

## Editor's Note

We have decided to no longer include the Bay Area DA meeting list in the *PROSPERITY TIMES*. We ran into trouble in the summer edition with inconsistencies between the printed list and the online version, so for the most up to date meeting list, go to [www.ncdaweb.org](http://www.ncdaweb.org) and select the city of your choice. Downloadable PDF meeting lists are coming in the future.

Thank you to all our wonderful contributors for sharing your experience, strength and hope on the subject of **Fellowship & Community**. We are very grateful for all the submissions. This is a very full edition with many wonderful articles. Please keep writing! Each one of us in our DA community has something to say, so please consider writing for our next edition.

With Winter Lights on the horizon, the theme for our next issue will be **Visions**, so please start thinking about contributing. Some questions to consider:

- What are your visions?
- How have your visions changed over the course of your recovery?
- What steps are you taking to realize your visions?
- How are you going to pay for your visions?
- Have you manifested your visions? We want to hear about it!!
- Reflect on the visions pamphlet: what speaks to you most deeply about visions in DA?
- Is there something else you'd rather write about? Do it!

Let's hear about your plans for recovery and realizing your beautiful visions!

Please have your submissions to us by **Saturday, February 4, 2012**. Send us an email:

[editor.prosperitytimes@gmail.com](mailto:editor.prosperitytimes@gmail.com)

## DoDA Day was wonderful!

**Thank you to everyone who volunteered, organized, gave PRGs, led workshops, shared, and attended the event. We have a rich community.**

## From Isolation to Intimacy in DA

The stories included in this edition of the *PROSPERITY TIMES* are wonderful examples of community in action. Recurring themes in the submissions are overcoming isolation and experiencing intimacy with a higher power and with others in our community.

Many of us appear to suffer from isolation. In DA, we discover that we crave connection, and we begin to build trust and intimacy with each other through service, working the Steps and Tools, and in fellowship with one another. Fellowship can be small, or in can be community-wide events like DoDA Day. Both examples are written about in this issue.

DoDA Day gave us a wonderful opportunity to connect with others and focus on recovery. Intergroup did a great job organizing a conference where our community could come together and immerse ourselves in many aspects of the DA program. It was fun to meet new people and see old friends. It is truly amazing how far we have all come, no matter where we are in our recovery.

The community came together in a beautiful way to offer PRGs to those who needed them. It has been wonderful to read in the articles submitted how

## Reflection on DoDA Day

I always write down the dates for DoDA day and Winter Lights. I have issues with time and over-scheduling, so I don't always make it to these fellowship days. In fact, I haven't been for over 3 years, but this year, miraculously, my Saturday opened up, and I decided to have what I considered to be a completely self-centered recovery day.

It turned out to be a very easy and graceful day. I pulled into the parking lot, my phone rang, and I was able to spend time speaking with a friend. Because I had given myself this day for healing, I was open to what Higher Power had in store.

I sat on one person's PRG during the day and attended 3 break out sessions. Each held lessons for me.

being of service is so rewarding. It is true- by helping each other we are helping ourselves.

Deep friendships have grown out of fellowship, and for me, those friendships build my community and enrich my life. As one contributor reminds us, we are there for each other in a multitude of diverse and important ways. We heal by letting others help us, and by being there for our fellows.

One of the most important relationships to me is that with my sponsor. Whenever I speak with my sponsor, I am challenging the belief that I am worthless and that I do not belong. The acceptance I experience from him helps me to heal the shame around my finances and removes my desire to debt. The relationship feeds me and helps me to feel like I am a valuable participating member of this community.

Each article in this edition contains wisdom around breaking isolation and experiencing the power of connection with others in a healing community. The contributions in this edition are truly of service. Thank you to all who wrote. Enjoy!

~ Editor

What was so striking about the day was experiencing that we all speak the same language. I attend predominantly one meeting and see a lot of the same people, so it was amazing to me to commune with the wider fellowship- others who are engaged with the steps and DA. It reminded me of the scope and magnitude of the program, and I felt very supported and inspired.

I loved seeing folks from my home meeting and meeting new people, as well. I still feel the connection, and am grateful for so many of us connecting with Higher Power and healing our relationships with money.

~ RM, Menlo Park

## ***Fellowship of Support, Encouragement and Love***

I've heard it said that DA is a "we" program: every one of the 12 steps begins with "we". This has been a challenging yet healing concept for me. At first, the "we" in DA – the fellowship – was the loving ears of people who heard me tell the truth, and who nodded and understood and even laughed with recognition.

Before DA I was extremely private about my finances. The more I struggled with debt and underearning, the more alone and fake I felt, even among friends. I talked in generalities like "Things are tight" or "I'm doing OK" and changed the subject. I spent away all I had rather than admit I couldn't afford my home or trips and gifts – really, I usually had no idea whether I could afford them or not! I was sure that the only thing worse than the stress, sleepless nights and fear for my future was the shame I would feel if my friends and family – not to mention potential creditors, employers, or romantic partners – found out what a mess I had made of my finances.

I remember how amazed I was to walk into DA rooms where people were talking so truthfully and specifically about money. Eventually I got the courage to speak up, too. It was comforting but also scary: I didn't want to be in a "fellowship" of losers. How could these people who all had the same problems possibly help me?? And yet going to those meetings – and eventually getting a sponsor – brought me out of isolation and put me in touch with a higher power. I began to feel accepted and accepting of my own powerlessness over debting and underearning (Step 1) and I started to trust that together we are greater – and wiser! – than the sum of our parts (Step 2).

## ***Fellowship and Fun as a Result of the DA Community***

I have been involved with Debtors Anonymous for many years now, and have always enjoyed the sense of community I find in the meetings, local DA events and among the individual members.

Although I live north of the bay area, I have been privileged to attend many of the Intergroup-sponsored Do-DA Days and Winter Lights, and always come away inspired, motivated, encouraged and propelled into deeper DA recovery!

This past Winter Lights, for instance, we were blessed by a speaker, Willie, from Washington state, who inspired me to duplicate their 14-week, 12-step workshop over the summer in our city.

There were 12 participants who completed the process that started in late June and ended toward the end of September. It was a serious time commitment, especially during the summer months when many travel and are out of the area on weekends.

We encouraged all to attend as many weeks as possible, and do the best they could with the sometimes-intense work that was asked of them in the workbook. In the end, we formed a very sweet, powerful bond between us, and each one was blessed in countless ways as we worked through the 12 steps of this amazing program.

After the 14 weeks ended, we all felt a sense of sadness that it was over, and we immediately made plans to offer the workshop again, starting in January. We are happy to make this powerful process available to other DA members, both in our area and perhaps even in neighboring counties.

We also chose to get together outside of DA for a game night party on Halloween weekend. One member cleverly suggested we dress as

For me DA fellowship also means getting hands-on practical support for moving into action. DA is such an action-oriented program! In my first PRG meeting I was stunned that two people I barely knew would take time out of their busy schedules to sit down and help me with my complicated financial mess – and then make a date with me to do it again! I started slowly to move on things that had paralyzed me for years, with the help of my PRG, bookending calls, my sponsor and an action buddy.

There were certain nights at DA "fellowship" – in this case the talking and coffee after a meeting – when I realized that we are really an amazing round-robin of practical help. In DA I've been lent tools, gotten referrals to service professionals, sent around my resume for feedback, given legal advice, fixed someone's computer, been coached on interior design and car repair. We help each other move, go on job interviews, write business plans, go to the hospital, plan weddings.

The intimacy and practical support that comes with this kind of community helps me break my pattern of doing everything alone. It's also a wonderful example of the promise "We will recognize that there is enough; our resources will be generous and we will share them with others and with DA." It reminds me that we all have something to give, just not the same thing and not necessarily at the same time. Like my HP, fellowship is always there if I just reach for it.

~ Maureen, San Francisco

our most challenging character defect! Several of us took that challenge, and we had a wonderful, humorous evening as one person came as "The Honorable J. Mental," while another was "Prepared for the Worst," completely dressed head to toe in Hazmat garb. Someone chose to wear purple to signify "Envy" and another formed a completely black and white ensemble out of household items, to portray "Black & White Thinking." We had a ball, playing off each other's costumes, and even did charades where we each had to act out some phrase, slogan or subject of DA!

This program has truly become an extended, chosen family for me. I continue to heal and grow in ways not possible without the acceptance, love and encouragement from the members I've come to know and appreciate! I am so grateful for the life that has been shown to me through these simple (but not easy!) 12 steps! Thank you, Debtors Anonymous!

~ Renee R, Santa Rosa

*For more DA stories and information from  
NCDI Intergroup, visit*

**[www.ncdaweb.com](http://www.ncdaweb.com)**

Contribute to the

***PROSPERITY TIMES***

[editor.prosperitytimes@gmail.com](mailto:editor.prosperitytimes@gmail.com)

## ***Money and Pain: A Healing of Isolation***

Having grown up in an alcoholic family, my addiction, if you will, has always been isolating.

In 1976, I got involved in a new age program which taught people that participation in life is the path to health and well being. I participated in this new age program by volunteering, and experienced a fullness in living which I had never known.

Over the years I moved in and out of isolation, in and out of participation, and in and out of experiencing the richness of community.

About a year ago I walked into DA with my isolation in tow. I wanted a solution to my financial crisis like RIGHT NOW! But they didn't have any right now solutions.

I was sitting on the periphery of my fourth DA meeting when I did what I've always done. I checked in with my trusty mind to figure out if there was anything for me in DA. The answer was a resounding PROBABLY NOT. Probably not for me meant: I'm socially awkward at times, I don't know anyone here, and I've attended four entire meetings and so far, nothing has changed.

But . . . I had a secret weapon, it's called pain. It's highly underrated but it can beat the pants off of pleasure any day of the week if you're looking for the motivation to step out of financial crisis. It reminds me of what McCabe said in *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*, "Money and pain . . . pain and

money," and that's what got me into Debtors Anonymous, "pain and money."

At the end of my fourth DA meeting, after we held hands in the completion circle my personal demon popped right up, Unstructured Social Interaction Time. I hate that. So the question is: Do I slip out the door? Or, do I take a leap of faith into participation and social interaction, and risk the possibility of death and dismemberment. But with the pain of my financial devastation and the end of my life as I knew it, I steadied myself to remain in the Debtor's Anonymous meeting room.

And then, as hard as it is to believe, this guy says hello, we start talking, and after awhile I realize I'm on the inside. I'm still breathing. I have a pulse. I'm okay. It's like when you're at a new school and you meet another kid on the playground, and now you have a friend.

That was my experience in breaking through my isolation to get into this amazing program called DA.

Whenever you find yourself taking the next challenging step in your DA program, always remember, death and dismemberment have never actually occurred in this program. They're only in our mind. So keep coming back!

~ Joel, San Francisco

## ***Gratitude for Fellowship and Service***

I don't know what I would do without this fellowship. I don't know what I would have done had I not come here. I was certainly in a mess: in poverty, homeless, broke, career going nowhere, clueless, desperate, in debt, no car, trying to be a good parent quite ineffectively, about to apply for welfare.

From my first meeting, I was greeted with love, patience and understanding. A member reached out to me and offered me help and hope. I was stunned that others were willing to spend their precious time and attention on my stuff, on me, and offer me a life, showing me how to work the program. It's been that way ever since, and I've gone on to be of service however I can be.

I've stopped feeling like I don't belong, like others know each other and are friends, and that I am on the outside (old patterns). I now feel like a contributing part of the group of debtors. I've begun to learn to treasure myself and offer my wisdom, strength and hope to others. I still have my old conditioning that keeps me to myself, not reaching out as much as I would like. I've made progress, have a good life, am out of debt and solvent, and am far from any idea of perfection.

The more and the deeper I reach into the community and befriend others and serve, the more my life, serenity and joy will increase. I know this. I pray to use the phone and other tools more frequently, in order to get closer to others and strengthen our community. It's the fellowship and community that heal my loneliness and isolation, help me know that I am valued, and allow me to give credit to myself and others. I thank God for the DA fellowship.

~ Anonymous

### **Group Donations**

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

- **45% to local Intergroup**

NCCA Intergroup  
PO Box 423058  
San Francisco, CA 94142

- **45% to Gen. Service Office**

DA-GSB  
PO Box 92088  
Needham, MA 02492

- **10% to Gen. Service Rep**

NorCal DA GSR  
PO Box 423136  
San Francisco, CA 94142

## ***Fellowship, I-solo-ation, and the Tandem Bike of Recovery***

When I was asked to be a keynote speaker at Do DA Day 2011, I was ready to decline. The “yeah buts” of a lifetime were right there (“My story isn’t...” “I don’t have...” “Nobody will want to...” “What do I think I...”).

Truth be told, I didn’t attend fellowship days regularly over the years. The “yeah buts” were always there (“I should go, but you know what it’s going to be like...” “It’s always a great event, but my recovery is at a point where...”).

Now, something is new: I have come to think about DA/BDA as an experience of “our recovery” instead of primarily “my recovery.”

There was a stretch of years in which “my recovery” got a little too comfortable. Though I couldn’t see it at the time, my life and my businesses were not going where I wanted them to go. The nonprofit that I had founded so as to answer the call of my right livelihood—surely evidence of carrying out my higher power’s will for me, right?—closed its doors in April 2009. That was when I got it: I was getting back pretty much what I was putting into my program.

So, that same month, when the announcement was made for the hundredth time that my BDA group still had a three-year service position open, I raised my hand and became a General Service Representative. (The yeah-buts were ready: “*Three years?! What am I thinking?! And I don’t know how to be a GSR!*”)

Three world conferences later, and after a thousand days of seeing recovery in a much bigger picture—one of community and fellowship, our life in recovery—I now see my role as, foremost, a responsibility to my fellows, with opportunities to serve. It appears I do have something to offer, and indeed I’m receiving blessings from the program disproportionate to the imperfect contributions I’ve put forth.

At Do DA Day 2011, I spoke. I introduced my higher power to the fellowship through a series of metaphors (OK: similes). The final one: “Living in recovery is like riding a tandem bicycle.”

My wife and I have a tandem. I’m up front, the “captain”; she’s the “stoker.” Solo riding can’t compare. This is a splendid new form of partner dancing, and we’re having a blast.

Yet I’m *intensely* aware of her life and welfare being in my hands, as I do all the steering, braking, maneuvering, judging, watching out, you name it. It’s a sobering reality of ceaseless vigilance.

But *so*, precisely, *is recovery*.

So I now see “our recovery” as having put me in the *stoker’s* seat! My higher power is the steering-and-braking captain!

Suddenly, it’s a new life in recovery. I have four tasks.

- 1: Sit back (I’m not in control).
- 2: Trust—*utterly* (my welfare is not in my hands).
- 3: Pedal like mad (there’s work to be done)!
- 4: Enjoy the ride (there is nothing else like it).

~ Tom F. San Francisco

## ***Letting the Clutter Go, and Letting the Love in***

The DA Fellowship has helped me to connect with and develop community outside of the walls of our magical, meaningful 12 step meetings.

“A much more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations and affairs.” (p 19, AA Big Book)

Part of my recovery experience has been to leave the cocoon of our fellowship and actually learning to apply the principles to my actual waking life.

When I came to DA, the primary relationships in my life were with my sponsees and sponsors in the various 12 step programs in which I participate. Due to time-debting, I didn’t have time for basic self care (sufficient sleep, clean, ironed clothes, etc...) let alone time for fun and socializing. And because of my self-debting, I didn’t have the energetic resources to enjoy quality time with people anyway! (I was always exhausted by the weekend from all of the multiple projects I would have going on at once.)

Through DA, in slowing down and being willing to show up for my bills and life on time, I am becoming increasingly able to show up for relationships with others – and in doing so, am able to receive the connection that I have always wanted.

Opening my heart and letting you in starts with the numbers. By not debting one day at a time, and steadily gaining clarity on the status of my income, records and the like, I have less clutter under which to hide. And with the clarity of our program, I’m able to see that I’d been using the messiness caused by my vague finances as a buffer between me and that all exposing, terrifying, yet highly hungered-for experience: intimacy.

I don’t know how, I don’t know why, but as my DA friend puts it “G\*d is in the numbers.” And in doing my numbers, I am given a clearer path to myself along which I meet you, my fellow travelers, and a larger, more satisfying life than I had expected. And the good news is, like DA recovery itself, that while it’s sometimes scary, this joint journey – sharing my life, recovery and self with you and others – is much more rewarding and doable than it first seems.

Thank you, DA.

~ Corrine, San Francisco

***“Isolation will give way to fellowship.  
Faith will displace fear.”***

~ From the DA Promises