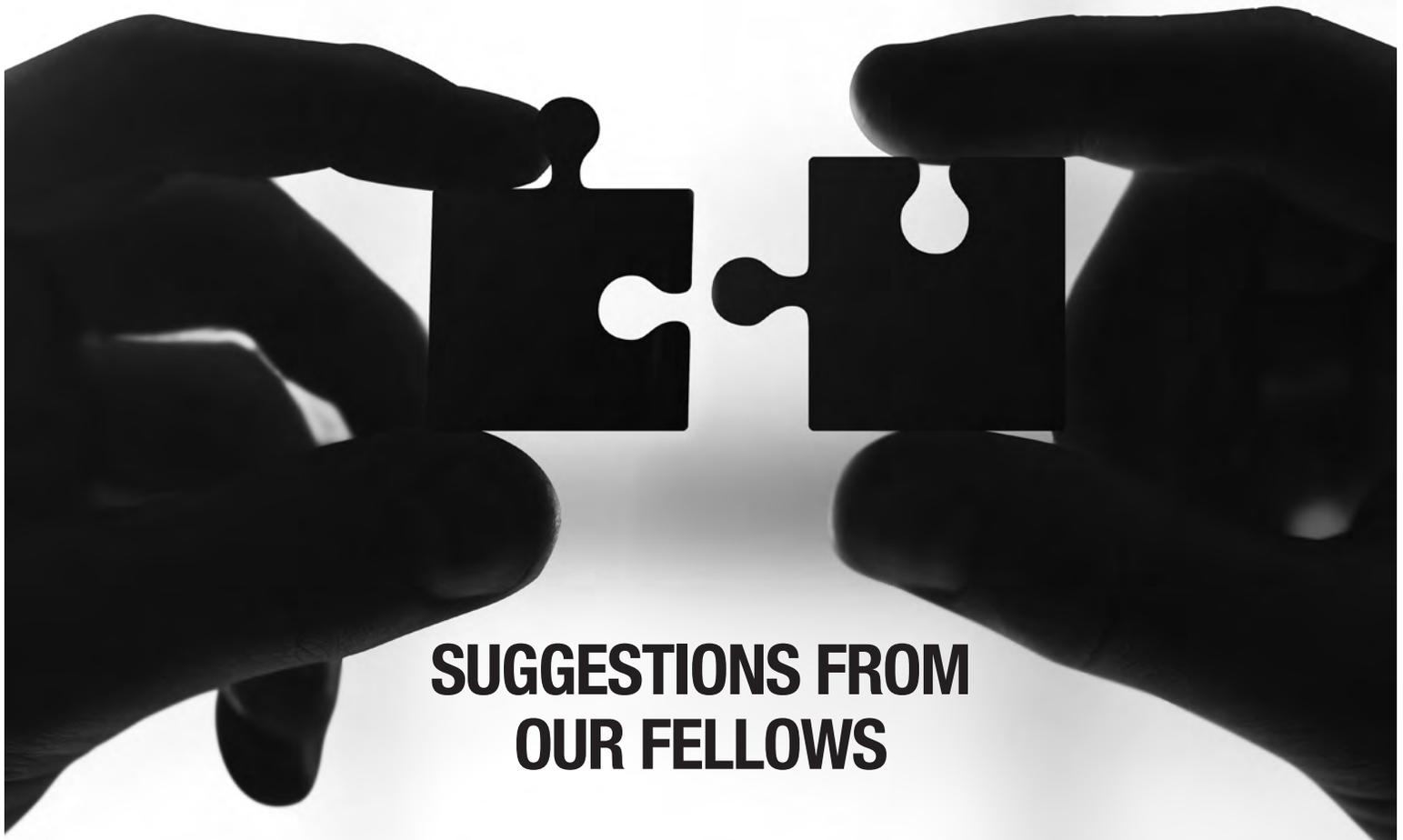




the BEST thing
MY SPONSOR EVER
TOLD ME WAS . . .



**SUGGESTIONS FROM
OUR FELLOWS**



EASY DOES IT!

We asked our fellows to tell us
the best wisdom they ever heard
from their sponsors

“There is no right answer. You’re a good person and you’re trying to do the right thing. That’s what matters.” —Jim H.

“Why not try accepting this is where you are right now?” —Mike F.

“Go ahead and eat as much ice cream as you want—you’re counting days! Be gentle on yourself.” —Chip E.

“Keep an open mind.” Never fails. It applies to every situation. —Amy H.

“You’re a miracle today.”
No matter what was going on in my life, Joe would say this frequently, and it resonated with me. No matter what, I was a miracle to be sober. It’s something I frequently say to people today on their anniversaries. It’s something I always say to myself (in Joe’s voice). —Luis V.

“Alcohol Becomes Crystal.”

“Darlin’, we treat our addictions in the order they kill us. You go ahead and keep smoking those cigarettes for now.”

“Call me tomorrow.”

“I understand what you’re going through, and I promise that it’ll get better.”

“We’ll help you out of your hole. First you have to put down your shovel.” —John T.

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

“Now this is something I did, and how I did it...”

My sponsor was very careful to only tell me things based on his experience. He also told me all the time how smart I was.

“Be careful that you don’t always try to figure things out yourself!”
—Barry L.

“Make your bed. Wash your dishes. Scrub your toilet.”

“Your Higher Power never gives you more than you are able to handle.”
—Michael L.

“I don’t have any friends who use crystal meth.”

“Stay away from toxic people.”

“The world is not going to revolve around your sobriety.” When I was freaking about going to a party where people were drinking.
—Billy U.

MARK V: “You know, I was just thinking.”

MY SPONSOR: “There you go, that’s the problem.”

“Everything’s an outside issue, unless you’re going through it!” Also: “If a fellow’s share is going on and on, remember, it’s going to end!”
—Ava L.

“Just because someone has 13 years doesn’t make him a nice person.”

“Does it need to be said? Does it need to be said now? Does it need to be said by me?”

“Stop comparing your insides to other people’s outsides.”

“Understanding why you do the things you do is the booby prize. The explanation of all the crazy things you think and do is simple: You are an addict. That’s all you need to understand.” —Todd A.

Whenever I was having a bad day he would say: “According to the odds, we were supposed to be, at best, holed up in some skanky bathhouse with a pipe in our hands for 36 hours or, at worst, dead.” —Tim M.

I had a lot of doubts about the program—it seemed like a cult, like I was going to be brainwashed. My sponsor looked at me and said, “Doesn’t your brain need washing?”
—Bob M.

“This is a simple program for complicated people. But just because it’s simple doesn’t mean it’s easy.” —David H.

“Oh, you’re one of those.” My first sponsor’s reaction when I pulled out my Step One novella, complete with spreadsheets and graphs. He said I’d get more out of a simple workbook. It was a great correction for my tendency to overthink things—and my grandiosity. —Mark L.

“The moment you really work Step Three is the moment you start working Step Four.”

“You don’t owe that guy an amends.”

“What do you owe him?”

“Shut it down.”

“You don’t owe your doctor an amends. You owe it to yourself.”

“Your best character asset is your imperfection.”

“Your only part in that resentment is holding on to it.”

“Just change your perception of the thing that is bothering you.”
—Carmine N.

“Take a piece of paper. On one side put five character defects, on the other, five assets. Keep it in your wallet.”

“What is cognitive dissonance?”
No, seriously, he said this to me as I sobbed in his arms about a flashback I had to childhood sexual abuse.
“That person can’t hurt you anymore. We will work the Steps together.”

“Wait until you finish your Fourth Step sexual inventory to start having sex again.”

“No sex for at least six months—hopefully a year. And no dating for a year.”

“My sponsor told me that I can be in a sling—as long as I stay sober!”

“Nothing good ever happens after midnight.”

I made plans to have sex with someone counting days. I called and told my sponsor. He yelled, “Red light! Red light! Do not have sex with that man!”

Once, when I was going insane and about to explode over the way someone mistreated me, my sponsor and I had this chat:

MY SPONSOR: “Have you ever been an ass to anyone?”

WIAFE: “No. Well...”

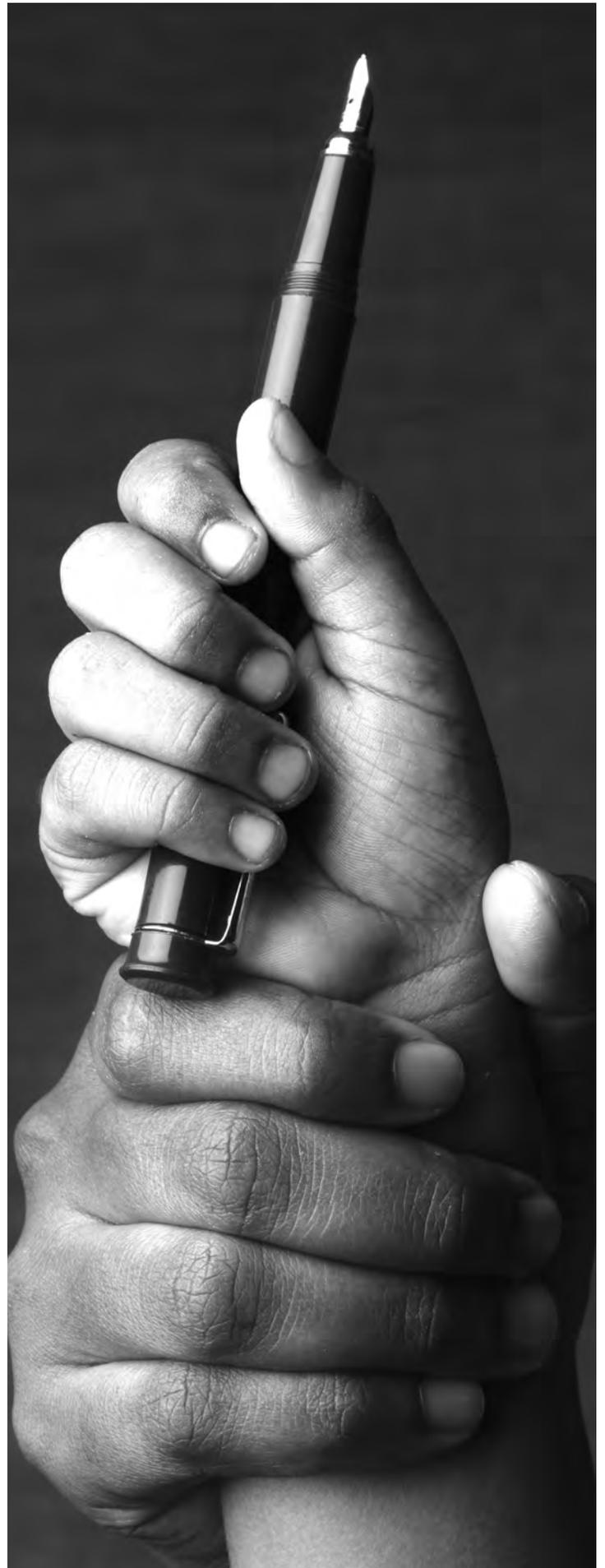
MY SPONSOR: “Well, if you can forgive yourself or hope that the person you harmed could forgive you, then maybe you can forgive this person.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

STEP FOUR AT THE DINING ROOM TABLE

By Jono M.

My sponsor leaned in, calmly, but with purpose. I'd been furiously yelling, but he hadn't taken the bait. Why? My usual strategy to hide my fear and shame was to confuse and berate my opponent. It always worked. It had worked for decades.



Why wasn't it working on him? His tone was matter-of-fact. Not much warmth, but no malice. He whispered into my ear the key phrase that got me through my anger, my fear, and my Step Four: "Jono, you're not that important."

The same words would later get me through Step Seven and help me maintain my Step Eleven, too. My sponsor isn't my parent, whose own self-worth is often tied to the strong ego—or even happiness!—of his kid. A parent would tell me I'm important. My sponsor is a guide whose "worth" is tied to offering experiences and tools and stripping away illusions, illusions that prevent his sponsee from living an authentic life. If my authentic life is a conventionally happy life—and thank god, it can be—then, yay! But that's not his job, nor is it his or our program's promise.

I'd been leaving sweaty palm prints on my sponsor's glass dining room table for weeks during our chats and prep work for Step Four writing. After he said that to me, I cried. He didn't flinch. I later learned that his glass table had witnessed a lot of crying over the years, lots of sponsees shedding lots of tears. I imagined a bottle of Windex was always on hand after sponsor hour.

Alfredo was my second sponsor. My first sponsor, Scott, had to move back to Miami. He'd seen me through my first three steps, my ego flare-ups, and a few brutal relapses; I will always be profoundly grateful and completely loyal to him. Alfredo is the hero who got me through Step Four. He instructed me to show up at his apartment with a blank notebook. He had told me to be on time. I will never underestimate the respectful gesture of being on time.

I'd ceremoniously decided that a black colored notebook was the appropriate color for Step Four writing, and had to visit three different stores to find the correct one—proof positive that I am a sad perfectionist addict! But

I couldn't hold the pen. Alfredo did most of the writing at first, coaxing the information out of some locked vaults of my memory. There was the usual list of resentments: family, sexual partners, law enforcement (for daring to do its job and pursue me in my errant ways), grown men who'd violently stolen my boyhood innocence, people who stalked me, people who ignored me! (This addict wants to be simultaneously embraced and ignored...a losing proposition.)

I didn't realize until I looked at my part how much toxic nourishment I got from keeping my anger alive. I was a mini resentment factory, fueled by and producing anger and victimhood. I needed a sponsor to point out this vicious cycle. I was trapped in it and unable to see outside of the jail cell.

We started and ended each writing session with gratitude and prayer. A Fourth Step without a Higher Power is just an exercise in masochism. Why relive this crap unless you're convinced that you have a Higher Power that will support you as you begin fearless self-examination? Step Four is just a stop on the program journey: Step Three allows me to have confidence in a Higher Power. Step Five allows me to have confidence in humanity, represented, for now, by this humble fellow addict: my sponsor.

When I finished the work, Alfredo gave me a white chip, signaling true surrender. He'd been given this same chip by his sponsor. It wasn't mine to keep—I was to be its temporary guardian until the first sponsee who I passed it to my first sponsee who completed Steps Four and Five with me. I gave a sponsee this chip this year. Sure, the ritual was moving, but at its core it was a business gesture that symbolized the continuation of the work.

A good sponsor is only training the next round of future sponsors. This doesn't, and cannot, begin and end with me.

I'm not that important. ■

HAVE YOU BEEN INCARCERATED?

HAVE YOU FOUND RECOVERY THROUGH WORKING THE 12 STEPS?

WE WANT YOUR STORY!

The CMA Hospitals and Institutions World Committee is looking for submissions from crystal meth addicts who have found recovery while incarcerated. These stories are being compiled for a new pamphlet titled **INSIDE LOOKING OUT: A SOBER CELL.**

SNAIL MAIL:

Please submit with a release form to:

H&I Committee CMA General Services, 4470 W Sunset Blvd.
Ste. 107 PMB 555
Los Angeles, CA 90027-6302

Release form is available at:

<http://www.crystalmeth.org/print.php>

Electronic submission:

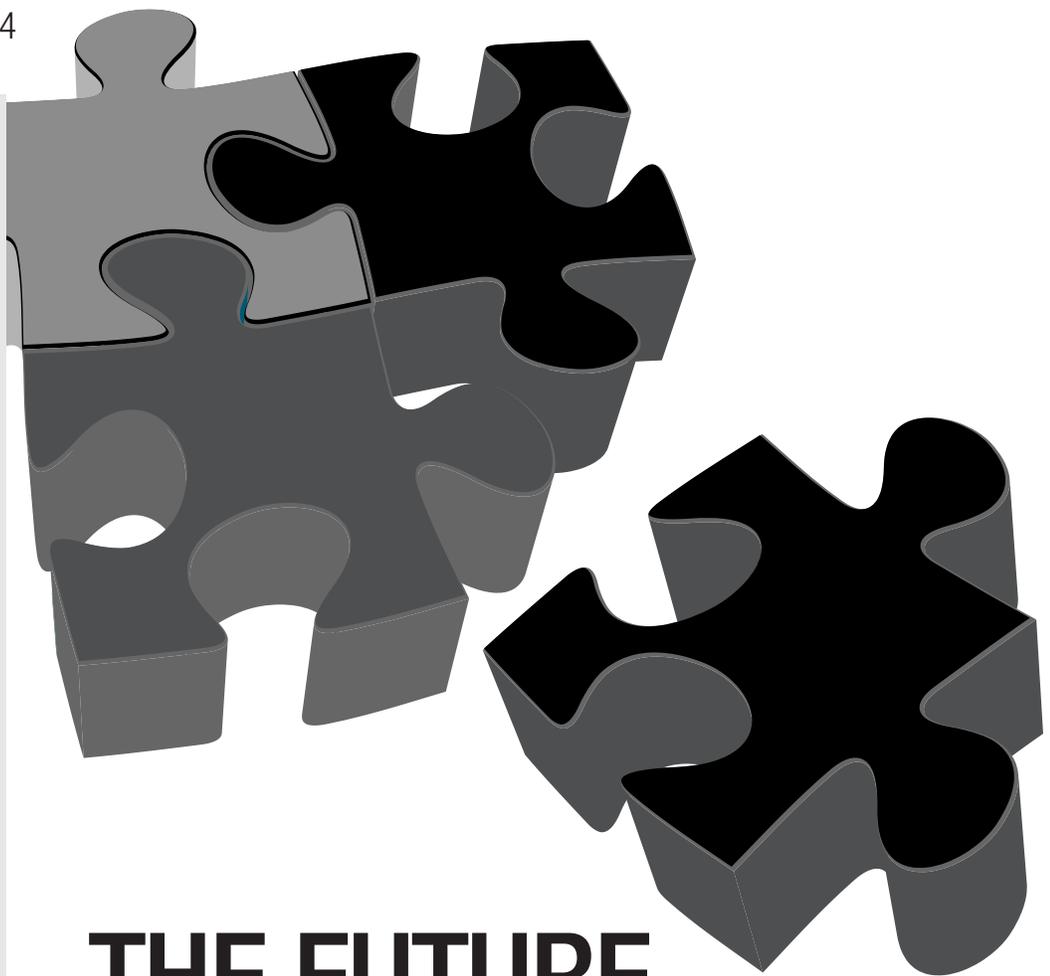
<http://crystalmeth.org/fellowship/hospitals-institutions-committee/submit-your-h-i-story.html>

THE TWELVE STEPS OF CMA

1. We admitted that we were powerless over crystal meth and our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than our selves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a God of our understanding.
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 God 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 a God of our understanding, praying only for the knowledge of God's will for us, and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to crystal meth addicts, and to practice these principles in all of our affairs.

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous have been reprinted and adapted with the permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.). Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous does not mean that Alcoholics Anonymous is affiliated with this program. AA is program of recovery from Alcoholism only—use of AA's Steps and Traditions, or an adapted version of its Steps and Traditions in connection with programs or activities which are patterned after AA, but which address other problems, or in any other non-AA context, does not imply otherwise.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. **1.** We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—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 ourselves, to God, 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 other alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



THE FUTURE ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE

“It works if you work it, and then you live it!” —Fernando

“It really is a bridge back to life.”

HUGH: “What is the secret to staying clean for 10 years?”

ROB: “Working the program.”

“Sobriety is a bridge back to life. What do you want to do with your life now that you’re sober?” —Mark M.

He would be my sponsor and do whatever he could do help me stay sober, providing that I was willing to put in the same amount of work that he was willing to put in to help. But this came with one condition: That I would pass it on to the next person that asked me. —John P.

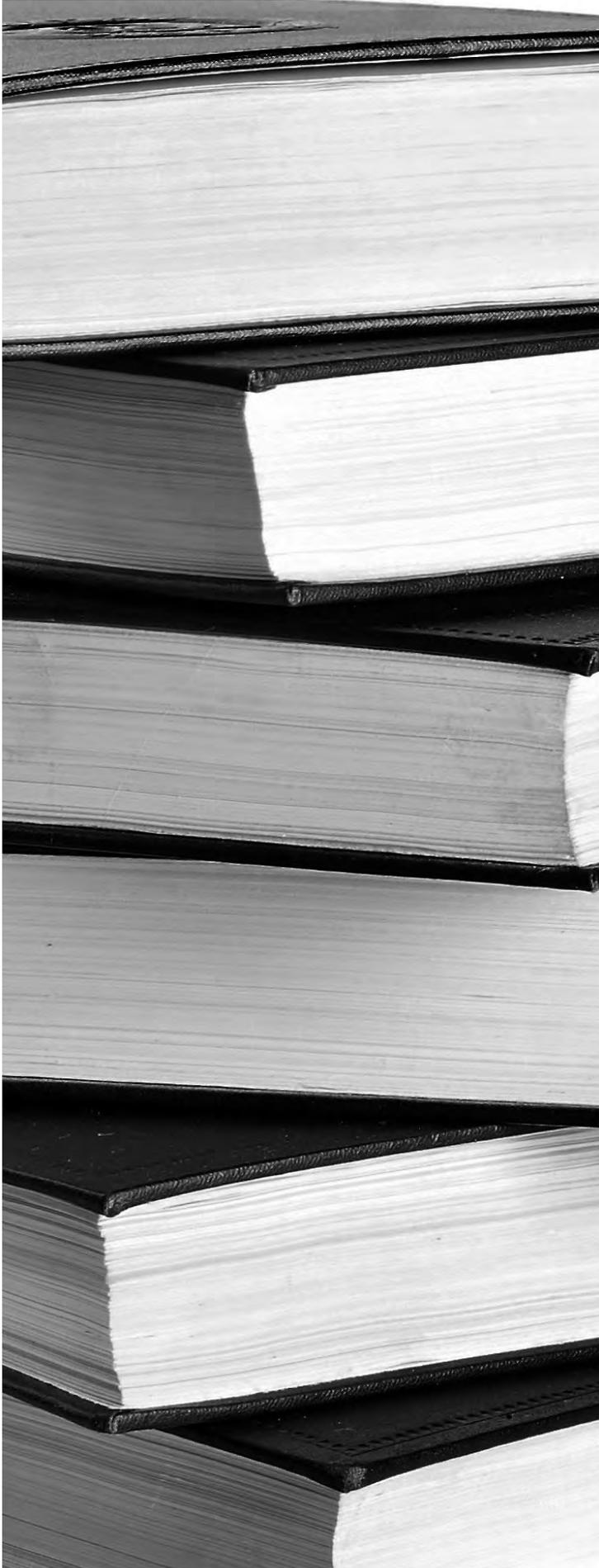
“Be of service to others.”

“You will learn the Steps with your sponsor, but truly do the Steps when you give them to a sponsee.” He hoped I would someday have the privilege of sponsoring another fellow. This has come true—and I’ve had a truer, deeper understanding of the Steps after guiding another addict through them. I keep what I have by giving it away. —Jono M.

“Trust God, clean house, and help others.” —Fabrice C.

KEN: “Look, I can highlight in blue, orange, and pink!”

JACKSON: “Pink? I would call it salmon, but that’s just me...” ■



WHAT OUR LITERATURE SAYS ON SPONSORSHIP

Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember they are very ill. Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.

— “Working With Others,” *Alcoholics Anonymous*, p.89

Our awareness of our patterns of relating with others and the risk we have just taken in admitting them to another bring about a momentous breakthrough in our relationships. Not only do we form a close bond with our sponsor, but the risk we take in trusting this person will help us develop close relationships with others as well. We’ve risked trusting one person with our secrets and our feelings, and we haven’t been rejected. We begin to have the freedom to trust others. Not only do we find out that others are trustworthy and deserve our friendship, we find that we are also trustworthy and deserving. We may have thought we were incapable of loving or being loved or ever having friends. We discover that these beliefs were unfounded. We learn from the example of our sponsor, how to be a more caring friend.

— “Step Five,” *It Works: How & Why*, pp. 56-57

What a sponsor is not: It is not a sponsor’s job to be a landlord, loan company, lawyer, doctor, accountant, psychiatrist, financial broker, marriage counselor or therapist. Sponsors who are in those professions leave that role at the door of CMA. Here they are like us: one addict trying to help another. Sponsors do not keep up the pretense of being right all the time. If they do not know the answer, they may quickly admit this, and help us find other sources of information including professional guidance when needed.

— “What About Sponsorship?” CMA Conference Approved Pamphlet

NYCMA MEETINGS

This list is updated regularly at nycma.org

SUNDAY		
9:00 AM	Pier Meeting (May 1–August 31 only)	(C) End of Christopher St. Pier
11:15 AM	Sunday Solutions	(C) The LGBTC Center
6:00 PM	Step Meeting –Traditions meeting the last Sunday of each month	(O) ●● The LGBTC Center
6:30 PM	Breaking Good	(O) AIDS Project New Haven, CT
7:30 PM	Beginner's Basics	(C) The LGBTC Center
MONDAY		
7:30 AM	Upon Awakening	(O) Judith Peabody Wellness Center
7:45 AM	Good Morning, Higher Power	(C) GMHC
6:00 PM	Relapse Prevention	(O) The LGBTC Center
8:00 PM	Book Study	(O) Realization Center
8:00 PM	59th Street Bridge Back to Life	(C) 33-11 Broadway, Apt. 3R, Astoria, NY
TUESDAY		
7:30 AM	Upon Awakening	(O) Judith Peabody Wellness Center
7:45 AM	Good Morning, Higher Power	(C) GMHC
7:30 PM	Beginner's Meeting	(O) ●● The LGBTC Center
8:15 PM	Long Term Sobriety	(C) GMHC
WEDNESDAY		
7:30 AM	Upon Awakening	(O) Judith Peabody Wellness Center
7:45 AM	Good Morning, Higher Power	(C) GMHC
6:30 PM	Harlem Renaissance	(C) Ephesus Church
7:45 PM	Solutions in Recovery	(C) The LGBTC Center
8:00 PM	Conscious Contact	(O) The LGBTC Center
THURSDAY		
7:30 AM	Upon Awakening	(O) Judith Peabody Wellness Center
7:45 AM	Good Morning, Higher Power	(C) GMHC
6:30 PM	CMA Agnostics	(C) GMHC
7:00 PM	Brooklyn Bridge Back to Life	(O) Brooklyn Community Pride Center
7:45 PM	It Works!	(C) Golden Hill United Methodist Church Library Bridgeport, CT
8:00 PM	Book Study Meeting	(O) The LGBTC Center
FRIDAY		
7:30 AM	Upon Awakening	(O) Judith Peabody Wellness Center
7:45 AM	Good Morning, Higher Power	(C) GMHC
6:15 PM	Living with HIV	(C) Hudson Guild Fulton Center
7:30 PM	Crystal Clear	(O) ●● The LGBTC Center
8:30 PM	New Tooles	(C) Church of the Holy Apostles
SATURDAY		
9:00 AM	Pier Meeting (May 1–August 31 only)	(C) End of Christopher St. Pier
11:15 AM	Saturday Solutions	(C) ●● The LGBTC Center
1:00 PM	A-1 Uptown Meeting	(C) Holyrood Episcopal Church
5:00 PM	Promises Meeting*	(O) Manhattan Plaza Health Club
8:00 PM	Meditation	(C) The LGBTC Center
9:30 PM	Intimacy, Relationships & Sex in Sobriety	(C) The LGBTC Center

MEETING DETAILS

(O) - Open Meeting (C) - Closed Meeting ●● - 1½ hrs ●● - 1 hr, 15 min. (all other meetings last 1 hr)

* Please be on time for the 10-minute silent meditation at the start of each meeting.

* The last Saturday of each month will be a guided meditation meeting.

DIRECTIONS

- **AIDS Project New Haven** 1302 Chapel St, New Haven, CT 06511
- **Brooklyn Community Pride** 4 Metro Tech Ctr, (on Willoughby St.)
- **Church of The Holy Apostles** 296 Ninth Ave at 28th St.
- **Ephesus Church** 101 West 123rd St.
- **GMHC** 446 W. 33rd St., btw 9th & 10th Av. GMHC pass or photo ID required to enter.
- **Golden Hill United Methodist Church Library** 210 Elm St., Bridgeport, CT 06604

- **Holyrood Episcopal Church** 715 W 179th St. (A or 1 to 181st)
- **Hudson Guild Fulton Center** 119 9th Ave., btw 17th & 18th St.
- **Judith Peabody Wellness Center** David E. Rogers Unit, 53 W 23rd Street, 6th Floor
- **Manhattan Plaza Health Club** 482 West 43rd St.
- **The LGBTC Center** 208 W. 13th St., btw 7th & 8th Av. Check lobby for room info.
- **Realization Center** 25 E. 15th St., 7th Floor
- **33-11 Broadway Astoria, NY** (N/Q to Broadway)

WHAT IS CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS?

Crystal Meth Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other, so they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from addiction to crystal meth. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. There are no dues or fees for CMA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. CMA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; and neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to lead a sober life and to carry the message of recovery to the crystal meth addict who still suffers.

HOW IS CMA DIFFERENT THAN OTHER TWELVE STEP PROGRAMS?

We have found that we relate best to other crystal meth addicts because they understand the darkness, paranoia and compulsions of this particular addiction. The Twelve Steps of CMA were adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous. We do not believe we are better or worse than those in other Twelve Step programs. At the same time, many of us fail to fully identify with “a falling-down drunk” or, in the case of a heroin addict, “a nodding-off junkie.” The hyper-extended length and intensity of crystal meth’s effects, be it compulsive cleaning or sexual activity, were unique. Many of us have attended other Twelve Step programs, but the feeling of identification in the Rooms of CMA has helped us to keep coming back. After all, who but another meth addict understands the insanity that accompanies the high and, finally, that seemingly bottomless drop into depression that makes us desperate to use still more?

Excerpted from the CMA General Service pamphlet titled “What Is Crystal Meth Anonymous?” Copies may be downloaded free of charge at crystalmeth.org.



© 2014, New York Crystal Meth Anonymous. Submissions and Comments: CMA members are encouraged to submit essays and other original nonfiction writing for publication in Crystal Clear. Interested parties may contact a member of the NYCMA Literature Committee or NYCMA Intergroup for more information. Inquiries and comments may also be sent to newsletter@nycma.org. By submitting material for publication, members affirm that it is comprised solely of original content or that references to other works are credited properly. The writer also assumes all liability for any damages that may result from the publication of his or her article. Crystal Meth Anonymous is a Twelve Step fellowship for those with a desire to stop using crystal meth. Crystal Clear is published periodically by NYCMA Inc., a not-for-profit corporation located in New York City. NYCMA, or its designee(s), reserves the right to refuse submissions and to edit them, including for clarity and space and to avoid triggering the reader. Submissions become property of NYCMA. No compensation is paid. According to our Tenth Tradition, NYCMA has no opinions on outside issues. Opinions expressed in articles are solely those of the writers and do not speak for NYCMA as a whole. This policy was created by the NYCMA Literature Committee at the request of NYCMA Intergroup members. We also suggest that writers keep in mind our Eleventh Tradition: “Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films and all other media.” The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of CMA have been adapted with permission from AA World Services Inc. NYCMA is not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous. Visual materials are printed with permission.

NEW YORK CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS

P.O. Box 1517, Old Chelsea Station • New York, New York. 10113