

Sunday Night BDA Group Inventory.
 May 18, 2019 and June 29, 2019
 Facilitator: Michalene
 Notetakers: Janie and Michalene

May 18, 2019 3-5pm Eastern (reformatted but no new edits since May 29th)

Michalene intro: AA and current chair of DA board. Has done many inventories more in AA.

PRESENT: Janie, Bill, Ingrid, Bob.

Suggested addition by adding the following:

Business Debtors Anonymous (BDA) is a distinct and dynamic but not separate part of DA, created to focus on the recovery of members of the fellowship who are business owners. Together, members of BDA support one another in applying the DA principles and tools when owning and running a business.

However, as part of DA, there is no separate membership for attending Business Debtors Anonymous meetings. As it states in DA's 3rd Tradition, "the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop incurring unsecured debt." This applies to both personal and professional debt. It is understood that paying bills for goods and services rendered according to agreed-upon terms does not constitute debting.

Inventory facilitator:

Michalene R, current GSB Chair (who generously helped us create our questions)

Planned questions for prayer, meditation, and discussion:

1. What are the principles by which all DA groups function, including our BDA group?
 Janie- to operate as DA/BDA steps, traditions, concepts, and all tools for both programs., Bill - add that it is about reaching out and being inclusive. Ingrid: keep it simple in agreement. Additionally: how to make it happen on phone bridge is often challenging to reach out and be inclusive.

2. From the Fifth Tradition, what is our BDA group's message? Are we carrying the message to debtors who still suffer. Janie: this meeting does this well. Bill: we are trying to carry message by using CAL and do the additional tools. We also exchange phone numbers and ask for people willing to sponsor and do PRGs. Ingrid: Carrying the message means to me - what can I do outside the meeting to carry message for ex: special programming/ie phone meeting, or in my life on daily basis how can I be doing that regularly. Janie: Do we distinguish ourselves w/BDA vs DA sponsor or PRG.

3. Do we stay focused on our singleness of purpose? Ingrid: Asks if it is to stop debting only in biz. M: clarifies that DA life impacts BDA life. Ingrid: We don't know if someone is having personal issues because we address only BIZ. M; Our focus is solvency in BIZ. Maybe we could be clearer that about the boundary between BDA and DA with regard to how each impacts the other. BILL: We don't specifically say that if you have a DA issue this meeting is for BDA. We straddle the line appropriately. Observation - We don't call out for BDA sponsor or PRG. DISCUSSION about on-line meetings Don't Debt and Solvency - both long time online meetings with huge followings.

Add on: Bob joined us late and provided the following comments while reviewing our notes -- In my understanding, every BDA meeting is a DA meeting, but not every DA meeting is a BDA meeting. Personally, I have both a micro-business which is not supporting my needs, and a night-time retail management job which is. I have that job and am earning a livable wage because of my recovery in BDA; DA didn't get me there. DA gives me the Steps and support I need to recover from compulsive debting and over-spending. BDA gives me the Tools and support I need to recover from under-earning, daydreaming when I should be working, and spending money before I receive it. I don't believe that DA sharing is an outside issue in BDA or vice versa.

4. Are we, as a group, open to change? Are we flexible and open to new ideas? Bill: I think we do well on this. We have changed our format, we use 12/12/12, new phone system, and we seem to be in good shape in this way. INGRID: I am impressed with all the recent changes. Good positive changes. Janie: Agree. Also concerned about tech element going forward. BOB: he thinks this group is very open and uptodate on tech. Michalene: She is clear that it sounds like we must be doing something right for there to be 30-40 people to be showing up.
5. Is our meeting format working for us and attracting new members? Janie: I love the focus on literature. Not sure about attraction. Bill: There are many silent members that we can now tell because of the new tech format. Not a fan of phone number exchange. Not sure about BIZ goals format. Likes the flow of meeting. We have created a contact list but not ez to do. As a phone format we do cover all the necessary things. Maybe we will figure out texting at some point. INGRID: I have just joined in the last 6 mo. And it was because of going to the meeting and liking the format. Not sure about attracting more people. Is it something we want to do? In her experience, when there is a strong meeting, and something outside like a workshop, it does attract new people. BOB: Thinks format is working but a bit messy. Don't love contact exchange. Suggests a solution to it to after meeting at newcomer greeter time. . Attracting - there are often up to 40 people listening. His best guess is that young people don't speak up. They show up consistently but don't participate. He would like to see more P.I.
6. What are the special challenges we face as a phone meeting? How are we handling those challenges? INGRID: My challenge as current moderator is to get participation. How come the listeners won't read/speak. BOB: 1. The biggest challenge was/ is background noise. We have licked that with new system. 2. Maintaining structure from one chair to another. Consistency of leadership is working for us. He sends the info when requested. The long pauses were difficult for me. I switched to phone from F2F for this reason. . JANIE: The issue of service in recovery and how to encourage people to do it and what service means. BILL: I have had same experience in large F2F meetings where people won't step up. If the prospect doesn't want what the meeting has you can't force the issues. We do

it for our recovery. Service is the critical piece of recovery. I think we are surging. And I am willing to accept what is. Now that we know there are silent participants I feel like we are doing our work. I am doing it for me now. The next frontier maybe chat rooms, reddit, etc. INGRID: suggests setting up a task force to do a tech thing like a chat room. Test it out amongst ourselves if interested. Look with new eyes. MICHAELNE: as far as participation / newcomers usually pass. A lot of people just want to listen at first. Is not necessarily a problem. Maintaining structure is no different for F2F. It all comes down to service. They are mentored. (JANIE: we do offer mentoring and support to people who have never chaired a phone meeting). Oldtimers are a big plus - especially when dead cat topics happen - the ESH is guided into a productive topic. It's important to stay in solution for body of meeting rather than on individual problems. . BOB: Newcomers don't necessarily have to share. I think as a newcomer I needed to listen to long time recovery. Our new tech is a dedicated line and can allow us to do some new tech things. BILL/INGRID: let's utilize this possibility. JANIE: hearing the same people over and over is a challenge for me. BILL: there are some new people. And the newcomer greeter thing is encouraging. BOB: Maybe chair person can find new ways to invite silent. MICHAELNE: do we limit shares/ Yes. 3 min. SUGGESTS: Chair can say: Is there anyone working on this step this month and would like to share revelations or experiences? INGRID: In her experience sponsors can encourage their sponsees to share in a meeting.

7. Are there changes we would like to make to our group or meetings? What are they and why?

BILL: We have already addressed a lot of things. The moderator could add: there are 30 people on meeting tonight as part of the meeting. Change the exchange of phone numbers to after meeting. INGRID: I like format so tight. Suggests we let more time go by with this present format. BOB: wherever we can make more room for sharing I am fan. Maybe leave out promises. I'd like to see expanding goals – and add successes – He observes we have changed content not structure. Would like 2 new positions: PI, and Intergroup Rep. JANIE: I love the meeting. It works. Do want more room for sharing. The challenge of phone exchange is an issue. My goal is get people doing their recovery work. BILL: announce number of people in a benign way. Like a yay we have _ people on call. Could start tomorrow.

8. Are there things we would hate to see change about our group or meetings? What are they and why?

BOB: Would not like to see meeting become about newcomers pain and problems. Stay in solution is best. Love the focus on concrete- literature and tools etc. We don't want newcomers to sit on their pain.. JANIE: I like the concrete focus. I think we need to keep that. I look forward to coming to this meeting to hear other's ESH. BILL: we are carrying a message that is very positive and that is good. Current crowd of folks is strong. INGRID: I wouldn't make any changes at this time.

Intermission:

BOB: we have 8 minutes left. STOP. Let Michalene give feedback.

Michalene Feedback: The 4 of us are a good core for the group. Perhaps pass around the notes (Michalene has taken her own and will share w/Janie. They will exchange and check each other.). We are all on same page. One impression is that more time for present newish format to see if it is working. Another impression is that group has interest in finding new ways of helping people participate more - diverse ways that are not pressure but light and enticing. To change phone exchange would be a big thing. Group Inventory is most powerful process in making/helping the group to move forward.

NEXT MEETING TO FINISH 9-13: June 29 3 pm EST 90 min.

June 29, 2019 3-4:30pm Eastern

Michalene intro: Welcome back!.

PRESENT: Janie, Bill, Ingrid, Bob.

Any thoughts on questions 1-8 since distribution of notes?:

Bob added: Format of the meeting. Changed in 2017 – added treasurer in Sept. 2018. Bill added: In 2013 went to the core format. Before that strictly a speakers meeting. Bob: 2017 went from weekly speakers to primarily a literature meeting – reading from the 12 x 12 x 12 and BDA Tools pamphlet – with one monthly speaker. All: Change was the use of the new literature as it became available. No real content change since 2017. Increase in conference-approved DA Literature has really expanded meeting format options.

Planned questions for prayer, meditation, and discussion:

9. Are we serving the newcomers who attend our meetings? How would we know? Are they coming back? Ingrid: It seems to me we are. We have newcomer greeter and invite newcomers to speak in 2nd half of meeting. My question is – are they coming back? Do they return? Janie: How can we tell who is coming back? Ingrid: My notes/log, as meeting facilitator, help me to see that. Bill: Good idea, Ingrid. What makes us come back in F2F is personal contact. On my other meeting greeter actually reaches out by email. We don't have a system for this. The Sunday night meeting ends late eastern time. Janie: The idea of follow up is not what we do like some other groups do.

Bob: I am aware of lots of newcomers, as tech coordinator, I respond to their requests for our contact list and meeting readings, and pass them on to Bill for literature. As I do that, I also add their names to our announcements list via sundaybdaphone@gmail.com. Those messages all go out via bcc, so we're protecting new members' anonymity. Both lists are growing. We have 20 members on our contact list, about half have joined in the 2.5 years he's been a member, and 40 members are receiving our announcements, about 25 have joined since early 2017. The core still appears to be the four of us, though. Bill: A person will not drop off the bcc list unless they tell us, so we will know. Bob: The list-building does make me uncomfortable because of fellowship boundaries. Michalene: We do keep home group AA lists. Not really membership lists but attendee lists are acceptable. When the tech coordinator position rotates, be sure to let the next person know how to handle these lists, especially related to anonymity. The anonymity Traditions encourage us to be anonymous at the public level. We should **not** be anonymous to our DA and BDA fellows. All: Discussion continues. The difference between F2F and phone anonymity. It is a challenge, especially related to email addresses, because sometimes members don't realize that their personal info – including both their first and last names – is displayed on groups like Yahoo.

Bill recognizes new names he hears during weekly meetings because of his long-time membership in this group. When he hears a new name, he tries to reach out to them. Ingrid – found that interesting. In her 7 am meeting, extended share time is allowed. That is where the personal connection time tends to happen. Bill – Newcomer greeter time is 9:15 eastern which is not necessarily the best time if you are on the east coast.

Ingrid: We are offering strong recovery. Newcomers get good impression. We run a tight ship. Because we are focused on literature, they can really learn and grow with us. Janie: Ditto. Ingrid: I'm conscious of how I share so newcomers are provided with something to grab and hold onto.

Michalene: my pet peeve is hearing opinions instead of program principles and solutions in meetings. My AA home group takes a “back to basics” approach.

Bob: In our contact exchange, we ask people to OFFER their availability for sponsorship and PRGs, which helps newcomers. I also think we do a good job of inviting newcomers into SERVICE. Very important. I want all newcomers and new members to have an opportunity to do service. And to have their needs met too. As we continue this discussion in our group, I hope we expand our priority beyond newcomers to also include new members. There are plenty of members with solvency and time in program who could use our help and support. I want us to be there for them when they call in.

Bob: One more note, I accidentally got on 10 minutes early a couple weeks ago and had a nice chat with newcomers. I’m committed to getting on the line 15 minutes early for July and August to see if this is helpful and if we might want to add that commitment to the Tech Coordinator’s position for 2020. Ingrid: Maybe we could start to think about that idea for the newcomer greeter, too – 10 minutes before our meetings and 10 minutes after.

10. Are we living up to self-support and voluntary contributions -- in terms of both money and service -- as described in the 7th Tradition? Bill: There are currently 4 or 5 people contributing to our treasury. We’ve only had the Treasury position for 6 or 9 months, so I think we’re making good progress. But it’s true that we do not yet have broad participation across the group’s membership. Bob: I offered this question because I was concerned that only one member was supporting the group financially. Once I made my own contributions to our funds, my concerns disappeared. I would propose changing our 7th Tradition announcement. Brief and off the cuff. Encourage generosity and 7th promise.

Janie: Very important to her personally. When she started to participate in 7th tradition, it was an active way of connecting the pocketbook with what we receive from the program and from our meetings. We need to keep in mind the new monetary frontiers and how they will affect us. Let’s find a way to make it really easy to click a button for making donations, like PayPal. Ingrid: Dittos Janie and agrees to the need to make it technologically easy.

Bill: At world service level, the issue has been allowing members to contribute via debit card while NOT accepting credit cards from members. Very difficult. We do not want to encourage CREDIT CARDS. Janie: My PayPal payments come directly out of my bank account. Bill: The biggest issue is the potential for members to use a PayPal credit card vs. debit or bank account. Michalene: The world service problem was very difficult. The Board really wrestled with this. The CASH vs CREDIT CARD issue. The Board is discussing how valid it is for board members to define someone else’s solvency re: use of credit card.

Michalene: Let’s talk about the Spiritual nature of the 7th tradition. Anytime we separate our giving from our spiritual recovery, we are in trouble. There is a Spiritual nature to money. My spiritual contribution is as important as my monetary one. Each person has a different way of designating in their spending plan (groups should do it too) when and how much to give on a regular basis. A conscious decision is a spiritual connection in DA and BDA recovery.

Bob: I appreciate this discussion. We held a recovery conference up here for several years, accepting online registrations. Our group conscience was to respectfully request that no one use credit cards to pay for conference activities, stating that we found the use of credit cards counter-productive to our

event and the recovery we sought to share together. We put the no credit card request on all conference materials that included payment info. While we cared about those payments, we did not want to micro-manage or demand anything from individual recovering DA and BDA members.

Bob: We could easily set up a Paypal account if the group decides it is okay to do so and Bill is willing to work with a PayPal account in his role as our Treasurer. Personally, I'm in favor of electronic payments and keeping it simple. I think we should stay out of individual decisions re: personal recovery and payment methods. Bill: I am willing to work with a PayPal account for the group. Janie – others prefer Venmo. Whatever we do, we don't want to get into fellow members' personal business but do want to encourage the ease of making contributions. Bob: Want to stay away from trying to get "something for nothing." Requesting, receiving, and transferring money costs something. Paypal is pretty moderate at 3%. Their service is simple and works consistently. Ingrid: Agrees that Paypal has been around a long time, and that may be the one to try. PayPal is the safest and well known.

Michalene: We haven't talked about service as a part of the 7th Tradition yet. Janie: She learned in her DA program that giving is a form of service in the meeting context. Even if you just put in 25 cents – or an equal amount of service – you feel part of. The leveling of her pride was so huge for her in the beginning. She felt a part of the group when she was able to do or give something. Bob: If newcomers are not ready or qualified to fill our usual positions, are there other things that can be offered as simple tasks to invite members in for short runs at service activities? There are service opportunities for newcomers that I don't think we are spelling out for them.

11. Are we filling our open positions with qualified candidates? If no, why not? Bob: I am doubled up with two full-year positions. As we grow, I would hope we'd be able to get away from doubling up. Because I'm so engaged, I sometimes feel I speak up too much on the calls, and it causes me to feel shame for taking up more time and space than I should. I am asking for help from members here on this call to let me know when I'm overly engaged with the group and speaking too much.

Bob: I've felt uncomfortable about members showing up from nowhere for business meetings and claiming open service positions. And yet, I couldn't be happier to have them doing service with and in our group. Our GSR, for instance, seemed to turn up from out of nowhere. Bill: Helena was a long-time member of our group in past years. You didn't know her, but many of the other group members did. Bob: Thank you for listening to my discomfort and for that info. Ingrid: Would prefer a large corps of people filling all the positions. But part of my surrender to my recovery is understanding I have no control over some things and if the folks step forward and have the solvency, I support them. It's a spiritual thing. Janie: It's a GOD thing. Michalene: Shared story about Ecuador person who gets to come to conference this year despite difficulties paying for registration. His LA group suddenly had a paid registration that their local GSR can't use after all. Our Ecuadorian member is now fully funded. Let Go and Let God. Bob: He and his service sponsee often attach that to their service discussions: "It's almost as if someone had planned it." "God is efficient." It may take 20 tasks to get from A to B, and we rarely know what they are except in hindsight, yet our service actions so often work out for the best.

Janie: I like that we sometimes adapt our position qualifications during business meetings to allow someone to do service that they couldn't do without a qualification waiver. Bob: I like the flexibility our group conscience gives us to make new decisions and to use our available resources well.

12. Do we want to create positions for Intergroup Rep and Public Information Rep? If yes, how will we accomplish this? Bill: What Intergroup would that be. BOB: DATIG. I had a negative experience with them a couple years ago. When I checked in recently, it was obvious some resentments still existed, so I can't be the one in contact with them. It is an active Intergroup meeting quarterly or bimonthly. They don't have any PI activities in the works.

Bob: Regarding PI, Step Sponsor DA, a huge and ongoing phone group has created a PI position. She's a long-time member of "Let's Grow DA" and asked us for help this month in shaping her position. We suggested that she look at herself as a PI committee chair for her group, ensuring their members have both the resources and support they need to carry the DA message. We also suggested that she help her group members to do outreach where they're at, following the DA PI manual's suggestion to do PI in a one-mile radius of your home or work or face-to-face meeting.

Bob: Personally, the 36 principles and both sets of tools, DA and BDA, have given me recovery and solvency. My work in PI has given me freedom, self-confidence, and happiness. I will likely never meet the people I help through outreach, but the abandonment of self to helping still suffering debtors has provided me with more than I ever imagined. If we don't create these positions, no big deal, I hope we continue considering them for the future.

Ingrid: I think developing both positions is a wonderful idea. We just added GSR and Treasurer, though. I think we could announce our vision of new positions and give our group time to absorb the possibility. Bob: I support that. It took us two years to get ready for Helena to be our GSR. I'm all for slow but steady progress. Janie: You've both just described what it means to be spiritual about recovery and service. It's the God thing again.

13. Is there anything we have not yet discussed based on the questions above? Michalene: This is a Heinz 57 question. Bob: In his experience, the 12 questions we developed together responded to every concern and hope he has for this group. This has been a great process for him. Ingrid: Great for her being fairly new in the group – great experience. Bill: I'm good. Janie: Added her ditto. She had never done a group inventory in DA before now and she would not have missed this inventory for anything. Her wish for newcomers would be that they could have been flies on the wall, experiencing this aspect of DA and BDA recovery, even if they weren't ready to participate. "The inventory has so clearly reminded me that we are all the same, all equal in the eyes of our Higher Powers."

Conclusion:

Bob: Thank you, Michalene, both for your participation and your leadership. We're lucky to have you!

Michalene: It has been wonderful for me, too. It's good to remember that our inventories and other group and recovery work are as spiritual on the phone as they are in person. My final feedback is that perhaps as time goes by – that some of these ideas be brought up 1X a month at the BIZ meeting. Make these issues part of the group meetings. For example PAYPAL. Another would be adding a PI rep. Full participation gives members a feeling of being included – INCLUSIVE is good. Shares the story about her women's meeting - re: inclusivity. When we go toward inclusion we are going in the right direction. Thanks for this opportunity.

Michalene: Let's close with the "we" version of the Serenity Prayer.

Recap of inventory topics for future business meetings (not in order of priority):

From question 5: Do we want to consider moving contact info exchange to the time with the newcomer greeter after the meeting has ended? (Context: This change could create an additional five minutes for sharing each week. Do we want more sharing each week?)

From question 6: Do we want to consider adding the opportunity for group member connection beyond our weekly meetings? For instance, start having drop-in meetings during the week. (Context: Our new conference call line is dedicated to our group and available to our members 24/7. What are the new possibilities?)

From question 7: Do we want to consider deleting the promises from the format of our weekly meetings? (Context: This change could create an additional three minutes for sharing each week. Do we want more sharing each week?)

From question 7: Do we want to consider changing our four minutes for goal setting to include sharing of successes from the previous week? (Context: Are we too focused on our future intentions while missing our present successes in BDA recovery?)

From question 7: Do we want to make announcing the number of meeting participants each week part of the tech coordinator's position description? (Context: Does the group find this data interesting or inspiring?)

From question 9: Do we want to consider adding the task of greeting members 10 or 15 minutes to either the tech coordinator's or newcomer greeter's position? Or to create a new position? (Context: If someone were regularly on the line early, newcomers and new members might feel encouraged to connect, especially if they're not ready to share in our meetings yet. Do we want informal fellowship to be part of how we interact together?)

From question 10: Do we want to consider creating a PayPal account to make contributing to our general and GSR funds as easy as possible? (Context: 7th Tradition donations have been received from only a handful of group members? Can we make it easier to contribute? Are we worried about possible credit card usage?)

From question 12: Do we want to consider creating positions for Intergroup Rep and Public Information Rep? If yes, how would we accomplish this?

(Context 1: Now that we have a GSR, are we ready to join our DA Telephone Intergroup (DATIG), the level of service between group service and world service?)

(Context 2: There is a lot of PI happening in the DA fellowship, especially at the WSC and GSB levels, along with "Let's Grow DA," a DA group focused specifically on PI. Little of that outreach is directly focused on either BDA or phone meetings, although "Let's Grow DA" is beginning to change that. Do we want to see our group grow, as well as other phone groups and BDA in general? Are we willing to carry the DA and BDA message to suffering debtors, rather than waiting for them to come to us?)

NOTE: Since we had time between question 13 and closing, we briefly discussed Bill's suggestion for an anniversary celebration – Group can celebrate 15 years of recovery and service in October. We'd like to do some kind of special event that could gather us together in fellowship and gratitude. Perhaps 2-3 hours on a Sunday, starting early enough to not conflict with our regular group meeting. Bill, Janie, Ingrid, and Bob will work together to develop an event plan for review and consideration during our July business meeting.