



Sponsor Discussion Prompts

A free recovery resource from Stepwise Recovery

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STEPWISE RECOVERY

Sponsor Discussion Prompts

Ready-to-use questions for conversations that matter

Good sponsorship is less about talking and more about listening well. These prompts are designed to open space for your sponsee to think out loud, reflect on their recovery, and find their own answers. They're tools for deepening conversation at different stages of the Steps, and through the lens of different recovery perspectives.

How to Use These Prompts Well

A prompt is only as good as the listening that follows it. Listen more than you speak: ask the question, then give real silence. Resist filling the gap. Don't interrogate—these are openings, not traps. Follow the thread: if something sparks genuine reflection, let them talk. Notice what they avoid: avoidance is usually fear, and fear is worth acknowledging. Share the weight: you're exploring territory together, not interrogating them. If it feels right, you can answer your own question.

Early Days (Steps 1–3)

These prompts help sponsees ground themselves in the reality of their powerlessness and begin to imagine what asking for help might look like.

On rock bottom, powerlessness, and asking for help

- What finally made you stop trying to fix it on your own?
- Can you describe what it felt like when you realised you couldn't control it?
- When did willpower stop working?
- What would have happened if you'd carried on exactly as you were?
- At what point did you know you couldn't do this alone?
- What parts of your life did addiction take over?

On a Power greater than yourself and turning it over

- What does 'a Power greater than yourself' mean to you right now?
- Does it have to be God? What are you comfortable with?
- Where have you felt held or helped in your life?

- What would it feel like to stop being the strongest person in the room?
- What does 'turning it over' actually mean to you?
- What are you afraid will happen if you're not in charge?

Self-Examination (Steps 4–7)

Here the work gets deeper. These prompts invite honesty about character, behaviour, and the patterns that got them here.

On moral inventory, patterns, and character

- What patterns are you starting to see?
- Where do you see yourself repeating the same story?
- How did you treat people when you were drinking/using?
- What character traits have got you somewhere good, and where do they cause harm?
- What would it take to be completely honest about this?
- When have you been your worst self, and why?

On fear, shame, resentments, and willingness

- What scares you most about admitting the truth?
- What shame have you been carrying?
- What do you think will happen if people really know you?
- Who are you angry at, and why?
- When you think about the people you've hurt, what comes up?
- What would it mean to let go of these patterns?
- What would you have to give up if you changed?

Amends (Steps 8–9)

This is delicate ground. These prompts help sponsees think through the purpose of amends and how to do them with integrity.

On the list, who to approach, and what amends mean

- Who needs to hear from you?
- Who should you protect by not contacting them?
- How will you know it's the right time?
- What's the difference between saying sorry and making amends?
- Can you apologise without asking for forgiveness?
- What can you actually change or fix, and what do you need to accept you can't?

On fear, resistance, and living amends

- What are you afraid will happen if you reach out?
- What if they don't believe you've changed?
- How will you stay honest if the conversation gets difficult?
- What does living differently look like?
- How are you showing up differently in your life now?
- What are you building instead of destruction?

Maintenance (Steps 10–12)

The work is never finished. These prompts help sponsees stay honest, stay connected, and stay aware.

On daily practice, staying grounded, and spiritual life

- How are you staying honest with yourself?
- What does a personal inventory look like for you now?
- When are you most likely to drift, and what brings you back?
- What keeps you sober today?
- Who or what are you staying connected to?
- What does your spiritual life look like now?

On service, relapse risk, and ongoing practice

- Why does helping others matter to you?
- What have you learned that someone else needs to hear?
- How has sponsoring others changed you?
- What's your early warning system?
- When have you nearly picked up, and what stopped you?
- How do you stay humble about your recovery?

The Six Lenses: Prompts Drawn from Each Perspective

These prompts invite reflection through Stepwise's framework of six ways to understand recovery.

Identification and Denial • Powerlessness • Turning Point and Surrender

- Can you see yourself in other people's stories?
- When did you first know something wasn't right, and why didn't you act?
- What lies did you tell yourself, and why?
- Where do you feel most stuck when you're drinking/using?

- What did you try that didn't work, and how many times?
- What was the moment you stopped trying to manage it?
- What had to break before you could ask for help?
- What does surrender feel like—in your body, your mind, your choices?

Spiritual Experience • Spiritual Resistance and Ego Defence • Passing It On

- What's changed that you can't fully explain?
- When do you feel most connected to something greater?
- Where do you feel held or supported?
- What gets in the way of trusting a Higher Power?
- How does your ego show up when you're afraid?
- What are you protecting, and why?
- Who showed up for you when you needed it, and how?
- What's worth passing on about what you've learned?

One More Thing

You don't need to ask all of these. A handful asked with real attention will do far more than running through a list. Let the conversation breathe. Let your sponsee teach you what they need to talk about. And remember: you're not supposed to have the answers. You're just supposed to help them find their own.

Keep going — you're not alone

This resource is one of a full library of free tools, worksheets and reading at **stepwiserecovery.com/resources** — take what helps and leave the rest. These tools are designed to sit alongside fellowship programmes, meetings and sponsorship — never to replace them.

The Stepwise Recovery Guides

Substance-specific recovery guides written by people who've recovered — for cocaine, ketamine, families, young people, and children. Free preview chapters, no email required, at **stepwiserecovery.com/guides**

Our 1-in-10 Pledge

For every ten guides sold, we donate one to someone who can't afford it — through treatment centres and prison recovery programmes.

Need help right now?

Samaritans: 116 123 (free, 24 hours) · FRANK: 0300 123 6600

Narcotics Anonymous UK: 0300 999 1212 · SHOUT: text 85258

Childline (under 19s): 0800 1111 · Nacoda: 0800 358 3456