

The Road To Recovery

The Newsletter of Westchester United Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

September 2004

For This I Am Responsible

Upon hearing the word Sponsor, the faces of the generous, loving women I called "sponsor" move through my memory. I recognize the "right" person to sponsor me when her voice resounds in my head, impressing upon me what I need to learn. Their voices reverberate down through the years. The voice of my first sponsor, Barbara, echoes, "If you are washing the dishes, stay in the moment by repeating over and over, 'I'm washing the dishes, I'm washing the dishes.' Upon completing my Fifth Step, my sponsor, Susan, exclaimed, "Well! Welcome to the human race!" and, Sonya, hearing my story, summed it all up with "Insanity!" One of the most valuable pieces of advice I received from a sponsor was a resounding, "Don't do it!"

As with all systems from which we draw, our resource has to be replaced or we perish. Each of my sponsors contributed to our perpetuity by returning to the Stream of Goodness what she had taken out. The foundation of the Twelve Step program we love so dearly is, in fact, Sponsorship. The love of one alcoholic for another was the heart of the germinating idea between Dr. Bob and Bill. For to save oneself from prison, insanity, or death, each of us must assume responsibility to carry the message to another person. Although the message may be spread in many ways, our roots mandate person to person sharing of our addiction history and recovery through the Twelve Steps. That is the simple program of recovery. To abdicate this responsibility is to run the risk of retrogression physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Sponsorship is tailored to each situation, personality, and relationship. What does *this* sponsee need? I remember I am not M.D., therapist, banker, or God Himself. I try to rely upon the Slogans, tools, and Steps to do the work for me and to practice the Traditions by respecting Anonymity and staying clear of politics, religion, and controversy. I aim to identify and not compare; to evaluate, but not condemn and to give without expectation of repayment, respecting another's right to choices and encouraging reliance upon God, who is Authority to us both. If I were to push a sponsee to progress too quickly, I will feel the sting of retribution. "There is only one law, the law of love, and there are only two sins: the first is to interfere with the growth of another human being and the second is to interfere with one's own growth." (Alcoholics Anonymous, 3rd Edition, p. 542) With this credo, I can confidently encourage a sponsee to develop a sense of responsibility to God, OA and herself – the same responsibility I have.

Slips? If a sponsee slips, humility demands I acknowledge neither her successes nor her failures are attributable to me. If she slips repeatedly? The Big Book responds, "To spend too much time on any one alcoholic is to deny some other an opportunity to live and be happy. One of our Fellowships failed entirely with his first half-dozen prospects. He often says if he had continued to work on them, he might have deprived many others, who have since recovered, of their chance." (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 96) Rather than cling to my past addictive insistence on winning, I must let go, and move on.

How shall I sponsor? "A good advisor will never do all our thinking for us. He knows that each final choice must be ours. He will therefore help to eliminate fear, expediency, and self-deception, so enabling us to make choices which are loving, wise, and honest." (As Bill Sees It, p. 83) I aspire to be an example of courage to face my life without *any* substance with which to round off the edges. I work to be able to share with my sponsee that today I have chosen constructive actions and have put aside destructive behaviors which I had practiced many a year. I want to let her know that Sobriety has a life all its own. It is the most important fact of my life today. I must help her to find her way. For this, I am responsible.

Priscilla R.

Westchester United Intergroup

All Welcome To Attend
First Thursday of the Month
7:30 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.
Emanuel Lutheran Church
197 Manville Road, Pleasantville
www.oawestchester-ny.org

Upcoming Events

OA Marathon

Levittown Hall, Hicksville, NY
Saturday, September 11, 2004
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
For information: Stru (613) 987-5429 or
Roberta D. (516) 796-3287

Lighting the Way to Recovery Region 6 Convention

October 29-31, 2004
Sheraton Hyannis Resort
West End Circle
Hyannis, Massachusetts 02601
Reservations: (800) 598-4559
OA Convention Registration
Contact: Barbara (508) 428-0878
or Paula (508) 280-3887

IDEA Day

November 20, 2004

Pass It On

Share your experience, strength, and hope with Westchester and Putnam OAers in the next issue of The Road To Recovery. The topic for November, 2004 is **Anonymity**. The deadline for submissions is October 10th. You may mail your submissions anonymously at WUIG, PO Box 125, White Plains, NY 10603, email to Thunderstorm6@msn.com or call Priscilla at (914) 722-9263.

Suggested focus:

- How has Anonymity contributed to your recovery?
- How have you applied Anonymity to working the Steps?
- What does Anonymity mean to you?
- What examples of breaking Anonymity have you seen?
- How was the breaking of Anonymity detrimental?
- How were situations of breaking Anonymity resolved?

The Road To Recovery is submitted to World Service Lifeline Magazine. Submission of an article constitutes permission for possible national/international publication. Each article is the sole opinion of the individual author and does not represent the opinion of WUIG or OA as a whole. Comments or suggestions? Contact Priscilla R. at (914) 722-9263.

Thanks to Dee M. for The Road To Recovery graphic design and to all the OA writer-contributors of this newsletter.

If We Work for Them

Sponsorship is a tool of the program, second only to Anonymity. When I came into OA I was told to be abstinent and get a sponsor to lead me through the Steps. So, I did. By the grace of God she kept me moving through the AA 12 & 12. She was indeed a channel for God to teach me a new way to live.

I began to sponsor after Step 4 because we were in desperate need of sponsors. The most pressing requirement for my sponsoring a person is anonymity; then, abstinence, working the Steps and the willingness to answer daily Step questions, and meetings. Meetings introduced new ideas and choices to a sponsee. I also required daily phone calls to three other OAers to establish a network to ask for help.

I feel I am a channel to God as I sponsor. When the phone rings, I say a prayer for God's help to stay in the moment, listen and hear, and be willing to share my experiences without fear. I pray to accept without judgment anything that passes between us and to believe that all will be okay. We end the conversation with a "Just for Today" to remain positive and leave all in God's capable Hands.

I sought out my own sponsor because I could see her spirituality. She offered unconditional acceptance and a willingness to be there for my phone calls and to work the Steps with me. My responsibility to her was anonymity. I was so afraid of failure that I became totally honest and called her on time with the answer to each daily question. I turned my food over every day and made my own three phone calls as she asked. To thank her for helping me, I knew I would have to give back as she had given to me. Without my doing this, the spirituality of the program would not be passed on. I knew it was how it worked.

To be a channel means I am willing to sponsor anyone God presents to me, to do for others what my sponsor did for me, to practice the spirituality of the Steps, to listen with an open heart and mind, and to share honestly when asked. I pray to God for clarity of mind and body while remembering I live one day at a time by His grace. I am a compulsive overeater who must keep gratitude in mind, keep my life on a positive note, take responsibility for my actions, and live my life with joy, laughter, and hope. The Promises of program do come true if I do work for them.

Shirley

A Gift of the Program

Sponsorship is a gift the program offers on the road to recovery. As a sponsor, I give service to newer members. As a teacher to new members, I learn and relearn what I need to know day by day. I rework the Steps by working them with my sponsee. Each day I am a sponsor, I help my own recovery. By sponsoring, I answer questions and hear from my sponsee as he or she progresses in their daily journey. It reminds me to give, receive, and to be mindful that we are each on a unique journey. I learn not to be critical or judgmental, to practice what I preach, so I may receive the gift of the Promises. To be a sponsor reconnects me to my own honesty, openness, and willingness. I need to be reminded just for today to be grateful for the Fellowship for helping us both with our physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. I have been blessed to be a sponsor. It is a gift. Sponsorship makes me aware that we are important to each other and mutually need each other. We are in our program of recovery together.

Leah

Fear of Finishing the Steps

One can never underestimate the importance of sponsorship. I was in program three months before I began working with a sponsor. Until then, I wasn't fully able to immerse myself in the program. Almost immediately I began to reap the cornucopia of benefits the program has to offer to those who are willing to work for them.

Working with a sponsor has been nothing short of an amazing experience of growth and spirituality. Things that I would never have thought possible are happening due to the efforts and persistence of my caring sponsor. I am nearing the end of my Step work and my fears of finishing the Steps and becoming a sponsor are beginning to surface. I hope and pray that I can be an effective sponsor and will be able to pass along to others the gifts I have been given. I will have to turn over my apprehension to my Higher Power, having confidence that, when the time comes, I will be ready. I have been assured of that by my sponsor.

Janet B.

A Daily Helper

Having a sponsor is a gift. Before entering the rooms of OA, I never dreamed I could have a daily helper in my life. My sponsor gives me unconditional love and acceptance. She understands my struggles because she has had the same struggles. Having a sponsor gives me an opportunity to check in with myself as I am checking in with her.

Anonymous

On My Toes

Sponsorship requires the humility to set aside my preconceptions of another person and my character defects to place myself in the best possible position to help someone work the Steps. Sponsorship affords the opportunity to practice the program and walk in the reflection of my Higher Power, whom I choose to call Jesus, in a spirit of patience, tolerance, hope, and love. Each of us has a unique journey. Addiction brings similarities, our “we” in the program. Each has his own history and demons which makes us who we are when we come into the rooms. Through sponsorship I have learned to accept another for whom she is and be willing to work with her to the best of my ability with whatever each of us is capable of for that day. I am humbled when a sponsee puts her trust in my guidance. I don’t have all the answers. Sponsorship is not about friendship, therapy, or advice-giving. My arsenal of tools are in the Twelve Steps, my faith in my Higher Power, and my personal experience. When I am unsure how to handle a situation with my sponsee,

I am blessed with my own sponsor to help me through it and give me another perspective. Sponsorship is not a platform to place myself above another person. To do so, especially to a newcomer who is so vulnerable and in the throes of bottoming out, would be a violation of trust and an abuse of the principles of our program.

Sponsorship allows me an opportunity to examine the health of my own program. How am I doing in working my own program? This keeps me on my toes. I can’t suggest to another what I am unwilling to do myself. Most of all, sponsorship brings me closer to my Higher Power. I pray for the knowledge of His Will and the Power to carry that out. I do the best I can; then, I turn over the results to my Higher Power. I don’t take things personally nor blame myself if the sponsorship relationship doesn’t work out. The person may not have the willingness yet. I pray for her as I would a sick friend, as the Big Book suggests. I feel honored to offer help to another person and blessed every time I have that opportunity.

Anonymous

A Circle of Caring

I well remember the first night I walked into an OA meeting feeling destitute, hopeless, and alone. I had reached a weight I couldn’t even bear to repeat to anyone else. I was certain I was one of the poor unfortunate ones we read about that night. After the meeting, people came over and welcomed me. I felt accepted. That night I made a decision to give the program a try. I am so blessed. I figured the only route for as bottomed-out an overeater as I was to work the Steps with a sponsor. I heard words meeting after meeting, week after week thinking I was getting it on my own. I find working program with my sponsor is a means of taking the program seriously if I am willing to work for results. I am being open with another person one step at a time and I have not been judged or condemned. When I am discouraged or have a hard day, my sponsor reminds me that anything worth having is worth working for. She knows this to be true for she walked that path before me. I view sponsorship as one of the highest forms of service. As long as a sponsor keeps working program with a sponsee, it is not likely that she will lose her own program.

A ship is a vessel that holds me up and carries me over the dangers of the depths. A sponsor upholds me and helps carry me through the depths of self-pity and self-destruction. Sponsorship is a gift that keeps giving. What a beautiful circle of caring!

Anonymous

A Blessed State

Forgiveness is a blessed state of grace where you let go of hating somebody who has hurt you and thus make yourself feel much better. It is a way of removing the hurt because when you forgive it stops bothering you. You are no longer angry or vengeful. You no longer want them to pay for what they did. You forgive them, not because you agree with what they did or think it was right, but to release yourself from them. You do it to help yourself. Even though it seems very hard, you have to try by praying or chanting for them, their happiness and wellbeing. This gives you release and peace even though it seems impossible at first.

Judy W.

More Than We Give

I came into program and did not sponsor for two years. Only then did I first become aware of what a miracle sponsoring is! I have grown so much. I have heard it said that we get more than we give. I now appreciate those words more than ever. Being sponsored is a commitment to be accountable and work the Steps. Being a sponsor is taking the food commitment or just listening when a sponsee needs someone with whom to share. “When the student is ready, the teacher appears.”

Jerry A.

Topic of this issue: Sponsorship

Service and God's Will

Having a sponsor means so much. My sponsor is there for me to listen and give me guidance through my Twelve Step journey. I have developed a really strong relationship with my sponsor over time. I can't wait to be a sponsor and give back what has so freely been given to me. My sponsor does not judge me for she has been through her own struggles with the disease of compulsive overeating. I can tell her anything and I know that she has my best interests at heart. She has been an awesome mentor to me giving me hope and strength when I have walked through hard times. I have taken time to show my gratitude toward my sponsor and she tells me that she gets a lot out of guiding me in my journey. She is able to be of service and do God's Will.

Anonymous

Payback

During the course of my recovery, I have been fortunate enough to be sponsored by several people each of whom were important in my journey and for whom I am grateful. After I put my foot in the OA doors, I heard that sponsorship was a major tool for fellowship. It was in keeping with that all-important belief that I cannot do it alone. It was through sponsorship that I became teachable and first understood the importance of a daily contact regarding my food commitment. I realized through this tool there was a power greater than myself, and first experienced surrender. In the beginning, my sponsor was my higher power. She supported everything that needed to be done for my reaching an understanding of how food and my disease of compulsive overeating affected my life physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Did I agree with her of any of my sponsors all the time? No! Did I want to quit, give up, throw in the towel? Many times! But, she was there, encouraging, checking up, watching, and, most importantly, loving me until I learned to love myself.

To all those sponsors that held my hand, gave that love, and continue to do so, and you know who you are, can I pay you back? Most definitely! Every time I pick up the phone today and answer those calls from my own sponsees, they hear the same words and feel the same love that you shared with me. To sponsors everywhere in our community of fellowship, thank you. You help save lives. God bless you all.

A Grateful Sponsee

Listing of WUIG Open Meetings

Monday, Pelham, Huguenot Memorial Church, last week of the month

Tuesday, Pleasantville, Presbyterian Church of Pleasantville, first week of the month

Wednesday, White Plains, Memorial United Methodist Church, third week of the month

Thursday, White Plains, Temple Israel, first week of the month

Friday, Friday Friendship, Ridgeview Congregational Church, last week of the month

Friday, Ossining, Ossining Community Center, second week of the month

Saturday, White Plains Presbyterian Church, 9/4/04, 12/18/04, and the last Saturday of each month

Important Changes to Intergroup Bylaws Policy

Delegates to the 2004 WSBC adopted a motion requiring intergroups to submit to WSO by January 1, 2005 intergroup bylaws that conform to the Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. bylaws. To seat delegates at the WSBC, intergroups must submit their revised bylaws no later than January 1, 2005.

Group donations to WUIG during June/July: Sat AM WP Presbyterian Church \$50; Wed PM Yonkers St. Marks \$78; Fri PM Ossining \$126

Group Anniversaries

How It Works Wednesday night Big Book meeting will be celebrating its third anniversary on Wednesday, November 3, 2004 St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Carhart Avenue at Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, NY. This is a special meeting at which a group member moderates an **Annual Group Inventory for group members**. For information, contact Priscilla at (914) 722-9263 or email at Thunderstorm6@msn.com.

The Courage to Change group will be celebrating its third anniversary at its Monday night Step Meeting on November 1, 2004 For information, contact Priscilla at (914) 722-9263 or email at Thunderstorm6@msn.com.

Carmel Recovery will be celebrating a group anniversary in October at the Drew United Methodist Church, 28 Gleneida Avenue, Carmel. For information call Rena at (845) 878-9846.

The White Plains Saturday morning Live in the Solution meeting is celebrating 14 years October 23rd at 10 am at the White Plains Presbyterian Church, corner of North Broadway and Barker Ave.

The Newsletter will publish **group anniversary** announcements upon request when submitted by the 8th of the month preceding publication.

The Road to Recovery is a bi-monthly publication of Westchester United Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous. Dates of publication are January, March, May, July, September and November. We reserve the right to edit submissions for spelling, length and clarity, but not for content. Articles may be submitted by e-mail or U.S. Mail and may be typed or legibly handwritten. Submissions must be received by the **10th of the month preceding publication**. Include your name and telephone number or email address.

Name published upon request. Send to Priscilla at: Thunderstorm6@MSN.com or call (914) 722-9263 for mailing address.