

♥ **Desperado** ♥

Desperado

Why don't you come to your senses
you been out riding fences - for so long now
oh you're a hard one, but I know that you got your reasons
these things that are pleasin' you, can hurt you some now
Don't you draw the Queen of Diamonds boy; she'll beat you if she's able
you know the Queen of Hearts is always your best bet
now it seems to me some fine things have been laid upon your table
but you only want the ones that you can't get

Desperado

Oh you ain't gettin' any younger
your pain and your hunger, they're driving you home
and freedom, oh freedom - well that's just some people talkin'
your prison is walking through this world all alone
Don't your feet get cold in the wintertime
- the sky won't snow and the sun won't shine
it's hard to tell the nighttime from the day
been losin' all your highs and lows
- ain't it funny how the feeling goes - away

Desperado

Why don't you come to your senses
come down from your fences - open the gate
it may be rainin' - but there's a rainbow above you
you better let somebody love you (let somebody love you)
you better let somebody love you - before it's too late

Fellow traveler along the road of recovery and discovery

Sponsorship



***“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in bud
became more painful than the risk to bloom.”***

~ Anais Nin

Sponsorship is a foundational component of the ACA Program. The primary purpose of the Sponsor is to support the Sponsee through the Twelve Steps as a Fellow Traveler. In addition to providing the guidance the Sponsor, when asked, can help the Sponsee by introducing recovery perspectives through ES&H, from which to view life and ensuing relationships in affirming and constructive ways.

The Sponsorship relationship will also serve to facilitate the recovery journey from isolation to intimacy. This process will challenge and replace outdated belief systems of fear-based living with the growth and development of emotional and spiritual maturity. The promises of the journey from enmeshment to individuation and from isolation to intimacy are beyond our wildest dreams.

Many ACA Members mistakenly believe that they are not qualified for the relationship. This misbelief serves to keep them stuck in the past as prisoners of learned helplessness.

ACA's are ready to sponsor after completing the 12 Steps and by working a rigorous program of recovery. Active Sponsorship can take our fellowship from hurting to healing to helping. It works if you work it! We get to keep what we give away.

This informational perspective is an offer of suggestions, guidance and understanding for the Sponsor/Sponsee relationship.

Take what you need and leave the rest.

Types of Sponsorship – The Sponsorship Umbrella

Direct Sponsors

Sponsor – A fellow traveler that's willing to share experience, strength and hope in helping the sponsee work his/her way through the steps, and to gain the tools for coping with life on life's terms by working the ACA program.

Temporary Sponsor – Serves as an interim Sponsor for a short agreed upon time period until a long-term Sponsor is found.

Multiple Sponsors – More than one sponsor to serve the various needs of the sponsee in other 12-Step Programs. Caution is advised so that the sponsee isn't hiding out in the various relationships.

Co-Sponsors – Are 2 or more people that have already worked the steps and make an agreement to sponsor each other. People that have not yet worked the steps just don't have the ES&H to support one another.

Non-Local Sponsors – Frequent and Consistent communication is important. Communicate by Internet, telephone, email, text, letter writing. Don't allow the lack of local sponsors let you miss out on this elemental Program Tool.

Indirect Sponsorship

Step Study Groups that commit to standing agreements and meet regularly to work the steps together.

Support Writing and Discussion Groups that meet regularly to support and encourage each other with working through issues.

Meetings act as recovery models that sponsors through attraction not promotion. Solution oriented meetings have an emphasis on carrying the message - Stepwork, sponsorship, traditions, other program tools, a well-stocked literature table with a phone list. Attending meetings where people enthusiastically carry out service positions and immediately volunteer to do service with "healthy family" attitudes and behaviors that ACA's probably didn't have or see growing up. This can be a welcoming sight to new and old members alike. Persons available for Temporary Sponsorship can make themselves known with a show of hands or by remark on the phone list.

Service Groups add to the ripple effect of sponsorship influence. Trusted Servants that have worked the steps and sponsored Fellow Travelers share their collective wisdom of ES&H with the Service Groups.

- Business Meetings
- Intergroups
- WSO Positions and Committees

What We Do As Sponsors

We accept and respect the grave responsibility of helping the Fellow Traveler along the road of discovery and recovery during these transitional times.

We carry the message by living the program and leading by example.

As sponsors we can:

- a. Continue to work our program and practice the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions.
- b. Support the sponsee in working his/her program and the 12 Steps by serving as a tour guide and role model.
- c. Share our experience, strength and hope through the steps.
- d. Encourage the development of a working relationship with a Higher Power.
- e. Model self-sufficiency and autonomy with the sponsee.
- f. Use "I" statements. Admit we don't know all the answers; encourage Sponsee inquiry and ask for help when needed.
- g. Exercise caution when dealing with all matters. Avoid being too firm, overprotective, controlling, manipulative, or otherwise inappropriate.
- h. Reserve judgment at all times and encourages finding one's own strength.
- i. Model compassion, kindness, patience, tolerance and forgiveness.
- j. Support and encourage the sponsee's building of character and confidence.
- k. Give without expecting anything in return & without any strings attached.
- l. Continue to model and honor existing agreements with the Sponsee.
- m. Ask and not assume to know what is going on.
- n. Exercise gentleness, humor, love and respect.
- o. Practice spiritual principles in all our affairs.
- p. Carry the message and don't carry/enable the sponsee.

What We Do As Sponsees

We begin to see that our ways we lived life were getting in our way. Although not quite understanding the ways of the program, or all that it has to offer, we came to believe that learning to live life as the program suggests will yield positive changes and results.

Together we can learn:

- a. To work the 12 Steps and practice their principles in all our affairs.
- b. To continue developing our relationship with our Higher Power.
- c. To become **sponsorable** by being a self-starter and by working our program.
- d. To explore new options and ideas which are introduced to us.
- e. To let go of learned helplessness through awareness, acceptance and action.
- f. To ask for help, accept the help, then use it or lose it.
- g. To take responsibility for our own life by not blaming or being a victim.
- h. How unhealthy thoughts + unhealthy actions = unhealthy feelings,
and how healthy thoughts + healthy actions = healthy feelings.
- i. We will get out of the process what we put into it. Putting in little or no work and expecting great returns is both unrealistic and dangerous.
- j. To work no one's program but our own ~ to thine own self be true.
- k. To do the footwork first before letting go and letting God.
- l. How faith without works is dead.
- m. To look for the good, and to place principles before personalities.
- n. To be supportive of others as we can't recover on our own.
- o. To get out of black and white thinking or acting in extremes.
- p. To be realistic in goal setting and staying away from imaginary and impractical expectations that lead to disappointment.
- q. How to implement boundaries, maintain them, and sustain them.
- r. To continue to honor agreements with our self and with our Sponsor.

Suggested Guidelines for Sponsor Selection

Our fears about Sponsor/Sponsee relationship are probably based upon old beliefs, myths, models, superstitions, past and present experiences tied to past relationships. It's never too early or late to get a sponsor, or to make a change when the relationship isn't working.

We try our best to be brave and courageous by taking a leap of faith, practicing new loving and functional ways that will help take us from living in the problem and into the solution.

You are hereby encouraged to give yourself the opportunity to step up to the plate and eventually hit a home run.

When looking around for a prospective Sponsor, find someone that:

- a. Has a working relationship with a Higher Power.
- b. Has a spiritual program and works it.
- c. Has worked the 12 Steps and continues to work them.
- d. Has an active working relationship with a sponsor.
- e. Practices the 12 Traditions.
- f. Has what you want in recovery and is worthy of trust and respect.
- g. Has continuing interest, responsibility and accountability in recovery.
- h. Enjoys life and living on the whole, and is happy, joyous and free.
- i. Willing to spend time with you on the phone and in person, on a regular and as needed basis.
- j. Has similar schedules, wants and needs.
- k. Shares experience, strength and hope in a way that is meaningful to you.
- l. You feel comfortable in talking freely, candidly & confidentially with her/him.
- m. Listens attentively and can earn your trust.

When looking around for a Sponsor, remember that a Sponsor is not:

- n. Your Higher Power, guru or authority figure.
- o. A family member, relative, spouse or lover.
- p. A banker, counselor, therapist, social worker, nurse, doctor, or babysitter.
- q. A potential sexual partner – someone attractive or attracted to you.
- r. In active addiction and not in recovery.

We do these things on a best effort basis since we are learning what healthy and nurturing qualities mean for ourselves in a new light – progress not perfection.

There may be times when the person you approach declines to be your Sponsor. Use this opportunity to simply ask someone else.

**These guidelines are meant to be suggestive only.
It is highly unlikely and virtually impossible to find all of these
desired traits in any one person.**

Do the best you can with what is available.

Rights & Responsibilities In Recovery

As program members we sometimes have difficulty showing up for our rights, in a black and white, or moderate way, even though we know what our rights are.

We can be more assertive with boundaries after learning and owning our rights.

**Rights are not privileges, do not have to be earned,
and already belong to us.**

You have the right and responsibility:

- a. To say, "NO!" especially when feeling not ready or unsafe.
- b. To dignity, respect and appreciation.
- c. To own your feelings, thoughts and opinions, and to express them appropriately.
- d. To change your mind, make mistakes and to take responsibility for your choices, actions and consequences.
- e. To make your own choices, independent of the wishes of others.
- f. To say I don't know, understand, or don't care.
- g. To privacy, safety and right to your own sacred space.
- h. To ask for what you want and need. You may not get it but keep asking.
- i. To live life not motivated by fear, guilt or shame.
- j. To change, grow and be healthier than those around you.
- k. To take care of yourself, no matter what circumstances you are in.
- l. To live your life, happy, joyous and free.
- m. To trust, respect and love whomever you choose.
- n. To disagree, not understand and not participate when asked.
- o. To terminate conversations with people who humiliate and put you down.
- p. To begin and maintain your own recovery program at a reasonable pace.
- q. To question authority figures, examine and evaluate their motives without being a doormat.

Initial Boundary Setting

Healthy boundaries for Sponsees and Sponsors can be initially developed and put in place before starting the work together. There's always room to make adjustments down the road. When maintained, these practices create space to allow for mutual growth and development within the relationship.

When two people are interested in developing a Sponsor/Sponsee relationship, it's generally a helpful idea to first check out with one another issues/things/considerations that inherently may come up in the course of fulfilling commitments to each other.

- a. Is there ample/adequate time available that each person is willing to give?
- b. What are the best times to call one another, and/or to get together?
- c. What is the length of time and frequency of calls and meetings that each person is comfortable with?
- d. To agree upon periodic check-ins to evaluate and assess the viability and success of the relationship. Also, to make any needed adjustments as circumstances can change.
- e. To reach mutual agreement without assumptions or unfounded expectations.
- f. To talk about getting together to celebrate accomplishments, honor milestones, or to simply relax and have fun.
- g. To discuss practical circumstances that lead to the termination of the relationship. Lack of willingness, lack of action, unaddressed active addiction, abusive actions, refusal to let go of denial, or _____?
- h. To be in agreement with being personally responsible, accountable, and committed for your half of the relationship...no less and no more.
- i. To discuss future possibilities that will affect the relationship. Relocation, marriage, children, divorce, etc?
- j. To agree in advance to give each other sufficient time and space to say goodbye, so long, or farewell at the end of the relationship.
- k. To have a thorough understanding of all matters covered in this handout by discussing comments and questions.

After having the initial interview discussion with one another, you may consider making a temporary commitment for a ___ period of time to take the relationship out for a test drive together to check out compatibility before transitioning into a longer term relationship.

Program Tools of Recovery

Your program is like any living thing. Nurture your recovery and it will flourish. Neglect your program and it cannot and will not take you very far down your recovery path.

Awareness + Acceptance + Action = Change

This program doesn't work for those who need it.
It works for those who want it. It only works if you work it.

Attend Meetings – Meetings are where members share their experience, strength, and hope with one another. Meetings offer us opportunities to share, identify and solve our common problems through sharing the gifts of the program. Attend a minimum of 3-4 meetings weekly until you are thoroughly involved in your recovery program.

Sponsorship – A sponsor is a fellow member that can help you work the Steps, and also help you with your recovery program. Get a sponsor or be one when ready! Time is of the essence with recovery.

Stepwork – By working the steps and learning to practice their principles in all your affairs, you will experience positive changes happening in your life. The promises of recovery will come true and be present in your life as long as you continue to work for them. Work the Steps over and over again until you are reasonably familiar with how to implement them, and your life will noticeably improve.

Traditions – The Twelve Traditions are to the groups what the Twelve Steps are to the individual. They are suggested principles to ensure the survival and growth of the fellowship by setting guidelines for how groups and members appropriately interact with each other, with ACA as a whole and with the general public.

Program Calls – Are a means of communicating with other members between meetings, and also helps to break through the harmful effects of isolation. We can build interdependent relationships with friends and sponsors by making program calls. Making at least 3-4 calls a week will make a big difference in your life.

Journaling and Writing – Will often help us to clarify our thoughts and feelings by writing them down on paper. This tool is also used in our Fourth Step Inventory, Daily Tenth Step check-in with ourselves or with writing groups. Get in the positive habit of expressing yourself!

Prayer & Meditation – Are useful tools to help build, maintain, and sustain a healthy relationship with our loving Higher Power. Start now and build upon the successes of your relationship with your HP!

Books and Literature – Help us to learn more about our selves and the process of recovery. New perspectives and ideas are made available through this resource. Learn and implement self-affirming knowledge and let go of the self-defeating myths and fantasies!

Family of Origin Work – Taking a closer look at our family patterns and influences will often help us know and understand why we do the things we do, and why we are the way we are. Knowing these traits can help us to make changes to bring us in alignment with whom and what we really are and can become. Your efforts to create positive change in your life requires knowing your current and past history without being enmeshed with people, places and things.

Service – Is a way of giving back what rewards you have received through the 12 Step process. Whether answering questions for newcomers, helping out in service positions, and/or being a sponsor. Service creates the opportunity to demonstrate your gratitude. Discover the joys of healing through helping others. Don't miss out on this excellent growth opportunity. You only get to keep what you give away.

Fun, Play, & Relaxation – Incorporate these healing and nurturing practices to maintain balance in your life because recovery is not all work and no play. Release and celebrate with your inner child!

Remember to apply gentleness, humor, love, & respect while working your program.

Too often we forget to treat ourselves well.

Daily Program Journal ~ Vital Signs for Month of: _____

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Attend Meetings	Sponsor Sponsee	Step Work	Program Calls	Journal & Writing	Prayer & Meditation	Books & Literature	Family of Origin	Service	Fun, Play & Relaxation
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										
13										
14										
15										
16										
17										
18										
19										
20										
21										
22										
23										
24										
25										
26										
27										
28										
29										
30										
31										

Daily Program Journal ~ Vital Signs for Month of: _____

	Attend Meetings	Sponsor Sponsee	Step Work	Program Calls	Service	Traditions	Journal & Writing	Prayer & Meditation	Books & Literature	Family of Origin	Fun, Play & Relaxation
1											
2	✓										
3							✓				
4											
5											
6				✓							
7											
8											
9											
10	✓										
11											
12											
13											
14											
15											
16											
17				✓							
18											
19									✓		
20											
21	✓										
22											
23											
24											
25											
26											
27											
28							✓				
29											
30	✓										
31											

Working a **"wannabe"** Program without Action
 Will take you nowhere fast!

Daily Program Journal ~ Vital Signs for Month of: _____

	Attend Meetings	Sponsor Sponsee	Step Work	Program Calls	Service	Traditions	Journal & Writing	Prayer & Meditation	Books & Literature	Family of Origin	Fun, Play & Relaxation
1	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
2	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	
3		✓		✓			✓	✓			
4	✓			✓			✓	✓			✓
5	✓				✓				✓		✓
6	✓						✓	✓		✓	
7			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
8	✓	✓						✓	✓		
9	✓						✓	✓			✓
10											
11	✓	✓									
12		✓		✓			✓	✓			✓
13				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
14	✓		✓				✓	✓			✓
15	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
16								✓			
17	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓			
18	✓				✓						
19	✓				✓	✓	✓				✓
20				✓			✓	✓			
21	✓						✓	✓			
22			✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
23	✓			✓			✓	✓			
24		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
25	✓						✓				
26	✓	✓			✓			✓			
27	✓			✓			✓	✓			
28			✓				✓	✓	✓		
29						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
30	✓						✓	✓			
31				✓			✓	✓			

Working an **ACTIVE** Recovery Program
 Can take you where you want to go!



I Hope You Dance

(Saunders & Sillers – recorded by Leeanne Womack)

I hope you never lose your sense of wonder,
You get your fill to eat but always keep that hunger,
May you never take one single breath for granted,
GOD forbid love ever leave you empty handed,
I hope you still feel small when you stand beside the ocean,
Whenever one door closes I hope one more opens,
Promise me that you'll give faith a fighting chance,
And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance.

I hope you dance....I hope you dance.

I hope you never fear those mountains in the distance,
Never settle for the path of least resistance,
Livin' might mean takin' chances but they're worth takin',
Lovin' might be a mistake but it's worth makin',
Don't let some hell bent heart leave you bitter,
When you come close to sellin' out reconsider,
Give the heavens above more than just a passing glance,
And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance.

I hope you dance....I hope you dance.

I hope you dance....I hope you dance.

(Time is a wheel in constant motion always rolling us along,
Tell me who wants to look back on their years and wonder where those years have gone.)

I hope you still feel small when you stand beside the ocean,
Whenever one door closes I hope one more opens,
Promise me that you'll give faith a fighting chance,
And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance.

Dance....I hope you dance.

I hope you dance....I hope you dance.

I hope you dance....I hope you dance..

(Time is a wheel in constant motion always rolling us along,
Tell me who wants to look back on their years and wonder where those years have gone.)

First Aid Kit

During the course of your recovery process, it is highly likely that you will run smack dab into a personally threatening situation. This real or imagined threat can appear in the form of a panic attack, shame spiral, or similar feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and utter despair.

It is during these fearful times when the First Aid Kit can be called into action. Take personal responsibility to deal with and resolve the issue at hand.
Faith without works is dead.

- a. Contact your Higher Power and turn it over through Prayer and Meditation. Do the necessary footwork before you can let it go.
- b. Get on the phone and talk to your sponsor and program friends.
- c. Go to a meeting and share about your experience. Don't isolate.
- d. Ask for help with what you're going through and be willing to receive help.
- e. Do something physical. Walk around the block, do the dishes, clean the house, or _____?
- f. Slow down because you're probably moving too fast. Remember to breathe. Take deep breaths and do your best to relax.
- g. Do some journaling/writing about the event. Express yourself!
- h. Write a gratitude list or call a newcomer to help her/him out.
- i. Remember that thoughts and feelings aren't always based on fact.
- j. Ask yourself from a mature and objective perspective - "Is my survival at stake – and what is **really** happening to me?"
- k. Try your best to objectively describe what just happened to you, and then come up with a positive game plan to place into action in order to prevent this event from happening again.
- l. When implementing your First Aid Kit, remember to breathe, progress not perfection, actions speak louder than words, and easy does it but do it!
- m. It's generally a good idea to practice your plan of action a few times before you really need it. By doing this you'll have a sense of what you're doing when you want or need to do it.

You can also practice when things are going well in your recovery process. These self-support tools are to be used throughout your recovery experience as you discover and uncover those scary ghosts and demons that previously crippled and held you hostage.

Practice, practice, practice. It works if you work it.