



CORNERSTONE  
RECOVERY

## THE ROLE OF A SPONSOR

Most sponsors do everything possible to work the Twelve Steps, carrying the message and practicing the Twelve Steps in all aspects of their relationship with the persons they sponsor.

It is suggested that a sponsor:

- Show by personal example how the program can lead to serenity.
- Encourage the member to attend meetings, read the literature and apply the tools of the program.
- Keep in regular contact, by telephone or in person, and whenever possible, be available when the sponsee has special problems.
- Listen. A sponsor listens for two reasons: 1) to allow the member to release his or her burden of trouble and 2) to help the sponsor recognize the areas where help is most needed.
- Listen not for the details of crisis, but for signs of self-pity, fear, resentment and negative thinking.
- Listen for the things left unsaid, things not easily talked about and perhaps by sharing a personal experience, you can draw a response in these areas of denial.
- Listen for opportunities to apply Twelve Steps principles and to explain the concept of alcoholism/drug abuse as a family illness.
- Never take another's inventory, but give honest answers if asked.
- Never give advice or make decisions for the member, particularly about family situations.
- Refrain from imposing personal views and instead, encourage the member to grow at his or her own rate. Have them practice the program in his or her own way.
- Provide patience, understanding, open-mindedness and flexibility, while not "killing with kindness" or being so helpful that you render the sponsee helpless.
- Avoid dwelling on personal problems, but share the experience, strength and hope of your own recovery.
- Realize that a sponsor is only one channel for the message of hope, and avoid feeling that it is necessary to know all the answers.
- Accept, care, encourage, love.