

Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve

Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve are the Steps that keep us on track *each day* as recovering compulsive eaters. As a sponsor, it's your job to set an example for your sponsees by working and living these Steps in your own program.

Because Compulsive Eaters Anonymous (CEA)-HOW asks us to call our sponsors on a daily basis, we have a great opportunity to reinforce daily practice of Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve for ourselves and our sponsees. Staying current and accountable will be essential if we are to stay well away from the “stinking thinking” that can show up at meals and situations where food is present.

Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Without Step Ten, we shut ourselves off from our real feelings and from our Higher Powers. Nowhere is this more quickly apparent than with the disease of compulsive eating. Like it or not, we deal with food three times a day, every day. If we fail to take personal inventory on a daily basis, we can be sure that our resentments will show up in our food and at our meals.

Remind your sponsees that those neglecting their inventories often find that “all of a sudden” measuring becomes dishonest or inaccurate. Eating out may become much more attractive. And foods that used to call our names have returned to haunt us.

As the CEA-HOW *Overview of the 12 Step Recovery Plan* pamphlet tells us, “The need to ‘go within’ and deal with emotional leftovers is essential to continued recovery.”

Staying current with your sponsees' daily Tenth Step can help prevent lingering resentments and the harms that can lead them back to their old compulsive eating way of life. Since Step Ten tells us we need to make prompt amends when we have caused harm, you can help your sponsees determine what is the best course of corrective action in cases where an amends is warranted.

There is no one way to work Step Ten. Some sponsors have their sponsees use the checklist guidelines outlined in Step Ten of *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, others work with specific Step Ten formats, and still others simply have their sponsees read journal entries to them. You can work with your sponsees to decide which format is best for them.

Step Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Prayer is often referred to as “talking to God” and meditation is often considered “listening to God.” We are fortunate that we have valuable resources that will help anyone seek a spiritual connection, no matter what their religious background or personal experiences are.

You can direct your sponsees to pages 86–88 of the Big Book, where they will find definite suggestions for effective ways to work Step Eleven, including what to do upon awakening, throughout the day, and upon retiring at night. In addition, you can also direct them to the prayer on page 99 in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

As sponsors, we reinforce the idea that inspiration and direction for each of us comes from a Higher Power. If your sponsees are facing big decisions, you can direct them to page 86 in the Big Book, where it says, “In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or decision. We relax and take it easy. We don’t struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for awhile.” This is a good reminder that as sponsors we do not have all the answers for our sponsees.

Along with directing our sponsees to AA literature, we can also share our experience with prayer and meditation. We can share how working Step Eleven helps us with making decisions, attaining serenity, and strengthening our spiritual lives.

Step Twelve: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive eaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

If your sponsees desire immunity from compulsive eating, they must carry the message of recovery to other compulsive eaters. At the Big Book says on page 89, “Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics [compulsive eaters].” Step Twelve is so important that an entire chapter in the Big Book is devoted to it.

Some sponsees find reasons to avoid working Step Twelve and/or sponsoring others. You may hear excuses like, “I am too busy” or “I don’t feel comfortable sponsoring.” At this point it can be very enlightening for them if you ask how many recovering

compulsive eaters they know who *do not* sponsor. Thus they can see that daily abstinence depends heavily on a willingness to work with others.

The CEA-HOW *Overview of the 12 Step Recovery Plan* pamphlet points out that “carrying the message means placing spiritual growth ahead of all else...It understands that ‘right action is the key to good living.’” Our right action as a sponsor is demonstrated every time we take a sponsee phone call, drive a newcomer to a meeting, or make an outreach call.

In CEA HOW, we are gifted with many valuable resources that help guide us through sponsorship. Direct your sponsees to the *CEA-HOW Sponsor Guidelines* booklet and Chapter 7 in the Big Book. In addition, they may be able to attend in-person or phone bridge Sponsorship Workshops. Most CEA-HOW phone lists show what level of sponsoring someone is at, which makes it easy for your sponsees to call and ask sponsorship-related questions during outreach calls.

Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve are the foundation for the useful, happy lives we build in recovery. As a CEA-HOW sponsor, make sure you refer to all the resources the program has available, such as the sponsorship articles on www.ceahow.org, CEA-HOW literature, and the experience, strength and hope of other members. We don't do this alone.

As it says on page 164 of the Big Book, “We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. May God bless you and keep you until then.”