

The Twelve Steps of Addictive Eaters Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over food – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addictive eaters, and to practise these principles in all our affairs.

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Addictive Eaters Anonymous is a Twelve Step fellowship based on the model pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous. Through working the AEA Twelve Step Programme, members have found several decades of recovery from binge eating, anorexia, bulimia, other forms of addictive eating and compulsive exercise.

Contact Details

For more information, meeting details and to find out how to speak to an AEA member, visit: www.addictiveeatersanonymous.org or email contact@aeainfo.org



Addictive Eaters Anonymous

Sponsorship in AEA

What is a Sponsor and why do I need one?

Addictive Eaters Anonymous (AEA) members have found they could not get or stay sober on their own. They have, invariably, needed another sober member's help in order to get well. This is where good sponsorship is invaluable. Sponsors are not professional counsellors. They are, simply, sober members of AEA who pass on their experience of working the Twelve Steps of Addictive Eaters Anonymous in their own lives. AEA sponsors freely share how they recovered from eating addictively and how they continue to stay sober through working the Steps, which serve as AEA's common solution. Sponsors encourage newcomers to discover and develop a connection with a Higher Power of their own understanding, which will enable them to get and stay well.

How did Sponsorship begin?

The principle of sponsorship in AEA is forged on the experience of the two co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, who found they needed each other to remain sober and to carry the message of recovery. That same concept, pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935, works equally well in Addictive Eaters Anonymous today. Sponsorship is just as beneficial for the sponsor as it is for the sponsee.

Sponsorship and the Twelve Steps

Some people come to AEA believing food is their only problem, then discover their lives are unmanageable in many other ways. AEA's Twelve Steps provide the pathway to a new way of living. Many of us found it did not work when we tried to take the Steps alone. This is where a good sponsor is imperative.

A Different Perspective

Experienced AEA sponsors say they sponsor individuals, rather than take a single approach. They recognise the importance of flexibility in working with newcomers. While there are no 'rules' for sponsorship, AEA does offer some proven suggestions. After years of addictive eating and self-centred behaviour, many of us found our thinking needed overhauling. We had to let go of old ideas which, sometimes, involved our sponsors pointing out some uncomfortable truths. As time goes on, a sponsee comes to understand a sponsor always has his or her best interests at heart. A feeling of trust develops, which enables the sponsor to say things to the sponsee that others would not.

If a newcomer does feel uncomfortable with their sponsor's suggestions, it is important to remember that there are no 'musts' in the AEA programme. Seeking guidance and direction from a sponsor, however, is a vital part of the process of surrender. It is essential to our sobriety to be open-minded, honest and willing.

How do I find a Sponsor?

AEA suggests going to meetings regularly and speaking to sober members. Look for someone who has what you want - good solid, happy sobriety, and ask how they are achieving this. It is up to the sponsee to seek a sponsor, not the other way around.

How often should I call my Sponsor?

Sharing with a sponsor on a confidential, one-on-one basis makes day-to-day living a lot easier. Many of us, in our early AEA days, had daily contact with our sponsors because we needed close guidance and direction. We are, however, always mindful our dependence must be on a Power greater than ourselves, not another person. A sponsor simply passes on his or her own experience and knowledge of how to recover from the disease of addiction, according to the programme set out in the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Newcomers should never worry about 'bothering' a sponsor. AEA members have found their own sobriety is enhanced when they attempt to pass on the message of recovery. In AEA's experience, recovery is a gift, and to be kept, it must be given away. It is a privilege for someone who has experienced freedom from addictive eating to share their experience. A sponsor's greatest joy is seeing someone come to AEA and get well.

Find out more about sponsorship at www.addictiveeatersanonymous.org

