Workshop 6 — Trusting Higher Power and Committing to Our Own Recovery — The Threes, Part 1

Step 3 — *"(We) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."*

Tradition 3 — *"The only requirement for DA membership is a desire to stop incurring unsecured debt."*

REMINDER — *DA Tool Three, BDA Tool Three, and Promise Three will be covered in workshop 7. Concept Three materials are included in this packet but will not be part of our workshop discussion.*

Preparatory readings for conference leaders and registrants:

Chapters on Step Three and Tradition Three from our "12, 12, and 12" book

Summary schedule for this workshop:

7 minutes: Host and Serenity Setter open with Serenity Prayer and get the workshop started

15 minutes: Speaker shares experience, strength, and hope on the two DA/BDA topics scheduled for the current workshop

10 minutes: Q&A with Speaker

5 minutes: Steering committee members provide housekeeping details and conference-specific announcements

5 minutes: Break

45 minutes (3-minute setup plus participant sharing on workshop topics): Host (and Share Shepherd) invites conference registrants to share on each of the topics for the week individually — up to 32 minutes on the Step, allowing as many 2-minute shares as possible, then the remaining time, usually five 2-minute shares, on the Tradition, offering the last two-minute share of the day to our Speaker

3 minutes: Serenity Setter leads us through wrap-up, preparation for next workshop, invitation to *After Party*, and close with Serenity Prayer

<u>Step Three — Preparatory meditation and writings for conference registrants:</u>

Please do not try to take the Steps without the support and guidance of a sponsor or Step guide. The recovery process begins with asking for help and then accepting and appreciating the help we receive. Please read Step Three in our “12, 12, and 12” book, then spend several minutes meditating on each of the questions below. We suggest answering every question we’ve posed; first in writing, then reading your answers aloud, sharing with a fellow BDAer or two. No long essays are necessary, just a paragraph or two in direct answer to a question. These questions are posed by the author and editors of the workshop materials based on our own experience, strength, and hope and a deep read of Step Three.

> *Step Three: “(We) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”*

1) Am I ready to release my compulsion to live beyond my means and to replace it with a daily commitment to recovery? To give myself over to my Higher Power as fully as I used to surrender my life to debting?
2) Why is Step Three essential? Does this Step look impossible to me?
3) Have I been seeking a quick fix through the DA and / or BDA tools, while avoiding the solution DA and BDA offer through the Steps?
4) Do I believe that “neither self-knowledge nor understanding of recovery will protect [me] from the compulsion to live beyond [my] means”? Do I believe that only the Steps and the resulting spiritual awakening will provide me with this protection?
5) “When we were debting, we were immersed in our disease.” Am I now ready to be immersed in the [DA and BDA] program and recovery process?
6) “[I do] not have to believe in a loving [Higher Power] … but why not?”
7) “Long experience in DA [and BDA shows] that procrastinating about any of the Steps [is] dangerous, as it [delays] our recovery and [increases] our risk of relapse.” Am I willing to take Step Three <u>*now*</u>? Am I willing to make “a conscious choice of a new way of living rather than continuing in the insanity of compulsive debting”?
8) Do I feel as if I were guided to DA and BDA by my Higher Power?
9) Am I willing to accept guidance that will likely create better results for me?
10) Am I committed to sticking with DA and BDA and to working the rest of the Steps?

Step Three — Preparatory meditation and writings for conference registrants — continued:

Step Three is a crossroads. By this time, we have taken Step One with a sponsor. We understand the problem of compulsive debting, along with the past, present, and future consequences if we continue on our current path. We have also taken Step Two, beginning to understand the new life being offered to us if we commit to DA and its Twelve Steps. Now we have a decision to make. Will we take a step forward into the recovery that has begun to manifest for us? Or will we take a step backward into the desperation of our debting life? We all must make this choice for ourselves.

We have the choice to return to debting and borrowing, to over-spending and under-earning, anytime we want. Once we are ready, we'll take the Steps, find our Higher Power, and recover in DA. If we're not done debting, we are welcome to continue our debting lifestyle until we're ready to give it up.

Once we are ready, we will need commitment and consistency. Without constancy in our solvency and in our recovery from debting, we simply get sicker, sometimes even while attending meetings, PRGs, business meetings, and doing service. Below is an excerpt from page 30 in the AA Big Book, from the chapter titled "More About Alcoholism." When we replace the words related to alcoholism with words related to compulsive debting, as we read either aloud or silently to ourselves, the following is true for most of us who eventually surrender to the program and find long-term, possibly even lifetime, freedom from debting:

> "We [debtors] are men and women who have lost the ability to control our [compulsive debting]. We know that no real [compulsive debtor] ever recovers control. All of us felt at times that we were regaining control, but such intervals — usually brief — were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. We are convinced to a [person] that [debtors] of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period, we get worse, never better."

When we're taking the Third Step, especially for the first time, most of us must make this decision one day at a time, one moment at a time. Although it's framed in the past tense — as are all the Steps — the Third Step happens in the current moment for most of us. We're making this decision now. The primary signal of this decision, especially this early in the recovery process, is solvency.

Solvency is one of the most valuable gifts that DA has to offer, second only to the conscious contact with our Higher Power that we gain through the Twelve Steps. Solvency is a measurement of our successful efforts to not debt and to reap the benefits of DA and BDA recovery. <u>*Solvency* **is** *the path to sanity.*</u> If we've had solvency and lost it, we've stepped off the path. The solvency we had before a relapse is gone. If we've been in program, then left, we've stepped off the path. The time we had in DA and BDA before our "time out" is gone.

While we're here, let's remember that Step Three is the making of a decision. The decision we're making has several distinct parts: to turn our will and our lives over (i.e., to surrender both our debting and our delusion of control, see Steps One and Two); to (trust in) the care of Higher Power; and to understand Higher Power (or whatever we call our Higher Powers). The reason we make a decision here, rather than actually doing these three things — turning over, trusting, and understanding — is because <u>*we don't yet have the resources, internal or external, that we need to take these actions*</u>. To gain the necessary resources, we'll need to trust our Higher Power as much as we can right now and commit to our own recovery through this and the remaining nine Steps.

Step Three — Preparatory meditation and writings for conference registrants — continued:

NOTE: We never want to discourage or alienate anyone who is working toward solvency but can't quite get there yet. The desire for solvency is usually not enough but a sincere attempt to become solvent, taking actions to increase income and to decrease spending, and a commitment to our own recovery will frequently get us there by the time we have completed our amends (*that is, reparations*). Yay, Higher Power and DA!

For participants who will be well-served by a daily activity, we suggest the following:

> Each day for the two weeks we'll spend on Step Three, we can prepare two lists, putting three to five items on each list each day. List one would be "the ways I contributed to my own recovery and well-being today"; list two would be "the ways my Higher Power contributed to my recovery and well-being today."
>
> The difference between what goes on one list or the other should be easy to discern as it relates to us, individually, and to our current experience as compulsive debtors, personally and in business.
>
> At the end of each week, we can summarize our own lists, usually leaving three to five items on each, looking for our most consistent patterns. It's this summary we would review with our Step guides. Our guides can help us to apply the third Step to this activity and can share their own experience, strength, and hope from their own third Steps.

Some members believe that we should define our Higher Powers at Step Two (and some believe we should never define our Higher Powers). We believe Step Two is about *faith as belief*; that is, belief in the existence of a Higher Power and in our insanity. We believe Step Three is about *faith as trust*; that is, trusting our will and lives to the care of a Higher Power. Our experience is that we can believe without definition, but we need to have some sense of what it is that we're attempting to trust and committing to through this and the next nine Steps.

Please close your eyes for a few minutes and then use the lines below to write about your chosen conception of a Higher Power:

____

____

____

____

____

Next we'll want to share our conception with a fellow BDA member before moving on to Step Four. First choice is your Step guide, second choice is your "study buddy."

<u>Step Three — Preparatory meditation and writings for conference registrants — continued:</u>

Before moving on, let's take a look at the results we gain by committing ourselves to and immersing ourselves in the DA and BDA program, including all 36 principles, 24 tools, and 12 promises. In our experience:

> **The 12 Steps lead us to recovery.** If we do this recovery work and make our solvency one of our highest, if not the highest, priorities, we cannot fail to recover from compulsive debting. If we're willing and apply these principles to some of our other affairs, and invite our fellows' support, we can also recover from compulsive spending, underearning, and ongoing difficulties with time management together.
>
> **The 12 Traditions lead us to unity.** If we practice these principles and make our collective solvency and common welfare two of our highest, if not the highest, shared priorities, we cannot fail to create unity and to help each other and newcomers recover from compulsive debting. We can also practice the 12 Traditions at home and at work and in any other group setting or activity, even if no one else in the group knows what we're doing. If we practice these principles in all our affairs, we cannot fail to live a life of unity; that is, wholeness, completeness, and integrity.
>
> **The 12 Concepts lead us to service, specifically world service.** Our "world" may be small or large; we're talking about the extent of our services to others, including stretching beyond our geography and comfort zones. Our service "world" — personally and in our businesses — may be our neighborhood, city, county, state, region, country, or even international service activities. If we practice these principles in all our affairs, we cannot fail to provide service in a healthy, helpful, and balanced way.
>
> **The 12 DA tools lead us to solvency.** If we practice these guiding tools and activities, <u>*and the 12 Steps*</u>, we cannot fail to get solvent. Fortunately, or unfortunately, depending on your viewpoint, the practice of DA's tools is a lifetime undertaking. When we stop or decrease the practice of these tools, <u>*and the 12 Steps*</u>, we are moving ever closer to our next unsecured debt and to relapse in the DA program. We may be able to pull ourselves back from the edge a few times but, at some point, avoiding or dismissing the DA tools will lead to our downfall once again.
>
> **The 12 BDA tools lead us to responsibility and leadership in our businesses, jobs, and service commitments.** If we practice these guiding tools and activities, <u>*along with the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions*</u>, we cannot fail to develop leadership qualities and to mature into responsibility and accountability. Fortunately, or unfortunately, depending on your viewpoint, the practice of BDA's tools is a lifetime undertaking. When we stop or decrease the practice of these tools, <u>*along with the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions*</u>, we are moving ever closer to our next business loss, difficult client, and dissatisfaction with our work and service lives.
>
> **The 12 DA promises lead us to reliance on our Higher Power … for everything!** If we practice and acknowledge our experience of these promises, we cannot fail to surrender to and develop conscious contact with our Higher Power. By Promise Twelve: "We will recognize a Power Greater than ourselves as the source of our abundance. We will ask for help and guidance and have faith that it will come." We will recognize those truths now, but they have always been our reality. We were just too blind to see those truths while we were compulsively debting and running our lives and businesses on self will alone.

<u>Tradition Three — Preparatory meditation and writings for conference registrants:</u>

Please read Tradition Three in our "12, 12, and 12" book, then spend several minutes meditating on each of the questions below. We suggest answering every question we've posed; first in writing, then reading your answers aloud, sharing with a fellow BDAer or two. No long essays are necessary, just a paragraph or two in direct answer to a question. These questions are posed by the author and editors of the workshop materials based on our own experience, strength, and hope and a deep read of Tradition Three. Most if not all of the questions below can be applied to our personal and business lives, as well as to our interactions with our fellow DAers.

> *Tradition Three: "The only requirement for DA membership is a desire to stop incurring unsecured debt."*

1) Despite our Traditions, including the *<u>requirement for membership</u>* in our Fellowship, countless non-debtors have historically flooded our meetings and service structure. What has been the impact of spending our resources of time, money, energy, and service on those who do not meet our only requirement? What has happened to our meetings, message, and membership through the "watering down" of our program to meet the demands of non-debtors who neither qualify for membership nor care about solvency?
2) Do I ever feel that wealthy DA and BDA members are doing a better job of working the program than non-wealthy members?
3) Is it possible to have a desire to stop incurring unsecured debt and to continue using an unsecured credit card at the same time?
4) Is a desire to stop debting enough to create solvency?
5) Is it possible to be both inclusive and exclusive at the same time?
6) Does my group or Intergroup apply any type of hierarchy of membership?

The thread running through the Threes is making decisions: we decide to turn our will and lives over to the care of our Higher Power (Step Three); we decide to avoid getting in the way of anyone else's recovery (Tradition Three); we decide to give service instead of staying at home feeling sorry for ourselves (DA Tool of Service); we decide to formalize the financial records in our businesses (BDA Tool Three); we decide to stop beating ourselves up over our relationship with money and to redefine ourselves in a more positive and generous light (Promise Three); and we decide to let our representatives make decisions on our behalf at World Service (Concept Three).

Bottom line, we decide to refocus our power and energy — as they are slowly being restored to us — where they can do the most good. We stop turning every conversation to "I" and "me," placing our emphasis instead on "we" and "us." By the time we reach the Twelves, we can set our sight on "those" and "them" who need our help. First on the yet-unknown still-suffering debtor who needs our help, and then on others in our businesses, families, and communities who we can lift up and support in their development, even if we get no direct payoff or recognition.

We might now ask ourselves: Have we become too focused on what we think we want and need, losing sight of what we have to offer both inside and outside of our businesses and workplaces, in and out of service?

Workshop 7 — Trusting Higher Power and Committing to Our Own Recovery — The Threes, Part 2

DA Tool 3 — *"Service — We perform service at every level: personal, meeting, Intergroup, and World Service. Service is vital to our recovery. Only through service can we give to others what so generously has been given to us."*

BDA Tool 3 — *"We keep clean, orderly and accurate financial records, including Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Cash on Hand, Inventory, Assets, and Outstanding Debts, and put all tax and bill due dates on our calendar."*

Promise 3 — *"We will live within our means, yet our means will not define us."*

REMINDER — *Step Three and Tradition Three were covered in workshop 6. Concept Three materials are included in this packet but will not be part of our workshop discussion.*

Preparatory readings for conference leaders and registrants:

Meditate on the full description of the DA Tool above (**NOTE:** We have reordered the DA Tools to fit our workshop plan. The Steps, Traditions, BDA Tools, and Promises have *not* been reordered.)

BDA Tool Three from the BDA Tools pamphlet

Promise Three from the DA Promises pamphlet

OPTIONAL — Chapter on Concept Three from our "12, 12, and 12" book (**Concept 3** — *"As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relationship between the groups, the World Service Conference, and the Debtors Anonymous General Service Board, it is suggested that we endow these elements of world service with a traditional 'Right of Decision' in order to ensure effective leadership."*)

Summary schedule for this workshop:

7 minutes: Host and Serenity Setter open with Serenity Prayer and get the workshop started

35 minutes: Speaker shares experience, strength, and hope and aanswers questions about the three DA/BDA topics scheduled for the current workshop plus announcements from steering committee members and 5-minute break

45 minutes (3-minute setup plus participant sharing on workshop topics): Host (and Share Shepherd) invites conference registrants to share on each of the topics for the week individually — up to 10 minutes on each of the tools, both DA and BDA, usually five 2-minute shares per topic, then the remaining time on the Promise, allowing as many 2-minute shares as possible on the Promise, offering the last two-minute share of the day to our Speaker

3 minutes: Serenity Setter leads us through wrap-up, preparation for next workshop, invitation to *After Party*, and close with Serenity Prayer

DA Tool #3 — Preparatory meditation and writing for conference registrants:

Please review the opportunities for service below, then spend several minutes meditating on how you might be of service to your fellow DA and BDA members right now. (The service opportunities listed below plus many, many more can be found in a flyer called "50 Ways to Be of Service" available for free download at https://debtorsanonymous.org/fellowship-services/resources-for-groups/.) If you are feeling an immediate objection to being of service too soon in your recovery, please do some writing. No long essays are necessary, just a paragraph or two in direct answer to this question, if it applies: "Why am I so darned unwilling to give service?" And as a preview to Tradition Seven, if it applies: "Why am I so darned stingy with money, refusing opportunities to share my abundance and to be generous with others?"

> *DA Tool #3: "Service — We perform service at every level: personal, meeting, Intergroup, and World Service. Service is vital to our recovery. Only through service can we give to others what so generously has been given to us."*

It's no secret that the solution to the lonely and isolated lives many of us have lived is to leap into service. Service connects us with newcomers who need our help and stories, and it connects us to people like us who understand who we are and what we are trying to change in our lives. And, unless there's something fundamentally wrong with those people, they honor our right to be who we are, with tolerance and without judgment. There are so many ways to be of service in DA that there is absolutely no way that one or more of them will not be a perfect fit for each of us, exactly where we are in our recovery right now. Excerpted from "50 Ways to Be of Service" (see above) for a link to access an dowload:

DA Personal Service

Introduce yourself to a newcomer; get a sponsor; put your number on the phone list; don't debt today; celebrate your recovery with your home group; ask someone new to be on a PRG with you; record your numbers every day; leave DA pamphlets at a bus stop.

DA Meeting Service

Set up chairs; be the literature person; be the greeter; update the meeting phone list; attend business meetings; give generously in the spirit of the 7th Tradition; help clean up after the meeting; let go of a service position when your term has ended.

DA Intergroup Service

Attend Intergroup meetings; read *The Debtors Anonymous Manual for Service*; monitor the Intergroup phone line; volunteer for Intergroup events; take public outreach training.

DA World Service

Attend the World Service Conference as a GSR or ISR; apply for an Appointed Committee Member position; be the message of DA wherever you go.

<u>BDA Tool Three — Preparatory meditation and writing for conference registrants:</u>

Please read BDA Tool Three in the BDA tools pamphlet, then spend 15-20 minutes meditating on the details below. Will you pursue clarity and accuracy for your business records now that you know how?

> *BDA Tool Three: "We keep clean, orderly and accurate financial records, including Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Cash on Hand, Inventory, Assets, and Outstanding Debts, and put all tax and bill due dates on our calendar."*

On the next two pages we will see sample 20xx financial statements — Income Statement and Balance Sheet — for a small nonprofit organization. (While the third primary financial statement, the Statement of Cash Flows, is often quite useful, it is beyond the scope of this workshop.) We'll go into detail about these examples because *<u>if we understand one set of financial statements, we can understand any set.</u>* We've heard objections that the nonprofit financial statements presented here are not relevant for small business owners. Nothing could be further from the truth. Every balance sheet is more alike than different. Income statements have more differences than similarities, but the key elements — total income, cost of sales, gross profit, total expenses, pre-tax profit, and post-tax profit — remain the same.

When we talk about clean, orderly, and accurate financial records, this is what we're talking about. As we'll see, this organization has none of the EXTRA items listed in BDA Tool Three — *Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Inventory, Assets, and Outstanding Debts.* Many of our businesses, especially for freelancers, don't have these items either, although we can decide to offer payment terms to clients and request payment terms from vendors, just like any other business.

Most of us need to use an accounting software to enter our data and prepare our financial statements, and many of us need the help of bookkeepers, payroll services, accountants, tax preparers, consultants, etc. (See BDA Tool Twelve for reference.) We should seek help, including outside help if necessary, in order to gain a clear picture of our business's financial activities and results. If we set up our accounting software correctly, most will automatically create our financial statements for us.

For review, let's turn to the Balance Sheet on the next page first. This statement is viewed as a snapshot of a business's financial picture on any given day. An informed viewer will immediately know the business's liquidity (or cash availability), asset to liability comparison, use or misuse of credit, viability in the short- and long-term, and year-to-date or year-end profitability. Here are some things we might notice immediately:

> The balance sheet is in balance based on the "accounting equation," Assets = Liabilities + Equity. The top half of the Balance Sheet must be in balance with the bottom half. That's true here; see highlights.
>
> This organization has three Current Assets, all checking accounts, and one Other Current Asset, a bond account. (These Current Assets would also be considered *Cash on Hand*, which includes both actual cash, such as petty cash funds, and up-to-date, reconciled bank balances in both checking and savings accounts.) Other Current Assets — "other" being different than cash or bank accounts but relatively easy to convert to cash — would also include Accounts Receivable. Inventory and Fixed Assets would be considered Non-Current assets, since it would usually take longer to convert them to cash.
>
> This nonprofit has no liabilities. If we have Accounts Payable or Outstanding Debts they belong on our Balance Sheets after Assets and before Equity. Liabilities get subtotaled with Equity.

Balance Sheet at Dec 31, 20xx

ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Key Bank – 20xx Business C...	2,867.49
Key Bank – Business Checking	7,884.33
Key Bank – Money Market	12,602.86
Total Checking/Savings	23,354.68
Other Current Assets	
Wells Fargo - Bond Account	33,779.26
Total Other Current Assets	33,779.26
Total Current Assets	57,133.94
TOTAL ASSETS	**57,133.94**
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Opening Bal Equity	0.00
Retained Earnings	75,562.89
Net Income	**-18,428.95**
Total Equity	57,133.94
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	**57,133.94**

A few more notes on the Balance Sheet, specifically the equity section:

"Opening Balance Equity" is zero. This usually means that the current accounting system includes all transactions ever processed on this organization's accounts. A system change during the life of an organization would usually include the carryover of previous equity balances.

"Retained Earnings" recognizes all previous years accounted for in the current system. In this case, the books were setup more than seven years before this income statement, so all auditable periods are included in one place.

"Net Income," in this case a year-end loss, calculates only the net profitability for the current year and must balance to the bottom-line of the related Income Statement. On January 1st, the Net Income amount will roll into the Retained Earnings line, adding to the amount already there, and the Net Income line will then include only January 1st transactions.

Based on its 20xx expenses, if they are normal, this nonprofit is funded for two to three more years, even if its income remains lower than its expenses. This organization is sustainable in the short-term. On the other hand, if they return to a slow build of cash each year, they will be sustainable long-term.

Income Statement for Jan - Dec 20xx

Income		**% of Income**
Membership Dues	2,500.64	23.78%
Income from Board	7,200.00	68.47%
Interest - Bonds/Long-Term	785.00	7.46%
Interest - Savings/Short-Term	30.59	0.29%
Total Income	**10,516.23**	**100%**
Gross Profit	**10,516.23**	**100%**
Expense		
Donations / Charity	**11,699.76**	**111.25%**
Membership Expenses		
District Events	776.60	7.38%
Dues to National	1,704.25	16.21%
Officers Retreat	567.09	5.39%
Total Membership Expenses	**3,047.94**	**28.98%**
Necessary Services Expenses		
Musician	240.00	2.28%
Secretary	2,400.00	22.82%
Treasurer	1,200.00	11.41%
Tyler (aka Event Greeter)	660.00	6.28%
Officers Expense - Withholding	836.02	7.95%
Professional Fees - Accounting	1,256.25	11.95%
Total Necessary Services	**6,592.27**	**62.69%**
Operations Expenses		
Bank Fees	48.15	0.46%
Supplies	219.98	2.09%
Total Operations Expenses	**268.13**	**2.55%**
Special Events Expenses		
Event Supplies	2,574.02	24.48%
Installation Ceremony Expenses	707.27	6.73%
Refreshments	4,055.79	38.56%
Total Special Events Expenses	**7,337.08**	**69.77%**
Total Expense	**28,945.18**	**275.24%**
Net Income	**-18,428.95**	**-175.24%**

Now let's turn to the related Income Statement shown on the previous page. The Income Statement is usually seen as the story of the period being reported. Before beginning analysis, please note that the Net Income balance matches the Net Income balance on the Balance Sheet. If those two amounts are not the same, we have a "snapshot" and a "story" that are unrelated and will cause no end of confusion. Since these statements are aligned, let's jump in:

Income

This organization has four distinct income streams: Membership Dues, Income from the Board, and two Interest Income sources. Membership dues are self-explanatory but not this group's primary income source. Most of their members paid for lifetime memberships years ago.

Their main income is received from their Board, which manages the building they own and provides them with any proceeds. In most years, the Board sends an auto-transfer of $600 per month, which adds up to $7,200 annually, and then they send a large deposit by check sometime mid-year. Total income from the Board is usually $30,000-$40,000 per year. In the year reported here, the Board invested $75,000 in a new roof and other building upgrades, so sent only the auto-transfers. That's why the organization realized a loss for the year, which would be immediately obvious if we compared this year's Income Statement with any other years. The last two income sources are Interest from two of the accounts listed as assets on the Balance Sheet: Bond Account and Money Market. Neither are big money makers, nor are they losers.

Expenses

The bulk of this organization's expenses, and all of its Cost of Goods Sold, in this case the cost of maintaining rental space and tenants, are reflected on their Board's financial statements, which are completely separate. *This is an excellent example* of the separation of financial records and bank accounts between entities or, in our case, between ourselves and our businesses. (See BDA Tool Two for reference.)

Like our example for DA Tool One, the leadership of this nonprofit is primarily concerned with categories and uses subcategories only for additional information and troubleshooting when there is significant variance from expectations. They have an annual expense budget of $30,000. They try to give away 40% or $12,000 through charitable contributions and donations. They have an equal amount to spend on their membership costs, which shows up as a combination of Membership Expenses and Special Event Expenses. And, finally, they budget 20% or $6,000 each year for administration costs, which shows up as a combination of Necessary Services Expenses and Operations Expenses. For 20xx, they were a little heavy on Necessary Services Expenses but were satisfied that they had stayed within their total expense budget of $30,000.

Had the Board contributed cash within its normal amount range, this arm of the non-profit would have had money left over to pass on to the 20xx committee responsible for charitable donations and member services instead of a loss.

BDA Tool Three — Preparatory meditation and writing for conference registrants — continued:

Before moving on, let's pause and consider a process for writing our annual business plans (ABPs), as a support in keeping "clean, orderly, and accurate financial records." We think BDA Tools Two and Three may be out of order or, more likely, BDA Tool Two should be BDA Tool Twelve, but we're working with what we've got.

We usually focus on our record maintenance, and the first three Steps, for at least three months before we're ready to tackle any sort of business planning in a solvent and spiritually principled way. So, we need a few months of numbers to create the best income and spending plans for our businesses. (If we're starting a new business, we need to engage with friends, fellows, and professionals who can help guide us through start-up planning and actions.) Once we have three calendar months of business income and expense numbers:

1. We suggest first choosing someone and asking them for help with our business planning. This might be our sponsor or PRG, our accountant or consultant, or a fellow recovering business debtor with whom we can share reciprocity and mutual support, doing our planning together.
2. We can spend an hour talking with our selected person about what we're planning to do. We can get to know each other, establish trust and rapport, share some of our debting history and DA and BDA recovery and experience. In the second half hour we can talk about our visions and businesses in solvent BDA terms — especially being "stewards of Higher Power's businesses" (from the BDA Tools pamphlet) — and of service as solvent recovering business owners.
3. We might spend 60-90 minutes, next time, creating custom spending plan templates for each of our businesses based on understandable, consistent, and well-defined categories and subcategories. (See BDA Tool Two materials for a standardized ABP / Income Statement.) We also make sure we've created functioning *percent of revenue (or gross income) columns*, then view our previous period — 3, 6, 9, or 12 calendar months — income and spending through the lens of this new format.

   > Once our fixed costs have been paid, and we've begun to take advantage of economies of scale: our cost of sales and gross profit percentages should remain the same; our expense percentages should consistently go down as total income increases, except our own salaries and benefits, which should go up as income goes up; and our profits should go up with unexpected spikes or ongoing rises in income. That's the value of "% of Revenue (or Gross Income)."

4. We can then meet several more times, slowly filling in our annual plans, in a one-month, three-month, or 12-month detail format. (By this we're referring to the three pages in the ABP workbook template on the home page at **https://www.hopefordebtors.org**.) We can start our year in ANY month although only on the 1st day of ANY month, and ideally on the 1st day of the 1st month of a calendar quarter. We also suggest the three-month detailed planning format, especially but not only for new businesses and new business owners.
5. Once we have inserted our projections into our customized templates, and we have reviewed the percentage columns and bottom lines together, we want to "own" our plans. This doesn't mean that we can't continue to pray and meditate about our plans and continue to make changes as new information becomes available. But we need to "own" our plans, even as we change them.

   > Not the words, but the spiritual approach we are encouraging is something like: "I have created this plan in faith, and it is my plan, at this moment, knowing that my plan will change, and my actual income and expenses will change even more." We also encourage praying for the manifestation of "this plan or something better," for alignment of our will with Higher Power's will, and for clarity and redirection if we are not in alignment.

<u>BDA Tool Three — Preparatory meditation and writing for conference registrants — continued:</u>

Finally, let's look at putting "all tax and bill due dates on our calendar," breaking this activity down between the two types of payments — taxes and bills.

There are many online resources, including the IRS website, for discovering tax due dates by specific date, month, and year. For instance, for April 20xx the following Business and Personal Income Tax due dates apply in the US. (This is not legal or tax advice. Please verify tax due dates and details with a professional tax preparer, and please reach out for help from expert professionals in your own country, wherever you may be, ensuring compliance with your own governmental and other requirements.) If we've never understood the big deal about April 15th, we may understand it now:

> **April 1, 20xx:** The deadline for filing 1099s electronically is April 1. If we don't file electronically, mailing them instead, the deadline is February 28 (or February 29 in leap years).
>
> **April 15, 20xx:** If our business is a sole proprietorship or a single-member LLC, we'll want to report our business income taxes on Schedule C with our personal tax return. Schedule C is the business profit and loss form that must be submitted with our personal income taxes on Form 1040. Our Schedule C net income is included with our other sources of income to determine our taxable income.
>
> **April 15, 20xx:** If we have a corporation with a year-end of December 31, our business must file Form 1120 Corporate Income Tax Return. If we want to file an extension application, it's due on this date, using IRS Form 7004.
>
> **April 15, 20xx:** If we pay estimated taxes, the first installment of estimated taxes for the current year is due now.
>
> **April 15, 20xx:** If we want to file an extension application for our personal, partnership, or LLC tax return, it must be filed by this date. We must also pay income taxes on this date. Corporations receive an automatic extension, but they don't receive an extension on payment.
>
> **April 15, 20xx:** If we make payroll tax deposits monthly, our payroll tax deposit for March is due now.
>
> **April 30, 20xx:** File Form 941 - Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return for our first quarter (January through March) payroll taxes. If we've made all required payments in full by the due dates, we have 10 more days to submit this form (by May 10).

Wouldn't it help us to have these tax due dates on our April 20xx calendars with appropriate reminders?

BDA Tool Three — Preparatory meditation and writing for conference registrants — continued:

Next, for the payment of our bills, and tracking on our calendars, we again suggest selection and use of a business-oriented accounting software. If our business is bigger than just us, if we can afford it, and if we are organized enough to delegate our bookkeeping and accounting needs, support from paid, trained professionals would likely save us money, even in the short-term. (Again, see BDA Tool Twelve for reference.) We suggest retaining vendor or contract relationships with accountants in this order:

1. **Tax professional**, not just a preparer, but also willing to provide us with guidance throughout our tax year, often on a quarterly basis, via review of our financial statements, bookkeeping and banking procedures, credit and collections policies, and tax benefits and liabilities.

    From the tax professional, there will be quarterly tax transaction commitments, at minimum, plus monthly and / or annual tax transactions.

2. **Payroll service** which prepares not only our weekly or bi-weekly payroll checks and / or employee direct deposits, but also prepares and files our payroll-related tax returns.

    From the payroll service, there will be weekly or biweekly payroll commitments, plus tax deposits due within every week or month that follows, plus quarterly and annual payroll and tax commitments. The complexity of our business's payroll processing will multiply quickly as we include a variety of compensation plans and employee benefits.

3. **Bookkeeper**, either onsite or off, who is responsible for taking care of our financial data entry, tasks related to payments and receipts, preparation of financial statements (to our specifications), and many more similar duties. External bookkeeping services can often be found with reasonable rates and terms; hiring a bookkeeper in-house may allow us to delegate administrative and / or lead-generation tasks in addition to financial duties.

    From the bookkeeper, there will be weekly or bi-weekly check runs for accounts payable, plus manual or emergency checks and payments. Savvy and engaged business owners and operators need and allow for *few emergency payments*. Unnecessary urgency is never the business owner's or compulsive debtor's friend.

Whether the tasks above are done by us or delegated to others, someone in our businesses will need to be responsible for ensuring that transactions and payments are fully funded on an often-tight schedule. Here we return to keeping payment due dates on a calendar and watching the calendar closely.

Even the most fiscally-talented owners and managers need cash requirements on their calendars, or we delegate to someone within our organization who fulfills this role. Managing the short- and long-term cash flows of an organization is called the "treasury function." Qualified professionals can help, but we usually must lead them. We encourage being our own businesses' treasurers for as long as we can.

TRY IT: Based on the cash (non-debting) priorities we've described on this and the previous page, we encourage you to put all your tax and bill due dates on your calendar for the upcoming month or two or three and review those details with your sponsor, PRG, and / or study buddy, seeking feedback and input.

Promise Three — Preparatory meditation for conference registrants:

Please read Promise Three from the DA Promises pamphlet, then spend several minutes meditating. Next read the suggestion below and use the lines provided to document at least 26 of your positive attributes, at least one for each letter of the English alphabet. Perhaps meditate a few more minutes, thanking Higher Power for this opportunity to reframe your opinion of yourself *right now* and to let go of shame.

> *Promise Three: "We will live within our means, yet our means will not define us."*

Who Am I Now?

We will soon get the opportunity to take a fresh look at our wrongs, defects of character, shortcomings, *character liabilities*, or whatever else we wish to call them. In the meantime, let's review some of the things that are right with us. Please use the lines below to document positive *character assets* you now hold. Try to write down at least one positive thing about yourself for every letter in the English alphabet:

A____________________________________

B____________________________________

C____________________________________

D____________________________________

E____________________________________

F____________________________________

G____________________________________

H____________________________________

I____________________________________

J____________________________________

K____________________________________

L____________________________________

M____________________________________

N____________________________________

O____________________________________

P____________________________________

Q____________________________________

R____________________________________

S____________________________________

T____________________________________

U____________________________________

V____________________________________

W____________________________________

X____________________________________

Y____________________________________

Z____________________________________

Promise Three — Preparatory meditation for conference registrants — continued:

Need more space to write about your positive characteristics? Or any other thoughts about who you are now?

Here you go:

BONUS — Concept Three — OPTIONAL meditation and writings for conference registrants:

Please read Concept Three in our "12, 12, and 12" book, then spend several minutes meditating on each of the questions below. We suggest answering every question we've posed; first in writing, then reading your answers aloud, sharing with a fellow BDAer or two. No long essays are necessary, just a paragraph or two in direct answer to a question. These questions are posed by the author and editors of the workshop materials based on our own experience, strength, and hope and a deep read of Concept Three. Most if not all of the questions below can be applied to our personal and business lives, as well as to our interactions with our fellow DAers.

> *Concept Three: "As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relationship between the groups, the World Service Conference, and the Debtors Anonymous General Service Board, it is suggested that we endow these elements of world service with a traditional 'Right of Decision' in order to ensure effective leadership."*

1) Can the "Right of Decision" be earned?
2) On a scale of 1 to 10, how honest am I? At home? At work? In DA and BDA?
3) Am I able and willing to examine my motives, as well as my words and actions?
4) Am I able to process new information, especially when it's unexpected?
5) Do I take time to evaluate the limits and boundaries on my various life roles? At home? At work? In service?
6) How strong are my communication skills? Could I improve my skills through regularly sharing my communication breakdowns or difficulties with a BDA sponsor?
7) Do I allow others to exercise their authority without fear of my criticism?

In the conference-approved text on Concept Three, there is an example given that GSRs and ISRs may go to WSC and receive urgent information they were not able to share with their groups or Intergroups before being required to place a vote. So far, so good, but we believe an important detail is being ignored or forgotten.

The trusted servant's role remains that of "representative." So, we believe that it is not the job of the representative to discern the "will of the Higher Power" in the situation described. We believe it is their role to discern the will of the group or Intergroup that sent them. It makes no sense to us that we would do the work of raising funds and sending a representative to WSC if they no longer represent us once they get there, or during the WSC service year that follows. A true representative knows their group or Intergroup well enough to know how they would vote after all the information has been considered.

In a more general sense, what we're talking about here is a consistency in the roles we play in our lives and allowing others consistency in their roles. There is security and relief in consistency. Let's not deprive ourselves or others of role clarity, whether we deprive them by micromanagement or by creation of unnecessary crises. Creating a crisis may put us back in the driver's seat, but at what cost?