

## **SPONSOR-BY-MAIL PROGRAM** **FOR PRISONERS**

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**Conference approved**

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### For The Sponsor

*Congratulations on your decision to become a Sponsor-by-Mail for a prisoner.*

This activity can be very rewarding for both you and the sponsee, and may become a very important part of your own 12<sup>th</sup> Step work. (Ideally, you will be working on Step 12, and will have some considerable continuous sexual sobriety yourself).

You will get names and addresses of prisoner sponsees from the SA Correctional Facilities Committee (SACFC). Occasionally your sponsee may give you the name of other prisoners as well.

You will need to send an initial letter with a SA Brochure, a For the Prisoner sheet, a Step 1 guide, and a brief summary of your own story (how it was, what happened, and how it is now).

*Keep in mind that some prisoners may have very limited reading skills.* Until you get a letter from the prisoner and can judge his language level, be sure to keep it very simple. You should respond within a few days of receiving any letter from a prisoner, unless you are really unable to do so. If possible, let them know in advance when you are going to be on vacation, out of town on business, etc.

When you get the prisoner's Step, you should respond with your comments on appropriateness, completeness, and sincerity, together with any positive suggestions for improving a really inadequate Step. You should also return the Step and enclose a guide for the next Step. (It is suggested that some of the Steps be worked in pairs—2 and 3, 4 and 5, 6 and 7, 8 and 9.)

When a prisoner mentions problems or difficulties, this is your opportunity to share your experience, strength, and hope. Share your personal experience, and that of other fellows and sponsees (anonymously, of course.)

In all of your correspondence, it is well to emphasize the importance of both sobriety and recovery. One good way to do this is by opening each letter with an introduction something like: "My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a happy and grateful recovering sexaholic. I've been sexually sober for \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm continuing to

re-build my life around Steps 10, 11, and 12.” Or the sponsee might write: “...and I’m working on Step \_\_\_\_, with the intention of finishing it by \_\_\_\_.”

### Special Tips

1. You will want to protect your own anonymity by using only the initial of your last name. *We highly recommend using a P.O. Box rather than your personal address.*
2. Personal relationship is important. Letters should be *handwritten* in the first person, and focus on your own experience and observations.
3. Motivation can be a problem. But like most of us, the sponsee will come to see that sobriety and recovery must be for himself, and not to impress family members, prison officials, judges, etc.
4. Tough love may be necessary at times. As a sponsor, you must insist on efforts to stay sober and work the Steps. You will instinctively know how to be understanding and firm at the same time. Above all, avoid becoming a mere pen pal.
5. Parole hearings require special attention. Try to help the prisoner approach such hearings with a positive attitude, but without a desperate attachment to a specific outcome. Surrender is essential here.
6. Release is a dangerous time. For most of us, transitions easily distract us from our program, and constitute a time of increased temptation. The prisoner’s new freedom makes this an especially crucial time. It is best to take on the special responsibility of calling the Central Office, getting the name and phone number of the nearest contact (near to the sponsee’s intended residence), and send this information on. You should encourage him to attend meetings regularly and look for a new sponsor in due time, one he can have more frequent contact with.

### A Final Word

If you continue to share your experience, strength, and hope with those who are most in need, you will find much satisfaction in this work, and much support for your own continuing recovery. You will come to understand the wisdom of the 12<sup>th</sup> Step, that you simply cannot help others without helping yourself. And God will bless you a hundredfold!

## For The Prisoner

Congratulations! You have shown the courage to look into the recovery program of Sexaholics Anonymous. Through this program, many sexaholics are living happy and useful lives, and have been sober for 10 or 15 years or more. And you can, too, if you are willing to make sobriety and recovery the very highest priorities in your life.

I have been asked, and I have agreed, to be your Sponsor-by-Mail. As such, I will guide you through the 12 Step program of recovery, and will do my best to answer any questions you may have about sobriety and recovery.

You will be expected to write out each of your Steps and send them to me. Each time, I will give you some feedback, return your Step, and send you a guide for the next Step. I will share my experience and advice.

In SA, we pay special attention to sobriety and recovery:

Sobriety: In defining sobriety, we do not speak for those outside Sexaholics Anonymous. We can only speak for ourselves. Thus, for the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, *sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust.\**

Recovery is the sum of all the changes that will take place in your thinking, feelings, and behavior as you work the Steps and re-build your life.

If you really try to follow my instructions in working the Steps and in dealing with temptations, you too can stay sober and grow in recovery. I promise to do all that I can to help you, but you have to do the work!

My mailing address is:

Yours truly,

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Your Sponsor-by-Mail

























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

I will share my lists with God in prayer, and I will send them to my sponsor along with a letter (maybe very long) explaining each line on each list.



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Step 7: Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.

Now I will ask God to remove each one of my main character defects (shortcomings). I will also ask God to replace each character defect with the opposite virtue or good behavior. And I will again keep this prayer very short so that I can easily remember it and say it often, especially when I catch myself falling into my old habits.

My short prayer asking God to remove each of my main character defects and to replace them with the opposite virtue is:

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Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

In my Step 4, I made a list of all the people I have hurt. Now I will list them again, say how I hurt them, and plan the ways and times I intend to make amends. In some cases, I may have to give back what I stole or pay for damage I caused to property. In other cases, I may need to make an honest and sincere apology for the hurt I caused. If I can't locate the person or meet with them, I will need to get some advice from my sponsor. Some amends may be done very soon, and others may take a lot of time. But I need to do this plan now.




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

Direct amends are best made face-to-face. When that is not possible, a telephone call is a good substitute. When neither of these is possible, I will send a very carefully worded letter. In any case, my amends will include the specific things I am sorry for and a sincere apology for the hurt I caused. And sometimes I will have to pay back what I owe.

Sometimes my direct contact may cause additional hurt for the person or others who are now in their lives. In these cases, I will need to make indirect amends. In each case, I will ask my sponsor for advice on the best way to do this.

Maybe the person I hurt has died or I have no way to contact them. Again I will ask my sponsor for the best way to make amends.

The most important thing about making amends is my attitude about making things right with the people I hurt. I must do my part whether or not they accept my apology. Even if they refuse to see me or take my phone call, I have to do my part.

Before I make each amends, I will tell my sponsor exactly how I intend to do it. If I am planning to send a letter, I will send it to my sponsor first to get his ideas for improving it. Above all, I will pray for the guidance to say the right things with the right attitude, so that I don't cause more hurt to the same person.

Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

As we live and work with people every day, there are many times when we need to say our 7<sup>th</sup> Step prayer. This will help us to avoid our character defects and practice the opposite virtues.

At the end of each day, we may want to review the events of the day to see where we fell into

our old habits and might have practiced the opposite virtue instead.

If we have hurt anyone that day, we will plan how to make amends as soon as possible, probably the next day.

Eventually, we'll be able to keep our defects and virtues in mind so that we can correct our behavior while it's happening. Then we won't have to go back and make amends later.

This Step, along with our 3<sup>rd</sup> Step prayer and our 7<sup>th</sup> Step prayer will become daily habits as we grow in recovery and in positive sobriety.

Step 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.

By now, I have developed the habit of saying my 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Step prayers often, and I have also developed the habit of taking a daily inventory.

Now it's time to start the never-ending process of improving my relationship with God. This is a very personal activity; I need to do it for myself, and I will never be finished. The best way to do this is to practice two special activities: prayer and meditation.

Prayer is talking to God, recognizing that He is always with me and that He is much more than my best friend. So, I tell Him what's going on in my life and I ask for His help. Actually, He already knows what is going on, but I need to think about these things myself. And His help is always there, but I need to be in the right attitude to accept His help. So, this kind of prayer is mostly for me to change, and not for God to do anything He's not already doing. Perhaps I used to pray for God to do my will (give me the things I wanted, make others do what I wanted, etc.), but now I turn this around. I pray only that I will know and do God's will for me.

Meditation, on the other hand, is listening to God. When I sit quietly and clear my mind, ideas

will come to me. This is how God talks to me. But if I pay careful attention, He also talks to me through other people and through everything that happens to me. Listening to God takes a lot of practice, and my sponsor may have more tips on how to meditate better.

So, I set aside a certain time each day for prayer and meditation. Again, this is something I will need to do so that I will grow spiritually for the rest of my life.

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to sexaholics, and practice these principles in all our affairs.

If I have carefully worked the steps to this point, somewhere along the line I saw that I was becoming aware of spiritual things, especially in my own life. And this awareness has continued to grow, to strengthen, and to deepen for me.

I have found a new way of living. I am now aware of living in partnership with God. He's the senior partner, and I'm the junior partner! I have also found that through this partnership I can stay sober for a long time, probably for the rest of my life. And I have come to see that love is the opposite of lust, and that I can take the actions of love to improve my relations with others. My life has turned completely around, and I am headed in the opposite direction. My selfishness has been converted into a real interest in helping others.

So, I begin to do what I can, what God puts in front of me to do, to help other sexaholics to find the peace and love that I have found. I become more aware of opportunities to serve, but I'm careful not to put (*out*) my will above God's, as I respond to the need for information, sponsorship, and other assistance.

(*This, too,*) I will need to practice *all of these principles* for the rest of my life in order to continue to grow in positive sobriety and live in recovery.