



# Doing Business Without Debting

A monthly publication of BDA Intergroup Startup Project ([bdaintergroup.org](http://bdaintergroup.org))

October 2020

Volume 1, Issue 2

## Coupling BDA with Already Solid DA Recovery

DA and BDA, combined, is the best thing that has ever happened to me. The first of many gifts I received from DA was that money stopped being my Higher Power. I first came to DA in 2009 as a six-figure earner. Yet I ran out of money once or twice every month, for years. Nothing could make me moody like having no access to money. Today I earn much less, and for years, I have frequently gone days, even weeks, without touching cash. This year, in 2020, I have literally had the same two \$1 bills in my wallet since January 1st.

Several years into solid solvency, there is nothing outside of myself that can take control of my mood or of my feelings about myself or about my life. Through practicing the principles — Steps, Traditions, and Concepts — of the DA and BDA program, I have found a Higher Power who loves and cares for me. Higher Power is my source for everything and every experience that comes into my life. My part is acceptance and gratitude, which lead to my best effort and energy.

The outcomes are then Higher Power's to manifest and are invariably positive, although not always immediately or obviously positive. Getting solvent — free of incurring new unsecured debt, that is any debt not backed up by some form of collateral, one day at a time, day after day — in August 2014 was not easy, though. Having left DA meetings in 2012 and having borrowed basic living expenses for a couple years, I rejoined DA and quit debting “cold turkey” on day one. For the first six months, my income did not change, yet my spending decreased at once.

My life shrank and my sense of deprivation grew rapidly. So, I dived into the first three Steps with a previous DA sponsor. That kept me free from debting one day at a time. Six months later my income increased suddenly, and I have had enough money to meet my needs ever since, more than enough money this year and last.

In August 2015, the DA Step booklet was released, and I immediately established a DA co-sponsoring relationship with a long-time friend I had originally met and served with during the WSC 2010-2012 service years. Big shout out to the Resource Development Committee (RDC)! It took us six months to take the Steps together using the new DA Steps literature. Although my earnings have remained low, and my historical debts remain high, I consider myself a DA success story, having taken the DA Steps in a very clear and concrete way with a fellow DA member, having maintained my solvency for more than six years, one day at a time, and having learned to live within my means, no matter what.

My membership in BDA started in January 2017, and although those relationships have recently ended, I had a BDA sponsor and a BDA home group for 3.5 years. Although not my primary money problem, which is compulsive debting, one of my most troublesome symptoms is underearning. I have turned to BDA for help. And it is working! I have been self-employed since 2002. Over the past few years, I have begun to find the same excitement and joy in my freelance work that I had only ever found in 12-Step service and sponsorship. I have also learned to approach the world with positive anticipation. I am meeting “my”

clients and can deliver the services they need at a higher quality than they expect. BDA is giving me both a new life experience and a new recovery experience.

My primary service to BDA these days, months, and years is as the host of “Let’s Do BDA Together,” a rotating six-month cycle of recovery and fundraising events hosted by BDA Workshops, registered group # 122319. This space will be filled with information about BDA Workshops in the November 2020 issue of this newsletter. For now, I’ll simply say that I fell in love with the “other 24 principles” — beyond the 12 Steps — as a servant of the World Service Conference (WSC) in 2010-2012 and 2015-2017. And I’ve been studying those chapters in our DA book with both sponsors and sponsees since they were first published in book form in 2016. Combining the 36 principles with the 24 DA and BDA tools, and the 12 DA promises, for these workshop



cycles, has been emotionally and spiritually mind-blowing. Please visit [bdaworkshops.org](http://bdaworkshops.org) for all the details.

My secondary BDA service is as project lead for the BDA Intergroup Startup Project, a BDA group with the very specific intention of spending 16 months, ending December 31, 2021, investigating the need for and viability of a worldwide BDA Intergroup. As a sample of who we are and how we are serving together, here is the 10th of our 10 spiritual ground rules for how we interact in shared service: “We have fun together and laugh at ourselves and each other

a LOT. Bleeding deacons, drama kings and queens, Eeyores, Debbie Downers, and party poopos need not apply!” You might think we are kidding; we are not. If you are offended, please refer to AA’s Rule 62. If you want to DO service “for fun and for free,” as we used to say in AA in the 1990s, please come join us.

To wrap-up my qualification here: I am a member of two 12-Step programs: clean and sober in AA since September 8, 1992 and solvent in DA since August 8, 2014. During my 28 years of sobriety, six years of solvency, and more than three years in BDA, I have taken the Steps no fewer than 15 times and in at least 10 different formats. Since 1996 I have sponsored more than 60 men and women through all 12 Steps. Thanks to BDA Workshops, I have taken 15 more members, so far, through some or all of the DA Steps, as applied to our business and work lives. I have the best possible sponsor — for me — in DA and my four DA/BDA sponsees are some of my favorite people on this planet. I have never allowed myself to be this engaged in anything, let alone something about which I feel a great God-given, God-driven purpose. DA and BDA have changed my life completely.

To me, this recovery is not about the money, yet I can share that in the 3.5 years since I joined BDA, after my earnings had remained static in DA for almost three years, my annual income has increased by 370%. (That is not a typo.)

— Bob A, Seattle by way of SF and Portland

## Experience

### Years of Solvency

Have a solvency anniversary coming up? <https://www.bdaintergroup.org/post/an-invitation-to-celebrate> for details.

### The Pains of Growing Up

*"Finally, we begin to see that all people, including ourselves, are to some extent emotionally ill as well as frequently wrong, and then we approach true tolerance and see what real love for our fellows actually means. It will become more and more evident as we go forward that it is pointless to become angry or to get hurt by people who, like us, are suffering from the pains of growing up."*

— from Step 10 in the AA 12 and 12

*"To begin Step Ten is to take a close, hard look at ourselves, our actions, words, motives, habits, patterns, and even thoughts. When we find that we've done or said something wrong, Step Ten directs us to admit our wrongness promptly, to ourselves first. Before rushing to make an apology or an amends we have the luxury and opportunity of sitting still with a clear example of who we are but no longer want to be." — from Step 10 in the "Let's Do BDA Together" workshop materials*

## Strength

### We Must First Look at Ourselves

*"Detachment [happens when we avoid] judging clients' actions and [stay only on our] side of the relationship. Part of attachment is over-engagement in other people's problems. Stand clear, stand free, disengage, detach ..."*

*"Before labeling any of the people with whom we interact in our business or workplace as difficult personalities or negative personality types, we must first look at ourselves. Who are we? What are we contributing to our interactions with these people? Have we become the people we want to be?"*

*"To 'dig deeper' within ourselves before confronting anyone else about their behaviors is to begin the practice of principles before personalities. To set proper boundaries, making suggestions and requests, rather than demands and ultimatums, is to be detached. We have our role; other people have theirs. Let's let them play their roles. And let's say goodbye when that's the best course of action."*

— from BDA Tool 10 in the "Let's Do BDA Together" workshop materials

## Hope

### Visions Are My GPS

*I think of visions like programming my GPS. I must put in my destination if I want to reach my goal. Of course, it is Higher Power that tells me which way to go. I used to be afraid to have a vision. I did not want to be disappointed yet again. I did not let myself think about visions until I got on top of my daily spending, which took about three years in BDA (and DA). With the help of my sponsor, Higher Power, and BDA members, I could hope and dream again.*

*My first vision was "piles of money." I created a sculpture out of small boxes I painted to look like stacks of dollar bills (programming my GPS). My savings increased from \$250 to \$25,000. I programmed in a 20% increase in annual business income, followed the suggestions of Higher Power and the program, i.e. write a business plan with accountable goals (turn right here), and reached my destination.*

*Today, my vision involves taking extremely good care of myself, the primary asset of my business. I follow the direction received in meditation to do one fun activity per week and have been enjoying this! I may not reach my next chosen destination, but I believe wherever I end up will be just fine — with Higher Power, BDA, and its members as my guidance system. I create a vision, take the actions, and leave the place of my arrival to my Higher Power.*

— Chris B, Federal Way, WA

## Come PRACTICE the DA and BDA principles and tools with us!

I am excited about our shift from BDA Intergroup to the BDA Intergroup Startup Project. This creates an opportunity for DA and BDA members who otherwise may not engage in service — like myself, while I am still in early solvency — to come aboard and participate. Not as bystanders to the action, but in real and vital service capacities. We will be taking and trying ideas and actions that many BDA members, especially members with a year or less of solvency, would feel uncomfortable even suggesting in a more formal setting. We will all get to learn about DA and BDA service, and about better leading and operating our businesses, through our involvement in this startup project.

Becoming a more engaged and knowledgeable business owner is exactly what I have been able to do since engaging with BDA service at this level in early June. That and attending the first and second cycles of "Let's Do BDA Together" ([bdaworkshops.org](http://bdaworkshops.org)). Despite a significant slowdown in my contracts and service agreements this year, my business is healthier than it has ever been. And despite our raging fires in Northern California, and the smoke I am inhaling every day, I feel that I am healthier — spiritually and emotionally — than I've ever been, too. This has been an amazing service experience so far, and I am excited that we're moving forward in our new project format and structure.

Serving as a project team, rather than as a replication of a World Service Conference (WSC) committee, we can invite and engage BDA members that are newer to DA and BDA recovery. I believe wholeheartedly that this service opportunity, especially being encouraged and trusted to create and lead development of our monthly newsletters, has enhanced my recovery more than I can even describe. So, I think this project plan is a great structure, and I think the far-reaching impact is going to be amazing.

The startup project plan and project document, as approved and posted to the [bdaintergroup.org](http://bdaintergroup.org) website in August, directly addresses most of my concerns regarding moving forward through 2021 and how we conduct ourselves with each other during the project. In June and July, I felt like everyone was trying to raise their energy and excitement, but it just was not happening.

The committee and Intergroup structures and all the rules we found in the *DA Manual of Service* (DAMS) and then included in the *BDA Intergroup Service Handbook* brought so much formality, hierarchy, and even politicking to our service interactions that I was having a hard time navigating. I felt like everyone was working hard, too hard, to try to establish a formal foundation, and it just was not coming together. As I understand it, our bottom-line intention is to work together towards a common good, towards our common mission, which is reaching the debtor who is still suffering. The new project structure works much better for me, and I think it will work better for everyone else, too.

I love that we will be having discussions and working through objections in order to, ideally, reach unanimous decisions at our future business meetings. As a long-time member of the beverage program, I've found that motions and voting create formal business meeting procedures that most 12-Steppers do not really understand anyway, so they either blindly follow the leader, or they rebel against the formality and perceived control. Both reactions frustrate me, so I am glad we will be taking all of that off the table, making things simpler for everyone. Consensus decision-making rocks! — Nancy G, San Ramon, CA