

as they arrived in the mail. She doesn't live in Brooklyn, NY, and my mother in law can't understand why I get tickets. "Don't drive Devora!" she tells me.

Here I am today feeling vague. I know it will pass. I arrived to my face to face meeting late, but it was great being there. That's how I got solvent after 3½ years in program. I showed up once a week to my home group meeting to just listen and share.

I am grateful I can begin doing service now and start giving back. My parking ticket this morning taught me that I need to step up my program. So I scheduled a PRG for next week. I sent my sponsor a text that I want to meet to finish step 4. And I sat down to write this article. I have to remember that while I will always be a debtor I can have a daily reprieve from the disease. One day at a time.

An Email to my PRG Woman

By Yarrow

One of our Debtors Anonymous Tools is the Pressure Relief Group. We meet with two experienced members, generally a man and a woman. In the late 1980's, when I found my seat in these rooms, they were called Pressure Groups. Soon after the name was changed to Pressure Relief Group because the idea is to relieve pressure not give it.

Rose M, says that it takes her over six months to incorporate her PRG's suggestions, "This is how I know that everything happens in Higher Power's time not mine" It takes a few years for me! I had emailed my PRG woman previously regarding her suggestion about my gift giving. I thanked her because I was no longer compulsively getting rid of money by any means necessary. I had been buying meals, cooking meals, handing gas money and train fare to an able bodied friend who claimed to be in financial difficulty.

My former PRG woman had another suggestion for me! "Since you have the connections print your email in The Bottom Line. :)". At her request to honor our spiritual tradition of anonymity, her name is changed.
Hi Esther,

Well, flashing back to that PRG- pressure relief group -you sat on for me in the St. Vincent's Hospital O'Toole building in about 2008. Who was my PRG man? I can't remember!

After looking at my weekly and monthly numbers you questioned some of my expenses and told me to stop giving money to subway beggars. And you suggested that I not give donations & gifts so much. "The money is for you". When you said it, I felt all shaky and scared inside. These days when I do my numbers in the morning and count the money in my

wallet, I put all the change in a metal bowl at home. That way I have no change for beggars. Plus I tell men begging that men give women money, women don't give men money. And I thank them for being in my educational outreach program. Believe it or not, they take it really well for the most part. One "fund raiser" gave me a dollar. I was shocked at first and didn't know what to do. I decided it was a sign from HP that the DA program is working.

On Tuesday I had a snafu with my new debit card due to buying the wrong bus ticket, then cancelling it. The money was in limbo, wouldn't clear until Monday. I needed to buy a bus ticket for Thursday to go to Salem, MA, for Halloween. I even called my new bank to find out if I had a credit line attached to my checking account. No, you don't they said. How annoying!

I rolled up the nickels, dimes, pennies and dollar coins, coming up with \$42.50. (& there's still more left!!) I had \$16 in my checking account today. Between the coins and the checking account was able to pay for a one way ticket for tomorrow, \$46.00, which is safe in my purse for tomorrow's trip.

Another check will clear tomorrow \$82.50 and I collected cash that was owed me from 2 people, \$82.83. This will be enough for food, entertainment, souvenirs, my bus ticket back and a play to stay if my hosts get tired of me. \$165.33. Thanks to your suggestion at that PRG, I get to go to Salem, where I have always wanted to my entire life. Happy Halloween 2013!

EXTRA! EXTRA!

'Share-A-Day' is Back in Town!

After a very long 2 year hiatus NYC Debtors Anonymous Intergroup and GSR (General Service Representatives) created a special committee to mastermind an entire day of workshops, speakers, meetings, vision boards, literature, Pressure Relief Groups, fellowship and recovery.

Date: **Sunday, January 19, 2014**

Time: **9:00am to 6:30pm**

Cost: **\$15 in advance, \$20 at the door - suggested donation only. No one ever turned away for lack of funds!**

Location: **Washington Irving High School, 40 Irving Place, New York, NY between East 16th and East 17th Street.**

If you would like to give service, the planning meetings are held each Wednesday, in the basement of the parish house of St. John the Baptist church, 210 W. 31st, entrance on 30th St., at 6:30pm. For more information contact: shareaday@danyc.info

The Bottom Line

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The Bottom Line is a collection of recovery stories written by D.A. members. It is available here (some issues can be viewed online, others can only be downloaded to your computer as a PDF). You are encouraged to contribute your own story; please consult the submissions guidelines (pdf version). Also, we encourage you to bring the submissions guidelines to your meeting, in order to inform those who may not have internet access. Submissions may be sent to bottomlineditor@yahoo.com, or by mail to: The Editor, *The Bottom Line*, c/o Debtors Anonymous of Greater New York, P.O. Box 452, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

YOU ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR MONEY.

DA Group Sponsorship

DA Group Sponsorship is a DA resource that:

- Provides new, less experienced or struggling DA groups with resources that can help to grow or strengthen their meetings.
- Assists new, less experienced or struggling DA groups meetings to find a Sponsor Group.
- Assists more established DA groups to become a Sponsor Group for a less experienced meeting.

To get information on Group Sponsorship, send an email to: gsponsorship@gmail.com

Once you send your email, you will receive an auto-response containing resources and suggestions for potential Sponsor Groups, Sponsee Groups and new or struggling groups. If you require further information you can reply to the auto-response with your questions. Someone will reply to your questions as soon as possible.

Chief Editor: Yarrow; Layout/Design: Elizabeth; Proofreader: Grateful Debtor

Practice These Principles In All My Affairs

By Randy W.

I was walking down the long, narrow hallway of a beat up old lower Manhattan building. A bluish glare from a fluorescent light showed the missing floor tiles. I walked past the closed doors. Behind each was a different 12 step program meeting. I was headed to an AA meeting at the end of the hall when I saw a sign on a door that said "Debtors Anonymous." I gasped and stopped to look at the sign. I couldn't believe my eyes. In 18 years of recovery, I had never heard of Debtors Anonymous.

My wife and I had been arguing over finances. Each month we went a little further into debt. I had a job that now paid more than I'd ever made in my life, that seemed like very good pay. I was in great pain over it. I could see how our marriage was being torn apart. I felt powerless to stop it. The name of the program, "Debtors Anonymous" was enough information for

me. I knew that I needed it and I needed it fast. I had been in a number of other 12 step fellowships. I've done them on a sort of serial basis.

There is a place in the 12th step that asks me to practice these principles in all my affairs. I find that the very best way for me to practice these principles in any particular affair is to join a 12 step program dedicated to that affair, pick up its vocabulary, pick up its tools and do its steps.

Of course, moving to an intense involvement with a new 12 step fellowship can mean less involvement with a previous one. I met an old timer whose experience was helpful. He was a man who had been associated with the first AA groups. He told me how, at that time, there were only meetings in New York and Akron. People would come from all over the US and stay for short while. He told me that those who were able to work through the steps during their stay could go back home and



stay sober and those who did not get through the steps could only stay sober by hanging around with the meeting and doing a lot of 12 step work. The implication of that and my own experience is that I can move on to another 12 step program if, and only if, I have done the steps.

When I got into DA, I started keeping my numbers and began to ask around for pressure people. It took a lot of asking, but finally I got a pressure meeting going. My wife and I did them as a couple. I actually began to enjoy the detailed record keeping and I saw that I was underearning. I had just over \$50,000 in debt when I started DA. With the help of my pressure people, I surrendered to paying off my debt very slowly and making solvency my number 1 goal. I had really wanted to make paying off my debt my number 1 goal.

I asked for and got a raise at work. Amazingly, I was debt free in about 2 years and abundance began to set up housekeeping in my life. I can see that this abundance and debt repayment is an inevitable side effect of solvency. I accumulated a prudent reserve, a retirement fund and even some investments in stocks.

My wife and I bought a farm in the country and had the financial confidence to have a couple of kids. Our marriage and finances are strong and I am thankful for the day I saw that sign on the door that said “Debtors Anonymous.”

Step One

by Patrick M.

I need help. My life is unmanageable around finances, depression, vagueness, fear, anger, self-sabotage, resentment and reactivity. In spite of steady efforts to wrangle the money problem, I am regularly humiliated by predictable pressures. With a low monthly rent, my expenses are within reason for New York City. One characteristic that plays strongly in all of this is how I minimize what my expenses really are. At every opportunity, I shrink my income and life down. When something comes along to upset my delusion, I am overwhelmed and sink into despair and depression.

When I get a check I think, “I’m done! I don’t have to work now!” Then I pay my bills realizing that I don’t have enough to live on. I am always living on the edge, with just sufficient money to make it through the next week (or two, if I’m lucky). I have no savings, no prudent reserve, no spending or retirement plan, even though I’ve been haunting DA for 8 years. I felt I wasn’t really that sick. I only needed to get a grasp the DA tools. Then I’d be on my way, leaving all the sick program people to wallow in their misery, while I waltzed into my happy future.

Along with the deep wound from my alcoholic family, I’ve been nurturing the disease of addiction for years. I blamed my

family for my condition. Whether they are to blame or not, I have carried the torch of addiction into the present. This has been the underlying principle that has guided everything I’ve been involved with. This is the primary reason that I belong in DA.

The only relief I have found has been in the fellowship of 12 DA step recovery. Thirteen and a half years of psychoanalysis have helped me tremendously to shine a light on my dark interior and help me to know myself. As it says in the Big Book, “self-knowledge availed us nothing.” Even with all of my self-awareness and self-examination, and the miracle of having forgiven and reconciled with my family has not helped me to overcome this sickness. The only hope for me is to replace the diseased principles of addiction with the healthy principles of recovery by working the steps and living in the solution one day at a time. When I seek a daily reprieve by living these principles of recovery, the depression that I normally experience is replaced by hope, and the fatigue I usually feel at the prospect of facing my life is replaced by a new found energy.

I am a high-bottom debtor, not a compulsive spender. Don’t have credit card debt; am current with my expenses with the exception of taxes. What plagues me is the way I bounce and scrape along the bottom, living a life that I experience as mediocre at best. Compared to most places on Earth, I live in wild abundance. I have everything I need. I am healthy. I have a place to live, I have work and income, food, clothing and so on. I don’t live in the third world. I live in the world’s richest country and I have been given a gift — many gifts by my Creator. I can never be happy unless I live up to my potential. I want to give back to the world. I want to be a source of abundance rather than simply existing day to day until I die. I don’t want to reach my death-bed and look back exclaiming “Why didn’t I try to do more?”

I’ve been given a chance by Debtor’s Anonymous to live a life that is worthy of celebration. This is a way of life that is a bit overwhelming to accept. I only have to live it one day at a time. I think I can do that — just for this day.

Resistance and Procrastination

By Dina K (NJ D.A.)

At our April 2013 New Jersey/Pennsylvania DA Workshop, I felt a strong pull towards signing up for a PRG- Pressure Relief Group. There was something telling me to meet with two total strangers. I truly believe this was all from my Higher Power.

I arrived ten minutes before the PRG, which was a feat in and of itself, since time management is not a strong point of mine. I had never met my pressure relief man and woman before as they were from two completely different states.

I asked if it was okay that this PRG was going to be unusual. They reminded me that a PRG is for anything that is giving you pressure. I wanted to talk about my “RESISTANCE”.

I had been in program for eleven months. Making meetings is my top priority and I had only missed two due to emergencies. I had three PRGs. I cut up and closed my credit cards, had 90 days solvency, and have a sponsor. I was extremely frustrated because although I want to be willing to go to any lengths to get well, I could not seem to take much action. My PRG people told me that we are not bad people trying to be good; we were sick people trying to get well. They suggested that I ask HP to help me overcome any resistance. And I was reminded that FEAR is nothing more than False Evidence Appearing Real. I have fear of doing the work. I was afraid of any pain or emotions that might come up.

I felt absolutely amazing after my PRG. It was definitely a spiritual experience. I had to stop over thinking and over analyzing about what might come up, as I work on a spending plan and as I continue to work on Step 4. Action was the only way I’d feel better. And I was reminded that I wasn’t taking action alone — I had my fellow D.A. members, and my Higher Power, to support me.

I know now that my resistance is based on “fear” and on perfectionism. I’ve heard that perfectionism leads to procrastination which leads to paralysis, and this was exactly what I was experiencing. Part of my fear was, what if I do the steps but I do them wrong and when I’m done I don’t get a spiritual experience or I don’t get well? I know I need to work harder on giving up the belief that either I do something perfectly, or I fail. My head knows that God loves me with my imperfections, and that I’m not expected to work the steps perfectly. After all, it’s progress, not perfection. I must continue to take action to not let my perfectionism cause me to procrastinate, which causes me to be paralyzed in fear.

The most beautiful part of the story is this: There were a small handful of January 2013 The Bottom Line newsletters. My Pressure Relief Woman handed me a copy, with the recovery story entitled “DEBTING AS A DISEASE” circled. The most important thing that she wanted me to remember, was that I was not a bad person, and that I was worthy of recovery. I have a disease. I got chills, and tears came to my eyes. I finally understood that debting is a disease. Thank you HP.

Step Nine: Amends

By Don C.

(This was part of the Magic Topic Jar from our Share-a-Day in 2011)

So I finally found the willingness and the courage to make one of my most difficult amends. When I was about 12 years old I used to steal money from my younger brother’s piggy bank to

go to an arcade at a nearby mall and play video games with my friends. I was resentful that my younger brother had money saved and that I had none.

So I just took his money — I remember one time when I specifically took a bunch of quarters and a 5 dollar bill. I also remembered a couple of occasions where I took advantage of my larger size and beat up on my younger brother.

I needed to contact my brother and to apologize for these behaviors. One night I called him and he very generously heard me out. When I was done, my brother thanked me and told me that there was really no need to apologize. And then something amazing happened. My brother said, “Imagine what I must feel like...not being to do the same for my younger brother.” We had lost our youngest brother in a tragic accident many years before. My brother said, “I mistreated him terribly and I won’t get the chance to apologize to him.” We realized at that moment that I had chosen to call my brother the week of our deceased brother’s birthday. And we cried and remembered our younger brother and shared our love for him and for each other.

It seems that my Higher Power had me call my brother to make my amends at just the right time. Maybe the time that was best for both me and my brother. I will never forget that call and I am grateful to DA for all of these wonderful experiences that my recovery continues to give to me and others. In Gratitude, Don C.

A Daily Reprieve

By Devora

105 days of solvency! But, today I am vague -in the disease. I got a parking ticket this morning.

I came home late from a wedding last night. My son in law was parked in the driveway. I could have blocked him, but being the people pleaser that I am, saved the spot for my husband! I parked on the corner. Street cleaning was scheduled for 7:30 am. I was way too tired this morning to move the car, and I had an excuse. My 2 year old grandson slept over and I was busy feeding him breakfast. Of course I got a ticket.

Which reminds me of my debting days. Days when I would just run in to the bank to make a quick deposit, and get a ticket because I was in front of a fire hydrant. I always took risks. More often than not, I got some hefty expensive tickets over the years. The most ridiculous ticket I ever got was when I double parked to buy an ice-cream! Talk about addiction. The 1.50 ice cream cost me a \$125 ticket.

Besides for figuring out how to pay for the tickets, they cause me embarrassment. My car lease is in my brother in law’s name, so my mother in law (God bless her) sees all my tickets