

Carrying the Message

The Twelve Steps

Step-Working Guide · The Recovery Files

In this workbook

1. **Carrying the Message** — key ideas, worksheet

Each topic's scored self-assessment and mind map are in the app.

TOPIC

Carrying the Message

KEY IDEAS

Carrying the Message

The Service Half of Step Twelve

Step Twelve asks two things of a recovering person: to carry the message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. This topic is the first half. Carrying the message is not a job for the long-sober or the well-spoken. It belongs to anyone who has something to pass on — and everyone who has stayed sober one day has something.

Attraction Rather Than Promotion

How the Message Actually Travels

The message is rarely delivered by persuasion. People are drawn by what they see: someone who used to be where they are, now living differently. Lecturing, recruiting, and diagnosing other people's drinking or using tend to push people away. A changed life does the convincing.

Sharing Experience

What Happened, What Changed, What It's Like Now

The message is experience, strength, and hope — not advice. "Here is what I did and what happened" lands in a way "Here is what you should do" never will. Honest sharing includes the struggles, not only the victories. A newcomer needs to hear that people like them get better, not that people get perfect.

Availability

Being Reachable

Much of carrying the message is simply being there: giving out a phone number, answering it, arriving early and staying after, noticing the person standing alone by the coffee. Availability has limits — your own recovery, family, and work come too — but a little reliable availability is worth more than a lot of good intentions.

Service Commitments

Keeping the Doors Open

Setting up chairs, making coffee, greeting at the door, chairing, treasurer, taking a meeting into a treatment center or jail. Service commitments carry the message to people you may never meet, by keeping in place the rooms that saved you. They also keep you showing up on the days you would rather not.

Sponsorship

Passing On What Was Given

Sponsorship is one person walking another through the steps the way someone walked them. It asks for honesty about your own experience, not expertise. A sponsor is not a therapist, a banker, or a rescuer. When a sponsee needs medical, psychiatric, legal, or safety help, the sponsor's job is to point them to it.

Living Example

The Message No One Has to Hear

Family, coworkers, and neighbors receive the message through how you live: keeping your word, making amends, staying calm under pressure, being present at dinner. For many people, a sober person they know well is the first evidence that recovery is real.

Carry the Message, Not the Person

Guardrails That Protect Everyone

You cannot get anyone sober, and it is not your job to try. Offer, then let go of the outcome. Keep your own recovery first. Watch for rescuing, over-functioning, and resentment when someone does not take your help. Do not go alone to someone who is intoxicated or unsafe — bring another person, and call emergency services if there is a medical risk.

Why It Works

Service Keeps Us Sober

Carrying the message is not only for the newcomer. It keeps our own story in front of us, turns attention outward when self-obsession is loudest, and gives meaning to what we went through. The person helped most by a Twelfth Step call is very often the one who made it.

WORKSHEET**Message Carrying Plan****REFLECTION****Understanding Your Service**

Which dimension feels most natural? (Sharing, Availability, Service, Sponsorship, Meetings, Example)

Which dimension feels most challenging?

What motivates you most to carry the message?

How do you balance service with your own recovery needs?

PLAN**Development Action Plan**

Area for Growth

Specific Goal

Action Steps (List 3-5)

Timeline

SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship Skills

Readiness Check (What makes you ready?)

Potential Obstacles (e.g., fear of inadequacy)

Solutions to Obstacles

EXAMPLE

Living Example

How does your daily life demonstrate recovery?

What aspects of your recovery seem most attractive to others?

What would you like to develop to strengthen your example?
