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The Twelve Step guide maps
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TWELVE STEPS

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) started in 1935 in Akron, Ohio, as a result of the meeting between a New York stockbroker and an Akron surgeon who were both hopeless alcoholics. They realized that alcoholism was a disease that could be treated by a system of applying spiritual values to daily living. Both men began working with themselves and with other alcoholics. In four years, there were three groups and 100 sober alcoholics. In 1939, based on their experiences (both the failures and the successes), the fellowship published its basic textbook, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, describing the AA philosophy and methods, and establishing the Twelve Steps. This book has been in continuous publication since then. Although it has been revised and updated, the Twelve Steps have remained the core, touching the lives of a countless number of people around the world.

Shortly after the founding of AA, the families and friends of alcoholics banded together to form AL-ANON, an organization that teaches the Twelve Steps to individuals who are most affected by the alcoholics in their lives. Since then, other groups have adopted the AA philosophy and successfully applied it to many problems. There are, for example, Twelve Step groups addressing drug abuse (such as Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, Crystal Meth Anonymous), support for substance abusers’ family and friends (such as AL-ANON, AL-ATEEN, NARC-ANON, Co-dependents Anonymous), other addictive problems (such as Debtors Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Workaholics Anonymous, Eating Addictions Anonymous, and Overeaters Anonymous), relationship issues (such as Incest Survivors Anonymous, Relationships Anonymous, and Parents Anonymous), as well as mental health issues (such as Obsessive-Compulsive Anonymous, and Emotions Anonymous).

1. We admitted we were powerless over ________ - that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

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

6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of characters.

7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. We 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 fellow sufferers of ________, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.
Step 1 maps

We admitted we were powerless over _____________ (our problem area)- that our lives had become unmanageable.
STEP 1. We admitted we were powerless over __________________-- that our lives had become unmanageable.

We **ADMITTED**

We were **POWERLESS**

Over

This is what admitted means to me.

This is what powerless means to me.

These are my problem areas (i.e., drugs, relationships, and other living problems).

--that our lives had become **UNMANAGEABLE**

This is what unmanageable means to me.

Def = Definition

Adapted from an original design by Marilyn Pugh, Ph.D
Department of Psychology
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Fort Worth, Texas, 1994
STEP 1. We admitted we were powerless over _________________ -- that our lives had become unmanageable.

We were powerless over

These are my problem areas (i.e., drugs, relationships, and other living problems.)

This is what this phrase means to me.

Here are some times that let me know that I am powerless.

This is how being powerless makes me feel.

This is a picture that shows how I feel about being powerless. (Draw or describe.)
STEP 1. We admitted we were powerless over______________________—that our lives had
become unmanageable.

Our lives had become unmanageable.

Def

This is what this phrase means to me.

Ex

There are some ways in which my life is unmanageable.

C

This is how I feel when my life is unmanageable.

C

This is a picture that shows how I feel about having an unmanageable life. (Draw or describe.)
STEP 1. We admitted we were powerless over __________________ -- that our lives had become unmanageable.

This is how I would say this in my own words.

This is who I have admitted my powerlessness and unmanageability to.

This is how I do or will feel about admitting my powerlessness and unmanageability.

This is a picture that shows how admitting it feels or will feel to me. (Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition   L = Leads to   C = Characteristic
Step 2 maps

We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
STEP 2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

We came to **BELIEVE** that a power greater than ourselves

This is what **believe** means to me.

could **RESTORE** us to **SANITY**.

This is what **restore** means to me.

This is what **sanity** means to me.
STEP 2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

We came to believe

This is what this phrase means to me.

This is how I come to believe something.

These are three things I believe.
1.
2.
3.

This is how I came to believe each one.

Def = Definition
Ex = Example
C = Characteristic
STEP 2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

**a power greater than ourselves**

- Def
  - This is what this phrase means to me.
  - These are some powers greater than me that could help me with my problems.
  - This is how a greater power could help me.
  - This is how it would feel to have a greater power helping me.

Def = Definition
C = Characteristic
STEP 2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could **restore us to sanity**.

**restore us to sanity**

- **Def**
  - This is what this phrase means to me.

- **Ex**
  - These are some times when I have been restored to sanity.

- **C**
  - This is what it feels like or will feel like to get my sanity back.

**Legend:**
- Def = Definition
- Ex = Example
- C = Characteristic
STEP 2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Def

This is how I would say this step in my own words.

These are the parts of the step I accept.

This is how it feels or will feel to accept this step.

This is a picture that shows how accepting this step feels or will feel to me. (Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition
C = Characteristic
Step 3 maps

We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.
STEP 3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

We made a **DECISION** to turn our **WILL** and our **LIVES**

This is what decision means to me.

This is what will means to me.

This is what life means to me.

Over to the **CARE** of **GOD** as we understood him.

This is what care means to me.

This is what God means to me.

Def. = definition
STEP 3. Map 2 of 5

STEP 3. **We made a decision** to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

**We made a decision**

1. This is what this phrase means to me.
2. These are some important decisions I have made.
3. This is how I usually make an important decision.
4. These are pictures that show how I feel while I'm making a decision and how I feel afterwards. (Draw or describe.)

**Def** = Definition  **Ex** = Example  **C** = Characteristic
STEP 3. We made a decision **to turn our will and our lives over to** the care of God as we understood Him.

**to turn our will and our lives**

- **Def**: This is what this phrase means to me.
- **Ex**: This is who or what I have turned (or will turn) my will over to.
- **C**: This is how I turned (or will turn) my life over to someone or something.
- **C**: This is a picture that shows how I feel (or will feel) about turning my life over to someone or something.

*Draw or describe.*
STEP 3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

the care of God as we understood Him.

Def

This is what this phrase means to me.

Ex

This is what I think God is like.

C

This is how God takes care of me (or could take care of me).

C

This is a picture that shows how I feel (or would feel) while being taken care of by God. (Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition  Ex = Example  C = Characteristic
STEP 3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

This is how I would say this step in my own words.

This is how I have made (or will make) the decision to turn over my will and life.

This is when I made (or will make) this decision.

This is a picture that shows how I will feel having made this decision. (Draw or describe.)
Step 4 maps

We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
STEP 4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

We made a **SEARCHING** and **FEARLESS**

This is what *searching* means to me.

This is what *fearless* means to me.

**MORAL**

This is what *moral* means to me.

**INVENTORY**

of ourselves

This is what *inventory* means to me.

Def = Definition
STEP 4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

We made a searching and fearless ....inventory

This is what this phrase means to me.

These are some times when I have worked hard and long at trying to figure out something about myself.

These are some times when I have been fearless in thinking about who I am.

This is a picture that shows how I feel when I am fearlessly looking at my good and bad points. (Draw or describe.)
STEP 4. We made a searching and fearless **moral inventory of ourselves**.

This is how I would say this in my own words.

These are the steps I will take to make a moral inventory.

These are some of the things I will have to overcome to make a moral inventory.

These are pictures of how I will feel about myself while I'm making a moral inventory and after I have completed it.

(Draw or describe.)
STEP 4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Def

This is how I would say this in my own words.

These are some of the good things about me.

These are some of the bad things about me.

This is a picture of how I am feeling about myself right now. (Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition   L = Leads to
We admitted to God, ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
STEP 5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

We **ADMITTED** to **GOD** to ourselves, and to another human being

This is what **admitted** means to me.

This is what **God** means to me.

the **EXACT NATURE** of our **WRONGS**.

This is what **exact nature** means to me.

This is what **wrongs** means to me.

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

STEP 5: We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

This is a picture of how I will feel after I have admitted something to God.
(Draw or describe.)

This is how I would admit something to God.
(Draw or describe.)

This is what this phrase means to me.

Def = Definition
L = Leads to
C = Characteristic

Mapping Your Steps
STEP 5. *We admitted* to God, *to ourselves*, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

**We admitted.... to ourselves,**

1. This is what this phrase means to me.
2. This is how I would admit something to myself.
3. This is a picture of how I would feel admitting something to myself. (Draw or describe.)
4. This is a picture of how I will feel after I have admitted something to myself. (Draw or describe.)

---

*Def* = Definition  
*L* = Leads to  
*C* = Characteristic
STEP 5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

We admitted.... to another human being

1. This is what this phrase means to me.
2. This is how I would admit something to another human being.
3. This is a picture of how I would feel admitting something to another human being. (Draw or describe.)
4. This is a picture of how I will feel after I have admitted something to another human being. (Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition  L = Leads to  C = Characteristic
STEP 5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being **the exact nature of our wrongs**.

---

**Def**

This is what this phrase means to me.

**Ex**

These are some of my specific wrongs.

**C**

This is a picture of how I feel about my wrongs.

(Draw or describe.)
STEP 5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

This is how I would say this in my own words.

These are the steps I will take to admit my wrongs.

This is a picture of how I will feel after admitting my wrongs. (Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition  L = Leads to  C = Characteristic
Step 6 maps

We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
STEP 6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

This is what entirely ready means to me.

This is what remove means to me.

This is what defects means to me.

This is what character means to me.

Def = Definition
STEP 6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

We were entirely ready

1. Def
   This is what this phrase means to me.

2. Ex
   These are some times I have been entirely ready for something to happen.

3. C
   These are some ways I get myself entirely ready.

Def = Definition  Ex = Example  C = Characteristic
STEP 6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

These are some ways God might remove something from me.

These are some reasons why God might remove something from me.

This is what this phrase means to me.
STEP 6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

This is what this phrase means to me.

These are some of my defects of character.

This is a picture of how my defects of character make me feel.
(Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition  Ex = Example  C = Characteristic.
STEP 6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

This is how I would say this step in my own words.

These are the steps I have taken or will take to get ready to have God remove all my defects of character.

This is a picture of how I will feel after God has removed all my defects of character.

(Draw or describe.)
Step 7 maps

We humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.
STEP 7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

1. We **HUMBLY** asked
   - This is what humbly means to me.

2. **HIM**
   - This is what Him (God) means to me.

3. to **REMOVE** our
   - This is what remove means to me.

4. **SHORTCOMINGS**
   - This is what shortcomings means to me.
STEP 7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

We humbly asked Him

This is what this phrase means to me.

This is how I would humbly ask Him for something.

This is a picture of how it feels to be humble.
(Draw or describe.)
STEP 7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

This is what this phrase means to me.

These are some of my shortcomings.

This is a picture of how my shortcomings make me feel.
(Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition  Ex = Example  C = Characteristic
STEP 7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

This is how I would say this step in my own words.

These are the ways I will ask Him to remove my shortcomings.

This is a picture of how I will feel after my shortcomings have been removed.
(Draw or describe.)
Step 8 maps

We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
STEP 8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

We made a **LIST** of all persons we had **HARMED,** and

This is what **list** means to me.

This is what **harmed** means to me.

became **WILLING** to make **AMENDS** to them all.

This is what **willing** means to me.

This is what **amends** means to me.

Def = Definition
STEP 8. Map 2 of 4

STEP 8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

We made a list of all persons we had harmed,

- This is what this phrase means to me.
- These are some of the people I have harmed.
- This is a picture of how thinking about people I have harmed makes me feel.
  (Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition    Ex = Example    C = Characteristic
STEP 8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

became willing to make amends to them all.

Def

This is what this phrase means to me.

Ex

This is how I will become willing to make amends.

C

This is a picture of how I feel about making amends.
(Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition  Ex = Example  C = Characteristic
STEP 8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

This is how I will get myself ready to make amends.

This is how I will make a complete list of people I have harmed.

This is how I would say this step in my own words.
Step 9 maps

We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
STEP 9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

We made **DIRECT AMENDS** to such people **WHEREVER POSSIBLE,**

This is what direct amends means to me. This is what wherever possible means to me.

Except when to do so would **INJURE** them or **OTHERS**

This is what injure means to me. This is what others means to me.
STEP 9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

We made direct amends to such people wherever possible

This is what this phrase means to me.

These are some ways I can make amends to the people I have wronged.

This is a picture of how I will feel after making amends to them. (Draw or describe.)
STEP 9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, **except when to do so would injure them or others.**

**except when to do so would injure them or others.**

This is what this phrase means to me.

This is an example of how I could injure someone while trying to make amends.

This is another example of how I could injure someone while trying to make amends.

**Def**

**Ex**

Def = Definition  Ex = Example
STEP 9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Def

This is how I would say this step in my own words.

This is how I plan to carry out this step.

This is a picture of how I will feel after I have made amends to everyone.
(Draw or describe.)
Step 10 maps

We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
STEP 10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

We CONTINUED to take PERSONAL INVENTORY and when

This is what continued means to me.

This is what personal inventory means to me.

we were WRONG, PROMPTLY ADMITTED it.

This is what wrong means to me.

This is what promptly admitted means to me.
STEP 10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

We continued to take personal inventory

Def

This is what this phrase means to me.

This is how I plan to continue taking my personal inventory.

This is a picture of how I will feel about continuing to take my personal inventory. (Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition  L = Leads to  C = Characteristic
STEP 10. Map 3 of 4

STEP 10. We continued to take personal inventory and **when we were wrong promptly admitted it.**

**when we were wrong promptly admitted it.**

Def

This is what this phrase means to me.

Ex

These are examples of some things I would promptly admit.

L

This is **who** I would admit it to.

Def = Definition  Ex = Example  L = Leads to
STEP 10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Def
This is how I would say this step in my own words.

This is how I will do this step.

This is a picture of how I will feel doing this step.
(Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition  L = Leads to
Step 11 maps

We 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.
STEP 11. We 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.

We sought through **PRAYER** and **MEDITATION** to improve our **CONSCIOUS CONTACT**

1. This is what prayer means to me.
2. This is what meditation means to me.
3. This is what conscious contact means to me.

with God as we understood Him, praying only for

**KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL** for us and the **POWER** to carry them out.

4. This is what knowledge of His will means to me.
5. This is what power means to me.

**Def** = Definition
STEP 11. We 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 it out.

We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God was we understood Him,

This is what this phrase means to me.

This is an example of a prayer or meditation.

This is a picture of how it feels to pray or meditate. (Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition    L = Leads to    C = Characteristic
STEP 11. Map 3 of 4

STEP 11. We 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.**

**praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**

Def

This is what this phrase means to me.

Ex

This is an example of something God wants me to do.

L

This is the power I will need to carry it out.

Def = Definition     Ex = Example     L = Leads to
STEP 11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God and we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

This is how I would say this step in my own words.

This is how I will do this step.

This is a picture of how I will feel doing this step.
(Draw or describe.)
Step 12 maps

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to fellow sufferers of ___________ (the problem area), and to practice these principles in all our affairs.
STEP 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to fellow sufferers of ____________ and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Having had **SPIRITUAL AWAKENING** as the result of these steps, we tried to

This is what spiritual awakening means to me.

**CARRY THIS MESSAGE** to fellow sufferers of ____________ (my problem area)

This is what carry this message means to me.

This is what fellow sufferers of _________ means to me.

and to **PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES** in **ALL OUR AFFAIRS**.

This is what practice these principles means to me.

This is what all our affairs means to me.
STEP 12. **Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps**, we tried to carry this message to fellow sufferers of ____________, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

(*my problem area*)

**Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps,**

1. **Def**
   - This is what this phrase means to me.

2. **Ex**
   - These are parts of a spiritual awakening.

3. **Ex**
   - This is a picture of how it feels to be spiritually awakened.
   - (Draw or describe.)

---

Def = Definition  Ex = Example
STEP 12. Map 3 of 5

STEP 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, **we tried to carry this message to fellow sufferers of** ____________________________, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

We tried to carry this message to fellow sufferers of ____________________________.

(This is my problem area)

This is what this phrase means to me.

This is an example of how I can carry the message to fellow sufferers of ____________________________.

(Draw or describe.)

This is a picture of how it feels to carry the message to fellow sufferers of ____________________________.

Def = Definition  Ex = Example
STEP 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to fellow sufferers of __________________________, and **to practice these principles in all our affairs.**

**to practice these principles in all our affairs.**

- **This is what this phrase means to me.**
- **These are examples of how I can practice these principles in all my affairs.**
- **This is a picture of how it will feel to practice these principles in all my affairs.**

(Draw or describe.)
STEP 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to fellow sufferers of ________________, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. (my problem area)

Def

This is how I would say this step in my own words.

This is how I will do this step.

This is a picture of how I will feel doing this step. (Draw or describe.)

Def = Definition  L = Leads to
THE PEAK OF SOBRIETY
We maintain our gains and help others.

Step 10       Step 11      Step 12
We made amends to people we have hurt.

Step 8   Step 9
We admitted and asked for help with our shortcomings.

Step 4            Step 5       Step 6          Step 7
We committed to a “Higher Power” for help.

Step 2       Step 3
We understood and admitted our dilemma.

Step 1
DEPTHS OF DELUSION AND DESPAIR

P = Parts of
L = Leads to
Mapping Your Steps
Discussion Topics for the *Twelve Steps* Maps

Discussions about completed maps can consolidate the information and insights gained from this process. We have included here some general questions that could follow each set of Step maps, as well as some specific questions about each of the *Twelve Steps*. The format of the discussion is up to you; these are just a few ideas.

**General Questions:**

- How did doing these maps make you feel?
- Does doing the maps help you accomplish the Step? What do you need to do in addition to accomplish the Step?
- Share any new insights you have gained on the meaning or use of this Step or the *Twelve Steps*, in general.
- How can I use what I have learned to work on the Steps?

**Specific Questions about the *Twelve Steps***:

**Step 1 Questions:**

- What are other situations in your life that have made you feel powerless?
- What have you done to deal with them?
- Would the *Twelve Steps* help in these situations?
Specific Questions about the *Twelve Steps* (cont.):

**Step 2 Questions:**

- Does a “power greater than ourselves” have to mean the same thing to you as it does to the person sitting next to you?
- Does this mean you are not responsible for your own sanity? Or are you responsible for your own sanity?

**Step 3 Questions:**

- Since this is a big decision, think of other big decisions in your life and how you dealt with them. How is this decision similar? How is this decision different?
- How are you going to know when you have really made this decision?
- What will you do differently?

**Step 4 Questions:**

- How has the word “moral” been used in your life up to now?
- Is it hard to think of the bad things about yourself? How about the good things?
- How will I know when my moral inventory is done? How will I know if it is accurate?

**Step 5 Questions:**

- What things are you worried about if you admit things? To yourself? To God? To another person?
- Who is it more difficult to admit things to? Why?
Specific Questions about the *Twelve Steps* (cont.):

**Step 6 Questions:**
- Why do you need God to remove your defects?
- Are you *entirely ready* to have all your defects removed?

**Step 7 Questions:**
- Why do you need to ask “humbly”? How does this make you feel?

**Step 8 Questions:**
- Do you really feel like you have harmed others? Or do you feel it was not your fault?
- Can you become willing to make amends to people you have harmed even if you don’t like them or they have treated you badly?

**Step 9 Questions:**
- Does making amends mean you have to be forgiven? What if some of the people you make amends to won’t forgive you?
- How can you tell if making amends will harm someone?

**Step 10 Questions:**
- Does this mean you have to monitor yourself all the time? Is this going to take the fun out of life?
- Who should you admit it to when you are wrong? Yourself? God? The person involved?
Specific Questions about the *Twelve Steps* (cont.):

**Step 11 Questions:**
- Do you know how to pray? Do you know how to meditate? If not, how can you learn?
- How can you separate His will from your will?

**Step 12 Questions:**
- How can I carry the message to fellow sufferers?
- Can you see yourself as a sponsor for somebody else? What kind of sponsor would you be? What kind of sponsor would you like to be?