

Loretta from NJ

Without help, it is too much for us!

Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book – Page 58-59 “Remember we deal with alcohol - cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power - that One is God may you find Him now!”

When someone asks me to sponsor them, I ask several questions about their willingness to eat according to the Forever Abstinent food plan, to do all the Tools every day, and to do the steps. Among my questions are “do you pray or, if not, are you willing to pray?”, for without help, it is too much for us!

We may think it's not too much for us if we can just do the CEA-HOW disciplines: the tools and steps every day. The tools and the steps, are human efforts necessary for abstinence. However, a characteristic of addiction is that we have placed ourselves beyond human aid. We are powerless, and we need the help of a Higher Power. My experience with Higher Power is that my God does for me what I cannot do for myself. However, my God does not do for me what I can do for myself, which are the tools and the steps.

Sometimes sponsees do the tools every day and conscientiously work the steps and yet slip and slide with their abstinence. In these cases, we do the following, which has worked every time we continue to persist with it:

First thing in the morning, ask God to keep you abstinent that day. Send me a text to affirm you said the prayer, and I will send you a text back to affirm I said the same prayer.

Before every meal, ask God to keep you willing and give you the strength for that meal, and send me a text to affirm you said that prayer. I'll send you a text when I've said a similar prayer before my meal.

After every meal, ask God to protect you until the next meal. Send me a text to affirm that you said that prayer, and I will do the same to you.

Every time you think of food, say a prayer of gratitude for a recovery program that works, for the strength to resist temptation, and for the willingness to pick up the phone and make a call. Then make the call.

At the end of the day, thank God for a day of abstinence.

Say each prayer both for you and for me, and I will say each prayer for you and for me. In this way, all through the day, we are each praying for each other, filling our days with prayer and gratitude.

It's my experience that this works every time we persist with it.

Thank you God, for inviting us to find You through Your power to overcome addiction!

What have I learned?

I was fortunate to come into recovery with a prayer life, so asking God for help with my food was a natural thing to do. I used these prayers to get abstinent and use these prayers to this day to stay abstinent.

Throughout much of my recovery, I thought I could not sponsor anyone who did not pray – I could not imagine recovery without dependence on God for willingness and strength.

However, what I've learned is that a person's Higher Power may be the Power of the Fellowship. In that case, these prayers could be replaced by outreach calls – with a call before every meal, as well as at the beginning and end of the day. That would be 5 outreach calls instead of the required 3 outreach calls, but I wonder if it would help someone who is slipping and sliding.

Before I suggest this to anyone else, I need to do it myself. So my commitment is to make each of my prayers a request for willingness to make an outreach call before I eat that meal, and see if I can do it consistently, and then suggest it to others who may be struggling.

Thank you God for inviting us to find You through each other.