

POWERLESSNESS ... "THE ESSENTIALS" ... RELATIONSHIPS ... FELLOWSHIPS
A "BIG BOOK" STUDY OF FOUR "THREADS OF RECOVERY"

October 11 through December 27, 2021

(Page cites from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, except as noted.)

FELLOWSHIPS - PART 1: WITH A SPONSOR. Chapter 7, "Working with Others".

We alcoholics are **powerless** over alcohol. We are powerless over *our physical allergy*, over the *idea of the first drink*, and our *inability to stop drinking once we start*. We need a spiritual awakening produced by the Twelve Steps and the "**three essentials**" of *willingness, honesty and open-mindedness* to deal with our powerlessness. (See Appendix II, pp. 567-568)

The Twelve Steps guide me in seeking, establishing and growing a *healthy, helpful relationship with God, myself and with all others*, as outlined in Step Five. "Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us." (p. 77)

A fourth "thread" in the spiritual awakening of our recovery is **fellowship**. There are three "fellowships" in AA: *fellowship with a sponsor; fellowship within the AA community; fellowship "in all our affairs"*.

Chapter 7, "Working with Others", has several suggestions regarding the healthy, helpful roles of the sponsor and the sponsee in the **sponsorship "fellowship"**. To be "healthy" is to be unselfish; to be "helpful" is to be considerate of the other person. The sponsor sets the example for the sponsee. Yet, the sponsee has responsibilities in this "fellowship", as well.

"You will be bound to them with new and wonderful ties, for you will escape disaster together and you will commence shoulder to shoulder your common journey." (pp. 152-153)

From this one sentence we learn three essential things about the common experience we share in the sponsor-sponsee fellowship. First, we escape disaster together. Second, we recover together—"shoulder to shoulder"—no "rank" in AA, simply members. Third, we share our common journey of recovery—never "graduating".

Chapter 7 guides the sponsor and sponsee as they grow in *fellowship with one another*. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part, pages 89-96, gives advice about preparing for and conducting the first meeting with the newcomer. The second part, pp. 96-103, has advice about the continuing *fellowship of sponsorship*.

Sponsor's Role in the Fellowship with the Sponsee.

First Visit, pp. 89-96.

"... because of your own drinking experience you can be uniquely useful to other alcoholics." (p. 89)

"So cooperate; never criticize. To be helpful is our only aim." "

"... [ask] if he wants to quit for good ... would go to any extreme to do so." (p. 90)

"Tell him enough about your drinking habits, symptoms, and experiences to encourage him to speak of himself ... " (p. 91)

"... describe yourself as an alcoholic ... tell him ... give him ... show him ..." (p. 92)

"We suggest you do this as we have done it in [Chapter 3]." "

"... dwell on the hopeless feature of the malady ... alcoholism as an illness ..." "

"Tell him exactly what happened to you." (p. 93)

"The main thing is that he be willing to believe in a Power greater than himself and that he live by spiritual principles." "

"Outline the program of action ... tell him about the Fellowship ... this book." (p. 94)

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The On-going Role of the Sponsor, pp. 96-103.

- "Let him know you are available ..." (p. 96)
"But be sure you use discretion." "
"Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery." (p. 97)
"... little charity, in the ordinary sense of the word, is needed or wanted." (p. 98)
"It is not the matter of giving that is in question, but when and how to give." "
"Burn the idea into the consciousness of every man that he can get well
regardless of anyone. The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house." "
"Both you and the new man must walk day by day in the path of spiritual
progress. If you persist, remarkable things will happen ..." (p. 100)

Sponsee's Role in the Fellowship with the Sponsor.

First Visit, pp. 89-96.

- "... want to stop [drinking] ..." (p. 90)
"... be more receptive ..." (p. 91)
"... wishes to talk ..." "
"... tell some of his [stories of his own escapades]." "
"... draw his own conclusion." (p. 92)
"... *believe in a Power greater than himself ... live by spiritual principles.*" (p. 93)
"... place the welfare of other people ahead of his own." (p. 94)
"The more hopeless he feels, the better." "
"... follow [the sponsor's] suggestions." "

The On-going Role of the Sponsee, pp. 96-103.

- "... read this volume [the Big Book]." (p. 96)
"... prepared to go through with the Twelve Steps of the program of recovery." "
"... make a decision and tell his story ..." "
"... trust in God and clean house." (p. 98)
"... made such reparation as he can to his family ..." "
"... put these principles into action at home." "
"... concentrate on his own spiritual demonstration." "
"... continues to demonstrate that he can be sober, considerate, and helpful,
regardless of what anyone says or does." (p. 99)
"Let the alcoholic continue his program day by day." "
"... walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress." (p. 100)

Suggested Cautions and Restraints.

- "Don't start out as an evangelist or a reformer ... never criticize." (p. 89)
"... don't waste time trying to persuade him [to stop drinking]." (p. 90)
"Don't deal with him when he is very drunk ..." "
"... never force yourself upon him." "
"... being careful not to moralize or lecture." "
"And be careful not to brand him as an alcoholic." (p. 92)
"... *he does not have to agree with your conception of God.*" (p. 93)
"Never talk down to an alcoholic from any moral or spiritual hilltop ..." (p. 95)
"[Do not act] as a banker ... or as a nurse ..." "
"He should not be pushed or prodded ... to find God ..." "
"... do not insist upon [being the sponsor] if he prefers ... someone else." (p. 96)

Next Time: Fellowships - Part 2: Within the AA Community.

Chapter 11, "A Vision for You".