Some General Suggestions for New Sponsors

1. Sponsor your experience: bingers, anorexics, bulimics, restrictors, gender.

2. Don’t expect success; and don’t fear failure. We do 12th step work to give what we have, so we can keep what we have been given. We’re not sponsoring or telling our story to newcomers to get them abstinent, nor to keep them in the program. We sponsor to keep what we have. This is the right motive. This motive will keep our pride out of the way and prevent many heartaches and disappointments when some of our sponsees choose not to accept the gift of the program.

3. Share your program. Keep the time on the phone program oriented. Don’t allow social conversations to override our need to carry the message. It’s important that the newcomer realize we’re where we are because of the program.

4. Remember we are sharing our own experience. Don’t give professional advice. We’re not doctors, therapists, clergymen or family counselors. When people ask for such advice, guide them to the people who are competent to give it. Don’t in egotistical vanity, give it yourself. The only thing we have to give is our experience in the program.

5. Don’t avoid or apologize for HP when we’re first explaining the program and our experience to newcomers. Remember Appendix 2 of the Big Book that describes spiritual awakening as personality change sufficient to bring about recovery. Emphasize that the problem and the solution are physical, emotional and spiritual.

6. Don’t make promises. The only thing we know for certain is that if someone follows the program sincerely, they will stay abstinent and find recovery. Initial abstinence from the numbing effect of compulsive overeating may mean feeling more pain. But as long as they are working the program completely, they can remain abstinent and serene in spite of problems.

7. Share your struggle if you struggle. Don’t allow yourself to be put on a pedestal. Let your sponsee know that the disease is arrested, not cured and that you are only one bite away. Point out that you are only an instrument of a higher power.

8. Don’t be selling – or dictating – instead of sharing your experience to date in the program. *Tell them what happened to you*. We all know our own story very well. We share up to where we are in the program.

9. Don’t sponsor too many people. One may be enough for some; three or four may be okay for others. We should sponsor only that number to whom we can give the full benefit of our sponsorship. As people of extremes beware of burning yourself out twelve-stepping. We can overdo it by taking ourselves away from our family too often or wearing ourselves out to the point of setting ourselves up to eat again. The OA 12 step program can be the foundation for our life, but it is the program that frees us to live our life.

10. If you give the program as it is written, you will be giving your newcomers a great gift, while at the same time holding on to the gift that the program has given you.

11. Don’t predict who will make it, and who will not. It’s impossible to know. Anyone can make it that follows the program sincerely, no matter what their background, their program, or the circumstances of their life. All that’s needed is willingness to take the actions.