Big Book Sponsorship — the Step Twelve guide

> *"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!"* — ◆ BB p.89 ¶1

This is one sponsor's working kit for taking a new man through the Twelve Steps out of the Big Book — from the first phone call to the day he sponsors someone himself. It is built around the **AA 12-Step Packet** (six assignments, five meetings, the way Joe McF runs them), with the Book's own passages as the spine, the Big Book Awakening sheets for the inventory, and a sheet to hand him at every meeting. Every Big Book line in it is the Book's wording, and every citation opens the Book at the page and paragraph it names.

Read it top to bottom once. Then it is a path: find the meeting you are in, and the pieces for it are listed there.

The path

Stage	What happens	Read	Hand him
Before you meet	Decide what you are for and what the approach looks like; have the pitch ready.	The Sponsor's Guide — *The Sponsor's Job*; Joe McF's outline — *how he sponsors*	▤ **The Twelve Steps in Ten Minutes**
Meeting #1 · Steps 0 & 1	Stories first. Qualify both directions: what alcoholism is, the cycle, the log and loser list, the mental obsession. He convinces himself. The agreement.	First meeting runsheet · The mental obsession, with a sponsee · Steps 0–3, the Joe McF way	The AA 12-Step Packet, Assignment #1: read xi–43, find the four things, Visualizations I · ▤ **First Meeting agreement** · My Cycle · Log & Loser List
The decision call	Twenty-four hours. He calls with a yes or a no. Nobody pushes.	The Sponsor's Guide — *Step Zero*	—
Meeting #2 · Steps 2 & 3 prepared	Steps One, Two and Three discussed out of the packet; the spiritual experience; a life run on self-will; the abandonment list dictated one line at a time.	Steps 2 & 3 runsheet · Step 3 in plain talk	Packet, Assignment #2 and #3 · ▤ **The Abandonment List** · ▤ **The Third Step Prayer**
Meeting #3 · Step 3 taken	He calls when he is ready. The prayer, on our knees. Then at once into Step Four — the sheets laid out, a date set for the Fifth Step.	Packet, Meeting #3 and Assignment #4	The Fourth Step sheets in the packet, and the Step Four guide for the long form

Stage	What happens	Read	Hand him
Step Four	The inventory: resentments through the seven areas of self and the fourth column, fears, sex conduct, the sane and sound ideal.	The Step Four guide — every column, worked examples, printable sheets	—
Meeting #4 · Step 5	Listen to the Fifth Step; write down the defects as he reads. Then the quiet hour, Steps Six and Seven, the Seventh Step Prayer.	The Sponsor's Guide — *Steps Five, Six & Seven*	▤ **The Fifth Step — session guide** · Defects of character · ▤ **The Seventh Step Prayer, daily**
Meeting #5 · Steps 8 & 9	Discuss what is left of the Fourth Step; Steps Six and Seven out of the Book; the amends list; Steps Eight through Twelve laid out. Visualizations II.	Packet, Meeting #5 and Assignment #6 · The Sponsor's Guide — *Steps Eight & Nine*	▤ **The Amends List** · Relationships & family — the Book's passages
Steps 10, 11, 12	The way of living: the spot check through the day, the nightly review and the morning, and work with others — now he carries this packet to someone else.	Big Book Sponsorship, passage by passage — Steps 10–12 · Joe McF's outline — Steps Ten to Twelve · Fishing	▤ **Step Ten — Watch · Ask · Discuss · Turn** · ▤ **Step Eleven — the nightly review** · ▤ **Daily visualizations & prayers**

The spine: three documents

- **The AA 12-Step Packet** — the sponsee's packet, transcribed and reset: the first meeting checklist, Assignment #1 (read page xi to page 43 and find the four things that will not keep you sober), Visualizations I, Meeting #1 on the problem, **the Mental Obsession** and **the Cycle of Addiction** where the packet had its Power of Choice diagram, the solution and the two diagrams, Steps Two and Three, **the Abandonment List** in whole,

Step Three taken, **the Big Book Awakening Fourth Step sheets** (the seven areas, the fourth column, fear, sex conduct, the 20-10-5 ideal), Meetings #4 and #5, Visualizations II, the amends list. Twenty pages; print it from the PDF. What changed from the packet's print, and every place the print differed from the Book, is in the transcription notes.

- **Big Book Sponsorship: the Twelve Step Program** — the whole program passage by passage, Step 0 to Step 12, in the Book's words with the sponsor's questions beside each line (*Is this your experience — yes/no?*). The reference the runsheets lean on.
- **The Sponsor's Guide** — the 24-page runbook that consolidates all of the above: the ten-minute pitch, the sponsor's job, Step Zero, the agreement, every Step with its assignments, the prayers, the map and the meetings. Built in two cadences, ▤ two meetings and ▤ three meetings; the three-meeting cadence is the packet's.

Beside the spine, an aside: *Are You a Bit Fucked?* — the Steps in everyday language. A second set of questions for each Step, put the way a friend in a bar would put them, for when the Book's words are not landing. Dr. Bob's "he talked my language" (◆ BB p.180 ¶2) is the reason for it. The runbook links each Step to its questions (*In his language →*), and a sponsor's note marks each place where they lean away from the Book. Since 2026-10-28 it is also a printed sheet, everyday language (11 pp.), with *The Book, question by question* under each Step's questions — the Book's own line for each question number, so the way back to the page is on the sheet. The room copy for H&I, Bruce's seven questions with the Book behind each, is `recovery/h-and-i/the-steps-in-everyday-language.md`; the word is starred there, not here.

The meetings, one runsheet each

- New prospect — the first meeting, Steps 0 & 1: stories first, what this is and isn't, the circle and triangle, the disease and the cycle, qualification, the two paths, the agreements, the twenty-four-hour decision.
- Steps 0–3, the Joe McF way: the through-line from first contact to a taken Third Step in three meetings and four assignments, with the packet's assignments and Joe's lines for the room.

- Step One — the mental obsession, with a sponsee: the session that gives examples of the mental obsession — the four sentences the head says, a man from the Book for each, and where the defense comes from.
- Steps 2 & 3 — the sponsee meeting: the bridge from the problem to the Power, Step Two's one question, Step Three taken together, and the grudge list started.
- Step 3 — plain talk: quit trying to run the show, at a sixth-grade reading level, for the man who freezes at the word God.

Step One in depth

- Cycle of Addiction — the Doctor's Opinion paragraph drawn as a circle, and the *My Cycle* worksheet. Print.
- My Log & Loser List — the easier, softer ways that failed, and the losses. Print.
- ▤ The Mental Obsession — the crux of the problem — the H&I readings sheet the packet's two pages are trimmed from: the four disguises, a man for each, and what will not keep you sober.
- ▤ The Foundation Meeting — the Primary Purpose Group's script as a study guide: what alcoholism is, what the solution is, page xx and the book's own lines; with its two companions, ▤ the script word for word and ▤ Recovery Statistics, the script's numbers drilled.
- ▤ The Promises, Read Backwards — qualifying the spiritual malady: what the drug of no-choice did for me first.
- ▤ Two Diagrams — the loss of the power of choice, and what the Twelve Steps do.

Steps Two and Three

- ▤ The Abandonment List — would I give control of this to God? A readiness check, not a promise; the *not yet* column goes straight into Step Four.
- ▤ The Third Step Prayer — the surrender at the heart of Step Three, on one sheet.

Step Four

The inventory has its own guide: **Step Four with the Big Book Awakening workbook** — Columns 1 and 2, the seven areas of self, the fourth column and the Realization, the fear inventory, the sex inventory and the sane and sound ideal, with worked examples, a plain-language track and every printed sheet. The packet carries the one-sheet versions of the same material for the man who is doing it the first time.

Steps Five through Nine

- ▤ The Fifth Step — session guide & defects of character — how the sponsor hears it, and the list he writes as the sponsee reads.
- Defects of character — the checklist — the Third and Seventh Step prayers, then the inventory of causes and conditions against the spiritual principles to strive for.
- ▤ The Seventh Step Prayer — a daily practice .
- ▤ Step Eight — the amends list .
- Relationships & family — Big Book passages — the actor running the show, the family afterward, and the amends that are lived at home.

Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve

- ▤ Step Ten — Watch · Ask · Discuss · Turn — the spot check through the day, RADS, PARS, the written tenth step.
- ▤ Step Eleven — the nightly review — the twelve questions in the Book's wording, with a worksheet page; the morning reading is in the daily readings.
- Fishing — finding sponsees — Dr. Bob's answer when the men did not call back, from *He Sold Himself Short*.
- Joe McF's outline — Steps 1–3, 10–12, and how he sponsors — the two ends of the program the way he takes a man through them, one line per move with the passage linked. Print.

The daily routine

- ▤ Daily Visualizations & Prayers — the routine — out loud, four times a day, until it is habit: Visualizations I from Assignment #1, II from Assignment #6, the two packet prayers and the Book's.
- ▤ Affirmations — the sponsee's copy: I with the two-numbers item, a Step Two set, II, the Third Step Prayer. ▤ One page : Affirmations I alone.

The other packets

- ▤ Sponsorship Workshop 2024 — Relevant Recovery — the workshop packet transcribed, sixteen pages: the first meeting, the Cycle of Addiction, Step Two's stepwork notebook, the Big Book Awakening Step Four sheets (this guide's Fourth Step pages come from here), Steps 5–8 in a day, the amends process, Steps Ten through Twelve.
- The AA Beginners Classes booklet sits in the folder as a scan, `aa-beginners-classes.pdf`, for reference.

Sources and provenance

The **AA 12-Step Packet** is an eighteen-page Big Book sponsorship packet of the kind Joe McF hands a new man (the scan is `aa-12-step-packet.scan.pdf`); its Book passages were checked against the text and the differences listed. **Joe McF** is Joe McFadden, whose way of taking a man through the Steps runs through the Tim M transcript corpus — the June 2020 online workshop with Tim M, the 2026 *Keep On Tookin'* sponsorship session, the Red Room round-up — and whose lines in the runsheets link to the moment they were said. The **Big Book Awakening** Step Four sheets are the August 2006 workbook's, as the Relevant Recovery workshop reprinted them. The **Foundation Meeting** is the Primary Purpose Group of Dallas's script. The **Big Book Sponsorship** guide follows bigbooksponsorship.org's twelve-steps-in-four-hours outline. The statistics quoted for sponsoring others are from Crape, Latkin, Laris and Knowlton (2002), read whole in *Recovery Statistics*. Every Big Book page number is the Fourth Edition's.

From the Big Book sponsorship guide at bigbook.it/step-12/ · a page of the guide; the Book's own text, page for page, is at bigbook.it/bb/. · source README.md