

THE BOTTOM LINE

DECEMBER 2006

A Publication of Debtor's Anonymous Intergroup of Greater New York

Editor's Notes

Hi, Folks,

2006's December Share-a-Day was the best ever! & An added bonus was how this year's event got me into the holiday spirit, too! I always fill up on all the goodies offered, & take them home with me to savor over time.

I am incredibly grateful to all who gave service in creating this Share-a-Day. All the meeting & keynote speakers, chairperson, treasurer, sign maker, rental negotiator, program creator, registration folk, literature table, lunch makers & servers, talent show organizers & performers, lights, set-up and clean-up crew, sleppers, Intergroup and everyone I forgot -- thanks!

What I love about NYDA is the constant sense that Debtors Anonymous is vibrantly alive, growing and evolving and each one of us is a part of that evolution, contributing to the changes.

Remember this is your Bottom Line, please send DA experience, strength and hope as text in the body of an email to

bottomline@danyc.org.

Send typed or handwritten submissions to:

**Bottom Line
420 Wyncoop Ct.
Holland, PA 18966.**

Peace & Prosperity,
Gretchen

Service: The Best-Kept Secret In D.A.

It's the 'S' word, the weak link, the Achilles' heel of Debtors Anonymous.

Service.

Say it once at a meeting, and some people will look uncomfortable. Say it twice, and they'll get up and leave. It's seven letters long, but it's DA's four-letter word.

I first began to suspect that there was something really strange going on with service early in my DA recovery, when my only access to meetings was through an Internet listserve. Although I was from a small New England town where there were no other DA members, I had fantasies that someday I would make it to a larger city, where there would be hundreds of meetings and thousands of recovering debtors eager to help me, the way I'd been helped to get sober 9 years earlier in Alcoholics Anonymous.

I was quickly disabused of that notion. Most of the members on the listserve were from big cities, and they said scary things like, "You just can't get a sponsor in Seattle." "No one will do a PRG in San Francisco." "Nobody is solvent at the meetings here in Cleveland". "Nobody wants to take the key for the meeting. I've been opening up the meeting for 3 years now, and I'm the group's secretary and treasurer, too."

I was shocked, horrified, really. Nothing of that sort had ever happened in AA or any other 12-Step program I'm familiar with. In those programs, service is a badge of honor, a shining opportunity, something you do without even thinking twice, because your sponsor told you you should "never say no."

But over the years, I've come to accept that here, in the DA culture, there is something very different, and very sad, about the way we do things, something that sets us apart from most of the rest of the 12-Step world.

Some old-timers estimate that the average

DA group contributes only one-fourth as much money to our service structure as is the norm in other programs, and that we also have one-fourth as many people doing service work. I don't know if those figures are exact, but they do sound about right.

This reluctance to do service manifests itself in many ways - the intergroup meeting at which only a handful of groups are represented, the group business meeting at which many positions remain unfilled, the meeting lists which are rarely updated and full of defunct meetings.

It's seen in the irresponsibility that is often encountered—the member with the only key to the meeting room who doesn't show up, who demands to receive regular PRGs but won't give one, those who complain that meetings are too small, but don't show up weekly at a home group, and the lucky individual or old-timer who experiences great financial success in DA, but won't take the time to give back to others in the program because "I'm too busy" or "that kind of thing doesn't meet my needs."

It's also seen in the small, dedicated band of debtors who too often burn out because they are forced to do dozens of PRGs, sponsor large numbers of complaining newcomers, and juggle several service positions at once, just to keep groups functioning.

So what is this common problem so many of us have in DA? It's an important question, because the lack of willingness to do service has severely stunted our growth as a fellowship. If we had the same percentage of trusted servants as, say Alcoholics Anonymous, our program would be strong, burgeoning, with hundreds of more strong, recovery oriented meetings.

I've spent many hours puzzling over this with other members who do service, and we agree it's a universal problem in DA, afflicting all but a tiny minority of members,

Debtor's Anonymous Intergroup of Greater New York
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2 groups, and intergroups. My pressure-woman, who has long experience in DA in various parts of the country, puts it bluntly, "Debtors not only spend other people's money. They spend other people's time and energy, too."

In short, debtors drain other people, places, and things, without ever feeling the need to do or pay their fair share, without any moral sense that there is a need to give back even a small percentage of what they've been given, or to keep the ethic of love and service moving full circle.

Debtors, in short, suffer from an emotional and spiritual condition that is rare, even in the world of 12-Step recovery. And that condition leads to so much of the depression and despair found in so many DA rooms.

I, too, came to DA that way, and today am grateful that I am no longer so obtuse, so blind, so self-obsessed, so immature.

I was missing a great deal more than money when I first came to Debtors Anonymous. Although I was certain then that all my problems could be solved with a big infusion of (somebody else's) cash, the stark fact is that I was poor and unsuccessful not because of the lack of money, but because of my emotional and spiritual state, a bankrupt personality that lacked even the most basic ingredient for success in the world.

I was irresponsible, unreliable, selfish in a nasty way, chronically late, and unwilling to do anything for anyone else without the most weasel-like of motives. I was, in short, a typical debtor.

After I became willing to stop debting,

I gradually gained the clarity to realize that I was in the grip of a serious malady, one that could be overcome only if I were willing to go to any lengths, and that included copious amounts of service.

I learned that I had to attend meetings regularly, and to have respect for myself and the fellowship by showing up on time. I took a succession of service positions that insured the survival of my group, so I could continue to recover. Without my DA groups, there was no hope for me. On many occasions, I was the only person to show up.

I had to learn to be reliable so that the meeting place would be there every week, the rent paid, literature purchased. I had to learn to do these things in a timely manner, without procrastinating.

As I slowly climbed the ladder of service from personal to group to intergroup to national-level service, I took on a succession of positions, none of which I believed I could perform. Those who had gone before me taught me how to do them, giving me many valuable skills in the process.

Over the years, doing service in whatever capacities DA asked of me, I gradually became reliable, dependable, sociable, skilled, and happy. I did estimable things, and so developed some of that mysterious quality, self-esteem.

I developed many of the personality traits that allowed me to have a successful, enjoyable life. I had observed long before that the people who had high-quality recovery in DA were the people doing lots of service, and I got to hang out with them and absorb some of the qualities in them that I

wanted for myself.

I did spend many years in DA angry that so few people were willing to do service, first on my home group level, and later on the state, regional, and national levels. I resented that I had to do so much, while so many others did so little.

But finally, I stopped resenting. I realized I could not guilt-trip anyone into doing service work. Service is a precious, but very individual, spiritual journey. The motive for service has to come from deep inside, where a selfish, bitter, fearful heart somehow summons up the willingness to go to any lengths to recover.

Service had been given to me as a gift from my higher power, as a way to transform myself into the kind of person I'd always wanted to be, a person who is prosperous and successful, the kind of person who is joyful, focused, and productive. I had defied the soul sickness, the deadly self-obsession that is at the very core of our disease of compulsive debting, and become a changed person.

Today, I continue to take on new service responsibilities, and ask for help in learning what to do and how to do it. It's an exciting spiritual journey, one for which many are called, but few choose to show up.

Service is the best-kept secret in DA. It's waiting for anyone willing to do something completely contrary to his or her debtor personality. It's where they're hiding some of the best and most exciting recovery imaginable.

-- Jan S.

Burlington, Vermont

Service keeps me solvent

If I may, I'd like to echo Jan's article and share about service -- editor.

Service in DA has helped me grow more than anything else.

5 Years after a relapse, my DA recovery was in a rut, and I couldn't seem to get solvent again.

In my 1st go round in DA, I held many service positions, back then sponsors expected it. I know that dropping my service commitments led to my

relapse.

To get out of my recovery rut I had to accept that I needed to make some changes. I had to leave my small, safe local meeting, get up early every Sat. morning & travel long distance to a large meeting filled with recovery. (& I hated to get out of bed on Saturdays!)

Then, because I began in NYDA, I needed to travel home and reconnect

via annual Share-a-Day's. & To say, "YES!" when I was asked to re-start the Bottom Line. This service has kept me connected with NYDA, and my own DA history. I couldn't get solvent again until I stopped denying my early years of recovery & until I let go of the shame of relapse.

The early DA folk believed in service. If we didn't give service, DA wouldn't exist & we needed DA. John H. always said "YES!" to service.

3 The early DA sponsor's taught their sponsee's how to do service. John spoke about service at meetings all the time. We don't do that much these days.

Why don't we start? Sharing about what service has done for our individual recoveries just might help other compulsive debtors reach out for this amazing tool and find aspects of

recovery that will lead them, us & DA beyond our wildest dreams.

Thank you all for the gift of solvency!
-- Gretchen

Counting days of solvency is a humbling experience and a very important aspect of my recovery.

-- Heard at a meeting, Freedom from Solvency

Notes from NY DA Share-A-Day 2006

Here are my notes from the meetings I attended at the Dec. 3, NYDA Share-A-Day. Done in the style of "heard in the rooms" quotes. You may recognize yourselves or you may not, I attempted to write what I heard as closely as possible using longhand & my 58 yr. old memory.

Thank you all for creating this wonderful day. --editor

1. Material & Spiritual Prosperity

Speaker: Marsha

"Spiritual expansion wasn't what I thought it would be – I lost a lot; ended my engagement, de-cluttered people, places and things – everything. Sometimes with spirituality you have to descend to ascend.

After letting go of all this, I began living in a place in Manhattan by the water, where I always wanted to be & got a dog, my little spiritual companion. I found a spiritual advisor and went inward. I kept making drawings, one after another, drawing out the darkness of my depression. & The final one was an empty vessel. It represented clearing out and creating an empty space for HP to come in. I always had emptiness that I tried to fill with things but what I now have is that empty space for HP to come in. I feel like I'm in God's hands."

Sharing: "I keep myself surrounded by smallness when what I need is to be in a place of expansiveness."
"I gave up trying to control and now I have more influence."
"I'm working on my attitude – my circumstances aren't changing but my attitude's different and everything's better."
"I normally go to whatever source wants me instead of what's best for me."
"Job actions are my personal 12-step "love & service" and are taken in humility not ego."

2. Using DA Tools on Underearning

and Fear of Success

Speaker: Judith

"Don't give up 5 minutes after the miracle."

Sharing: "Despite my success on the job, deep down I feel like a fraud."

"Our founder, John H. always said, 'Get beyond your father' (or you past)."

"My spending plan's an inside job."

"I'm taking care of myself and too bad for the disease."

3. Big Meeting

Speakers: Joe, Anna, Judy

"Chairing means I'm delegating as fast as I can."

"In DA you learn to take actions regardless of the fear and whether you feel deserving or not."

"The things I want, it doesn't matter how long I have to wait, I'm going to buy them solvent and sanely."

"God is my employer."

"There is no such thing as a "B" job and all work is service."

4. Conscious Contact with an Abundant Higher Power: Steps 10, 11

Speaker: Jim

"Spiritual Suicide = murdering any feelings, not expressing yourself or anything."

"Emotional Suicide = giving up."

"My favorite word in Abundance is DANCE. Abundance is about joy, fun, dancing like Zorba the Greek, the dance of life."

"It's not the money, the jewels, the jobs. Waiting for the big hit is just crazy. You hear it at meetings, "I did this, got this raise, job, clients, amount of money." It's not what DA's about. It's about surrender, humility and working the steps, it's having a spiritual awakening."

"Once we start recovery we never go back."

"12 steps, PRG, Service, work with a sponsor, sponsees, meetings, living the DA program creates abundance in

our lives."

Sharing: "I'm here to get connected with an abundant HP not a grandiose HP."

5. The Journey from Deprivation to Abundance in DA

Speaker: Kate

"Since coming into DA my life has changed from somebody who has all these unused talents, living in fantasy, doing nothing — to listening to my PRG, writing down action plans, taking actions. And the fact that there's more than the 3 of us in that PRG room (HP makes 4) changes everything.

With the support of people in DA, my life has turned around completely. I am working and making a decent amount of money, writing, in a good relationship, & putting a child through college."

Sharing: "I thought I felt abundant when I was using credit cards but I was high. Now I'm abundant in other ways, like the clarity of knowing what I really want and taking the actions that will allow me to give it to myself."
"My life will only improve in relation to how humble I allow myself to be."
"Humility is not about depriving myself, it's about being open to the abundance of DA and taking the actions my recovery offers me."
"I begin the day and use this affirmation when I need it throughout the day, "God I'm ready to receive joy and abundance in my life."
"Being able to meet my needs is the beginning of recovery for me."
"When I'm depriving myself of people, I'm in my disease of isolation."
"Not having deprivation in my life is being more responsible to myself."
"The fundamental thing about deprivation is about spirituality for me – taking away from myself is really deprivation of spirit."

— Gretchen

Intergroup Service Opportunity: Help newcomers! Volunteer to answer the DANYC cell phone (on-call support line). One week service rotation. Requires 6 mos. solvency & 2 pressure relief meetings. Call Coordinator at 917-374-7911

1. Underearning, Fear of Success, and Vision Issues

This information is NOT DA Conference Approved Literature. This was created by Judith C and is used at the Underearning, This is a handout from the meeting Judith C. led at the Dec. 3, 2006, NY DA Share-a-Day. As an underearner with vision issues, I identified immediately with it and wanted to share it with you. I believe this will make a wonderful contribution to our DA literature, if so approved. A continuation of this literature is on page 6. -- editor

About debtors and self-sabotage

We, who have issues with money, have come to understand through our recovery that we sabotage our financial success. Although we work as employees or owners of our own business, have a vision, or seek a vision; say we are committed to abundance and prosperity; many of us in DA and BDA create a life where we survive rather than thrive. We do this by underearning, underachieving, staying in confusion about our vision, not nurturing our creative and spiritual selves and not working consistently on our vision.

What is Fear of Success?

Fear of Success is experiencing discomfort with achievement and success or noticing patterns of self-sabotage that illustrate this. These patterns must be addressed if we are to achieve consistent prosperity.

If you can say yes to one or more of the statements below, you may have a fear of success:

1. I have been told all my life that I have the potential (skill, talent, and/or creativity) to be successful;
2. I have a history of self-sabotage when I am close to the goal or after I achieve some measure of success;
3. I have a history of under earning or up and down earnings.
4. I resent having to take care of myself.
5. I want to be taken care of but I act independently and I periodically get into trouble and need rescuing.
6. I cannot take consistent actions to reach my goals due to interferences from co-dependency, compulsions, addictions, or an experience with failure.
7. I deny reality and live in a fantasy.

8. I dream and talk about grandiose plans that never manifest
9. I do not believe I can manifest success.
10. I have had problems with commitment to goals, projects, and people.
11. I have downsized my lifestyle to accommodate decreased income.
12. I have taken equity out of a home/apartment or other real estate, and/or cashed in stocks, bonds, mutual funds, & jewelry to support my lifestyle.

Underearning and underachieving represents poor self-care

Underearning and underachieving demonstrate an inability to take care of ourselves in the following ways:

1. Difficulty loving the self;
2. Difficulty protecting the self;
3. Difficulty identifying who one is and knowing how to share that appropriately with others;
4. Difficulty with self-care;
5. Difficulty being appropriate for one's age and various circumstances.

The Big Book, Fear of Success and Underearning

A number of stories in the Big Book discuss financial insecurity, and how alcoholics ruin their financial success. Bill W discusses how many times he sabotaged his own financial life with alcohol and acting-put on his character defects.

Many debtors & underearners have difficulty maintaining financial prosperity by cycling into periods of financial abundance followed by either periods of reduced income or financial difficulty. It is characterized by cycles of accomplishment followed by cycles of lowered performance.

Fear of Success Signals

1. Procrastination.
2. Poor or no follow up around work or creative endeavors.
3. Resistance to asking for or taking help.
4. Inconsistent work & performance habits.
5. Fear of authority (demonstrated by defiance or compliance).
6. Difficulty being a "team player".

7. Difficulty creating a clear vision.
8. Difficulty asking for a raise at the job.
9. Difficulty setting higher fees in business.
10. Lack of flexibility regarding fees to encourage new clients.
11. Acts-out one or more of the "debt-ing" signals in business (see BDA debt-ing signals).
12. Greed.
13. Spends irresponsibly.
14. Hoards money personally or in business.
15. Devalues performance, talents, skills or job.
16. Fears people feeling jealous, competitive, angry, or ambivalent.
17. Gets distracted by people, places, things, & projects.
18. Hides in recovery.
19. Focus on a love infatuation that adversely effects work performance
20. Tells oneself, "I don't know if I can do it."
21. Works for employers or with employees or clients who are destructive.
22. Acts impulsively regarding work issues.
23. Over or under-values accomplishments.
24. Feels ambivalent toward work or business.
25. Is not present spiritually, emotionally or physically.
26. Over or under sells when in front of a boss or client.
27. Takes things personally.
28. Has difficulty working the tools of DA/BDA.
29. Resists working or re-working the 12 steps.
30. Lacks program support to help identify self-sabotage.
31. Has poor self-care demonstrated by the difficulties described above.

-- Judith C.

DA & BDA: Recovering from Underearning, Fear of Success, & Vision Issues Meeting

Saturday 8:30 am
St. Vincent's Hospital
O'Toole Building, 6th Floor small conference room
203 West 12th St.
(Between 7th Ave. & Greenwich)

VISIONS PRAYER

Spirit, please reveal my gifts, goals,
talents and visions.

Please clear my mind so that I may hear, see
and feel your guidance and direction.

Help me discover my unique path of joy
and abundance.

This prayer was written by the Sacramento, California DA Visions group.. Hope you enjoy it. -- Allie S.

Back Issues Of DA Publications Sought

The DA General Service Board has begun a vigorous effort to preserve the history of the fellowship by collecting items related to DA history.

A recent cataloguing of archives at the General Service Office in Needham, Mass. revealed a number of old documents, including a few very old copies of New York Intergroup's Bottom Line newsletter, and the national DA newsletter Ways & Means.

The GSB Archives Committee is vitally interested in compiling and preserv-

ing complete sets of Ways & Means, The Bottom Line, and other national and regional newsletters. Anyone with anything ranging from a complete set to a single issue who would care to donate them to the national DA archives, is urged to send them to the DA General Service Office at PO Box 920888, Needham, Mass. 02492. Please mark "For Archives" on the outside of the mailing container.

The committee is in the process of sorting, cataloguing, and storing all kinds of documents, audio tapes, and

other materials related to the history of the fellowship. It is in the process of renting a climate-controlled storage facility near the GSO in Massachusetts so that these materials can be properly preserved for the future, and eventually made available to researchers, historians, and the fellowship as a whole.

Anyone with questions about the archive effort can contact GSB Trustee Jan S. at stillsolvent@yahoo.com or 802-862-6927.

Tuesday Debtors Anonymous and Health Issues Telephone Meeting

Tuesday 3:00 - 4:00 PM Eastern Time USA

To attend this meeting, Dial: 712-432-2000 (+1 712-432-2000 from outside USA)

Then key in the access code: 66639#

DA Publications Advisory Statement

Since all publications cannot go through the conference approval process, the DA World Service Conference recognizes that the Ways & Means is by tradition the international meeting in print of DA. The Steps, Traditions and Concepts are our guidelines, always wishing to reflect DA and nothing but DA. The DA Focus and the DA Web site are service publications for the DA Fellowship.

*Presented at the 2005 WSC by the General Service Board.
Send your comments to the GSO at da-gso@mindspring.com*

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2. Underearning: Solution, Tools, and Vision Issues

There is a solution

By using the tools of DA & BDA, admitting our powerlessness, working the steps and sharing our solutions with each other, we can achieve prosperity and serenity.

The Tools of DA	➤Action Plan
➤Meetings	➤The telephone
➤Record	& the internet
Maintenance	➤DA & AA
➤Sponsorship	Literature
➤Pressure Relief	➤Awareness
Groups &	➤Business
Pressure Relief	Meetings
Meetings	➤Service
➤Spending Plan	➤Anonymity

Some additional tools DA & BDA Members are using to overcome underearning & fear of success:

1. Awareness, Acceptance, Action. Admit powerlessness over fear of success signals. Keep talking at meetings about the awareness. Practice acceptance of the awareness. Make an action plan.
2. Marketing Action plan - Form a marketing group that meets regularly.
3. Action plan - Form a fear of suc-

- cess action group or team up with a fear of success action partner.
4. Vision plan - Work on clarifying your vision of prosperity by going to vision meetings, writing, doing a vision map.
 5. Work the steps on the fear of success signals & step 4-5 character defects.

Signposts of Vision Issues Described by Fellow Debtors

Do you have a "Vision Issue"? You may have a vision issue if you can answer yes to one or more of the following:

1. I have a clear vision but can only manifest part, but not all of it.
2. I feel that my vision is too big and it prevents me from making a beginning.
3. I am waiting for my vision to magically emerge or appear.
4. I do not recall ever knowing what I loved to do and how I could earn money doing it.
5. I did not have a dream or vision as a child, teenager, young adult or adult about work.
6. I had a clear dream but gave up on it.
7. I have a number of things I'm good at and I have difficulty focusing on one skill.

8. I feel scared to take a risk and go for what my vision is because I might fail or worse, it may not really be my vision.
9. I have followed other people's vision for me.
10. I am searching for my spiritual and creative self.

Vision Issue Signals

1. Has never enjoyed the work world
2. Has no specific vision and is confused about how to "find" a vision.
3. Envisions the goal, financial success, but has no plan to get there.
4. Has a clear vision but has trouble nurturing the dream consistently.
5. Lives the vision for a period of time and then get distracted with other things.
6. Reports confusion about vision or what he/she feels passionate about.
7. Feels confused about how to use his/her passion to create blissful work.

-- Judith C.

This information is NOT DA Conference Approved Literature. Created by Judith C it is used at the Underearning, Fear of Success & Vision Issues meeting by group consensus.

Write for NYDA's Bottom Line

As a voice of NYDA the Bottom Line can't exist without you. Please contribute DA writings, your individual stories of recovery, emails, qualifications, thoughts, wishes, visions, spending plan & recordkeeping or tools stories, and DA's history (present or past). *Or be spontaneous & create something right now!*

The Bottom Line is published monthly by the Intergroup of Greater NY, available in Web form at www.danyc.org & where NYDA literature is sold

every Monday from 7:00 - 8:30pm

Gracie Square Hospital

420 East 76th Street - first floor, room 100

(between 1st Ave & York)

Send your submission as text in the body of an email to bottomline@danyc.org

Send typed or handwritten submissions:

Bottom Line

420 Wyncoop Ct.

Holland, PA 18966

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