

# Sponsorship in EDA

## **In EDA, a sponsor:**

- Listens ☺
- Shares personal experience, strength and hope
- Is supportive and encouraging
- Provides honest, positive feedback
- Avoids offering unsolicited advice

## **A sponsee:**

- Maintains regular, frequent contact with a sponsor
- Shares (as openly as possible) current life situations, thoughts and feelings
- Is open to honest, positive feedback
- Asks for advice when ready to hear it
- Takes what is useful and leaves the rest
- Takes responsibility for decisions and choices

In EDA, we do not “surrender to suggestions” nor do we “fake it until we make it.” For most of us, “faking it” is part of the problem, not the solution. Our solution is to get honest about our inner turmoil and to use tools, particularly “telling on ourselves” and cognitive behavioral therapy techniques, to work our way through difficulty. A sponsor listens and helps guide us through this process.

Sponsors work with those for whom they feel genuine affection and respect. It does not work for sponsors to “fake it”, either. It is especially important for a sponsor to be honest when things are going badly, when feelings are hurt or when resentments develop. Love and tolerance of others is our code; these require tactful honesty and timeliness. It is helpful to remember neither sponsor nor sponsee is likely to be expert at relationships. The sponsor-sponsee relationship, however, can work as a model for our other relationships; we aim to be as calm, frank, open, honest, and positive as possible in support of one another.

The best sponsor is one a sponsee feels comfortable with and can talk with openly and easily. Some sponsors have not formally worked the twelve steps. In such cases, the sponsee may ask others to share their step experience. Switching sponsors is okay. A critical, demanding or judgmental sponsor is not helpful in building recovery.

We each try to build the best support network possible to foster our recovery. A sponsor is only one part of this network. It can be difficult to forge new lines of communication, but depending too heavily on one person or even a few people is unwise. When we get ourselves in over our heads we need immediate help. It is important to have open, tested, safe lines of communication with many friends, not just a few.