

# **Back to the Basics of Sponsorship**

## **Key Concepts from the 1940's**

### **1. Put no block between the sponsee and Step Twelve.**

Get the sponsee to Step Twelve as quickly as possible, so he or she can experience the life-changing spiritual awakening that occurs as the direct result of taking the Steps. Assure the sponsee that our program of action "works-it really does." Explain that the process is simple and straightforward.

### **2. Call the sponsee.**

Demonstrate that you are interested in the sponsee's well-being by checking in with him or her on a regular basis. The sponsee needs your encouragement and support.

### **3. Read the appropriate parts of the "Big Book" to the sponsee.**

The sponsee may not be able to comprehend the "Big Book" by him or herself. Therefore, read and discuss the appropriate parts of the book to the sponsee, specifically those 50 or so passages that pertain directly to taking the Twelve Steps.

### **4. The healing is in the sharing not in the writing.**

Sit down with the sponsee and guide him or her through the Fourth Step inventory. Write the inventory while the sponsee does the talking. This will help relieve any anxiety or apprehension the sponsee may have about this part of the program.

### **5. Assist the sponsee with his or her amends.**

Work together on the sponsee's amends. Be the first person the sponsee sees after an amends is made.

### **6. Share guidance with the sponsee.**

Show the sponsee that you believe in and are practicing two-way prayer on a daily basis.

### **7. Co-sponsor the next sponsee.**

Have the sponsee accompany you as you work with the next person. This way, the sponsee will gain confidence in his or her ability to guide others through the recovery process.

# **Sponsorship—AA Grapevine**

## **April 1961**

**"Though three hundred thousand have recovered in the last twenty-five years, maybe half a million more have walked into our midst, and then out again.**

**"We can't well content ourselves with the view that all these recovery failures were entirely the fault of the newcomers themselves. Perhaps a great many didn't receive the kind and amount of sponsorship they so sorely needed. We didn't communicate when we might have done so. So we AA's failed them."**

**Bill W.**

# Back to the Basics of Sponsorship

## Suggested “Big Book” Passages for Taking a Sponsee through the Twelve Steps

(Fourth Edition ~ Standard Size “Big Book”)

### Introduction

Who are we? pg. xiii: 5 (1) and pg. xiv: 0 (1-6)

What do we have to offer? pg. 17: 3 (1-6)

### Surrender (Steps 1, 2 and 3)

#### Step 1

Physical symptoms: pg. xxx: 5 (1-3, 5-8); pg. 44: 1 (4-7)

Mental symptoms: pg. xxviii: 4 (1-6) and pg. xxix: 0 (1-9); pg. 23: 1 (3-10) and pg. 23: 2 (1-9); pg. 30: 1 (4-10)

Psychic change: pg. xxix: 1 (1-7)

Unmanageability: pg. 52: 2 (3-8)

First Step question: pg. 30: 2 (1-3)

#### Step 2

Lack of Power: pg. 45: 1 (1-4) and pg. 45: 2 (1-3)

Where do we find the Power? pg. 55: 2 (1-7), pg. 55: 3 (5-7)

Look within: pg. 55: 4 (3-4)

What if the newcomer doesn't believe? pg. 46: 1 (3-8)

Second Step question: pg. 47: 2 (1-3)

#### Step 3

A life run on self-will: pg. 60: 4 (1-8)

Selfishness blocks us from God's will: pg. 62: 1 (1-8) and pg. 62: 2 (1-8)

A life guided by the vision of God's will: pg. 62: 3 (1-4, 6-8) and pg. 63: 1 (1-4)

Third Step prayer: pg. 63: 2 (2-8)

### Sharing (Steps 4, 5, 6 and 7)

#### Step 4

Explanation: pg. 63: 4 (1-2) and pg. 64: 0 (1-5)

Assets and liabilities checklist: pg. 64: 1 (1-7)

Fill out liabilities side of the checklist first: pg. 64: 2 (1-6)

Sponsor does the writing: pg. 13: 3 (1-4)

What do we inventory?

Resentments: pg. 64: 3 (1-2, 6-9)

We overcome our resentments with forgiveness: pg. 66: 4 (1-2), pg. 67: 0 (1-8), and pg. 67: 1 (1-2)

Fears: pg. 68: 1 (1-3)

We overcome our fears with faith: pg. 68: 2 (1-4) and pg. 68: 3 (4-10)

Harms: pg. 69: 1 (1-6)

We overcome our harms with amends: pg. 69: 3 (2-4)

### **Step 5**

We share our inventory: pg. 72: 2 (4-10)  
With whom? pg. 73: 4 (1), pg. 74: 0 (1-9), and pg. 74: 1 (1-4)  
This Step may be temporarily postponed: pg. 74: 2 (2-6)  
How do we take this Step: pg. 75: 1 (1-4)

### **Step 6**

Explanation: pg. 76: 1 (1-7)  
Sixth Step question: pg. 76: 1 (3-5)

### **Step 7**

Seventh Step prayer: pg. 76: 2 (1-7)

## **Amends (Steps 8 and 9)**

### **Step 8**

Explanation: pg. 76: 3 (2-5)

### **Step 9**

Explanation: pg. 76: 3 (6-11)  
Specific amends:  
Direct: To people we dislike: pg. 77: 1 (9-14)  
Direct: To creditors: pg. 78: 2 (1-12)  
Living: Patience, tolerance, kindness and love: pg. 83: 1 (1-3, 7-10)  
In-kind: pg. 82: 1 (8-10)  
People who cannot be seen: pg. 83: 3 (1-5)

## **Guidance (Steps 10, 11 and 12)**

### **Step 10**

Explanation: pg. 84: 2 (1-8)  
Tenth Step process: pg. 84: 2 (8-14)  
Tenth Step question: pg. 84: 2 (2-3)

### **Step 11**

Explanation of two-way prayer: pg. 85: 3 (1-2) and pg. 86: 0 (1-4)  
When we retire: pg. 86: 1 (1-9)  
Upon awakening: pg. 86: 2 (1-5)  
How does God communicate with us? pg. 86: 3 (1-6)  
How did God communicate with Bill W.? pg. 14: 2 (1-8)  
Practice, practice, practice: pg. 87: 0 (1-9)  
Throughout the day: pg. 87: 3 (1-3), pg. 88: 0 (1-7), and pg. 88: 1 (1)

### **Step 12**

Explanation: pg. 89: 1 (1-7) and pg. 89: 2 (1-7)  
Twelfth Step question: pg. 89: 1 (5)

## **Close**

Program summary: pg. 164: 2 (1-10), pg. 164: 3 (1-6), and pg. 164: 4 (1)  
There is a solution: pg. 25: 1 (1-12) and pg. 25: 2 (1-9)

# Fourth Step Inventory

Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the "Big Book"  
pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)

Liabilities  
Watch for—

Assets  
Strive for—

|             |  |               |
|-------------|--|---------------|
| Resentment  |  | Forgiveness   |
| Fear        |  | Faith         |
| Selfishness |  | Unselfishness |
| Dishonesty  |  | Honesty       |
| False Pride |  | Humility      |
| Jealousy    |  | Trust         |
| Envy        |  | Contentment   |
| Laziness    |  | Action        |
|             |  |               |

Assets and Liabilities Checklist

# Fourth Step Inventory

Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the "Big Book"  
pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)

Liabilities  
Watch for—

|             |               |          |           |           |
|-------------|---------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Resentment  | Ex            | Myself   | Count     | God       |
| Fear        | Count         | Relapse  | Health    |           |
| Selfishness | Ex            | Employer | Friend #1 |           |
| Dishonesty  | Ex            | Myself   | Employer  | Friend #2 |
| False Pride | God           | Employer |           |           |
| Jealousy    | Family Member |          |           |           |
| Envy        |               |          |           |           |
| Laziness    | Ex            | Employer | Myself    |           |
| Shame       | Friend #2     |          |           |           |

Example of Assets and Liabilities Checklist During Fourth Step Inventory

# Fourth Step Inventory

Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the "Big Book"  
pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)

## Liabilities

Watch for—

## Assets

Strive for—

| Resentment  | <i>Ex</i>            | <i>Myself</i>   | <i>Court</i>     | <i>God</i>       | Forgiveness         |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Fear        | <i>Court</i>         | <i>Relapse</i>  | <i>Health</i>    |                  | Faith               |
| Selfishness | <i>Ex</i>            | <i>Employer</i> | <i>Friend #1</i> |                  | Unselfishness       |
| Dishonesty  | <i>Ex</i>            | <i>Myself</i>   | <i>Employer</i>  | <i>Friend #2</i> | Honesty             |
| False Pride | <i>God</i>           | <i>Employer</i> |                  |                  | Humility            |
| Jealousy    | <i>Family Member</i> |                 |                  |                  | Trust               |
| Envy        |                      |                 |                  |                  | Contentment         |
| Laziness    | <i>Ex</i>            | <i>Employer</i> | <i>Myself</i>    |                  | Action              |
| Shame       | <i>Friend #2</i>     |                 |                  |                  | <i>Self-respect</i> |

Example of Assets and Liabilities Checklist with Eight Step Amends List

# Fourth Step Inventory

Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the "Big Book"  
pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)

Liabilities

Watch for—

Assets

Strive for—

|             |               |          |           |           |               |
|-------------|---------------|----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| Resentment  | $\Sigma x$    | Myself   | Count     | God       | Forgiveness   |
| Fear        | Count         | Relative | Health    |           | Faith         |
| Selfishness | $\Sigma x$    | Employer | Friend #1 | DIRECT    | Unselfishness |
| Dishonesty  | $\Sigma x$    | LIVING   | Myself    | Employer  | Honesty       |
|             |               |          |           | Friend #2 |               |
| False Pride | God           | Employer | LIVING    | DIRECT    | Humility      |
| Jealousy    | Family Member | LETTER   |           |           | Trust         |
| Envy        |               |          |           |           | Contentment   |
| Laziness    | $\Sigma x$    | IN-KIND  | Employer  | Myself    | Action        |
|             |               |          |           | LIVING    |               |
| Shame       | Friend #2     |          |           |           | Self-respect  |

Example of Assets and Liabilities Checklist with Ninth Step Type of Amends Added

# Back to the Basics of the “Big Book”

## Fourth Step Questions

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### Resentment Inventory

1. Who or what are you angry at? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Fear Inventory

2. Who or what are you afraid of? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Harms inventory

3. Toward whom have you been selfish? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Where have you been dishonest? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What about false pride—do you feel  
better than or less than others? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Are you jealous of any relationship? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you envy anyone’s possessions? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Where have you been lazy? \_\_\_\_\_

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During the discussion of each event or situation, ask your partner to “*resolutely look for your own mistakes. . . . Though a situation had not been entirely your fault, you are to disregard the other person entirely. Where were you to blame?*” (pg. 67: 2 (2-3, 4-7), edited).

Ask him or her, “Are you prepared to forgive those toward whom you feel resentment?” If not, then “*we ask God to help us be willing.*” (pg. 76: 1 (6-7)).

Ask, “Are you ready to overcome your fear with faith?” Together, “*We ask God to remove our fear and direct our attention to what God would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear.*” (pg. 68: 3 (7-10), edited).

In terms of harms, ask your partner, “*What are you “willing to do to set these matters straight?”*” (pg. 67: 2 (10-11), edited). Keep in mind there are four types of amends: direct, living, in-kind and letters. Together, decide what would be the most appropriate “*course of action*” for each incident or circumstance.

Conclude the sharing session with a prayer. (pg. 76: 2 (1-7)).

# Back to the Basics of the “Big Book”

## Fourth Step Questions

### Resentment Inventory

1. Who or what are you angry at? *Ex Myself Court God*

### Fear Inventory

2. Who or what are you afraid of? *Court Relapse Health*

### Harms inventory

3. Toward whom have you been selfish? *Ex Employer Friend #1* **DIRECT**
4. Where have you been dishonest? *Ex Myself Employer Friend #2*  
**LIVING LIVING DIRECT**
5. What about false pride—do you feel better than or less than others? *God Employer*
6. Are you jealous of any relationship? *Family Member*  
**LETTER**
7. Do you envy anyone's possessions?
8. Where have you been lazy? *Ex Employer Myself*  
*Shame about Friend #2* **IN-KIND LIVING**

During the discussion of each event or situation, ask your partner to “*resolutely look for your own mistakes. . . . Though a situation had not been entirely your fault, you are to disregard the other person entirely. Where were you to blame?*” (pg. 67: 2 (2-3, 4-7), edited).

Ask him or her, “Are you prepared to forgive those toward whom you feel resentment?” If not, then “*we ask God to help us be willing.*” (pg. 76: 1 (6-7)).

Ask, “Are you ready to overcome your fear with faith?” Together, “*We ask God to remove our fear and direct our attention to what God would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear.*” (pg. 68: 3 (7-10), edited).

In terms of harms, ask your partner, “*What are you “willing to do to set these matters straight?”* (pg. 67: 2 (10-11), edited). Keep in mind there are four types of amends: direct, living, in-kind and letters. Together, decide what would be the most appropriate “*course of action*” for each incident or circumstance.

Conclude the sharing session with a prayer. (pg. 76: 2 (1-7)).

# Step Four–Anger Management

(How to quell the “grouch and the brainstorm”)

“As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action.”

(“Big Book,” p. 87, para. 3, lines 1-2)

When we become irritated or afraid, we need to take specific actions that will prevent these emotions from turning into rage or revenge. If we allow this “fight or flight” response to escalate, we may end up saying or doing something that we will later regret.

In the second paragraph on page 66, the “Big Book” authors tell us we must overcome our anger or else it will kill us:

“If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us. They may be the dubious luxury of normal men (and women), but for (us) these things are poison.

“. . . How could we escape? We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how?”

(“Big Book,” p. 66, para. 2, lines 1-4, para. 3, lines 7-8)

There is a simple technique consisting of two basic actions that can help us overcome anger. It also works anytime we become anxious or afraid.

These two actions are:

1. Redirect attention, and
2. Take a deep breath.

We redirect our attention by doing something as simple as touching the tip of one of our thumbs to an adjacent forefinger to form a circle. We can think of this circle as a "stop sign," because it stops us from getting angry. We emotionally turn away from the person or event that is irritating us and temporarily withdraw from the situation.

Next, we take a deep breath. When we are agitated or stressed, our breathing become rapid and shallow. We counter the negative effects of shallow breathing by breathing slowly and deeply. We breath in, hold our breath momentarily, and then exhale until our lungs are completely empty. When we repeat this process several times, we become relaxed and at peace with ourselves and those around us.

This technique can also be used to ease the cravings associated with chemical withdrawal. By practicing this simple technique regularly—preferably throughout the day— we will be in much better position to "relax and take it easy."

# Step Five—Legal Privilege

(Revised: 03-04-13)

**Step 5:**     *Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*

We confide in someone else, because only another person can see us as we really are. This individual can be the member of Twelve-Step community who is assisting you through this process, but it doesn't have to be. The "Big Book" authors provide us with other options.

Starting with the fourth paragraph on page 73, the authors give us directions on how to choose the person or persons with whom we share our inventory.

**"We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. . . . Those of us belonging to a religious denomination which requires confession must, and of course, will want to go to the properly appointed authority whose duty it is to receive it.**

**"If we cannot or would rather not do this, we search our acquaintance for a close-mouthed, understanding friend. Perhaps our doctor or psychologist will be the person."**

Of critical importance is confidentiality. The "Big Book" authors list some of the people who are legally bound to keep a secret. This "privilege" protects communications between certain individuals and insures that these communications will not be divulged to a third party.

The people listed in the "Big Book" who have this legal protection are religious, medical, and mental health professionals. Attorneys also have this "privilege."

This legal protection does not include members of the Twelve-Step community. This is why we must be careful about what we share during a Fifth Step.

This "privilege" is not absolute—there are exceptions. In certain situations, "mandatory reporting" supercedes "legal privilege."

If you would rather share some portion of your checklist with a person who has this "legal privilege," make a commitment to your sponsor as to when, where, and with whom you will share those inventory items.

If you are willing to make this commitment, you can take the rest of the Steps with us right now. In the second paragraph on page 74, the "Big Book" authors explain the circumstances under which this Step may be temporarily postponed:

**“Notwithstanding the great necessity for discussing ourselves with someone, it may be one is so situated that there is no suitable person available. If that is so, this step may be postponed, only, however, if we hold ourselves in complete readiness to go through with it at the first opportunity. We say this because we are very anxious that we talk to the right person. It is important that he (or she) be able to keep a confidence; . . . fully understand and approve what we are driving at; (and) will not try to change our plan. But we must not use this as a mere excuse to postpone.”**

So immediately after this presentation, get together with your sponsor and share your Fourth Step inventory or set up a specific date and time, in the near future, to share your inventory.

# Step Nine–Types of Amends

(Revised: 03-04-13)

**Step 9**     ***Made direct amends to such people, wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.***

The amends process is explained in detail on pages 76 through 83 of the “Big Book.” On page 76, paragraph three, the authors tell us what we need to do.

**“... Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes.”**

If the sponsee has reservations about making an amends, the “Big Book” authors ask the sponsor and sponsee to pray together. They pray for the sponsee to have the courage to reconcile with those he or she has harmed.

There are four types of amends described in the “Big Book.” They are direct amends, living amends, amends-in-kind, and amends to those who cannot be seen. The sponsor and sponsee together decide the type of amends to be made. They do this through a back-and-forth role play until the likely outcomes have been thoroughly discussed.

There are “Big Book” passages that describe each of these amends. Let’s start with people to whom we owe money. Here, we usually make a direct amends. This is explained in the second paragraph on page 78.

**“Most (of us) owe money. We do not dodge our creditors. Telling them what we are trying to do, we make no bones about our (trouble); they usually know it anyway, whether we think so or not. . . . Approached in this way, the most ruthless creditor will sometimes surprise us. . . . We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to (relapse) if we are afraid to face them.”**

In the first paragraph on page 83, we learn about living amends.

**“Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead. A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won’t fill the bill at all. . . . So we clean house, . . . asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.”**

The living amends is straightforward. We practice “patience, tolerance, kindness and love” in all of our affairs. This is one of the greatest amends we can make to family and friends. As the “Big Book” authors write, “Our behavior will convince them more than our words.”

An amends-in-kind is described on page 82, paragraph one.

**“Good generalship may decide that the problem should be attacked on the flank rather than risk . . . face-to-face combat.”**

There are many ways to make an amends-in-kind. Some examples are taking a Beginners’ Meeting into a halfway house or prison; volunteering at a homeless shelter or assisted living facility; or serving a Twelve-Step home group by taking on and fulfilling a service commitment.

In the third paragraph on page 83, the “Big Book” authors give directions on what to do if we can’t make amends to someone face-to-face.

**“There may be some wrongs we can never fully right. We don’t worry about them if we can honestly say to ourselves that we would right them if we could. Some people cannot be seen—we send them an honest letter.”**

Here, the sponsor and the sponsee sit down together and write the letter. Then the sponsee reads it aloud and puts it in an envelope. Together, they go to the post office and mail it. The envelope has no name on it, no address on it, no return name or address, and no stamp.

Another way to send the letter is to burn it after reading it aloud. Again this is something the sponsor and sponsee do together. It is amazing that the letter goes exactly where it needs to go in order for the sponsee to heal.

Taking the Steps is all about healing—overcoming the pain, remorse, guilt and shame associated with past behaviors and activities. We heal as the direct result of making amends to those we’ve harmed and forgiving those who have harmed us. As we heal, we enhance our conscious contact with the “One who has all power.”

# Four Paths of Divine Guidance

As described in the second paragraph on page 14 of the "Big Book"

*These were revolutionary and drastic proposals* (the proposals Bill is writing about are the Four Steps of Surrender, Sharing, Amends and Guidance), *but the moment I fully accepted them, the effect was electric* (Bill feels the sensation of electricity). *There was a sense of victory, followed by such a peace and serenity as I had never known* (Bill feels the additional sensations of victory, peace and serenity). *There was utter confidence* (Bill knows he is having spiritual experience). *I felt lifted up, as though the great clean wind of a mountain top blew through and through* (Bill sees himself on top of a mountain and hears the wind). *God comes to most men gradually, but His impact on me was sudden and profound* (Bill knows he is having a rapid conversion experience).

| <u>Method of Communication</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <u>Path</u>      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>True Seeing (Visualizing)</b><br><br>Perceiving, detecting or experiencing as if by sight. It includes, but is not restricted to, seeing or forming a mental image such as a mini-motion picture, photograph, or painting.                                                                    | <b>Sight</b>     |
| <b>True Hearing (Listening)</b><br><br>The process, function, or power of receiving auditory stimuli such as sounds, noises or tones. It includes, but is not restricted to, "the still small voice," words, music or songs.                                                                     | <b>Sound</b>     |
| <b>True Feeling (Sensing)</b><br><br>A generalized bodily consciousness or sensation. It includes, but is not restricted to, touch, smell, or feelings of warmth or cold. Manifestations include goose bumps, hair standing up on the back of the neck, or a tightening of the chest or stomach. | <b>Sensation</b> |
| <b>True Awareness (Understanding)</b><br><br>Knowledge, or intelligence that produces ideas, concepts or observations. It includes, but is not restricted to, inspiration or intuition.                                                                                                          | <b>Knowing</b>   |

# **Twelve Characteristics of Divine Guidance**

- 1. It is Accurate and True**
- 2. It is Right and Proper**
- 3. It is Sensitive to and Considerate of Others**
- 4. It is Loving and Forgiving**
- 5. It is Consistent**
- 6. It Calls Us to Take Action**
- 7. It is Friendly and Supportive**
- 8. It is Strong and Powerful**
- 9. It Speaks in the Second Person (You vs. I)**
- 10. It is Direct and to the Point**
- 11. It Comes Suddenly and Completely**
- 12. It Never Puts Us Above or Below Others**