

Prosperity Times

Northern California Debtors Anonymous Newsletter and Meeting List

October - December 2006

Abundance at DoDA Day

The annual DoDA Day event, hosted and organized by NCDA Intergroup, was held this year on September 9th. "The feedback was really terrific," said Ann S., the event coordinator for Intergroup. "The absolute highlight of the day was the Treasure Mapping. The room was packed all day with wall-to-wall people." One participant added, "All day treasure mapping—how abundant!" DoDA Day offers a day of workshops, treasure mapping and PRGs (Pressure Relief Groups). Written evaluations from participants mentioned the speakers, and especially the main speaker, as being fabulous. In addition, this year added workshops specifically for business people, such as record keeping and business relationships.

An event such as DoDA day requires a tremendous amount of planning and the collective contributions of many individuals. "As the organizer," said Ann S., "I felt I could trust that everyone would do their part. It's amazing how everyone does a little piece and it all comes together and runs smoothly." Intergroup is blessed to have several members who have extended their terms so that this event (and others) can be a success. As opposed to the terms of service for General Service Representatives which are generally 3 years, the term for most Intergroup representatives is 6 months, which makes it unlikely that the skill and knowledge that is developed in organizing an event such as DoDA day will be available for the next event. "Intergroup counts on having that knowledge from event to event," said Ann S., "Meetings might want to consider extending their terms of service."

The next event that Intergroup will host is Winter Lights on February 11, 2007. Stay tuned for details!

a fond farewell . . .

With this issue, I am passing the torch to a new editor. It's hard to believe I have mid-wifed five issues over the past fourteen months. Recently, I received some sage advice from a long-time member of DA who told me, "Do service that feels right to you." In other words, there are many ways I can serve, and so I need to choose the service that feels the best to me. The Prosperity Times has been one such service that has just been "right." As editor, I've been able to express my creativity, connect with other members, and offer something that I hope has been of value. I look forward to serving DA (and life in general) in other rich and rewarding ways in the future.

WORK THE 12 STEPS! . . .

. . . with a committed group of DA members

Sunday evenings, 7 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.

851 Irwin Street, San Rafael, CA

CALL MARY P. 415-884-0694 OR MARIA 415-435-6375

"Quote Unquote"

Before coming to DA many of us isolated ourselves from other people. We thought we were self-sufficient and knew all of the answers. In the first step of recovery . . . we learn to ask for help and we benefit from asking.

-Using the Telephone Pamphlet

AA has given me . . . the opportunity to be of service to God and to the people about me . . . AA has taught me that I will have peace of mind in exact proportion to the peace of mind I bring into the lives of other people.

-Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

In DA, we learned that one way to experience more abundance and prosperity in our lives was by giving of ourselves to others . . . We learned that as we gave of our time and talents, our Higher Power did for us what we could not do for ourselves . . . When we become willing to contribute, to give back, the God of our understanding meets us more than halfway.

-Service Pamphlet

I personally believe that my recovery depends on my giving service anywhere I am called to do so.

-A Currency of Hope

Meeting Spotlight

PRGs (Pressure Relief Groups) are a basic tool for DA recovery. The Tuesday evening meeting in Palo Alto has changed its format to focus on supporting members in having regular PRGs. They ask those receiving PRGs to commit to sit on at least two PRGs for other members. The group meets at 7 p.m. See the meeting list inside for more information.

MEMBERS SPEAK on GIVING and RECEIVING!

Before I started DA, I was out of balance—giving to others when I was not able to give to myself and greatly overspending on gifts and donations. It came from a need to be loved or to get something from others, and I was closing myself off from receiving from God. My DA pattern is closely related to my Alanon pattern. My out of balance giving came from this deep feeling that I wasn't worthy of having anything myself. Or if I did get anything for myself, I needed to really deserve it, and deserving it meant cutting off an arm and a leg.

My first lesson in DA was to stop giving to others before I took care of myself. One of the things I had to do, which was hard for me, was to call all my siblings and tell them that I could not afford to give them Christmas gifts. I had to take care of my own basic needs first. At the same time, I was doing a lot of service. I saw how much time I was giving in service when I was not giving time to myself to take care of my own needs, so I stopped doing service for a period. That was also hard for me to do, but I had to get my priorities clear. It's OK to give when I'm giving out of excess, but not when I'm giving out of fear.

What I tend to do as a deprivation addict is to get tight and afraid, and that fear closes the channel through which God can reach me. What opens me back up to giving and receiving God's abundance is feeling gratitude. I always take it to today—"Is there anything I need today that I don't have?" I can go unconscious about what I have in my life. Like right now, I'm sitting in a restaurant with a beautiful creek outside, the sun is shining and life is good. I've learned that I have to be willing to receive. When I'm in gratitude it takes me out of the fear and into the openness of God's abundance.

Through DA, I have learned how to align my will with God's will in such a way that I'm not giving out of deprivation. Once I get tapped into God's flow of giving and receiving, it's just two sides of the same coin and it all keeps recycling itself. When I'm in the flow of the abundance of God, it's like I'm standing in a stream and I have one hand in one side of the stream and one hand in the other and it's just flowing through me. I know I'm giving in the right way when I feel relaxed. I don't feel resentful when I give from that place. I have never given more than I've received in any DA service position that I've held. When I do service, I quite literally receive exactly what I need. For example, I just finished sitting on a PRG with someone who was having the exact same issues I am right now. I heard exactly what I needed to hear for myself to take my next step.

--Pat

“ I w a s a b l e t o g i v e . . . ”

I've been working with a sponsee for a number of years. She had been in a low spot for a long time—she's self-employed and hadn't been getting enough work. She needed more help than she was getting and she was not able to afford to see a therapist. I checked in during meditation time, asking myself, "What can I do for her?" The answer I got was, "You can give her money." I called her and made a commitment to send a check and she in turn made the commitment to make an appointment with a therapist. I really checked in with my heart about this. I felt like it was my calling to give her this money and no one else was stepping up to help her. She said to me, "I'll do this for someone else in the future." And I know she will do that.

For me, it was about sharing the abundance that has come into my life through recovery in DA. My partner asked me, "Can you really afford to give her this money?" And thanks to DA, I was able to say, "It amounts to 3 months of my clothing allowance." Because of DA and regular PRGs, I knew exactly how much money I was going to give her and exactly what the trade-off was for me and I was willing to make that trade-off. Clothing is an area that I tend to act out in and I had no problem spending that money in a different way for three months. If I hadn't been in DA, I would have been too scared to make the choice to give money like that. Because of the clarity I have in this program, I was able to give without feeling any fear or scarcity. I knew I had the resources to make this choice and it gave me such a wonderful sense of well-being. Giving to her was a gift to myself.

The real point, however, is that I was able to be helpful to someone else and she had the graciousness to accept my gift. A lot of people wouldn't have accepted it. It was a wonderful flow of positive energy that I know is just going to keep getting regenerated. She gives a lot to others—she volunteers as a teacher and does lots of other good work. She's doing her part and I'm doing my part.

--Sara

I have to admit I feel anger and annoyance when I see people being stingy with their time or resources. A friend of mine is stingy with money. When she recently purchased her used car from someone who was giving her a terrific deal, she continued to try to think of ways to talk him down further in price. I, on the other hand, would have felt guilty for buying a car from someone for less than the blue book value. In the same situation, I would have asked the fellow, "Are you *sure* you want to sell the car for this price? I think I should pay you more." I also experienced anger recently at a small meeting that needed folks to fill service positions. Several positions went unfilled. I'm sure it's my own projections that I'm experiencing—i.e., my own stinginess that I don't want to admit I have. My stinginess comes from the fear that I won't have enough for myself. "I can't buy this gift or make this donation, because I'm uncertain about my job situation" or "I can't do extra service, because what if I overextend myself?" I would like God to remove my resentment toward stingy people. Mostly, I would like God to remove my own stinginess. It's about having trust with God. Is God *really* going to take care of me if I offer my time or resources? I don't want to be stingy. I want to fully offer what I have to offer in this life, with no holding back. The image I often see of my life is that of a beautiful flower that bursts forth in all its glory and then dies. My greatest fear is that I will die before I've fully flowered and fully shared all my gifts and abundance. To me, giving and receiving is at the center of a rich life. I don't want to be stingy. I want to do this thing called life well.

--Ellen

I underearned my way into a job that was a set-up for resentment because I had used up my prudent reserve. If I had had a flourishing prudent reserve, I would not have had to take a job that was less than the market rate. The reason I got myself into this situation? Partly because I was acting out in another area of my life (an unhealthy relationship) that I needed to come to terms with. This unhealthy emotional scenario got me dangerously close to debting. I tore through my prudent reserve, including some of my retirement funds. I will not EVER take a job that is below market rate again. Now I look on the Internet for market rates for my field and talk to successful people about their salaries. I will not back down. I always ask for the higher rate. People are impressed when I do that. And if they note that I'm earning much less now, I say, "Yes, and I've researched the market rate through other individuals doing the same type of work and I learned I am way below market rate. I know my work is top quality and I want to feel inspired to do my best for your company. I have realized I need to work with a company that values me as much as I do my work. I need to be paid in accordance with the quality of my work in order to do an excellent job." NO HAGGLING!

--Erin

Doing service has done amazing things for me. I often feel like an outsider and different from other people, like I'm not part of the group. I also feel like I'm "not good enough." Doing service, I feel like I am a part of something and that has boosted my self confidence. That self confidence, in turn, has helped me talk to people and when I start talking to people, I find out that I'm not really that different. I never would have had the confidence to ask people to be on my PRG, without doing service. I also think that they said yes because I was doing service. I definitely felt more legitimate in asking for their time.

Service has definitely had a wonderful domino effect. One thing has led to another and it all started with doing service. I wouldn't know the people I know now without doing service. It all started with "getting over myself" and reaching out to participate in the meetings. The other thing I notice about doing service is that it keeps me from going back to my old behaviors. Doing service has a lot to do with me staying sober and not debting. There are a lot of times I have the choice to incur debt, but I don't make that choice because I have a service commitment and I can't in good conscious incur debt. Service keeps me working my program. I find myself having resistance to going to a meeting or doing service, but I always get so much more out of it than what I put into it.

--Karen

... without fear or scarcity."

This newsletter is published by Northern California Debtor's Anonymous (NCDA) Intergroup. The role of Intergroup is to serve the local meetings held in Northern California.

NCDA Intergroup meets on the fourth Saturday of each month from 10:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at the main branch of the San Francisco Public Library, 3rd floor Conference Room. (The library is across from the Civic Center BART stop.) In December, the meeting will be held on the third Saturday.

All DA members are welcome to attend. The next meeting is October 28th.

Joining Intergroup is a great way to serve DA and strengthen your recovery.

Need to send out your GROUP DONATIONS?

It is suggested that each group, after meeting its own needs and establishing a prudent reserve, send a 7th Tradition donation:

▶ **45% to the local Intergroup:**

NCDA Intergroup
P.O. Box 31224
San Francisco, CA 94131

▶ **45% to the General Service Office:**

General Service Office - DA
P.O. Box 920888
Needham, MA 02492-0009

▶ **10% to the General Service Rep.:**

NorCal DA GSR
P.O. Box 423136
San Francisco, CA 94142

Mark Your Calendar!

Winter Lights

February 11th, 2007 noon-5:30 PM

*Share this newsletter!
Copy it or download and print it
from ncdaweb.org.*

Ways to Serve

On An Individual Level ...

*Step into a leadership role by becoming a sponsor.
Sit on another member's Pressure Relief Group (PRG)*

At Your Local Meeting ...

Welcome newcomers

Set up chairs

Volunteer for a service position. While some positions have abstinence requirements, many do not. So hold up your hand—it's a great way to get involved!

At the Intergroup Level ...

Become an Intergroup representative. DA Intergroup is a group of representatives from DA meetings throughout Northern California. (See box at left.)

At the National and World Service Level ...

Become a General Service Representative (GSR). GSRs' main functions are to carry information from the World Service Office to local meetings and vice versa, attend the annual World Service Conference and work on Conference committees. Visit the next meeting and find out more. Meetings are held on the 2nd Saturday of each month (except September) from 10:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the San Francisco Public Library Main Branch (across from the Civic Center BART stop) in the 3rd floor conference room. Call Nancy at 415-239-5692 for more information.

Heard at a Meeting

"There is a God and He loves me. He has a plan for me and it's a good one. I need to let go and trust God's plan."

Submission Guidelines

Prosperity Times welcomes your personal story of experience, strength and hope. Articles may be edited to fit as space allows.

Please send submissions of up to 300 words to us at registrar@ncdaweb.org. Or mail it to:

NCDA, PO Box 31224,
San Francisco, CA 94131

Attn: *Prosperity Times*, Editor

Submissions must be received by December 5th.