now understand I need to use the 10<sup>th</sup> step disciplines to grow in understanding and effectiveness? What are the five 10<sup>th</sup> step disciplines? (Watch, Ask, Discuss, Make Amends, Turn)
- d. Have I stopped fighting everything and everyone – even alcohol and drugs?
- e. Can I be helpful to those around me instead of imposing my drama onto them?
- f. Have I been placed in a position of neutrality, safe and protected?
- g. Do I understand what “resting on my laurels” means? Do I understand my body cannot live off the food I ate yesterday? Do I understand that every day is the day I must give to the world; that I need an open mind and a new experience to stay spiritually fit?

- h. Do I understand that I am not cured of my alcoholism, that although I have recovered from a hopeless state of mind and body, what I really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of my spiritual condition?
- i. What things does the book suggest to stay in fit spiritual condition? (prayer and meditation, 10<sup>th</sup> step all day long, write inventory when I am up against fear/resentment and read it to someone, working with other AA's [steps, meetings], evening review)
- j. **Step 10 should also be read out of the 12x12 as there are more descriptions of different types of behaviors we can watch out for.**

19) If these questions can be answered to the sponsor's satisfaction, we can now move on to Step 11. This step suggests prayer and meditation. Refer to the AA Prayers worksheet for specific prayers. Meditation is the practice of quieting the mind. It is suggested that the sponsee start a daily meditation, followed by reciting a few set prayers. Meditation clears a channel to God; prayer is a petition to God, but not for ourselves. This sets us up for the day before the "chatter of 1,000 monkeys" starts in our heads. It allows us to be at peace, to allow our "karma" to unfold, and to acquire a vision of how we can be helpful throughout the day. **The daily practice of meditation is NOT THE SAME as reading out of a daily meditation book!**

- a. The sponsee can be directed to use the "Upon Awakening" and "10/11<sup>th</sup>" step review worksheets on a daily basis.
- b. These are not easy disciplines. Prayer, Meditation, and Evening Review take a long time to master and incorporate into your life. But with practice, they become a vital part of our emotional balance. Go into any AA meeting and you may be able to tell right away who is and who isn't doing these daily practices, once you've done them for awhile.
- c. This is by no means the only source of practice/inspiration for us alcoholics. Many people do yoga, exercise, reading, music, inspirational speakers, silent retreats, monasteries, medicine men, church retreats, etc...to open their mind/expand their consciousness. The book "Living Sober" also has many practical things an alcoholic can do to incorporate new disciplines/experiences into their life.
- d. **The important thing about meditation is that you do it! It is not optional!**
- e. Read bottom of page 85-88 in Big Book and Step 11 in 12x12 with sponsee.

20) This brings us to the Twelfth Step. Read the entire chapter "Working with Others" in the Big Book, and Step 12 out of the 12x12.

- a. Sponsorship is not easy. It takes a persistent effort to help someone who may not be entirely willing to look at themselves.
- b. Sponsorship requires that the **sponsor** is committed to taking someone through the work.
- c. The Big Book outlines in very clear language how to approach an alcoholic. You may encounter many Bullshit Artists, Tire Kickers, Liars, the Mentally Ill, Angry/Belligerent Drunks and/or Drug Addicts. Some people aren't "done" yet. If so, suggest they go "get done". We cannot waste time with someone who has a lurking reservation. Stick to the principles in the book and you cannot fail. Sometimes we are required to be very honest with another alcoholic; do not shy away from this Duty. You will be much better off being frankly honest with an alcoholic, with Love as your guide, than you will be to not

say something so you don't "hurt his feelings." Remember, his feelings are a mess anyway; you really can't do him any harm if you are honestly trying to be helpful.

- d. The Big book is very clear in working with others: **do not be a nurse for someone's sprees or a banker for their financial difficulties.**
- e. Remember that the alcoholic who is a potential sponsee is a very sick man. He will most likely put his dependence upon you before he puts his dependence on God. He may behave badly for some time during the stepwork. This **may** require you to:
  - i. Hang up on him if he isn't praying/writing inventory before he calls you and he insists on not doing those things before bitching endlessly. Discipline!
  - ii. Point out he is still swearing, angry, not minding his own business, not being polite to people in and out of the AA rooms. Love!
  - iii. Ask him what caliber bullet he is using when he is character assassinating other sick and suffering alcoholics/human beings. Tolerance!
  - iv. Tell him to climb out of the pine box he has built for himself when he is in a low spot and failing to show up to meetings, do daily disciplines, etc...and he just wants to whine to you about it. Act into good thinking!
  - v. The above examples are only to be used in such cases where you and your new man have an understanding and are accountable to each other. We do not go around saying these things unless there is a good reason for it! If you must say something like this to your sponsee, always do it in private, and be sure you aren't participating in the same bad behavior yourself! Love and Tolerance of others is our code, although some situations call for Tough Love.
  - vi. **A rule of thumb is if he is acting badly, it needs pointed out and his reliance must be on a higher power, not you as his sponsor! Knowing when to be direct is the key here. Again, we aren't trying to beat anyone up or be dominant over them or be mean to them. But alcoholics are very defiant people. We don't put up with bad behavior as sponsors. We don't scold, criticize, or moralize, just state our case and move on. Remember, we are teaching them how to handle these things they may come across once they are sponsoring the next sick and suffering alcoholic.**
  - vii. Some may criticize the above approach and think it in bad taste. Remember that if an alcoholic has ended up in AA, he has done a terrible job of running his own life. He has lost all rights. His judgments, resentments, and prejudices (preconceived thoughts or opinions) are what will ultimately kill him. This is not a game. If the alcoholic thinks it is ok to act without humility, he has signed his own death warrant. It is up to us as sponsors to nip this in the bud and set the tone for how to act and behave throughout this process. There is no easier, softer way...we've tried it all and it does not work!
  - viii. DO NOT use your sponsee as free labor. It is not his job to wash your car, clean your house, help you move, work for you, etc...also be careful of being too generous to your sponsee: meals, places to live, employment, free clothes, etc... as the book states, little charity is needed for the man who wants to get sober; but we can provide these things as necessary if he is serious.

ix. And always, always remember this key thing about sponsorship: we do it for free, and we do it for fun!

21) Proceed to read the rest of the Big Book with the sponsee up to page 164. He can read the personal stories on his own, and start working with his own protégé.