

PROSPERITY TIMES

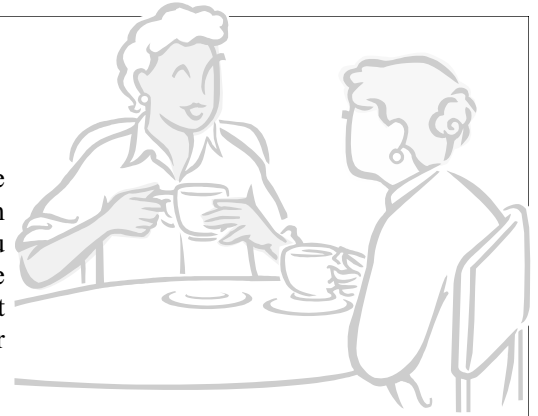
Northern California Debtors Anonymous Newsletter and Meeting List

January - March 2010

Sponsorship / Sponseeship

... And now, a message from our sponsor!..

No, not that kind of sponsor. We're talking about the person you chose, or have yet to choose, to be your guide through the 12 Steps of DA/BDA. The person who will listen patiently while you vent, or point out your successes when you are unable to see them. Sponsors say things like; "Congratulations, you've worked Step 1 to the best of your ability, you are now on Step 2!" and "What does your PRG say about that?" or "OK, but what's your part in all this?" or maybe "I hear your pain and I'm here to tell you that you're gonna be alright."



I was once told that a good sponsor asks really good questions then and sits back and listens. Your relationship with your sponsor or sponsee could be very businesslike or it could be intimate, or anywhere in between; it is a relationship with healthy boundaries based on trust. In the last three Prosperity Times we've been exploring tools of the program in the 12 Steps, The 12 Traditions, PRG's, and now Sponsorship; that rich and beautiful relationship between one who needs to give away what they have been given, and one who needs to receive what they will one day give away... ~ Editor

Do DA Day Follow-Up,

One of InterGroup's two annual events, was held on Sunday, September 21, 2009 at the Holiday Inn on Hegenberger Road in Oakland. Do DA Day focuses on the nuts and bolts of DA. The event was a great success with over 150 people attending and a record number of 38 advanced registrations through the PayPal button on the NCDA website.

The event began with Michael A. from San Francisco as the keynote. Afterward, the main room was broken down into three rooms for simultaneous workshops to happen throughout the day. Workshops included the Steps, the Tools, and focused topics such as Financial Dependency, Underearning, and Artists in DA. Cynthia S. from Marin gave the second keynote just after lunch. Treasure Mapping and PRGs happened throughout the day.

Lynda R., serving as a DA Intergroup representative and co-speaker coordinator for Do Da Day, offered her reflections on the day:

As I was standing outside of the workshops and directing people to where they wanted to go, I loved listening to the excitement, hope and joy in their voices and on their faces when they were speaking to their friends old or those just met at Do DA Day. The theme over and over was how much they received from listening to the keynote speakers or the workshop leaders; how happy they were to be at Do DA Day for the umpteenth time, or for the very first time. People were showing the treasure maps they had just made and/or talking about the PRG that they just sat on for someone or had for themselves.

I experienced great joy to have been a part of helping other DA members new and seasoned with their recovery in DA. I am in deep gratitude for the hope I saw in others, and felt in my own heart. Thank you God for Do DA Day '09.

Here are some of the comments people shared in their evaluations at the end of the event:

-Inspiring! I really want to do my numbers now again!

-The Financial Dependency panel was very powerful. It was hard-hitting, faith-based, and in line with going to any length.

-As a newcomer, I appreciated the Record Keeping and Spending Plan workshops.

-I particularly appreciated the Artists in DA workshop.

-Loved the Treasure Mapping.

-Good workshops, lots of recovery.

Thanks InterGroup, very well done!! ~ Editor

We Came to Believe in a Power Greater Than Ourselves...

Sponsorship; a Unique Relationship

There is an expectation in forming a sponsor / sponsee relationship that one of the participants will change. Usually the sponsee is the one seeking change from the fear, confusion, frustration and the hopelessness that got them into recovery in the first place. It is important to know that the sponsor is in the relationship for a reason too. For me, the reason was to give back some of the gifts that recovery had provided. The gift of serenity was first. My sponsor helped me to understand that I wasn't a bad person needing to get good but that I was a person with out tools needing a full set and a box to put them in.

I usually tell new sponsee's that I have two main duties as a sponsor. The first is to help them go through the steps. The second is to have a good filter when listening and being able to determine which step to work on for what ever is going on when we talk. The tools include using the phone, going to meetings, having pressure relief groups, keeping the numbers and working the steps. The sponsor can be a ready source for the step work over a period of time and as a check in and continue to take inventory basis. Here is how it works for me and most of my sponsee's.

We usually get back to steps one two and three in the first few minutes of our conversations. This helps both of us to start with the understanding of powerlessness and the identification and inclusion of a higher power in the situation. What a relief. Even if we don't go any further, for the time being, there is hope and relief in these three steps. It does not take but a few minutes to go through them. 1. We admitted we were powerless over debt and that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. And 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

When I talk to my sponsor, I am often at my wits end and quite excited. He often invites me to say the Serenity Prayer. For some reason, this always calms me down a bit and when our conversation resumes I am much more coherent. I recommend starting any conversation with a sponsor or sponsee this way. If I can get into the gist of my problems then he asks "do you think you might be powerless over this situation?"

With this, I am reminded (ever so gently) that the first step is appropriate here. "Yes, I say, and my life is unmanageable but, but, but," at which point he says, "Where is your higher power in this?" We talk then about my higher power because when I remember that I have a higher power, my troubles take a back seat.

At this point, I can turn my will and my life over.

If during this process, when working with a sponsee, I get resistance or confusion we can stop there with the progression. This is exactly where the growth in recovery has reached a glitch. Where some how the understanding of powerlessness or a belief in a higher power or the decision to turn ones will and life over to the higher power of his or her understanding has stopped. What an insight this is. At any of these points, a sponsee can go back to work on themselves. Like doing homework, we need to know what we have to study and then get to it. If a sponsee needs to look into if they are powerless over debt, they can research the evidence. Look over the books, or lack there of, look at the past spending habits or statements from the bank. The information is there and looking will reveal if all is well or help is needed. Discovering or revisiting a belief in a higher power is the homework for step two. And committing to that relationship is the homework for step three.

I encourage sponsee's to not dally on these steps. Nobody I know does them perfectly. It is of course, up to the sponsee how fast they want to move through the steps but I try to make it clear that many people get relief with the steps (all of them) in a matter of days.

The fourth through ninth steps are a bit more work, but can be done quite thoroughly with the help of literature like the pamphlet "The twelve steps of D.A." a pad of paper and a sponsor. The foundation we built with the first three steps are paramount to success in these next steps. We take inventory noting where we debt. We admit to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs and through steps six and seven we become willing to have these defects removed and ask that they be removed.

As a sponsor, I am humbled by the need there is for this relationship. It is not easy to ask a sponsee to become willing to change let alone to ask their higher power for help in that change by removing the defect.

I need my relationship with my higher power to be in good shape for this. I need to ask for the humility to be of service and not holier than thou. As a sponsor the responsibility is enormous.

In step eight, the sponsee makes a list and becomes willing to make amends (change behavior). I encourage them to ask for help from their higher power for the willingness. In step nine, the amends are different every time for every

sponsee. This is where each sponsor and sponsee relationship is tested. Again reading all one can on making amends is needed. I re-read the "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" book published by Alcoholics Anonymous as well as all of the D.A. literature. The stories in "The Currency of Hope" help a lot in seeing how other recovering debtors made their amends. I try to remind my sponsee's that amends is about getting clear. A big part of amends is communication and re-commitment. They are starting a new way of relating and have a new set of tools to do it with. Steps ten eleven and twelve are ongoing, revisiting and maintenance steps. Continuing inventory and when wrong, promptly admitting it is a daily practice. By this time we are all humbled by the process of the steps. Continuing with prayer and meditation is very helpful in staying balanced and maintaining serenity. Giving back to others in the program is one of the best ways to do twelfth step work. Speaking at meetings when asked, sitting on pressure relief groups and sponsoring others are all forms of giving back.

As a sponsor I watch that my sponsee's are through their step work prior to recommending being a sponsor. The work of doing the steps makes for a very consuming and personal time in one's life. It takes an enormous amount of energy to change and having a sponsor there to help us through these changes is very fortunate for those who use this tool. I hope this helps.

Jack M

Keep Trying

In my meeting, no one raises their hand to be a sponsor, except for one guy. And I am not about to ask a guy to be my sponsor. I don't mind because I have been in 12 step programs a long time, so I know to ask. I personally don't raise my hand because I sponsor five or six people (do you count people that haven't called you in over a month?).

A friend of mine in the program advised that I ask a particular woman to sponsor me. I did, and she gave me an answer that now seems characteristically DA to me. "I have made a commitment to not take on any new service positions until April." I waited the four to six weeks until April and asked her again. She was surprised that I had remembered, but she said yes.

Two things I want to illustrate here: one) that DA members are often time debtors and if they are working on that, they strive to take care of themselves by not

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
 PO Box 423058
 San Francisco, CA 94142-3058
- ◇ **45% to the General Service Offices**
 General Service Office-DA
 PO Box 92088
 Needham, MA 02492-0009
- ◇ **10% to the General Service Rep**
 NorCal DA GSR
 PO Box 423136
 San Francisco, CA 94142

taking on too many commitments; and two) don't take it personally.

My sponsor said to me that her role with me was primarily to work the steps. She encouraged me to get a PRG so I had people I could talk to about specific financial issues. I say the same things to my sponsees. In the four years since, I have worked steps one through twelve with my sponsor. This year, I worked another four through twelve.

This division of responsibility between the sponsor and the PRG was important for me. When I came to DA it was easy to think that it was all about the money. I was relieved to have someone help me set up a spending plan. I was glad to have someone counsel me in regards to my creditors. And I relished getting guidance about putting my sizable tax return into prudent reserve rather than using it to pay off 1% of my overwhelming debt.

But that's not what DA is only about. If it was, then I would have gotten the help I needed when I met with a financial consultant six years before. DA is about working the steps around my debting. Discovering my powerlessness over debting, beyond a shadow of a doubt. Finding a higher power big enough to handle the hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt, a law suit and another one waiting in the wings, an IRS audit, and the possible demise of our company. And completely turning my will and my life over to that higher power, on a daily basis. Looking at my part, asking god to remove from me the needs for my character defects, making amends for my part, reviewing my day every day, praying, meditating, and using the principles in all of my affairs. Having a spiritual awakening.

Stories of Recovery

Working the steps with a sponsor in DA has relieved me of overwhelming stress, anxiety and fear. I didn't know that it was possible to live free of these things and to feel gratitude everyday for my life. I continue to talk to my sponsor once a week. Most of the time, I'm just fine. Sometimes I might have some writing to do, or some self care or meditation. And I have had the pleasure to work the steps with my sponsees the same exact way that my sponsor showed them to me.

~ Anonymous

Please do feel free to make copies of

P **T** and share it with others.

Or, save a tree and download it from:
www.ncdawe.org

(Secret: The web edition may have additional stories)

Grateful for Another Solvent Day

*Your power & strength carry us through each day.
So why would one choose another way?
The choices are clear and your comfort so dear.....*

*Why would one rather debt then THINK?
Why would one rather buy all but the sink?
Why would one rather have clutter to heave?
When one could trust and then believe.*

*What is the story and why would folks do it?
The answer is clear that we lack Your spirit.*

*We receive Your spirit if we just ask humbly.
Because another purchase will just make us bumbly.*

*So why would one debt to later regret?
Live "out of moment" and soon just forget.
We wouldn't, we're fellows with our safety net.
We trust and we love You. You are our best bet.*

*You are our Higher Power
...by minute....by hour.*

*Your love can transform our lives perfectly.
We want it, we pray and eventually
We thank You for waiting so patiently.*

*You are our Higher Power. We surrender to You.
You're ways are always so tried and so true.*

*Thank You for the reminder to pray for Your way....
And for making this another solvent day. ~ Marcia*

P **T** has more of your great stories!
Thank you for submitting your experience, strength and hope!
Please, Keep 'em coming!

(Secret: The web edition WILL have additional stories)

Next Topic, The Promises of DA/BDA

Please submit your story no later than February 15, 2010

to

wadeheirloom@gmail.com

It may seem like a long time away, but don't wait, write your story and send it in right away!! *Editor*

Sponsorship, Go Figure!

I have a great Sponsor. I call my sponsor when I feel like my program is letting me down, and my Sponsor always reminds me that I need to work my program a little harder and I won't feel that way anymore— she is always right about that one. The first time I really let her into my life, trusted her with my numbers, and was really honest my hands were shaking and I thought I was going to burst into tears. About a half hour later I felt relief, I hadn't been judged or condemned in any way; they were just numbers after all!

I now sponsor four people in this program and I talk to each of them weekly; for now. They are all new to the Steps in this program and I assume that eventually we'll talk less, or maybe not, we'll see. I didn't know that I was ready to be a Sponsor until someone asked me and then boom, there I was, a Sponsor! I am not all knowing, and I certainly don't work a perfect program, so what am I doing here? Who do I think I am? The gentle answer is that I'm just a regular person who has learned to listen really well and to be patient and kind and supportive.

You see, I read a couple of books about Sponsorship and I realized that I couldn't be like those other people in the books. I needed to be myself if I was going to be any good at this thing, but I needed to be better at being myself than I had been all along. I needed to ground myself and develop the best things I like about myself when I was being a sponsor; you know, a better listener, more patient, and more supportive. Also I needed to be better organized and have better follow through. It seemed to work pretty well, none of my Sponsees have fired me and all are progressing through the Steps in what seems to me to be a regular pace.

(continues)

Funny thing happened though. While I was pretending to be this better person, I quickly became that better person all the time, not just when I'm with a Sponsee. Helping them work their program has made me better at my

Stories of Recovery

program. Helping them discover who they were meant to be has led me to who I was meant to be... Go figure.

I still need my Sponsor, and if I lose her I will find another and keep working my program with the help of a good Sponsor. I'm still not perfect, but I'm way better now than I was before becoming a Sponsor. My advice: If you've worked through Step Five with a Sponsor you are ready to be a Sponsor yourself. If someone asks you to be their Sponsor say yes to them, you'll be saying yes to yourself too.

~Andrew

Webster missed the point

I looked up Sponsor in the dictionary and it didn't say anything about being in a Twelve Step program. Nothing about trust, kindness, and understanding. Nothing about being available, wise, compassionate or patient. Not a thing about having healthy boundaries, sharing one's experience, strength and hope and calling me on my baloney. Webster didn't say a single thing about when I felt lost and my meetings and my Sponsor were my only guiding light until I found my Higher Power. There was nothing about sharing my step work with a safe person and discovering that I no longer needed my ill patterns in life, I could choose another way.

Maybe it was silly to look for a definition of what my DA Sponsor is to me in the dictionary, because everyone's Sponsor is a little different. But maybe in the synonym section they could say: Sponsor = Lifesaver

~Angela

Take Five!

When I came to DA I heard about the Steps and tried diligently to work my way through them on my own for a long time. I didn't get very far or have much success that way because I was isolating. I started and stopped four times and finally asked someone to be my Sponsor. They said no, and so did someone else. I was encouraged to keep asking and the third person said YES and became my Sponsor and still is.

My Sponsor helped me through the steps and I found my previous work wasn't all that bad, I just needed someone with a little more experience to help me put it in context, and to understand myself a little better. With the help of my Sponsor I worked through the fourth step in about six months. Then came step five, sharing my personal inventory with another person. The only person I could imagine doing that with was my Sponsor. No way, no how could it have been another person on this planet,

and when I was done I walked away a new person. Literally. Truly. And I have never gone back to being the old me again.

~Darrah

Meeting donations to the Northern California Debtors Anonymous General Service Rep Group...	Group #	City	Donations
	141	Santa Rosa	\$35.00
	153	San Francisco	\$24.79
	155	Menlo Park	\$30.00
	156	Menlo Park	\$70.00
Now that's a mouthful!	157	Mountain View	\$25.00
	176	Corte Madera	\$197.04
<i>The GSR Area group meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month at 10:15 am.</i>	224	San Jose	\$31.70
	368	Walnut Creek	\$39.49
	406	San Francisco	\$54.94
<i>The meeting ends at 12:00 noon and is also accessible by teleconference. We meet in the 3rd floor conference room (Paley) at the main branch of the San Francisco Public Library, 100 Larkin Street. Our call in number is (616) 347-8100 and the access code is 758367#</i>	419	San Rafael	\$156.46
	468	San Francisco	\$53.38
	494	Santa Cruz	\$23.58
	604	San Francisco	\$39.60
	611	Oakland	\$88.46
	713	Mill Valley	\$20.38
	817	Burlingame	\$28.00
	1009	Palo Alto	\$48.60
	1029	Oakland	\$30.00
	1091	San Francisco	\$12.00
	1303	San Francisco	\$26.82
		Oakland	\$10.00
		San Francisco	\$20.00
			\$1,065.24

Share your Recovery...

The *PROSPERITY TIMES* welcomes your personal story of experience, strength and hope in the DA program.

Please send your submission as a Word document or in the body of an email. Length may be 300-650 words or whatever.

Please send to:

prosperitytimes@ncdawe.org

Next theme: The Tools of the Program

Please submit no later than March 10, 2010

Thanks from the Editor

If you are concerned about doing all the work of writing an article and not seeing it printed, don't be. If there is an overflow the web edition will have all articles that could not go into the paper edition.