

January 20, 2013

Intergroup Service Representative's Report from the 2012 World Service Conference in Seattle, WA.

To the groups within New York's *Empire State Intergroup*

Dear fellow D.A. members,

Thank you again for providing me the wonderful experience of serving the remarkable fellowship of Debtors Anonymous as one of your representatives at the 2012 World Service Conference (WSC). In this report I hope to share some of my personal experience at the Conference, and attempt to provide a general overview of the Conference operation. Along with this report, I have attached the full WSC report containing the minutes, motions, and all committee reports, as well as the Conference's responses to all Issues and Concerns submitted by groups around the world. These documents are also available on the D.A. website: debtorsanonymous.org.

I'd like first to clarify the common misconception that the World Service Conference is a "really big business meeting." In fact, the part of the Conference that resembles a typical business meeting (motions, discussion, flying opinions, grunts, moans, and voting) is only a fraction of what happens each year. While some decisions about D.A. policy are made, the main focus of the Conference is service. It's about giving back a little energy to the program that gave me everything, and making just a little effort to help keep D.A. strong for the many people who decide they want help.

Each delegate (Group Service Representatives or Intergroup Service Representatives) is required to join one of the eight committees that make up the Conference. I've chosen to work on the Fellowship Communications Committee (FCC). During the Conference, much of a delegates time is spent formulating his/her committee's plan of action for the coming year. Here is an example of the FCC's action plan:

1. Use the fellowship-wide conference call format to introduce topics including, but not limited to, *definition of solvency, group sponsorship, using social media to carry messages, social media, anonymity, underearning definition, and healthy meetings.*
2. Create a repeatable process for sharing information & outcomes from conference calls.
3. Continue to maintain the existing *Group Sponsorship* email account (gsponsorship@gmail.com), responding to all inquiries and review the content of the auto response.
4. Develop & implement ways of publicizing the *Group Sponsorship* program/email address.
5. Guided by the Traditions, we will explore the use of social media to carry the

message

6. Encourage GSRs to go to their home meetings and share their personal stories of how the WSC changed their lives and helped their program.
7. Develop FCC Tagline (Are We Connecting?) from our visioning process to be used in all FCC communication.
8. Solicit and gather DA group success stories to be shared with the fellowship to help groups thrive.

Along with this plan of action, the committees bring motions and recommendations before the entire Conference, to be considered and voted upon. This year the FCC presented the following:

1. *FCC moves that the Conference accept the revised FCC mission statement and remove all references to the "Adopt a Loner" service from DA literature and website.*
2. *FCC recommends that all WSC & GSB committee reports be included in the Conference binder.*
3. *FCC recommends the GSO distribute the Treasurer's Manual to newly registered & existing groups.*

In addition to participating in the business of forming policy, voting on important issues, and offering myself in service to the Debtor who still suffers, the Conference has been a source of incredible spiritual growth for me, and will always remain as the most fulfilling experience of my life thus far. It is very difficult to try to explain what the Conference has been to me. I will try, by writing the things that come to mind:

My first thought goes to the fact that the Conference is a D.A. meeting attended by over 100 members that have a significant length of abstinence from incurring new debt, and who are willingly giving themselves to the tool of World Service. It's like a 5-day power-meeting, where blinding moments of insight, surrender, gratitude, camaraderie, and Godliness, occur many times each day.

Another remarkable thing I witnessed is the visible act of placing principles before personalities. Those at the Conference are all human (and Debtors), placed in an unfamiliar space, exerting themselves mentally and physically. In every case of personality flare-up that I saw, I also saw the willingness to let go of personal opinions in favor of the overall goal: We are here to serve the entire Fellowship and make D.A. available for anyone in the world who wishes to recover from our disease.

Over the course of three Conferences, each spanning five days, I have never once experienced a negative moment. I can honestly say that it is like the very best parts of a good meeting—a share-a-day, a meditation, and a family gathering—distilled, concentrated, and enjoyed steadily over the five days. This spiritual experience also

continues and grows afterward, as the service work continues with the delegates from around the world.

Another thing worth noting is that the Conference is exhausting in the best way imaginable. The night before I was leaving for Seattle this past August, I was totally relaxed, my arrangements were well in order, my Conference spending plan was solid, I was packed, and I was ready for bed at 10:00. At around midnight, I realized that I would in fact not sleep. I was too excited. The first night of the Conference was fairly sleepless as well. At the end of each following day, I was completely spent from constant motion, deep thought and decision making. I remember that exhaustion being one of the most satisfying feelings—a feeling that I had given everything I had, that there was nothing else in the world that I needed to accomplish, and that there was an unlimited supply of this energy, starting tomorrow.

The Convocation is the “really big business meeting” that takes place on Saturday and Sunday morning (day 4 and 5). There is actually a legal procedure – regarding nonprofit entities—that must be adhered to in this process. I always find it amazing that among the formalities of credentialing, parliamentary procedure, and ratification, there prevails a spiritual component. Once, during the convocation, a delegate wanted clarity on what constitutes “substantial unanimity” within the GSB. After a thoughtful description by the parliamentarian, and some discussion with board members, it was finally stated that the GSB does not use substantial unanimity as legal device—it is a spiritual principle. While a simple majority suffices in most organizations, we strive for an overwhelming majority, and ensure that the minority opinion is thoroughly considered and given ample time to express itself—even after a vote has been completed. I’ve witness more than one case where the minority opinion was expressed after a vote. A member who voted in the majority then changed their mind. The motion was allowed to be reconsidered, and the group conscience shifted to the other side. It seems chaotic on the surface, but as in many case throughout the Conference, I was amazed by the way our organization operates, and allows the principle of service to the still-suffering debtor prevail.

Again, it is very difficult to describe the experience of doing this service, and equally difficult to quantify the transformation that I’ve undergone while doing it. I leave the Conference with a multi-leveled sense of fulfillment. I have made an effort to help strengthen and grow the program that has given me everything. “Service is gratitude in action.” I was able to express my thoughts, listen to other’s ideas, and work together to make a plan, with the sole objective of making D.A. open and available to anyone in the world who wants help. I recognize, with overwhelming certainty, that this program is miraculous, and that my membership is a precious gift. I am seeing myself in roles that were beyond my imagination. I’m seeing myself becoming the person I didn’t know I was.

Throughout the year I will continue meeting with the other members of the FCC, and working with them to complete our action plan. I laugh when I think about the guy who scoffed at “those people who do service,” and my (terrified) reluctance at becoming an ISR. I spent practically my entire life trying to prevent *change* from disrupting my small sphere of existence. People telling me that “becoming a GSR will turbo-charge your recovery” was hardly comforting. That notion is repulsive to the self-centered, willful, scared debtor that I was and still am. Through my years as a member of D.A., there

have been many things/actions that I believed would bring the change I so desperately needed. I now see that the most profound “actions” I took, were simply a daily commitment to abstinence, and a slow surrender to service in this program. I believe that the D.A. tool of *Service* is our hidden gem of happiness, fulfillment, self-esteem, and lasting solvency.

I wish you all the very best on your journey.

Your trusted servant,

Chris K