

Lesson 7

SPONSOR

Principle 4: Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

“Happy are the pure in heart.” (Matthew 5:8)

Step 4: We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.” (Lamentations 3:40)

Think About It

You’ve heard the word “sponsor” for a few weeks now. I’m sure you have at least a vague idea of what a sponsor is, but maybe you’re wondering why you even need one.

Why do I need a sponsor and/ or an accountability partner?

There are three reasons why having a sponsor is vital.

Having a sponsor and/or accountability partner is biblical.

“Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone . . . there is no one to help him. . . . Two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9 – 12, GNT)

“As iron sharpens iron, one person sharpens another.” (Proverbs 27:17)

Having a sponsor and/or accountability partner is a key part of your recovery program.

Your recovery program has four key elements to success:

- To the best of your ability, maintain your **honest** view of reality as you *work* each principle. The best way to ensure this is to have a sponsor and develop a strong accountability support team.
- Make recovery group **meetings** a priority in your schedule. Knowing that a sponsor or accountability partner will be there to greet you or notice that you’re not there is an added incentive to attend.
- Maintain your **spiritual program** with Jesus Christ, through prayer, meditation, and studying His Word.
- Get involved in **service**, which includes serving as a sponsor (after you have completed all eight principles) or accountability partner.

Having a sponsor and/or an accountability partner is the best guard against relapse.

By providing feedback to keep you on track, a sponsor and/or accountability partner can see your old dysfunctional hurts, hang-ups, and habits beginning to return, and point them out to you quickly. He or she can confront you with truth and love without placing shame or guilt.

What are the qualities of a sponsor?

“Though good advice lies deep within a counselor’s heart, the wise man will draw it out.” (Proverbs 20:5, TLB)

When you are selecting a possible sponsor, look for the following qualities:

1. Does his walk match his talk? Is he living by the eight principles?
2. Does she have a growing relationship with Jesus Christ?
3. Does he express the desire to help others on the “road to recovery?”
4. Does she show compassion, care, and hope, but not pity?
5. Is he a good listener?
6. Is she strong enough to confront your denial or procrastination?
7. Does he offer suggestions?
8. Can she share her own current struggles with others?

What is the role of a sponsor?

1. She can be there to discuss issues in detail that are too personal or would take too much time in a meeting.
2. He is available in times of crisis or potential relapse.
3. She serves as a sounding board by providing an objective point of view.
4. He is there to encourage you to work the principles at your own speed. He does not work the steps for you!
5. Most important, she attempts to model the lifestyle resulting from working the eight principles.
6. A sponsor can resign or can be fired.

How do I find a sponsor and/or an accountability partner?

First, your sponsor or accountability partner **MUST** be of the same sex as you. After you have narrowed the field down with that requirement, listen to people share. Do you relate to or resonate with what is spoken? Ask others in your group to go out for coffee after the meeting. Get to know the person before you ask him or her to be your sponsor or accountability partner!

If you ask someone to be your sponsor or accountability partner and that person says no, do not take it as a personal rejection. Ask someone else. You can even ask for a “temporary” sponsor or accountability partner.

Ask God to lead you to the sponsor and/or accountability partner of His choosing. He already has someone in mind for you.

What is the difference between a sponsor and an accountability partner?

A sponsor is someone who has completed the four participant’s guides. He or she has worked through the eight principles and the 12 Steps. The main goal of this relationship is to choose someone to guide you through the program.

An accountability partner is someone you ask to hold you accountable for certain areas of your recovery or issues, such as meeting attendance, journaling, and so forth. This person can be at the same level of recovery as you are, unlike a

sponsor, who should have completed the eight principles or 12 Steps. The main goal of this relationship is to encourage one another. You can even form an accountability team of three or four.

The accountability partner or group acts as the “team,” whereas the sponsor’s role is that of a “coach.”

Write About It

1. Why is it important for you to have a support team?
2. What qualities are you looking for in a sponsor?
3. How have you attempted to find a sponsor/accountability partner?
4. What are some new places and ways you can try to find a sponsor/ accountability partner?
5. What is the difference between a sponsor and an accountability partner?
6. List the names and phone numbers of possible sponsors or accountability partners. These should be individuals you have met on your “Road to Recovery” who have touched you in the sharing of their experiences, strengths, and hopes.