



On the web at aasrq.org

Sara-Mana Intergroup

P.O. Box 3075 1748 Independence Blvd., #B2, Sarasota, FL

God
grant me the
serenity to accept the
things I cannot
change, courage to
change the things I
can and the wisdom
to know the differ-
ence.

FEBRUARY 2016

Central Office (941) 351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

4 Qualities to Look for in Choosing a Sponsor

Excerpted from SoberNation; original sent along by Chris C.

An important criteria in successfully completing the 12 steps of the A.A. program is to have a sponsor who is willing to take you through them. A sponsor is someone who has been through the steps and will assist you on your journey. Many times this includes going through the Big Book together, working through the steps together, and giving and providing mutual support.

It is said that you should find a sponsor who “has what you want,” someone you would want to emulate and that lives their life in a way that you would want to live yours. There are no rules for the right sponsor, and many times people go through more than one sponsor on their journey through sobriety.

However, there are a few good personality traits or characteristics one may want to look for when trying to find a sponsor.

1 – Patience And Tolerance

Working with recovering persons is difficult. No doubt about it. They are emotional, they are impulsive and they just don’t know how to live their lives in sobriety. A good sponsor must be patient and not take things personally. Sponsees don’t always call when they say they will, and they don’t always follow guidance, but that is okay. Bringing someone through the 12 steps is a slow process that requires lots of self-reflection and lots of honesty. Breaking down the barriers and getting

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“Comparison is the thief of happiness . . .” —Terry



Bill Wilson in an undated photo is shown at the grave of Dr. Bob Smith, co-founder with Wilson of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Central Office Fund Drive Seeks \$30,000

Once again we are asking individual A.A. members to send a contribution to support the Central Office. These contributions —the target total is \$30,000— enable us to staff and maintain what we feel is the best Central Office in South Florida. It operates and maintains our Website. It hosts the Help Line. It is a clearing house for information relating to A.A. in our district as well as a means of sharing information with A.A. groups throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Envelopes for mailing your contributions are available at your groups and of course, the Office. We are not asking you to give a lot. If everyone would consider what a night of drinking cost (even without the DUI) and send it, we would make our goal of \$30,000.00 easily.—Tony F.

Emotional Sobriety His Key to Relief from Alcoholism

By Doug C.

More often than not in meetings I witness newcomers raise their hands and admit their powerlessness over alcohol. Step one: what does it mean? While alcohol has influenced many of the events in my life, I believe that unmanageable emotions were the root cause of consuming this liquid. Having a proven track record of unmanageability, I find it easy to admit, with no hesitation, my powerlessness over this substance.

Emotions that led me to this habitual addiction can be summed up as: fear, disappointments, anger, resentments, loneliness, and any other emotion associated with childhood experiences. For me, I truly believe we all have been through traumatic events that shaped and formed these insecure emotions. In my case, as I am confident in others as well, teachings on how to manage these emotions were absent. Having a little over 6 months in round two of a sober attempt, I was and still am at times, an emotional rollercoaster.

I have determined the work involved in dissecting my emotions one piece at a time is absolutely necessary if I am in any way serious about living a decent life ever again. I have become obsessed to strive towards emotional sobriety. I will be vigilant and keep mindful of the very emotions bringing me to the rooms of A.A. The goal for me is finding the emotional relief from repressed feelings I have built up from resentments fueled by anger and hate.

It will not be easy, but it will be better! One day at a time.

Finding a Sponsor

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to this place of healing is difficult and many times it is met with resistance. A good sponsor knows this and knows that the most important thing is that the sponsee doesn't drink. Tomorrow is another day.

2 – Long Term Sobriety

Having lots of sober time doesn't make someone a good sponsor. We have all seen people who have long term sobriety who are still miserable and live unhealthy lives. However, there is something to be said about commitment.

One old-timer heard a guy say, "If you don't think time in sobriety is a big deal, then try to get some."

He never forgot that. At the very least, your sponsor should have at least a year of sobriety. A simple suggestion is that time in sobriety does mean something. It means that this person has probably dealt with pain and death and money problems and depression and stayed sober through it all.

3 – Their Words Match Their Actions

This is the truest testament of a man's or woman's character.

Anyone can get in front of people at a meeting and talk a big game about spirituality and helping other people. But what do they do? What are their actions?

What a person does will tell you a million times more than what they say. If someone's actions match their words, then they respect themselves because they are willing to do what it takes to hold themselves accountable.

Look for a sponsor who walks the walk.

4 – They Do The Right Thing And Expect Nothing In Return

Being a good sponsor requires someone to be selfless. To help someone without expecting anything in return is a sure sign of a virtuous person who can help you on your road to recovery.

Being a sponsor is a commitment. Hours of talking on the phone, reading with sponsees, being available when they are needed. All of these hours really do add up. But a good sponsor will do it and go out of his way to help someone in need.

SUMMING UP.

If you are afraid to get a sponsor, you're going to need to get over it. A sponsor's job is to help you stay sober. If you are new in recovery, you probably don't know how to stay sober on your own. Your sponsor does.

How comparison blinds us to the truth is evident in this story heard at a meeting: "Though I was living under a bridge, with no job, no friends, no family and no hope, I didn't consider myself a real alcoholic like my friend Bill; he didn't have a shopping cart."

Back of the Book

Crossing the River of Denial

The stories in the back of the Big Book were believed by Bill Wilson to be the most important part of the tome, yet they are often overlooked. Readers are invited to supply a favorite passage, thought, or theme from a story, like this one on page 328 of the Fourth Edition.

"Eventually, you talked about my feelings in the meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous until I could no longer close my ears. I heard women, beautiful, successful women in recovery, talk about the things they had done while drinking and I would think, 'I did that' or 'I did worse than that!' Then I began to see the miracles that only happen in A.A. People who would nearly crawl in the doors, sick and broken, and who in a few weeks of meetings and not drinking one day at a time would get their health back, find a little job and friends who really cared, and then discover a God in their lives."

Brimming with many of our 12 Steps' underlying principles, this Denial story reminds me of how the magic of our program works to restore people's lives. The paragraph cited above speaks to me of honesty, hope, faith, courage, willingness, perseverance and of course spirituality, just to name a few.—*Anonymous*

Letter to the editor

No Cell Phone, Texting at Meetings

I have noticed in the last six months the frequent intrusion of cell phones going off during many meetings that I attend. This is not only very disturbing, but very disrespectful of fellow members.

Unless you are a physician on call, there is no reason to bring your phone to a meeting. Mine stays in the car. I discovered 30 years ago that I'm not quite as important as I thought I was.

Also, the texting is frequent too. Stay home if you need to take care of business. A lot of us would be very grateful!
— Richard B.



"Getting in the bottle was easy. The hard part is getting back out."

Admitting Wrongs Was Easier, Softer Way

Nancy B. keeps a daily journal and enters thoughts about the A.A. program triggered by her morning readings.

By Nancy B

Promptly admitting when I am wrong—as a practice—has brought me immeasurable peace.

I didn't appreciate how much turmoil and pain my self-righteous approach and my victim mentality caused me until I started to practice taking responsibility for my part and admitting I was wrong. The admission to myself was the biggest, hardest part because I had built a persona of myself to myself that included me being self-searching and honest.

But my fear and alcoholism colluded to keep me anything but honest about some of my motives and behaviors. In retrospect, it was exhausting. Living Step 10 is the easier, softer way. I like myself more and I am easier to get along with.

Book Note

Drinking in America

by Susan Cheever

DRINKING IN AMERICA, by Susan Cheever, notes that beer was more potable than water in seventeenth-century Europe, and when the Mayflower's supplies were running low, its captain made an impromptu landing at Cape Cod. Liquor has remained a significant influence in Americans' lives, as this compact account of the nation's often tumultuous relationship with the bottle reveals.

Cheever, who wrote a biography of Bill Wilson, focuses on alcohol's more damaging effects. John Adams lost two sons and two grandsons to alcoholism, Civil War doctors often became addicted to "their principal means of anesthetic," and Prohibition did not stop the excessive drinking of Hemingway, Faulkner, and Steinbeck.

Not every boozy encounter ended poorly. Colony taverns, which the Puritans considered "gifts from God," became the primary meeting places for revolutionaries.



Prayers for each Step

The Sponsor's Aide web site offers a prayer to accompany the working of each step in our program. These are not part of the official canon of A.A. but are grounded in Big Book comments and are well-regarded by many long-time A.A. members. We are printing one prayer each month through the end of the year.

SECOND STEP PRAYER:
Heavenly Father, I know in my heart that only You can restore me to sanity. I humbly ask that You remove all twisted thought and addictive behavior from me this day. Heal my spirit and restore in me a clear mind.

How Pain Leads Us to Grace, Freedom

"Though I still find it difficult to accept today's pain and anxiety with any great degree of serenity — as those more advanced in the spiritual life seem able to do — I can give thanks for present pain nevertheless. I find the willingness to do this by contemplating the lessons learned from past suffering — lessons which have led to the blessings I now enjoy. I can remember how the agonies of alcoholism, the pain of rebellion and thwarted pride, have often led me to God's grace, and so to a new freedom."

Bill W., Grapevine, March 1962
c. 1967 AAWS, As Bill Sees It, p. 266

Jeff M. says he practices SOBRENITY on a daily basis, explaining that it is a blend of SOBRIETY and SERENITY.

Dear Alkie

"Alkie" is a long-time member of A.A. His comments are based on his own strength, hope, and experience and do not represent any official A.A. position or practice.

Q. My sponsee of a year is sober but she is miserable. Not "restless, irritable & discontent," but very sad even though she has a good life. I've warned about being a "dry drunk" with no results. Any ideas?

A. She just may be NUTS—Not Using The Steps. She's lost her best friend (booze), but should be over grieving after a year. Suggest she go back to the third step — frequently repeating the prayer about "relieve me of bondage of self" until she believes the part about 'those I would help'.

Q. I'm losing my serenity as I see everything happening in this world — shrinking middle class, government paralysis, ISIS and terrorism, politicians stirring resentment/fear, and now the zika virus. Will it ever stop?

A. People with our disease are susceptible to instantly turning world chaos into alcoholic chaos. The big difference is a) you can do nothing about world chaos and it probably won't affect your life and b) you can do everything to avoid alcoholic chaos and it will absolutely affect your life. Turn off the TV news and go to a meeting — you'll feel better.

Q. Year's second month and I'm ready for the second step. I just don't get "restore us to sanity"—I'm not crazy!

A. A definition of insanity is repeatedly doing the same thing and expecting a different result — doesn't that fit all of us A.A.s? It took most of us some time to remember our past behavior and how sick we were.

Get This Newsletter

Delivered to You by Email

Get your Sara-Mana Newsletter emailed to you as a PDF. Email igsecretary@AAsrq.org and ask to be added to the email list.

ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: email birthdays to newsletter@AAsrq.org and put ANNIVERSARIES in the subject line. Cutoff for the newsletter is the last day of the month. February anniversaries appear in March.

Bay		Happy Cookie Hour			
December		December		Carol H.	25
Kerry S.	34	Patricia	34	Corky S.	1
Rhonda G.	29	Karen E.	34		
Peg B.	8	Erica A.	22	Open Door	
Karla K.	8	Charlie R.	18	Ellenton	
January		Toby M.	13	January	
Denise W.	31	Maribeth	12	Cliff B.	48
Susan W.	15	Kim A.	11	Judy B.	7
Mike P.	5	Tina S.	10	Willis H.	2
		Steve Y.	4		
Bee Ridge East		George	3	Pass it On	
January		Daniel Y.	2	January	
Kathy W.	34	Mike C.	2	Jimmy Mac	34
				Dick.	33
Friends of the		Lakewood Ranch		John R.	8
Pelican		12&12			
January		January		Sunrise	
Sean S.	2	Pat Mc.	11	January	
Ben R.	1	Bobbie R.	2	Cape Cod Bill	34
				Cindy C.	19
Gulf Gate Noon		Monday Nite Men's		Barb Z	18
January		January		Liz A.	14
Phil C.	34	Sean M.	18	Mike L.	7
Laurie C.	6				
Chad S.	4	Oasis		Third Legacy Men's	
Mark S.	2	January		January	
Anne F.	2	Ed B.	33	Cal J.	32
Kevin F.	1	Dick B.	27	Elliott S.	22
				Gary B.	14
				Joe R.	14

"You'd be surprised how many people violate this simple principle every day of their lives and try to fit square pegs into round holes, ignoring the clear reality that **Things Are As They Are.**"



Helpline Seeks Help!

The Helpline is looking for volunteers to cover 3-hour shifts (either at the Central Office or from their own phones). One year of continuous sobriety is required. Inquiries to helpline@aasrq.org



January 2016 AA Helpline Totals

AA Meeting Time/Location:	269
AA Meeting in lieu of 12 step call:	12
Actual 12 Step Call:	9
Al-Anon:	2
Special Needs:	5
Miscellaneous:	24
Total Calls:	321



Thanks to all volunteers who make it happen!

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform, connect and entertain.

TO SUBMIT ITEMS TO THE NEWSLETTER:

Anniversaries, articles and meeting notices should be sent to newsletter@AAsrq.org. Submit material as attachments or directly in an email. Include your first name, group and type of item being sent. Deadline is the last day of the month. Submissions may be edited for length or content. Opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and not necessarily those of A.A., Sara-Mana Intergroup, or the Central Office, located at #B-2, 1748 Independence Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34234. Phone 941- 351-4818.



"No matter the problem, the answer is always the same...More Spiritual growth and working the Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and doing the following: 1) Say the Serenity Prayer, 2) Help Others, 3) Take a personal inventory, 4) Say the St. Francis Prayer" --- from the late Richard John "Sandy" Beach