

Hello, I'm Brian and I'm a believer in Jesus as my Higher Power, I am also a recovering Baptist, perfectionist and still recovering from a sexual addiction.

What a privilege to share with you all tonight.

Wibke bravely asked me to share tonight, knowing I am a bit of a "rogue", (those were her words, I think she meant it affectionately).

Along with several other leaders, can we thank Wibke and Don for their leadership in getting this program going? So, I don't necessarily do well "in a box" and my wife can never be sure, what I am going to say. Tonight this teaching is based on Principle 4 and Steps 4 and 5, so let's look at these together.

> **Principle 4**

Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God and to someone I trust.

Happy are the pure in heart.

– Matthew 5:8

> **Step 4**

We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.

– Lamentations 3:40

> **Step 5**

We admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

– James 5:16

Ok, can we view my favorite recovery video together?

If you are struggling with an addiction or for that matter, any Hurt, Habit, or Hangup, I am here to give you the answer! Some of you may have seen this.

We are all looking for someone to FIX us, or give us a simple answer, right?

Well here it is, a simple answer to all your issues! How many of you recognize this?

This is about someone, like me, that does not do well in a box. (Newhart Stop It video).

<https://vimeo.com/281880267>

Ok for those of you who love to fill in the blanks on your handout, I will try to color inside the lines. But first, what is a CR teaching without an acrostic?

This was the one thing Wibke asked me to follow, only to find there was NO acrostic, as you probably know, an acrostic is (a WORD, where each letter represents a word or thought) ... so I made one for us!

> **GAS**

Here is the ONE THING, I want you to remember from this teaching!

Ok who wants to know what GAS stands for?

It's just 3 simple words. I think you will remember it, it's pretty simple, but if you want to write them down ... here they are ...

> **Get A Sponsor**

Tonight's teaching is about the value of getting a sponsor. First, let me tell you about some of my sponsors. I shared briefly, in a previous week, that in November of 1991, I checked myself into a 30 day treatment center for sexual addiction, a very sick 36 year old father of 3 precious boys.

So this week will be 25 years ago, that I got home and was given a phone number of some guy, that somehow became my first sponsor. I can't say I choose him, but it seemed he self appointed himself to become my sponsor. I did not want him to know my name or really anything about me. His name was Ken and he instructed me to my first local 12 step meeting, which I did not want to attend. Let me tell you just a couple stories about Ken ... Prison twice, living in his x's closet. From that first phone call to now, he has loved me like a brother. Ken was at one time a Mormon Priest ... gave me a book of Mormon ... remarried and wanted his marriage sealed for all eternity. He would invite me to his church ... I would invite him to Men's Spiritual Events, he gave me the book of Mormon ... I talked about Grace, Galatians. Saved, Baptized, He has an over 20 year, good marriage ... a good friend.

> **Ken, Ricky, Mike, Dan**

Then there was affirmation Ricky. We met at a SAA retreat and he cared enough to go for a walk, where he invited me to share my story. Always a positive affirmation for himself, others and me. Several of us formed a non-conventional 12 step group of

Christian men and we met for 18 years. Mike was actually my therapist, trained with Patrick Carnes, the founder of SAA and the treatment center I attended. Mike always spoke of grace and that recovery and Christianity are not about performance. He encouraged me to get involved in a church and find another group of men, I did, and 7 of us met for about 7 years, they were all my sponsors, of more accurately my accountability partners. In this group was a guy named Dan, he was often missing or in Pine Rest. I soon got to know him and as I asked questions, I believed the underlying issue to his chronic depression, was sexual addiction. I suppose in ways I sponsored him, as I went to his family and friends and helped him raise the money to get into a treatment center. He later graduated with a Masters, and became a sexual addiction therapist and today we are iron sharpening iron. Now, let's look at your handout, Some people might ask ...

> **#1. Why do I NEED a sponsor?**

By the way, as we think about getting a sponsor, we are going to answer some questions together. This is your first fill in the blank on your Handout: I'll come back to this. First, here are the next few fill in the blanks:

> **#2. Having a sponsor or accountability partner is BIBLICAL ...**

Ecclesiastes says,

> **Vs.** *Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively.*

– Ecclesiastes

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. – Proverbs

Also, there are over 50 mentions of the term “one another” in scripture, guiding us in the importance of encouraging, accepting and loving one another.

Back to our handout,

> **#3. Having a sponsor or accountability partner is a KEY PART of your recovery program.**

> **#4. Having a sponsor or accountability partner is the best guard against RELAPSE.**

Now, one thought on our first question: Why do we need a sponsor?

Think about it! Let's say you're dying of a heart attack, and asking, "why do I need a doctor?" Or you are lost in the wilderness, asking, "why do I need a guide?"

A sponsor is a guide, a mentor, a coach. Again, I'm going to come back to this question, at the end.

A sponsor once told me, my best choices, got me where I was at. Sobering thought.

What is our one word for tonight? **GAS.**

Now ... your next fill in the blank:

> **#5. What are the QUALITIES of a sponsor?**

- First of all, there are No perfect sponsors. Just GET A SPONSOR.
- Someone who is willing and available. And don't take a "no" as personal rejection.
- Someone who is further along the journey of recovery than you. A guide, a mentor, someone desirous of helping you. In Christian terms, we are making disciples. Older men teaching, younger men, older women teaching ...
- In CR, a growing believer in Jesus. One who understands, grace and God's unconditional love. And, ideally someone who has been through the CR step study books. Someone ...
- Empathetic. Ideally someone with the same addiction. Someone compassionate, with strong personal boundaries. Able to challenge and confront you, in a loving nonjudgmental way.
- Vulnerable and transparent about their own struggles. Again, remember there are no perfect sponsor. They may even disappoint you. Your next fill in the blank:

> **#6. What is the ROLE of a sponsor?**

Someone:

- Willing to take time to listen and get to know your story. Available in crisis or potential relapse.
- Able to give feedback and opinions, without trying to fix, control or be too opinionated.
- Encourages you to attend meetings and work the steps. Willing to listen to your 4th step. That being, your 5th step.
- Attempts to lead by example, and is working their own program.
- Can be fired or resign at any time. All of life has seasons, relationships, sponsors ...

> **#7. How do I FIND a Sponsor?**

- Keep coming back. Get involved.
- Consider who you might relate to and possibly respect.
- Same sex. Or if you struggle with “same sex attraction” you will want someone who you respect, that is not “triggering.”
- A favorite of mine, Ask, seek, knock. It is your responsibility to find a sponsor. Remember gas, Get a Sponsor.
- Again, don’t take a no as personal rejection. That just might not be the person for you, at this time.
- Most importantly, ask God to direct you. Pray about it. Then ask someone.

Your last fill in the blank, #8: The paper reads,

> **#8. What is the difference between a sponsor and an ACCOUNTABILITY partner?**

Well our emphasis has been, GAS, Get a Sponsor!
And we have been talking about their qualities and role. But quickly ...

- An accountability partner is more of a peer, a friend, a group member. It takes a village or a TEAM to get recovery over addiction.
- We can't do it alone. Proverbs says, there is wisdom in a multitude of counsel.

Some Accountability partner Qualities?

- Caring and available.
- Walking a similar journey. Someone who will ask tough questions and allow you to do the same.
- Someone sharing your desires and goals to get recovery and get healthy.
- Someone with shared accountability plans and willing to followup with one another ... Iron sharpening iron.

Now here is a statement I added, not on your handout. But I think an important one.

> What a Sponsor is NOT.

Just a few thoughts for us ... a sponsor is not ...

- Responsible for your recovery. Only you are.
- Responsible to call you. You call your sponsor as needed!
- Necessarily a forever friend. May be for a short period of time.
- Someone to become dependent on.

Now, in summary, let's go back to Question #1, **Why do I need a sponsor?**

Here are my ideas about the need for a sponsor, the importance of GAS. Get a Sponsor!

This could be the missing ingredient in all our recovery. **HUMILITY**. Think about it ... Asking for help, asking for a sponsor, admitting you might even need a sponsor! Therefore, here is my humility list ...

Real Men/Women: Admit They ... OR You could say... broken people admit they ... wise persons ... seekers ... hungry people ... humble people ... people who have hit bottom ... I stuck with Real Men and Real Women, ADMIT THEY ...

Real Men/Women: Admit They Need a Sponsor! Ok, got it, And...

Real Men/Women: Admit They Have a problem and need a sponsor ... because they are powerless to overcome their addiction, powerless when in their addiction, powerless when ALONE. No one acts out, when in healthy community.

Real Men/Women: Admit They Have weaknesses... needs.

Real Men/Women: Admit They Have feelings and emotions. That a sponsor can help them process.

What are feelings guys? Right? Not to stereotype, but, Sometimes I think this one is more difficult for men. But I'm sure this is difficult for some women too. Learning to identify and deal with our feelings and emotions, in healthy ways, is part of our recovery.

Real Men/Women: Admit They Have hurts and wounds. And that healing from them, requires a sponsor, a TEAM, a community, a village.

Typically we all, so try to hide them. I grew up in church and home, where the norm was concealing, not confessing ... I'm fine, your fine, we're all fine. Don't let anyone know.

Real Men/Women: Admit They Need Help, from a sponsor and become willing to receive help.

Sometimes it is easier to give help than receive help.

Real Men/Women: Ask for help, from their sponsor ... Anyone struggle with that? Here's a good one ...

Real Men/Women: Make phone calls. To their sponsor and accountability partners.

Surprising how few of guys, take advantage of my offer to welcome their calls.

This is something I became good at ... and it was easier for me, in my new marriage, to call a guy in my group, than it was to process difficult times with my wife.

Real Men/Women: Go to weekly meetings and not just for the first year ... for a lifetime! Many benefit from going to several meetings a week.

Heard of the AA, 90 in 90?

Real Men/Women: Admit when they fail. Step 10, says, continued to take personal inventory and when wrong, promptly admitted it.

Real Men/Women: Never give up. Never quit quitting.

How many times have you failed and felt like giving up on recovery?

So what did you take away from this teaching?

If people ask you **what you got** from Monday night's teaching, what will you tell them?

> **GAS**

So in conclusion ... **Get a Sponsor!**

Build your Team. You can't do it alone.

Thanks for letting me share, now go ask someone to be your sponsor!