

# Together We Can

Winter 2010 Newsletter  
NYS Capital District Intergroup  
Overeaters Anonymous

**Our first newsletter for 2010 focuses on one of the key OA tools of recovery: sponsorship. Members share their personal experience, strength, and hope on finding a sponsor, working with a sponsor, and being a sponsor.**

## Finding a Sponsor

Find a sponsor who has what you want and ask how he/she is achieving it. The best way to decide if someone has what you want is to listen to the sharing in meetings and the qualifications. Does the person you are considering have enough sobriety to serve as a model for your abstinence? To what does the person attribute his/her serenity? Can you hear evidence of this person's relationship with a Higher Power? Do you hear a message of experience, strength, hope and gratitude?

When you have noticed that you resonate with someone's ideas as they share, and believe you want what they have, it is a good idea to seek out that person after a meeting and make a few calls to this person. This may further confirm what you think or may change your mind.

Recently, the idea of interviewing someone for the role of sponsor has been used by several people I know. The idea is to see if this person who has what you want is willing to give you what and need. Asking the person how they work with sponsees is a good way to start the conversation. Explaining what you hope the sponsor can give you in the way of time and the type of support you desire is important information to impart. The potential sponsor might have certain expectations of people they sponsor. All of this can come out in the interview.

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## Sponsorship

"Do you have something to offer?" That is the question my sponsor asked me. Some soul searching and a practical look at my own program led to my response. With ten years of experience, strength and hope to share up to the level of my ability, I have been actively working the steps each day and am formally heading into my third round of writing responses to the steps with a sponsor or with a group. I realized that the only OA tool I had not been using was sponsoring others, and that came from my own struggle with self-defined continuous abstinence and with feeling I had to do it perfectly.

So I have embarked again after many years on a path of sponsoring others in the program, and it is evolving into a gift for myself; a renewed look at my own program, a clearer view of what I believe, an enhanced practice of listening, growing patience with the awareness that everyone grows at their own pace and in their own way, and finally an abundance of gratitude for the sponsors who have shared their wisdom and hope with me at the darkest hours of my journey.

*(Sponsorship continued on page 2.)*

### Saturday Meetings Moved

The Albany Beginner's meeting at 9am on Saturdays and Albany Intergroup meetings at 10:15am have moved to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor auditorium in the Stratton VA Hospital at 113 Holland Ave. in Albany.

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There is another technique that has worked well for someone who really wants to work a good program but feels scared about the commitment of asking someone to sponsor or has not found someone who has what he/she wants. Ask for temporary sponsorship. This might also be a way of having a short term relationship with someone who writes “full” or “N/A” on the We Care List.

It is very important to remember that this selection is not a lifetime commitment. We can “change sponsors at will.”

This brings me to what I think is an important point on the subject of sponsorship. People have asked me, “Who is your sponsor?” or “Who are you sponsoring?” I think this information should be anonymous. Do I mean that you should keep your sponsor a secret? Yes, I do.

I have several reasons for thinking this way. If I have a reason to need to let go of a sponsor and find another one, people who know the identity of my former sponsor may possibly wonder why or unfairly have some negative misconception about that person (or me). Similarly, if I have ended a sponsorship relationship with a sponsee, it will serve that person better if I have not told anyone who I was sponsoring. It is important not to have tainted that person’s chances of obtaining a new sponsor.

Also, I often hear people say in their sharing, “My sponsor always says \_\_\_\_\_.” or “My first sponsor always told me to do \_\_\_\_\_.” If I have told people who is sponsoring me, I believe I have just crossed a boundary by revealing what they have said to me in private. If I have kept the sponsor’s identity anonymous, I can pass on the gems that I have been given without inappropriately crossing a boundary.

Over the years I have been in this fellowship, I have had many different sponsors. From each of them I have

received many gifts. I have also sponsored many people and from each of them I have received many gifts. Whenever I ask my Higher Power to give me the insight and the words to help a sponsee who is still suffering or who needs support, I am given the words and the wisdom I need for myself as well.

— Margy

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We are not meant to travel this earth alone. To the extent we are able, we open our hearts and minds to others and with that willingness to consider a different point of view, and we unfold and grow. I do not have all the answers. I cannot sponsor everyone. However, I can do something. To that end, I am also grateful for the people who I do sponsor for their refreshing of lessons and for their sharing their road to health with me.

To those whom I have not been able to agree to sponsor, I offer my prayers and gratitude for their seeing in me something they want. I remember that I have an obligation to balance and not overwhelm myself... I offer to keep in touch and to assist in finding another sponsor if they want that.

How wonderful it is to walk into a meeting and see many hands go up when folks announce they are sponsors (or many “Y” notations on the “we care” list). Even if people are “full” or not available, it is a positive reflection of the Big Book’s guide to share this program in order to keep its gifts and its presence in our community.

Keeping in mind that we can have as many sponsors as we want and can change sponsors at will reinforces the intuition within us to find what we need for guidance and support. The reality is that a sponsor cannot be everything to us. The most important relationship for me to pursue is one with my Higher Power. Then, all else follows.

— Helen

## The Gifts of Sponsorship

Having a sponsor has been essential to my recovery from compulsive overeating. I was so desperate and my life was out of control when I came to OA. I knew I could not stop eating compulsively and needed help. So, I got a sponsor almost immediately who helped me develop a plan of eating that is nutritious and works. I knew only how to binge or starve myself. Once the physical malady was overcome, she guided me through the steps so that I could recover emotionally and spiritually and live the way my Higher Power intended, which is allowing me to fulfill my hopes and dreams. Even after several years in OA, I am still just one bite away from uncontrolled eating and death spiritually, emotionally, and physically. To this day I continue to need a sponsor because my best thinking brought me to OA full of shame, fat, and moral degradation. No matter how long I abstain, how many meetings I attend, and how much service work I do, I am *still* powerless over food. Thus, this program has truly been for me a “design for living that really works” (BB pg. 28).

I have also discovered I cannot keep the sanity, serenity, and freedom from compulsive overeating unless I give back that which was given to me so generously. Being a sponsor myself has given me so much more than I ever imagined. It is helping me develop real relationships with other people and learn to have emotional intimacy. My sponsor said recently that I need my sponsees more than they need me. And boy was she right! I don't think I have all the answers and I'm quite certain my sponsees can find recovery just as well with another sponsor. But giving to others and getting out of myself keeps me on track and of better use to my Higher Power and my fellows, all of which keeps me abstinent and recovering one day at a time.

— Sallie W.

## Sponsorship Is Nothing Like I Thought It Would Be

Sponsorship is nothing like I thought it would be. I had a sponsor for years, but had resisted being a sponsor myself. This was partly due to the fact that I never thought I could do as good a job as my sponsor. I always wondered where she got her inspiration from. It seemed like when I was struggling, she would always know what to say. I would soon to come to learn where she got her inspiration.

For years, my sponsor encouraged me to work the steps, but it just seemed like too much work. I had been in therapy for years and thought I had worked through all I needed. After all, my problem was the food, and I just needed to stop overeating!

I finally got sick and tired of being sick and tired. I could not get a handle on my abstinence. In my home group, we were reading from the Big Book and we came upon The Miracle passage on pages 84 – 85. It said that if I worked the steps and kept spiritually fit, I would have neutrality with my food. I so desperately wanted this that I became willing to work the steps. By working the steps, I learned that while I had a lot of insight about my issues, I had not necessarily moved beyond that awareness. Here is what I learned from my sponsor and the steps:

- There is a solution.
- My *real* problem was a lack of spiritual connectedness.
- I need to “step down” from being in charge and allow my Higher Power to be the director while I remain committed to enlarging my spiritual life.
- Understanding that while I was a very giving individual (sometimes to the point that it hurt), I was also “selfish”

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and “self-centered” by *constantly* focusing on my weight, how to lose weight, eating and swearing off, hiding my eating from others and obsessing about how I looked.

- How to deal with my resentments and fears.
- When I had a stronger relationship with my Higher Power, I didn’t need to rely upon my character defects quite so much.
- If you want to keep what you have, you’ve got to give it away
- Service and helping others is an antidote for a lot of what ails me.

Now that I am a sponsor, I can see that I am the one receiving the gifts. Sponsoring allows me to be in a bigger conversation than “what do I look like.” It allows me to reinforce what I, myself, am practicing. I am able to witness an individual’s growth and recovery — something much more gratifying than any food I’ve ever eaten.

I am grateful to my sponsor for all her patience, acceptance and support. Her keeping what she has by giving it away has changed my life in ways that I never could have imagined.

— Anonymous

### **Facing Step Four with My Sponsor**

When I started Step 4, I was full of fear and trepidation because I didn’t want to look too closely at my mistakes and my part in them. However, this part of my recovery was necessary in order for me to heal. I have a sponsor who doesn’t judge me and wants me to recover. This still did not lessen the fear I had. I did not want her to find out what I was really like. I have friends in OA who also want me to heal. They encouraged me to trust my HP and my sponsor and move forward. As I got into Step 4 and started answering the questions, I realized that I had no reason to be afraid. I could feel HP’s presence and I knew that I was loved and

cared for. I am grateful to my sponsor for helping me get beyond my fear of doing Step 4. I found turning it over to HP and just doing it didn’t harm me, and it helped make me a better person.

— Mary S.

### **Intergroup News**

Print copies of the meeting lists will be made only when there are changes to meeting locations or times.

Di, who does our meeting list, is giving up the position and will work with whoever takes over the position.

Other open Intergroup positions include Vice-Chair, Recording Secretary (who only needs to take the meeting notes), and two Alternate Region 6 Reps. Come to our next Intergroup meeting if you are interested in any of these service opportunities.

Anne G. will be our delegate to the World Service Business Conference in April.

Our next Intergroup Meeting is Saturday, March 13, 2010 in Saratoga.

### **Editorial Policy**

*Together We Can* is the newsletter of the New York State Capital District Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous. Submissions will appear with the author’s first name and last initial unless otherwise requested. Materials cannot be returned nor can payment be made. *Together We Can* reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity. Other OA groups may reprint without permission. We ask that you cite the writer and *Together We Can* as your source. The opinions expressed are those of the individual writers and not those of NYSCD IG or OA as a whole. Please address all submissions and suggestions to the editor Sue S. at 463-3350 or [katiesusan35@aim.com](mailto:katiesusan35@aim.com).