

Notes from PRG's (1996–2021) with Rose M.

By Steve B.

11/19/96 – Ask HP: Is this is accordance with your will for me?

4/11/97 – What am I doing? I'm recovering.

7/11/98 – Gratitude. Ask (fill in the blank) to generate some of his own income (babysitting, dog walking, etc.).

8/28/99 – Send love ahead (for upcoming difficult meeting). Taking care of myself is best thing for me and everyone around me. Fear keeps us in the cage.

Every action will be met with approval and disapproval.

Go on vacation and have a great time.

6/19/00 – Realize I'm still a debtor. Detach from toxic personalities.

7/15/04 – Express my gratitude. I'm open and willing to receive from the universe everything I need to make (fill the number in).

8/25/04 – Get ready for something better. I am in God's loving hands and embrace.

3/1/05 – If you're willing to receive it, you'll have it. Joy, not struggle. Prayerful attitude. Be willing to receive 24 hours around the clock, 7 days a week.

5/12/05 – Seed > Seedling > Plant.

6/20/06 – Pray for guidance.

10/31/06 – Put the negativity in the hands of God.

Replace negative thoughts with thoughts of God.

Be gentle with myself. We only get free by showing up.

1/19/11 – The mind that creates the problem cannot be the one that solves it. Accept that I'm an underearner.

Pray for underearning to be lifted. Be willing to be willing to have an abundant and prosperous life. Pay the rent without selling Mom's jewelry. The disorder cannot continue in honesty.

5/27/11 – Ask God to give me the strength and grace to do what I need to do to take care of myself. Trust God to guide me.

12/17/19 – Ask HP for help. Be kind to myself.

12/11/20 – Use the 4-letter word "Help"

Big Book, pg 64: "When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically."

3/5/2 – Be merciful to all involved. Pray to be willing.

WSC Resource and Development Committee Fellowship-wide Call: Promises of Living the 7th Tradition

By Lee

I attended the Fellowship Wide Call on Promises of Living the 7th Tradition on Saturday February 19, 2022. Four DA Members spoke on the seventh tradition and how it enhanced their program. Some highlights include:

- It's counterintuitive but say yes to service!
- Put your trust in a higher power.
- Service to the DA Fellowship is service to God.
- Contributions may be non-monetary.
- Giving to World Service directly helps carry the message.
- You can get to know great people thru service!
- Financially responsible self-support leads to self-respect
- Sometimes it's not the right time to give, you have to wait and trust.
- Everyone is welcome in DA regardless of ones' ability to contribute.
- Give as though your life depends on it – not until it hurts but until it feels good.
- It's a privilege to do service!
- If you're in Debtors Anonymous and have nothing," put some chairs away".
- Practicing the 7th tradition is acting out of trust and gratitude, keeping the doors open.
- Keeping numbers leads to freedom and abundance.
- Trust HP as a source of joy, abundance, and money.
- Hoarding money through fear goes against the flow.
- Care for and value yourself with a spending plan.
- The 7th Tradition is an ongoing acknowledgement that Higher Power is our source.



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The Bottom Line

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DA World Service Conference 2023 Theme Song Writing Contest



The Bottom Line is sponsoring a Theme Song Writing Contest to represent NYC DA, hosts of the 2023 WSC. The winning song will receive a special prize and be named Official Theme Song of DA WSC 2023. Parodies welcome. For more information and to submit your contribution email to: bottomlineeditor@yahoo.com

Bell Ringer, Peggy D. By Recovering Debtor

I met Peggy D. in a DA meeting in the 1990's. We were Burt Lancaster fans and watched his classic film, "Come Back Little Sheba" at her West 96th Street apartment. Both of us felt we were just like Lola, the wife of an alcoholic. We were ecstatic to see an AA meeting in the movie, where Doc, played by Burt Lancaster, celebrates his one-year anniversary.

In 1996 I was lucky to be living in a 10-room apartment in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. It was only because I had taken my PRG woman's (Cara) suggestions. But I was once again at the end of my rope, not knowing what to do about my empty pocketbook. I learned in DA meetings that when the going got rough to pick up the phone and call DA members.

When I made a program call that horrible day to Peggy from my kitchen's yellow wall phone, I was upset, panic ridden and hyperventilating. I had no money, no groceries or car fare, no work, no change, nothing owed to

me and no income. Her suggestion was to get \$100 from somewhere or somebody. That was out of the question because I didn't know anyone with \$100 to spare. I was embarrassed and ashamed to accept or admit that I was once again in serious trouble. Peggy said, "Give me your address. I'm mailing you \$5.00 to prime the pump." I knew her finances were bare bones tight, as she hadn't worked in a while. You would do that for me? I asked her.

I will never forget Peggy's response. "Look, when there's nothing, when you have no money, no food, no bus fare, no friends and no one is around that's when God is there".

A day later a small, wrinkled envelope appeared on the hallway radiator cover, with a five-dollar bill inside, Peggy's gift. It was much more than money; it was hope, faith and a confidence that the circumstances of my life would improve. I understood then that Debtors Anonymous is a spiritual program. I am very grateful that Peggy shared her concept of DA. Her belief in a power greater than herself

remains with me, like a lighthouse in a hurricane.

After a prolonged illness, sadly, Peggy passed away on December 4th, 2007, at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx, NY, a month shy of her 65th birthday.

She had attended St. Mary's Church on West 126th Street in Harlem, NYC. The pastor asked her to ring the church bells before the service. Peggy wasn't sure about being a bell ringer. I encouraged her to give it a try because it's suggested we say yes when we are asked to do service Well, Peggy did ring the bells of St. Mary's for some time. I often think of her when I hear the beautiful bell chimes from two different churches in my neighborhood. Thank you, Peggy.

Jan S. By Allen A.

I first met Jan S. at a New York Share-A-Day. He had driven all the way down from Burlington, Vermont to attend. I didn't even know DA had meetings in Vermont! A few years later, I had the privilege of serving with Jan on the DA General Service Board as a trustee.

Jan loved serving DA — “our beloved Fellowship,” he liked to call it. He often spoke with honesty and humility about how working this simple program had changed his life. He was passionately committed (often with a child-like glee) to digging up long-lost details about the birth of DA and its subsequent rapid growth. At each GSB face-to-face meeting around the U.S., Jan would track down and interview local former trusted servants, the result of which began what is now the routine collection of archival

materials at the General Service Office. (I also learned at those meetings that Jan always arrived early because he was a train enthusiast— his “vision” was to ride the train system of every city he visited from end to end!)

When Jan became GSB chair, he reverently protected the wooden gavel that chairs had used since the first World Service Conference, and he served with both vision and humility. In the two Conferences that he served as chair; he urged the Fellowship's representatives to refocus on DA's primary purpose in order to ensure DA's survival for compulsive debtors everywhere. While he was chair, writing and publication of the second edition of *A Currency of Hope* and DA's own *Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts* got underway. When he rotated off the Board, he served as the Fellowship's Archivist and continued to fill the gaps in DA's story. When Jan announced that he had been diagnosed with stomach cancer, it didn't stop him from continuing to serve DA.

About a year later, I drove Jan and another former GSB chair (River, from Woodstock, NY) to a DA event in Philadelphia. River had recently suffered a stroke, and I had recently been diagnosed with Parkinson's. Jan took recovery very seriously, but he also couldn't resist any opportunity for humor. The image of the three of us — with our major life-changing ailments — fumbling together in a rented car on our way to a DA meeting was no exception. I remember a lot of storytelling and laughter.

A few months later, Jan was admitted to Respite Care. When we spoke for the last time, he marveled about

how blessed he was. He marveled at the quality of care — how he could ask for a massage at any time or ask someone to cook any kind of food he wanted. And he was quite clear about what the end of his life would have been like if he hadn't bottomed out and found his way to “his beloved Fellowship”.

Jan S. By Carolyn B.

I met Jan S. at the first Burlington DA meeting in 1996. There were only four of us. Jan spoke of his first exposure to DA from a friend who took him through the stack of bills on his kitchen table. After attending his first DA meeting, Jan was on fire, full of DA fervor and desire to spread the message. The next ten years were an exciting time for our growing Burlington DA community. With Jan at the helm, we were all rearing to attend whatever event might be available in nearby states. Two carloads of us drove south to a Wilson House DA Retreat and shared a lean-two at a local campground. Jan and another DA, Paul, spent the entire night unabashedly blasting out oldie tunes, leaving the rest of us to

endure two sleepless but hysterical nights. We were bonded. Jan, always the voice of DA recovery, spoke often of his journey from literally ashes (burning down his house in rural VT after the electricity had been turned off and he fell asleep by candle light) to a life of prosperity. From isolation to sharing a beautiful home with his wife and dog, with an enchanted backyard (selected for the summer garden tour). Jan garnered love and admiration wherever he spoke or did service. I am forever grateful for being a beneficiary of his whole-hearted passion for our program.

Jan S. By Paula

Jan S. died August 22, 2016, with over 20 years of back-to-back solvency. He had been the President of the DA Board of Trustees and was the DA Archivist. He was well known to the New York contingent that went to the DA retreats at the Wilson House, and, though he lived in Burlington, Vermont, he often spoke at events in New York City. He was well known and well respected in DA.

More than that, Jan was my sponsor, and I got to know him well. Jan taught me integrity in my solvency. Solvency for Jan was clear and unequivocal: not using credit cards, not borrowing without collateral, not bouncing checks, not paying bills late, not receiving services without paying for them at the time, and not paying taxes late.

Jan was not a man of means, but he had great abundance in his life. His garden at his little house in Burlington was a paradise. Tended with care, bursting with color, and



"I know money can't buy happiness, but can Bitcoin?"

radiating serenity, his garden was his pride and joy. It was regularly on the garden tour in Burlington. That was his abundance. He set out to read the 100 greatest books of all time, listen to the 100 greatest pieces of music of all time, and watch the 100 greatest movies of all time. He damn near made it. That was his abundance. He set out to camp in every state campground in Vermont. That was his abundance. He set out to learn Spanish late in life and became fluent. That was his abundance. Jan didn't measure abundance in money, though he was able to pay cash for his cars. But for him abundance was service and living life with intention and gusto.

He approached his service as President of the DA Board of Trustees with great humility, hardly believing that an underlearner like himself, who once drove a car that was "illegal in seven different ways," could be entrusted with such a responsibility. He was diligent in service as the DA Archivist and taught me DA history.

Jan was brave in the face of the cancer that eventually took his life. He faced it with dignity. He was grateful for all he had. When he was transferred to a hospice facility, he described it as a paradise where they prepared him whatever food he wanted and found him Spanish language TV. He even told me in his last days that he wanted someone to come teach him some math, since he had never been good at it in school. Impending death was no impediment to his seeking growth and new discoveries.

I miss Jan so much. Though I have a new sponsor in DA, whose service sponsor was Jan, I miss Jan's wisdom,



his humor, his integrity, and his great love of DA. I believe he is watching over all of us.

Larry A. By Christopher E.

Our brother in DA — Larry A. — died of a massive heart attack June 26th, 2020. I am convinced that the pandemic contributed mightily: no exercise, no human contact and no autopsy help me to feel so.

Larry was 66 and was the penultimate seeker: his spiritual quests were many and very strong. He knew more about different schools of therapy than most — including even uses of psychedelics for the same, breathwork, meditation, and documentaries on the most complex neurological/physiological.

I was very lucky to bring him back to DA, to which he took like a duck to water, and our 100 or so attendances together at DA meetings reconnected him to life in so many and wonderful, healthy, productive, loving ways. Including in such practical ways: when we met, he was convinced he was about to lose his apartment and HP blessedly let me realize he had not signed up for Social Security...and to help sign him up.

Thank you beyond words, DA! His mother's suicide when he was 29 was one of several terrible traumas with which he had to cope and, tragically, his PTSD was major. He was a hugely talented photographer and created a collection of PTSD perfectly beautiful art which he produced using an algorithm re his PTSD which converted the PTSD into...paintings!

We called each other "Sacred Brother", which was our equivalent of "partner".

The "good news" is that — largely due to other 12-step programs — I was able to react in two ways:

1) extreme grief and 2) immense gratitude for the wonderful relationship we had.

In the Zoom, Shiva, which we assisted for him, a family member remembered that — even as a baby, playing on the floor — his family had instantly realized that he was brilliant and quite different from the rest of his family. They weren't equipped, alas, to be there for such a son and brother.

AND... when he died (again thanks to DA) he had \$7.00+ in his bank account — which had not been the case for many, many years. He also had an amazing sense of humor! We will miss him.

Rinse and Repeat By Kevin

Keep coming back, it works if you work it. The operative words being come back and work!!!

I'm writing this today, despite my feelings of inadequacy and asking myself, who wants to hear what I have to say? After all, I'm a "professional"

debtor and underlearner. I "simply" need to keep coming back, work the program and trust that it's a spiritual solution to my problem. And stop isolating, beating myself to a pulp and lose my elitist belief that "my problems are the biggest and most unsolvable". Not as easy as it sounds, but it's an insidious disease we all contend with. I need to stop trying to fight it and fix it by myself. That's the "only thing" I need to hear and understand. And really, give this amazing program a fair shot. Previously, the brilliance of this program somehow escaped me, so I hopelessly tried to just earn more money, spend less and fight my way through it all. Nope, just ain't happening. I've been told it's simple, just not easy, so I need to focus on the beautiful simplicity of it all, and not the difficulty.

The issue for me is, how to "just do it" and then do it consistently. After trying and failing and hitting what I believe to be yet another bottom. I've finally concluded, the only thing to do is go back to the well and try it yet again, and then again, if needed. So, as you read this today, please pray for me, the stranger behind this keyboard, send your positive energy my way, and I'll do the same for you, whoever, wherever you are. And while you're at it, reach out to a fellow, struggling debtor and see how they're doing. For me, the reality is, I resumed going to meetings, and am actually writing this today because someone reached out to me, to check up on me, and asked me to. So here I am. HP brought her to me and gave me the nudge I needed to get back on board. Thank you all for being a part of this unique fellowship.

Lastly, we all need to believe our history is our greatest asset. It brought us to where we are today and that's a good thing.

There is hope. So keep coming back, it works if you work it. Rinse and repeat. God bless.

Mondays with Rose M.

By Matthew E.

Rose was NYC DA royalty. She had been an AI-Anon trustee and one of the founding members of DA. Everyone loved her but was a little scared to approach her. But if you did approach her, she was lovely. She had a way of looking squarely at compulsive debting as a spiritual problem. One year, she was the keynote speaker at the NYC Share-A-Day. "Back when the subway cost fifteen cents, I had thirteen cents," she said, making it clear that it didn't matter what things cost. A debtor will find a way to live in deprivation.

Rose did a lot of service. She and I got to know each other when we were both GSRs in 2013. When she rotated off the GSRs, I missed her wit and wisdom at the monthly Greater New York meetings, so I started calling her.

I liked Rose because she seemed familiar to me. The word familiar is derived from the word family. My family is filled with gruff Irish Catholic women — like Rose — with nursing degrees and wicked senses of humor who lovingly kick my ass. So, I quickly zeroed in on her. We zeroed in on each other.

Rose always told me the truth when I called her. She was very kind about it — and it was important for me to hear it — but it felt exhilarating and

painful... like getting my teeth cleaned or a deep tissue massage. So, I didn't call her that often.

But during one of these phone calls — I don't remember why I needed her laser sharp feedback this particular time — I surprised myself and asked her if she would sponsor me. I had been taken through the steps quickly as a newcomer. I thought it might be good to have some additional ongoing support. I had never occurred to me before to ask Rose. To my surprise and delight she said yes, and we started meeting Mondays at a Chipotle in midtown. We both loved the burrito bowl at Chipotle and their upstairs seating area was always empty in the evenings. When I arrived to meet her, she would be early and already seated. She always had her nose in a book, usually a spiritual text. Although she been raised Catholic, she surveyed all the religions of the world. Our meetings started with her giving me a recap of the book she was reading that week.

One week, I was hitting more meetings than usual. I was between freelance gigs and although my prudent reserve was keeping me solvent, it wasn't a good feeling not making money. The Monday Night Step Meeting at the LGBT center was starting in an hour, and I told Rose I'd be going there after we parted. She asked if she could come along. She also needed a meeting.

We started attending the meeting together. It was our Monday ritual: 45 minutes of Step Work at the center and then I'd walk her up those endless flights of steep stairs to a DA meeting. Then after the meeting, I'd walk her down those stairs and to the subway



and make sure she got home okay. We did this for two years.

One day she said to me "thank you so much for being my sponsee. Meeting you every Monday gets me out of the house and to a meeting. It's been an asset to my recovery."

I know that for me, my sponsees are more important to my own recovery than I am to theirs. It never occurred to me that I might have been important to her recovery. I was so thrilled to have her as a sponsor. I was thrilled to have the honor of her company every Monday night.

Two years later, Rose passed away after a long struggle with pancreatic cancer. I learned of this long into her illness through a mutual friend and I was grateful to have the opportunity to say goodbye, albeit on the phone. Rose was very private and hated to be a bother. That she wouldn't have let me know about her illness and wouldn't have given me an opportunity to help in some way or at least visit was keeping in character for Rose. There was an online memorial for her. Dozens of people showed up. It turned out that a lot of us at her funeral had had these special private relationships with her. A petty, self-centered part of me was a little annoyed that I wasn't special. But I got over it pretty quickly. She deserved to have all that love from all of us.

Rose M. – Our Friendship is Priceless By Anonymity Matters

August 2005 — Going home on the subway from a meeting, a DA member said something about a storm they were preparing for down South. I had no idea. A few days later Hurricane Katrina was international headline news for the next three months. Every day more horrific images and details of its aftermath were published.

Among the news photos were dead bodies of elderly and disabled people in twisted, broken wheelchairs among the wreckage. I was overcome with grief.

In DA I learned to use the tool of the telephone. So, what did I do when I was upset or emotional? I called my good DA friend, Rose M. She worked round the clock as a Private Duty RN. I would leave awfully long hysterical messages on her answering machine 24 hours a day. Some days I would call back to leave Part Two and Part Three. Rose was home this time. I was weeping when I asked, "Did you see the news about Hurricane Katrina? They're all dead. No one went to rescue them."

Rose took a different approach saying our government couldn't and shouldn't keep giving hurricane victims endless money. I yelled that I would expect our government or the UN or whoever to spend any amount of money to aid the victims. Because I was emotional to begin with our conversation morphed into a heated discussion, nah, it was a good old screaming match. I slammed down the phone. In those days, one could still

have the satisfaction of a loud crack as you slammed the receiver into its base.

About two weeks later, the phone rang. Rose was calling to apologize because she hadn't realized the extreme hurricane damage. She said, "I am sorry we fell out over an outside issue. I want us to stay friends, I value our friendship." I thanked her, accepted her apology and next she said something I think every DA member would understand, "Our friendship is invaluable, it's priceless" We enjoyed a good laugh over the dollar value.

I met Rose M. because I came into a DA meeting and having nowhere else to go with my endless, harrowing, hair pulling financial issues, I stayed in Debtors Anonymous.

I am crying as I write this because Rose passed away last September 2021. She was one of the few program people that would continue to take my hysterical DA program calls literally 24 hours a day. Rose came to support me when I went to pick up the last paycheck from a job I was fired from, she came to housing court with me many times and even showed up when a housing court judge came to my apartment to see the housing code violations firsthand.

I benefited from Rose having worked her DA program. If I had any issue with anyone, I would quickly, loudly confront them. Having come from an alcoholic home, I was comfortable with conflict. This approach did not exactly make me welcome in DA or anywhere else. I learned to open the DA toolkit and find a telephone before I went into full combat

mode. This was pre cellphone days where sometimes I would have to take my change to pay phones. I was able to reason things out with someone other than the involved party and I was given support, feedback and suggestions. This was usually from Rose.

Inevitably, the suggestions would be to pray for the parties I had a beef with. Sometimes Rose would hint at program literature or writing that had helped her. Then that awful question, what was my part in it? Most of the time I saw that I had rigid expectations of people and made kind of crazy demands on them. I continue to use the tool of praying for those I disagree with every day.

I discovered that when I prayed for my next-door neighbors, who had lied about me in court, I got the gift of serenity. I can't explain how that worked; I used the suggestions. The judge believed me, not the liars and this was proven in her decision, very much in my favor.

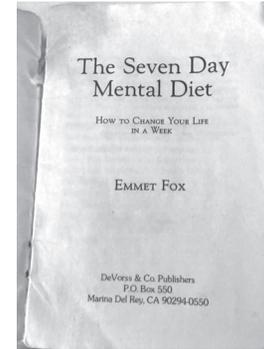
I joined a nearby community garden in my neighborhood, which had been shattered by Hurricane Sandy. The one hundred mile an hour winds and storm surge took down the fence. The members were raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for a brand-new fence. The community garden did not own the land, nor did it have written permission from the owner for us to be there. I had done extensive research on the lot and NYC Community Garden Rules. I questioned why we were raising money to put a fence on property we did not own and had no legal right to use. This annoyed a member who made it

their mission to make me unwelcome.

I called Rose with updates of the growing dysfunction, if not every day, at least every other day. After listening for months, she quietly said, "It doesn't sound like you're making any friends over there." Rose was right. I decided to leave the community garden. I learned the DA tool of detaching from difficult personalities and if I am driven to fix a place or situation, it's probably not for me.

Rose, the pride of her Irish immigrant family, graduated with her Registered Nurses License on January 28, 1957. She worked for 60 years as a Private Duty RN. Rose may have given up her license in August 2014, but when clients called, Rose went to work. She learned not to say no to money in DA. This is who Rose was, she was all about service. At the age of eighty-three, she took the bus to care-take a ninety-year-old man. Rose was always doing spiritual teachings from different traditions. She took me to Sufi gatherings and gave me a little book, *The Seven Day Mental Diet* by Emmet Fox, about positive thinking for seven days. Through all my moves, somehow that book has stayed with me. I have never been able to complete this mental diet because I always go back to Day One.

Rose would say that the support in DA comes in between the meetings, either in person or on the phone. Her view on the Debting Disease is that it takes an exceptionally long time to have awareness, it's like an iceberg.



Someone may come into DA with a pressing problem, an emergency, but that it didn't happen overnight. It was growing for years, maybe decades. Rose would say that money problems are very easy to hide.

Rose was a calming presence in DA meetings and always available to do service. She had been a NYC Intergroup Rep, was a GSR Rep and went to the WSC in Colorado. She sat on many PRG's. Well into her eighties Rose would take a bus then a subway, —an hour, and a half trip— to sit on early morning PRG's. She really lived the slogan: you can't keep it unless you give it away.

Rose was a card-carrying cat lady, spending most of her money on therapy and cat food. She was involved with cat rescue and volunteered at a thrift store that supported NYC street cats.

Rose felt a funeral, a wake, a burial plot in a cemetery were all a waste of good money. When I asked her about any memorial service or mass she would say, I don't want it. Don't bother. I said we were going to do whatever we wanted because she wouldn't be around to say no. Rose got a big kick out of that and we had many laughs as I described the festivities I was planning upon her demise. Of course, it included bagpipers, an Irish tenor signing Danny Boy and a decent lunch for attendees. Whenever I wanted to cheer her up, I would elaborate on her over-the-top funeral I was planning. Rose got her wish with a pre-paid simple cremation (Cont'd on Page 10)

and her ashes scattered to the winds across the Atlantic Ocean.

Felix the Cat cartoons and the movie “*Pennies from Heaven*” were released the year Rose was born. The title song crooning out of every radio was a suitable theme song for a future member of Debtors Anonymous. Pennies from Heaven is the theme of this edition of the Bottom Line. I am incredibly grateful to all the DA members, no longer with us, who kept the meetings open and a going concern. There was a seat waiting for me when I got to DA because of them.

*Every time it rains
It rains pennies from heaven
Don't you know each cloud
contains
Pennies from heaven
If you want the things, you love
You must have showers
So, when you hear it thunder
Don't run under a tree
There'll be pennies from heaven
For you and me*

In Rose's keynote talk at a NYC Share-A-Day, she mentions that she was always short, despite having a well-paying stable job, whatever the amount, she just didn't have it. Her example was taking the bus to work — the fare was five cents at the time and all she had was four cents. The bus driver was not going to let her on but the man behind her gave her a penny to make up her shortfall

The night before her online memorial service, a raccoon trotted rapidly into my path. I screamed at the top of my lungs. It scurried away but like an afterthought, it turned back, glared boldly at me, and continued on its original path. I felt that raccoon had

Rose's spirit and was headed for cat food. I am very grateful for her friendship and sharing her DA, AI-Anon and ACA recovery, with me.

Rose was Irish-American NYC to the bone, she was a bad ass eighty-five-year-old and died at home with her four big, spoiled cats, which is what she wanted. Rose did it her way.

If you happen to look out on the Atlantic Ocean, give a thought or a prayer for a debtor who got solvent and passed it on.

Thank you Rose.

Jerry M.

By Anonymous Debtor

I first heard Jerry M. speak at a New York City DA meeting in 1999. I heard clarity. He spoke of paying a quarter for a newspaper and writing it down, and that if he didn't have the money for things he wanted to buy, he wouldn't buy them. What a terrifying and simple idea. NOT buying something you couldn't afford?!! Writing numbers down?!! Those ideas seemed like death: terrifying prospects of change which I felt in my gut could bring me great relief.

They say no one arrives in DA gliding on the wings of victory. And I was no different: suicide had crossed my mind.

Right away in 1998, Jerry's voice held a kindness, clarity and intelligence which attracted me. I needed help, so like a good recovering person, I promptly asked him to be my sponsor... a mere 18 years later.

Fast forward through many attempts at recovery and various sponsors with no lasting surrender to

solvency on my part to the year 2017.

In 2017, when I finally asked Jerry for sponsorship, he said, “You must really want to recover, because most people are afraid of me”.

I said, “I dunno what to say about that, Jerry, but I am ready to do whatever.”

Finally, I was.

Jerry was perhaps imposing to some because he'd written books on solvency and underearning. Some writers write so people can go and read those writings (with an emphasis on the word “go”) and to not bother said writer personally. A kind of “It's in the book, kid.” distancing helpfulness. And there I was bothering Jerry up close. Needing guidance. Jerry reminded me of a combination of Stanley Kubrick and my Italian grandfather — but with better life tips than my grampa. Jerry agreed to take on what would be his last sponsee.

In one of our first email exchanges to set up a face-to-face step appointment, I expressed to Jerry some current fear about life, and to comfort me Jerry wrote, “In the interim, just be peaceful in all things. (It'll all be over in 100 years or less anyway, so why not?)” This made me laugh AND brought me comfort. As we worked the steps together in his apartment on Jane Street for the last 3 years of his life, death seemed always perched in Jerry's study. Jerry and I reflected quite often on the impermanence of all things. “This Too Shall Pass” on steroids.

In my mind's eye I see Jerry, toward the end of his life, limping with great caution and effort through the Valley

of the Shadow of Death, or (in reality) a shaded West Village lane, quite bravely, and frequently invoking with stolid defiance the transitional nature of all things. From my point of view much of Jerry's life energy went to the service of helping others avoid giving in to hopelessness and despair, mindsets which the program and said Service helped him avoid as well. Jerry had the writer/monks' gifts of patience for sitting quietly for long periods while listening for the deep concerns of the soul. He also had the writer/monk's need to impart this gained wisdom to the many. The walls of Jerry's study were lined with volumes of his favorite teachers like Aurelius. Jerry had worked out a system for himself which involved squarely facing reality, which included looking both death and taxes in their skull like faces with grace and occasional flashes of humor. I made Jerry laugh a lot, even at himself sometimes, which was one of my great pleasures as a humorist. Jerry faced and taught me to face the twins of Life and Death with equal steadiness. He looked at numbers. He looked at life. He looked within. He looked at death, all with the same intense gaze. He gave me impossibly direct feedback at times, yet it never held the sting of cruelty. It always carried the sober shock of cold truth and the warm fire of Love. Thank you, Jerry.

You were one of my life's great teachers whose wisdom and generosity will be with me forever.

“Now the game concludes. Cancer will mate Nora soon, and the rest, despite the presumption of caskets will be a story of worms.” *Gerhardt's Children* — Jerrold M.