

SPONSORSHIP

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Sponsorship in Emotions Anonymous differs slightly from that in other 12-step programs. Because we in EA are not dealing with a physical addiction, we are fortunate enough to go straight to our thinking to begin working our program. While this may change the way in which we approach sponsorship, it in no way lessens its benefit. Our feelings of anger, fear, depression, self-pity and resentment can send us on emotional binges that are just as destructive as physical addictions. For us to achieve and maintain emotional serenity and practice the principles of the EA program, having a sponsor can be helpful.

WHAT IS SPONSORSHIP?

Sponsorship is a mutual and confidential sharing between two EA members. A sponsor is a special person with whom a member can discuss personal problems or questions, and who will share their experience, strength and hope in working the EA program.

IS HAVING A SPONSOR REQUIRED?

No, although it is strongly recommended. Most members find it helpful to have an experienced program person with whom they build a relationship and with whom they feel comfortable in confiding and seeking guidance in working their program.

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR IN A SPONSOR, AND HOW DO I FIND ONE?

When, after attending meetings for a while, we identify with another EA member and feel that they

are trustworthy and have experience, strength, and hope to share, we may ask them to be our sponsor. We may also ask the group for a temporary sponsor until we are ready to choose one.

It is strongly recommended that the person you choose as a sponsor has completed a fourth and fifth step.

Sponsors should be knowledgeable about the program and supportive without presenting themselves as an authority. A sponsor will not do our work for us, but will listen, support our efforts, and encourage us. If we ask a person to be our sponsor and are refused it can feel like rejection. It is not. It is a message to us that we need to seek further. If we are diligent and serious about working our program, we will continue to search for the right sponsor.

Years of 12-step experience have shown it is preferable for men to sponsor men and women to sponsor women.

WHAT SHOULD I AS A SPONSOR EXPECT TO PROVIDE?

A sponsor will listen carefully. They will point out what parts of the program may apply to the difficulties the sponsee is experiencing. They will encourage formulating a belief in, and cultivating a relationship with a personal Higher Power. They will not and cannot be a "guru." Their job is to lovingly and patiently encourage the sponsee in finding their own answers. A sponsor will be trustworthy and not betray a confidence.

Sponsorship is not a relationship to be undertaken lightly. It is good to give it some thought before making the commitment. No one is a perfect sponsor, but avoiding sponsorship denies us a valuable experience for growth. Sponsorship is a form of twelfth-step service and a way of expressing gratitude for what we have gained in the EA program.

HOW LONG DOES A SPONSOR/SPONSEE RELATIONSHIP LAST?

Sponsorship is not a permanent relationship. It continues as long as both sponsor and sponsored feel it is beneficial, whether that is weeks, months, or years. Many sponsorships develop into friendships that continue indefinitely. However, either person may end sponsorship at any time. If, after thoughtful consideration, one person decides to end a sponsorship relationship, it is recommended that the situation be approached with honesty and love.

BENEFITS OF SPONSORSHIP

Sponsors can learn, too. The newest member can give insights to those who have been in the EA program for months or years. The interchange between sponsor and sponsored is a form of communication, which will instruct and nourish both persons.

We are all seeking peace of mind. Having and being a sponsor can be important steps towards attaining that goal and becoming what our Higher Power wants us to be—loving and serene people comfortable with ourselves and our world.