

## More on Sponsorship

Nowadays sponsorship has become more friendship than it was in the early days.

A lot of the emphasis is on socializing; people go out for coffee with new members after meetings. This is fine, but it is not the primary relationship the sponsor needs with his sponsoree.

If a friendship comes first, sponsors may not feel as free to say things that need to be said.

At first, anyway, a relationship of mutual respect is better.

After a while, friendship may develop, but it could make sponsorship more difficult in the beginning of the relationship.

We need to spend our time helping people work the Steps.

We need to be more aware of what A.A. is and what it is not.

I think some people quit drinking, work some of the Steps, and start sponsoring.

But if you haven't had a spiritual awakening, you can't carry "this message" to other people.

The Big Book says, "You cannot transmit something you haven't got" (p. 164).

So the first qualification for sponsorship is to have worked the Steps yourself, and to have had your own spiritual awakening.

We say this is a program of attraction. New people aren't going to be attracted to people who are simply not drinking.

Not drinking is not enough. We often place the emphasis on sobriety, but that isn't the goal of this program.

The goal of this program is a spiritual awakening

that will change our lives, that will produce a personality change sufficient to make us recover, to make us happy, joyous, and free.

If people can see that has happened to us—in us—they will be attracted to our program. This is our message.

Unfortunately, there are some miserable people attending A.A. These people are just not drinking. The Big Book tells us that the tools of our program will enable us to enter a "fourth dimension," to live better lives than most other people on earth.

But too often we settle for not drinking.

If we are to carry this message, we need to be reminded what a powerful message it is. "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps . . ."—this is the message we carry to others.

The existence of the fellowship depends on it. Lives depend on it.

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The best advice comes from Chapter 7 of the Big Book:

- Find out all you can about the prospect.
- Don't deal with him when he is drunk.
- Never force yourself on him.
- Place this book where he can see it.
- See him alone (without his family).
- Tell him enough about your own drinking to encourage him to speak of himself.
- Do not yet tell him what you did to recover.
- Describe yourself as an alcoholic.
- Tell him about your struggles to stop.
- Show him the mental twists which lead to the first drink.
- Be careful not to brand him as an alcoholic.
- If he thinks he can still control his drinking, tell him that that is possible if he is not too alcoholic, but if he is, there is little chance he can recover on his own.
- Speak of alcoholism as an illness.
- Tell him about the conditions of the mind and the body that characterize the disease.
- Let him ask you how you got well.
- Tell him exactly what happened to you.
- Make it clear that he does not have to agree with your concept of God.
- Let him see that you are not there to instruct him in religion.
- Outline the program of action.
- Make it clear that he is under no obligation to see you again if he doesn't want to.
- Do not contradict his defensive views.
- Tell him about the fellowship and offer to lend him your book.
- Give him a chance to think it over.
- Do not crusade.
- Do not talk down to him.
- Show him how the steps worked for you.
- Offer him friendship and fellowship.
- Tell him if he wants to get well, you will do anything to help.
- If he only wants you to be a banker or nurse, you may drop him.
- If he wants to see you again, ask him to read the Big Book in the interval.
- If he thinks he can do the job some other way, encourage him to follow his own conscience.
- If he asks for a second visit, has read the Book, and is ready to go through the Twelve Steps, offer to give him practical advice.
- Even if he doesn't want the Program, you may offer it to his family.
- Make sure he understands that he can recover in spite of anyone.
- Do not participate in his family quarrels.
- Never show intolerance or hatred of drinking as an institution.

McQ, Joe. Carry This Message (p. 9-12). Headline.

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