



THE TABLEMATE - REVISED VERSION 2015

“If you want what we have....”



OCTOBER 2, 2015
TABLEMATE NEWBURY GROUP

amended and updated July 2016

The TableMate

Introduction

A valuable work entitled The Tablemate was an early AA set of beginners lessons entitled "Alcoholics Anonymous: An Interpretation of the Twelve Steps," put out in the form of a little pamphlet. It was (and still is) the most successful set of A.A. beginners lessons ever devised. It breaks the twelve steps down into four groups, which are studied over a period of four weeks: In the 1940s in South Bend Indiana at each meeting, the pamphlet was passed around the table, with each person in turn reading aloud a small portion of one of the four lessons. Then there was a group discussion. By using a different lesson each week, by the end of the year each lesson had been read through and discussed thirteen times. Busloads of people from treatment centers and halfway houses started being brought in, as news spread of the marvelously successful new beginners lessons.**

The success rate? If newcomers made every week's meeting without fail, by the end of the year 90% of them had remained sober the entire year. Even now, many years later, 90% of those still have unbroken sobriety. That is an overall long term 80% success rate, comparable to the kinds of success rates that were being achieved in early AA times. Bobby Burger, the secretary at the New York AA headquarters (then called the Alcoholic Foundation) wrote a letter on November 11, 1944, making it clear that the New York office heartily approved of AA groups using the little pamphlet. And if we want real old-time AA we must read and study the actual

words of the good old-timers in our AA meetings. Little pamphlets from the modern New York G.S.O. are not designed to be the kind of good solid meat-and-potatoes literature which must be read and studied and discussed in meetings in order to keep the spirit of original old time AA alive and still save alcoholics from destruction today.

****CAUTION:** To make this method work, it is necessary that at least three AA people be present at each meeting who have some quality time in the programme, are well founded in AA principles, and know how to speak about them effectively in group meetings. It requires a commitment on the part of the local AA community if they really want to make this work. Otherwise, in spite of the pamphlet, the tendency of the newcomers is invariably to want to spend all their time griping and complaining about minor irritations in their lives, and becoming very negative or go off into other diversions contrary to the Primary Purpose, until everything breaks down into total ineffectuality.

**MADE AVAILABLE BY
TABLEMATE STEP STUDY
NEWBURY
2015**

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The material contained herein is merely an outline of the phases of the programme and is not intended to replace or supplant:

- a. The careful reading and re-reading of the Big Book.
- b. Regular attendance at weekly group meetings.
- c. Study of the programme.
- d. Daily practice of the programme.
- e. Informal discussion with other members.

This instruction is not a short-cut to A.A. It is an introduction - - a help - - a brief course in fundamentals.

Our experience is that all your work should be done with a Sponsor

WEEK ONE

THE ADMISSION

STEP NO. 1

WE ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL - THAT
OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE

In order to determine whether or not you have drifted from "social drinking" into alcoholic drinking it is well to check over a list of test questions, which each member may ask himself and answer for himself. Then we can answer once and for all these three puzzling questions:

Am I an alcoholic? What is an alcoholic? Who is an alcoholic?

To get the right answer the prospective member must start this course of instruction with: A willingness to learn, an open mind. Forget any and all notions we already have. Set our opinions aside. Complete honesty. It is possible we must be honest with ourselves, and it is a good time to start being honest with others.

YARDSTICK FOR ALCOHOLICS - The prospective member of AA may have some doubts if he is actually an alcoholic. AA in Akron has found a yardstick prepared by psychiatrists of Johns Hopkins University to be very valuable in helping the alcoholic decide for himself. Have your prospect answer the following questions, being as honest as possible with himself in deciding the answers. If he answers Yes to one of the questions, there is a definite warning that he MAY be an alcoholic. If he answers YES to any two, the chances are that he IS an alcoholic. If he answers YES to any three or more, he IS DEFINITELY an alcoholic and in need of help.

The questions:

- a. Do you lose time from work due to drinking?
- b. Is drinking making your home life unhappy?
- c. Do you drink because you are shy with other people?
- d. Is drinking affecting your reputation?
- e. Have you gotten into financial difficulties as a result of drinking?
- f. Have you ever stolen, pawned property, or "borrowed" to get money for alcoholic drinks?
- g. Do you turn to lower companions and an inferior environment when drinking?
- h. Does your drinking make you careless of your family's welfare?
- i. Has your ambition decreased since drinking?
- j. Do you crave a drink at a definite time daily?
- k. Do you want a drink the next morning?
- l. Does drinking cause you to have difficulty in sleeping?
- m. has your efficiency decreased since drinking?
- n. Is drinking jeopardizing your job or business?
- o. Do you drink to escape from worries or troubles?
- p. Do you drink alone?
- q. have you ever had a complete loss of memory as a result of drinking?

- r. Has your physician ever treated you for drinking?
- s. Do you drink to build up your self-confidence?
- t. Have you ever been to a hospital or institution on account of drinking?

Why Does An Alcoholic Drink?

Best answered by Dr Silkworth's definition of alcoholism

Excerpts from a lecture by Dr Silkworth in 1937 Alcoholism a true allergic state

"... The inevitable conclusion is that true alcoholism is an allergic state, the result of gradually increasing sensitization by alcohol over a more or less extended period of time. The constancy of the symptoms and progress is too fixed to permit any other explanation. Some are allergic from birth, but the condition usually develops later in life. It is noteworthy also, that such patients may be deprived of liquor altogether for a long period, a year or longer for example, and become apparently normal. They are still allergic, however, and a single drink will develop the full symptomatology again."

We Admit

If after carefully considering all the foregoing, we admit we are alcoholics, we must realize that, once a person becomes an

alcoholic drinker, he can never again become a controlled, or normal drinker, and from that point on, you are limited to just two alternatives:

Total permanent abstinence, achieved just one day at a time. **OR** Chronic **terminal active** alcoholism with all of the handicaps, penalties and total life destroying capabilities this illness imposes on us. In other words, we have gone past the point where we had a choice. All we have left is a decision to make.

We Resolve to Do Something about It

We must change our way of thinking. (This is such an important matter that it will have to be discussed more fully in a later discussion).

We must realize that each morning when we wake, we are potential drunkards for that day.

We resolve that we will practice A.A. for the 24 hours of that day.

Beginning with the use of the Just For Today Card

We must commence to study the other eleven steps of the programme as suggested by tablemate and come to understand that we shall need to practice each and every one.

Attend this regular group meeting each week without fail and attend as many AA meetings as possible.

Firmly believe that by practicing A.A. faithfully each day, we will achieve sobriety. Believe that we can be free from alcohol as a problem.

Contact another member before taking a drink, not after. Tell him what bothers you - - talk it over with him freely.

Work the programme for ourselves alone - - not for our wife, children, friends, or for our job.

Be absolutely honest and sincere.

Be fully open minded - - no mental reservations.

Be fully willing to work the programme. Nothing good in life comes without work.

Conclusion

Alcoholics are suffering from a threefold disease; mental, physical and spiritual. In A.A. we have learned how to be sober just one day at a time, we can achieve a full and happy life without recourse to alcohol.

I know that if this programme works for me and I am able to maintain a sober, peaceful life, it will not be through any strength of mine, but rather, a Power Greater than myself Who has reached down and given me a helping hand. Strange as it may seem - - it works.

Ask Questions if you are under a year sober

No question pertaining to drinking, or stopping drinking, is silly or irrelevant. The matter is too serious. Any questions we ask may help someone else. This is not a shortcut to A.A., it is an introduction, a help, a brief course in fundamentals. In A.A. we learn by question and answer; we learn by exchanging our thought and our experience with each other. Any question you ask may help someone else. To cover as many questions as possible in the short time available, all answers must be limited to three minutes.

suggested Reading

The Big Book, The Doctor's Opinion and the first 4 Chapters

The Twelve and Twelve, step 1

The Just for Today card 15 points to consider etc

The Pamphlet – AA members and medications

The Pamphlet – Q and A on sponsorship

The Pamphlet – Problems other than alcohol

if you have access to the internet then you can read the big book on line at www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Scroll down the homepage and you will see the option “read the Big Book on Line”.

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WEEK TWO

THE SPIRITUAL PHASE

Steps 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 11

The material contained herein is merely an outline of this phase of the programme and is not intended to replace or supplant:

- a. The careful reading and re-reading of the Big Book.
- b. Regular attendance at weekly group meetings.
- c. Study of the programme.
- d. Daily practice of the programme.
- e. Informal discussion with other members.

STEP No. 2

**CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD
RESTORE US TO SANITY**

Our drinking experience has shown:

That as our drinking escalated we strayed away from the normal social side of life, and that our minds, our thought processes started to justify everything around alcohol.

An abnormal mental condition is certainly not sanity in the accepted sense of the word. Alcoholism, our obsession with alcohol has left us with a frame of mind that is not sane. Study of A.A. shows that: In the mental or tangible side of life we have lost touch with, or ignored, or have forgotten the spiritual values that give us the dignity of man as differentiated from the animal.

We have fallen back upon the material things of life and these have failed us. We have been groping in the dark. No human agency, no science or art has been able to solve the alcoholic problem, so we turn to the spiritual for guidance. Therefore we "came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

STEP NO. 3

MADE A DECISION TO **TURN** OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE **CARE** OF GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD **HIM**

In the first step we learned that we had lost the power of choice and had to make a decision. What decision could we make better than to:

Turn our very will over to a loving God, realizing that our self will run riot had never achieved a good result...

God as we understand Him. Religion is a word we do not use in A.A. We refer to a member's relationship to God as the spiritual.

If an alcoholic cannot believe in God he can certainly believe in something greater than himself, greater than alcohol, around him in AA he will see evidence of the success of this approach. If he cannot believe in a power greater than himself then his ego has yet to be reduced.

STEP NO. 5

ADMITTED TO GOD, TO OURSELVES, AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS

There is nothing new in this step. There are many sound reasons for "talking over our troubles out loud with others." For the alcoholic especially this is vital for "he may not overcome drinking".

Under this step it is not even necessary to go to a priest or minister. Any understanding human being, friend or stranger, will serve the purpose - although our experience indicates taking this step with your sponsor is a sound approach. The purpose and intent of this step is so plain and definite that it needs little explanation.

The point is that we must do exactly what the fifth step says, sooner or later. We must not rush to get this step off our chest. Consider it carefully and calmly. **Then get about it and do it.**

Wrongs" do not necessarily mean crime. It can well be wrong thinking - - selfishness - - false pride - - egotism - - or any one of a hundred such negative faults.

STEP NO. 6

WERE ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVED ALL THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER

After admitting our wrong thinking and wrong actions in step five we now do something more than "admit" or "confess."

We now become ready and willing to have God remove the defects in our character.

Remember it is our character we are working on. Not the other fellow's. Here is a good place to drop the critical attitude toward others - - the superior attitude toward others.

We must clean our mind of wrong thinking - - petty jealousy - - envy - - self- pity - - remorse, etc.

Here is the place to drop resentments, one of the biggest hurdles the alcoholic has to get over.

What concerns us here is that we drop all thoughts of resentment: anger, hatred, revenge.

We have made a decision in step 3 to turn our will over to the care of God and here, now, we let him know that we are ready, and ask him to remove all our defects of character as revealed to us in step 5.

STEP NO. 7

HUMBLY ASKED HIM TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS

We have taken this step with step 6 immediately after our fifth step, as directed in the Big Book. We have basically given God permission to sort us out. Now on a daily basis I must be mindful of this step, always ready to be humble and cheerful while God goes about His business. A simple notion is to see your shortcomings as defects in action. I.e. I was angry, the defect - and the shortcoming I slammed the door hard when I left the room.

STEP NO.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

We pray each night - - every night - - a prayer of thanks.

We pray each morning - - every morning - - for help and guidance.

When we are lonely, confused, uncertain - - we pray.

Most of us find it well to - -

Choose, for each day, a "quiet time" to meditate on the
programme, on our progress in it.

Keep conscious contact with God and pray to make that contact
closer.

Pray that our will be laid aside and that God's will direct us.

Pray for calmness - - quiet - - relaxation - - rest.

Pray for strength and courage to enable us to do today's work
today.

Pray for forgiveness for yesterday's errors.

Ask for hope for better things tomorrow.

Pray for what we feel we need. We will not get what we want - -
we will get what we need, what is good for us.

CONCLUSION

We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the programme. Willingness, Honesty, and Open-Mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.

Ask Questions if you are under a year sober

No question pertaining to drinking, or stopping drinking, is silly or irrelevant. The matter is too serious. In A.A. we learn by question and answer. We learn by exchanging our thoughts and our experience with each other. Any question you ask may help someone else. To cover as many questions as possible in the short time available, all answers must be limited to three minutes.

Suggested Reading

The Big Book, Chapters 5 and 6

The Twelve and Twelve, steps 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 11

The pamphlet "Ego reduction necessary for true sobriety" by Dr Harry Tiebout

if you have access to the internet then you can read the big book on line at www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/

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WEEK THREE

INVENTORY & RESTITUTION

The material contained herein is merely an outline of this phase of the programme and is not intended to replace or supplant:

- a. The careful reading and re-reading of the Big Book.
- b. Regular attendance at weekly group meetings.
- c. Study of the programme.
- d. Daily practice of the programme.
- e. Informal discussion with other members.

This meeting covers Steps 4, 8, 9, 10. We will take them in order.

STEP NO. 4

MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES

The intent and purpose of this step is plain. All alcoholics have a definite need to acquire self-knowledge- - a sort of self-appraisal. Other people have certainly analyzed us, appraised us, criticized us and even judged us. It might be a good idea to assess ourselves, calmly and honestly. We need inventory because:

Not overlooking the physical allergy, our faults, weaknesses and/or defects of character, are the cause of our drinking,

Or our drinking has weakened our character and led us into all kinds of wrong action, wrong attitudes, wrong viewpoints – or both.

In either event we obviously need an inventory and the only kind of inventory to make is a good one. Moreover, the job is up to us. We created or we let develop all the anti-social actions that got us in the wrong. So we have got to work it out. We must make out a list of our faults and then we must do something about it. If our list is contained in a life story we have done more than the big book asks of us not less. Some may find this method suitable to allow a commencement. Check with your sponsor.

The inventory/life story must be four things:

It must be **honest**. Why waste time fooling ourselves with a phony list? We have fooled ourselves for years, we tried to fool others, and now is a good time to look ourselves squarely in the eye.

It must be **searching**. Why skip over a vital matter lightly and quickly? Our trouble is a grave mental disease, confused by screwy thinking. Therefore, we must search diligently and

fearlessly to get at the truth of what is wrong with us -
- just dig in and search.

It must be **fearless**. We must not be afraid we might find things in our heart, mind and soul that we will hate to discover. If we do find such things they may be the root of our trouble.

It must be a **moral** inventory.

Some, in error, think the inventory is a lot of unpaid debts, plus a list of unmade apologies. Our trouble lies much deeper.

We will find the root of our trouble lies in Resentments, False Pride, Envy, Jealousy, Selfishness and many other things. Laziness is an important one. In other words we are making an inventory of our character: our attitude toward others, our very way of living.

Dr Bob wrote in his prescription for alcoholics, Trust in God, Clean House and help others.

STEP NO. 8

MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WE HAD HARMED, AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL.

Under this step we will make a written list of those we have harmed. We will be looking specifically at all our relationships. We ask God to let HBis will be done, not our will, and ask for the strength and courage to become willing to forget resentments and false pride and make amends to those we have harmed. We must not do this step grudgingly, or as an unpleasant task to be rid of quickly. We must do it willingly, fairly, and humbly - - without condescension. This is where we redouble our efforts for

there is much to learn not only about those we have harmed but how we have harmed ourselves

STEP NO. 9

MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHEREVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS.

This is where we make peace with ourselves by making peace with those we have hurt. The amends we make must be direct. We must pay in kind for the hurt we have done them.

If we have cheated people or businesses of money - we must make restitution. If we have hurt their feelings we must ask forgiveness from them.

The list of harms done may be long but the list of amends is equally long. For every wrong we have done, there is a right we may do to compensate.

There is only one exception. We must develop a sense of justice, a spirit of fairness, an attitude of common sense. If our effort to make amends would create further harm or cause a scandal, we will have to skip the direct amends and clean the matter up only under Step Five.

STEP NO. 10

CONTINUED TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY AND WHEN WE WERE WRONG PROMPTLY ADMITTED IT.

In coming into A.A. we usually will have a pretty big inventory to work on, as in Steps Four, Eight, and Nine. But even after that, we will not be perfect. We have a long way to go. We will continue to make mistakes and will be inclined to do some more wrong thinking and wrong doing. So at daily intervals, we continue to

take inventory. Here the purpose is to check on our progress. We certainly cannot be perfect, so the need for regular inventory is apparent.

These inventories are personal. We confine the inventory to ourselves. We are the ones who need it. Never mind the other fellow! He too is probably troubled and will have to make his own inventory.

When we make these inventories, probably the best way to start is to go over (one by one) each of the twelve steps, and try to discover just what (in these steps) we are not following.

Character Defects

So much for the inventory steps - - now look at some of the things we would do well to cover in an inventory:

1. Selfishness - - the common defect of all alcoholics.
2. Egotism - - who is without some of it? Self-Importance, Mr. Big.
3. False Pride - - too big to admit a fault or an error.
4. Impatience - - the spoiled child in a grown man.
5. Resentments - - an alcoholic usually is sore at the whole world. Everybody is wrong!
6. Lack of common honesty - - usually fooling ourselves and trying to fool others. False pretence, sham.
7. Deceit
8. Hate - - the outgrowth of anger and resentment.
9. Jealousy - - just wanting what the other fellow worked to get.
10. Envy - - a sure-fire cause of discontent and unhappiness.

11. Laziness - - just plain laziness.

And so on through a long list

Conversely our Inventory could show a list of acquired Virtues

Which we were very definitely lacking and should go to work on to develop such as:

1. Honesty
2. Simple Justice
3. Fairness
4. Generosity
5. Truthfulness
6. Modesty Humility
7. Honest Pride in work well done
8. Simplicity
9. Patience
10. Industry (go to work and really work)

And so on through a long list.

Then Consider a Few MAJOR Virtues

1. FAITH - if we have lost faith we must work desperately hard to get it back. Ask God to give us faith in him, our fellow man, and ourselves.
2. HOPE - if we have lost hope we are dead pigeons. Only those who have been cruelly hurt and in desperate need can know the wonderful sense of security that lies in hope for better things.
3. TRUST - since our own self-sufficient conduct of our own life has failed us, we must put our trust in God, who has never failed.

Ask Questions if you are under a year sober

No question pertaining to drinking, or stopping drinking, is silly or irrelevant. The matter is too serious. In A.A. we learn by question and answer. We learn by exchanging our thought and experience with each other. Any question we ask may help someone else. To cover as many questions as possible in the short time available, all answers must be limited to three minutes.

Suggested Reading

The Big Book, All Chapters up to and including Chapter 6

The Twelve and Twelve, steps 4, 8, 9 & 10

if you have access to the internet then you can read the big book on line at www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/

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WEEK FOUR

ACTIVE WORK

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STEP NO. 12

HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO ALCOHOLICS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

This step logically separates into three parts:

Part 1 - The Spiritual Experience

The terms "spiritual experience" and "spiritual awakening" used here and in the book Alcoholics Anonymous mean (upon careful reading)

That the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism has manifested itself among us in many forms.

Some such experiences can be sudden and overwhelming but most of our experiences are what psychologist William James calls "the educational variety" because they develop slowly over a

period of time.

Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before he is himself. The new man gradually realizes that he has undergone a profound alteration in his attitude, outlook and reactions to life - - that such a change could hardly have been brought about by himself alone. What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves, a loving God.

Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problem in the light of our experience can recover provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial.

We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the programme. Willingness, Honesty, and Open-Mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.

Part 2 - Carry the Message to Others

This means exactly what it says. Carry the message actively. Bring it to the man who needs it. We do it in many ways:

- a By attending every meeting of our own group.
- b By making calls when asked.
- c By speaking at group meetings when asked.
- d By supporting our group financially to make group meetings possible.
- e By assisting at meetings when asked.
- f By setting a good example of complete sobriety.
- g By owning, and loaning to new men, our own copy of the Big A.A. Book.
- h By encouraging those who find the way difficult.
- i By serving as an officer or on group committees or special assignments when asked.
- j By doing all of the foregoing cheerfully and willingly.
- k We do any or all of the foregoing at some sacrifice to ourselves with definite thought of developing unselfishness in our own character.

Part 3 - We Practice These Principles in All Our Affairs

This last part of the Twelfth Step is the real purpose that all of the twelve steps lead to - - a new way of life, **a design for living**. It shows us how to live rightly, think rightly and to achieve happiness. How do we go about it?

- a We resolve to live our life one day at a time - - just twenty-four hours.

- b. We pray each day for guidance that day.
- c. We pray each night - - thanks for that day.
- d. We resolve to keep our heads and to forego anger, or other emotional disturbances no matter what situation arises, as much as possible.
- e. We are patient.
- f. We keep calm, relaxed.
- g. Now and most important: whatever little ordinary situations as well as big situations arise, we look at them calmly and fairly, with an open mind, then act on them in exact accordance with the simple true principles that A.A. has taught and will teach us.

In other words, our sobriety is only a correction of our worst and most evident faults. Our living each day according to the principles of A.A. will also correct all of our other lesser faults and will gradually eliminate, one by one, all of the defects in our character that cause frictions, discontents, and unhappy rebellious moods that lead right back to our very chief fault of drinking.

Ask Questions if you are under a year sober

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Suggested Reading

The Big Book, Chapter up 7 onwards through the rest of the book
The Twelve and Twelve, Step 12 and then The Traditions
Pamphlet – why were we chosen?

if you have access to the internet then you can read the big book
on line at www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/

**Our experience is that all your work should be done with a
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See the Secretary to ask about sponsorship

“... Sponsorship is yours for the asking. We urge you ***do not delay.*** Alcoholics recovered in AA want to share what they have learned with other alcoholics. ... Sponsorship responsibility is unwritten and informal, but it is a basic part of the AA approach to recovery from alcoholism through the twelve steps.”

“... We find that we need constant, close support as we begin learning how to live sober. So we select an AA member with whom we can feel comfortable, someone with whom we can talk freely and confidentially” ***From Q&A on sponsorship***

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