

In the beginning she thought D.A. was for rich people who could not handle their money. She did not think she was good enough to be in D.A., to share in D.A. What could a person like her who grew up on welfare have to offer these people who had a lot of money but who just did not know how to manage it?

My life is so much better now because of D.A. and BDA!

I want to repay my creditors, I take so much better care of myself. D.A. has twelve steps which suggest clear cut instructions. I find a daily reprieve in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* that there is a solution where I can know that a Higher Power (HP) of my understanding loves me so much and always knows best and always gives me a life beyond anything I could have ever imagined. Instead of "alcoholic" and "alcoholism," in my mind I can replace these words with "compulsive debtor," "over spender," "underearner," "deprivation addict," "under be-er," "money obsessive," "money drunk," and "pauper." D.A. and A.A. literature shows me that I am a chronic debtor and all of the aforementioned descriptions are all manifestations of this disease I have with money.

It wasn't always that way. In the beginning I thought D.A. was for rich people who could not handle their money. I did not think I was good enough to be in D.A., to share in D.A. What could a person like me who grew up on welfare have to offer these people who had a lot of money but who just did not know how to manage it?

But I was in so much pain of feeling less than, and from being in another program I knew I was still so spiritually sick - especially with feeling less than. I felt less than as a woman, as an African American, as someone who grew up on welfare, I could keep going.

But you all in D.A. suggested I keep coming back, that I begin to record my numbers - what comes in and what goes out - that I do service - keeping time in meetings, being the business meeting secretary, being a greeter. You gave me wings to take responsibility for my life little by little. I can talk to people, I can show up and I can really live up to all the potential HP deems for me - if I am willing to follow a few simple suggestions. Actually, even if I am not willing to follow a few simple suggestions, you all say to me, "Keep coming back!"

D.A.'s Steps, Traditions, and Tools, as I work them and seek guidance from my sponsor or step study group, reveal that my Higher Power loves me and that HP loves all of us all the same - and that I am not better or worse than anyone else. I am an abundant child of HP and so is everyone else.

I can be a chronic debtor, underearner, deprivation addict and over spender, no matter my race, gender, religion, economic standing, mental abilities, etc., and guess what? HP loves all of us, and this gift of solvency and prosperity is available to all. I know from experience that the program of D.A., rooted in its Steps,

Traditions, and Concepts, welcomes everybody.

My primary purpose is to not debt one day at a time and to help another sick and suffering debtor to not debt one day at a time. I do not have to wait until I am fixed to enjoy life. I can laugh and have fun and dress abundantly and smile and dance and look people in the eye just because I am me.

I still get paralyzed with fear and think people who have money or prestige or celebrity are better than me and that I need these things to be on even par. And when that happens, I do as the D.A. Steps suggest: I go out and help another. I am so grateful that pg. 84 in *Alcoholics Anonymous* gives me clear instructions of what to do when my character defects of selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and come up. Through D.A., HP has performed this “divine surgery” on my insides: I care about others in a way that I never have before.

Thanks D.A. and to all the trusted servants who continue to pass these Steps, Traditions, Tools, and Concepts on to me. You are setting me free from feeling like a deviant nobody, beyond human aid, to a confident, hopeful abundant servant of Higher Power and D.A.! Now I get to gratefully pass on what has been so freely given to me.

Sherry