

# Novations

The newsletter for the OA NOVA Intergroup

September, 2009

Overeaters Anonymous...

Is a Fellowship of individuals, who, through shared experience, strength and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively.

There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues.

Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

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## Tool Time: Sponsors

We had two reports from the recent sponsorship workshop:

The recent "Workshop for Sponsors" was excellent and very well-attended. It was exciting to see the wonderful dedication of sponsors carrying the message of OA to our fellows whether, new, struggling or returning.

The speakers addressed sponsorship styles from three perspectives; structured step-work, flexible sponsee-centered phone calls grounded on honesty and the steps, and a formalized HOW format.

There was plenty of input from the experience, strength and hope of the participants as well in a roundtable which addressed such questions as: The importance of a contract of confidentiality, when am I ready to sponsor? How full is full? Can a friend be a sponsor or sponsee? What to do if a sponsee disappears? .

Three things were made clear to me in this workshop: The Program, i.e. the Steps and the Fellowship, i.e. the meetings and sharing come together in Sponsorship. The 'same' person WILL eat again because if nothing changes, nothing changes. Therefore, willingness is the key because when one is ready to change the sponsor can say nothing wrong; when one is not ready to change the sponsor can say nothing right.

One suggestion for meetings in which all the sponsors are full is for the inquiring sponsee to pass around a calendar for the upcoming week allowing sponsors a chance to pencil in a slot when they can accept a phone call. That way the newcomer can place a few calls during the next week to receive some good program conversation.

Each participant also received a copy of two OA pamphlets, "A Guide to the Twelve Steps for You and Your Sponsor: One Approach" and "A Guide for Sponsors: Why, When and How to be an OA Sponsor". This pamphlet includes an appendix of 30 questions to start off newcomers with reading, writing and talking about recovery right away.

I am very glad I attended this worthwhile Intergroup event and am very grateful for the service provided by the Springfield Early Birds meeting in presenting this workshop.

Anonymous

On Saturday I attended the workshop for sponsors, hosted by the Saturday Springfield Earlybirds meeting from the NOVA Intergroup. It was an incredible informative session covering different styles of sponsoring (structured, non-structured, H.O.W.), special issues, and a roundtable/Q&A of challenges when it comes to sponsoring. Compiled are some of the highlights:

When sponsoring a "double winner" (someone who qualifies for more than one program), establish clear boundaries about which program you are working with them - stick to your own program. Every program starts from step one, unfortunately the credits don't transfer.

#### Getting started:

Recommended that new sponsors try temp sponsoring initially, so they can get a feel for the kind of commitment.

Take the time out to really talk with someone before they become your new sponsee, find out what they want from the program. Be objective and mutually decide if you have the experience, strength and hope they are looking for. Also, take this as an opportunity to gauge their honesty and commitment.

Take the opportunity to write down their goals, can use it as a tool later on to see if they're being met.

Gradually introduce things instead of overwhelming sponsees - and DON'T tell them what to do!

Don't be afraid to turn to your own sponsor for help.

### Taking a 5<sup>th</sup> Step

Take it from a place of non-judgment.

It can be done any way that is comfortable for both parties, incrementally or in one big session.

JUST DO IT! Keep it simple. Best if done immediately after 4<sup>th</sup> Step.

Some sponsors have found it helpful if some assets are included in the 5<sup>th</sup> Step.

The Big Book says it can be taken by someone who has not completed one themselves (in or out of program) – however, the most important thing is that the sponsee should feel comfortable with the person they are giving it to. In or out of program, a member of the opposite sex, safety and other factors need to be taken into consideration. And if the sponsee has something that could be the basis for prosecution, they might want to consider taking it to someone who is protected by law (member of the clergy or a social worker).

### Firing a sponsee

If program is lacking focus, it can be useful to increase the structure (sponsees will either tighten up or find another path).

As opposed to firing them, ask “Is this still working for you?” Empower THEM to make a decision.

If they are not working their program, you may gently remind them that you are holding a time slot for them; find out if they still value it.

Gentle suggestion: “Maybe there is someone who can better serve your needs.”

Don't take it personally if a sponsee begins to thrive with another sponsor – sometimes the change itself is the thing they need to jump start their program.

### Time slots

Do NOT give out of resentment; only devote what you are willingly open to do.

It's okay to be flexible if challenges come up, but if you set up an appointment, honor each other's time.

### Dealing with an experienced OA in relapse

Take it back and find out if they are willing to go to any lengths. From someone who was in relapse: “When I was going into relapse, my sponsor couldn't say anything right. When I was coming out of relapse, my sponsor couldn't say anything wrong.”

Ask a) “Do you have a desire to stop eating compulsively?”, b) “Are you willing to put down the food?”, c) “What are you immediately willing to put down?”

### Other notes

As a sponsor, you can't MAKE a sponsee be abstinent (we can't create abstinence for ourselves, how can we do it for another person?); keep in mind there is a learning curve.

View sponsoring as TUTORING vs. TEACHING – a tutor doesn't punish or reward, they guide.

“My sponsor is the one that I have given permission to call me on my bullshit.” Be open to discussing the hard truths (this includes physical recovery!) – come up with questions, make them soul search. Do NOT give accusations or ultimatums.

“If children do well, don't take too much credit; if they don't do well, don't take too much responsibility.” Same thing for sponsees.

If the OA 12 Steps don't “fix it”, seek outside help.

Define slips and relapse for yourself. Objectively ask, “Am I still able to carry the message?”

If something happens that you can't be present for your sponsee, it's okay to step down temporarily.

Stacie H, DC Metro IG.

### Is it OK to use AA literature in OA meetings?

It sure is, and it's a great idea. The AA literature is packed with plenty of good suggestions that are really helpful for a food addicts like us.

There has been some confusion about what is and is not acceptable literature at OA meetings. There are plenty of great resources available from many sources. In general, we do not sell or read from outside literature -- no matter how good or beneficial -- at OA meetings because that would be seen as endorsing an outside enterprise. There is one major exception to this: We do not consider AA literature to be outside because OA is descended from AA. It has long been a standard practice to read from the AA literature at OA meetings because the AA literature is so helpful to our recovery.

Yet some people have gotten confused and think that we shouldn't read AA literature at meetings, or that AA does not allow us to do so. This is not true. AA has long granted

permission to adapt AA's steps and traditions for different 12-step fellowships. AA also has chosen for decades not to give permission to rewrite AA's books for other fellowships. For example, AA does not give anyone permission to reprint and sell the entire AA 12&12 substituting the word "food" for "alcohol". This has caused some confusion, in that some groups have gotten the false idea that we are not allowed to use AA literature.

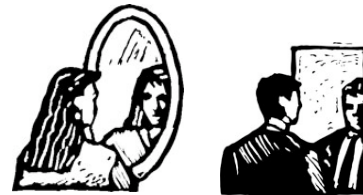
We are allowed to use the AA literature, and we do use it. Indeed, this practice is encouraged in the official, OA conference-approved Tools of Recovery pamphlet. The OA World Service office even makes it convenient by selling AA Big Books from the OA World Service Office.

So read the AA Big Book, both at meetings and on your own. It will help you and others stay abstinent.

Jim A.

Footnote. The copyrights to the first and second editions of the AA Big Book have expired and it is now in the public domain. This means that anyone can do anything they want with the original 164 pages and stories from the first edition without needing any legal permission from AA. For more information go to "[http://www.serenityfound.org/AA\\_Copyright\\_uslaw.pdf](http://www.serenityfound.org/AA_Copyright_uslaw.pdf)" However, AA asks that the fellowship act as if the copyright were still in force, and it is proper to respect their wishes on this.

## Date Change for Body Image Workshop



The Sept. 19th Body Image Workshop has been postponed one week to September 26th. The Oakton, Monday night 100 pounders meeting will be featuring a workshop on Body Image Issues. Please look for flyers with more information soon.

Please pass this information on to your meetings and plan to attend, bring a program friend and join us.

### **Future workshops already scheduled:**

October - The Promises

November- Thanksgiving Marathon

December - Twelfth Step Within Day and TBD workshop

All workshops will be held at the same place we have intergroup meetings:

Hope Lutheran Church

4604 Ravensworth Rd

Annandale, VA

Workshops are from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Bring a brown bag lunch to sit with your fellow compulsive overeaters in recovery and "talk shop." More to come in 2010!

We will see you there!

### Region 7 2009 Convention Basket Auction

November 6, 7, 8 brings *An Ocean of Miracles* to Ocean City for our annual Region 7 Convention. This is a fantastic time to meet other recovering compulsive overeaters from all across the region.



This year we have a fantastic opportunity to carry the message region-wide. We are the intergroup sponsoring the auction held every year.

What can you and your meetings do to support this?

We have a goal of creating 20 baskets to come from our meetings. They are generally about \$25 in value.

Some examples are:

OA Conference approved literature

Gift certificates from merchants (as long as they are purchased from an OA member, it is NOT endorsing an outside vendor), Photo album, journal, God box, Coffee basket (we donated that one last year)

The Unity Club in Falls Church has a FANTASTIC gift shop. Please consider going in and spending a few dollars to put some incredible 'serenity focused' baskets together.

I promise it is worth your funds!!!

Please call Maria P at 301.275.7093 or e-mail me [loveyalady@yahoo.com](mailto:loveyalady@yahoo.com) with any questions. Baskets are due by Halloween- October 31, 2009 at Hope Lutheran church- 4604 Ravensworth Road Fairfax, VA by noon!

For intergroup reps or for reporting back to your meetings from intergroup

Special Events: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

New Meetings:

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Day : \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person /Ph. # \_\_\_\_\_

Novations topic: \_\_\_\_\_/Deadline\_\_\_\_\_

**Send any and all articles to: [novations@oanova.org](mailto:novations@oanova.org)**

Region 7/World

Service Events/Info \_\_\_\_\_

Next IG Ops Meeting

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Next IG Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

ADOPT A MEETING! To what meeting can you bring this information?

Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Any other noteworthy events/thoughts/issues?

