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Transcript

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He was in a bathroom like that, I wasn't sure who was that bad for me. My name is Don P. I am an alcoholic, and I'm a very grateful member of Alcoholics Anonymous. I come to you from the Parapsad Bick School of Youth in rural Colorado. We meet on Wednesday night at seven o'clock, and if you're ever that way, stop out. As long as you don't know, you might as well be exposed to the best. Before I come up to you, I ask my God to please send me with His love, and let it fair to me even though I was a brother. And I say to you, looking at you tonight, and I will show you, too, with God's love. That's what you got into my life. You see, God gave me back my life in the free, clear gift. December 26, 1967, no person had to be paid. And then he gave me Alcoholics Anonymous. He gave me you.

So that gift could take on some meaning, and some good notion, and some purpose. I say, I think the greatest thing that I ever suffered was walking around this year alone, and I was useless. There's nothing worse than that. And today, I don't feel useless, because you just keep me busy, and then the thing I'd have to do better, and that's talking to drunks. And I don't know how to get on the floor tonight. I don't have to scare it, and I don't know how to get on the floor tonight. I don't have to scare it, and I don't know how to get on the floor tonight. I don't have to scare it, and I don't have to scare it.

But I have no idea what the question looks like tonight. I had a very special feeling for the Golden Slippers, 15 years old old, and that came out of town. And we've been pretty much doing that, but he talked with us. And we picked up that format. And throughout the United States, the people moved off that way, and who are still sober. Some navigations to be able to be part of the Golden Slippers tonight. I ran off the highway from my first drink. That's all I can tell you. I don't have the biggest idea of control drinking in it. Not of course, the stuff changed me. It made me big and pretty. When I ran off the bag, I was just there. That's what makes me a great lover. That's when there's a different thing to it. I said that because I was a great lover. That's when there's a different thing to it.

The biggest feeling, if you want to get emotional, is to dress cool as beer with, and listen to the full and hoppy thing in the full warm home. Oh, I lost the baby. Well, you're alive then. But from the very beginning, I had this tennis season too much. It was in my nature that if I had hoped you'd take tennis, anything was going worth abusing. When I was 17 years old, the town got too small for me, and I ran away and joined the Navy, to save America from the communist menace, I've never done anything shabby in my life. It's always been a no-boy.

In two years later, I was in my first federal penitentiary, as a result of all of this. And I didn't know that's why I was here. That's why you found me in my third penitentiary. And I just never did get used to those questions. And I don't have to think of how much this kind of country is that I was a big-time gangster because I wasn't. We were here when I was a police officer. We were a long, hard hour. We drank one in the middle bed, and took it instead of me.

We got to go away. I got confused one night, and I forgot which side I was on. And then I went out and put

on my black sweet coat, and my back was kept. And then on my back, I was just going to go back to add this off. The library. It most perfectly changed me. And I got in and went around for a couple of hours. I never tried to go to. I've been growing it earlier that week. I'm coming home. It's the easiest off the way.

I don't even want to go around for a couple hours. And that's the last thing I got to take in there. So, that was not my best to speak. A couple days of 1967 was a bit. I had just sat around out. I was wanted by the federal government for a little bit of discussion. I committed in 1966. I had my two little boys with me. I still don't know how they kept giving them back to me. They're not even taking off years before.

I went 133 pounds, and I didn't feel good. But I will be forever grateful for that week, because that's the week. But I finally just ran out of everything. I got to take a look at who I really was. Instead of all the illusions. I wouldn't have to go back anymore. That was the week I finally came to understand that my dreams were dead and were never ever going to happen. All the stuff I'd ever wanted to do, I'd never get it done.

And all the things I had never really wanted to do, I had already done them. And there just wasn't any help. That's a marvelous place to be. It's like hell, but it's a great place to be. Our Christmas tree really fit our room. There's all our conservation apartments beneath the old lady who had cats. That's your cat. I didn't really turn around with the cat. And if you know anything about cats, you know what that's about.

And this is the week that I got to look into my own room and see that the place was cleaner than mine was. And our trees didn't fit that room. We found a dollar in the snow and gone about a trip to a Christmas Eve. And I'll tell you anything I got in a dollar. And of course, I'm dramatic. It has to have something so the trees didn't fit. It killed it. And that hurt a little bit. We dressed in apples, whatever we could find.

And my two little boys, one of the kids, along the way, I'd always prided myself on never having to turn down young people. Well, I'm out of drug addicts. I did get into drugs for a while. I sold them and smuggled them and did that kind of stuff. And the kid that I was using was around 16 years old when I had turned him on. I saw that. And he was throwing a big box of blue paper towels. He didn't know why. He was there.

And my two little boys had wrapped up everything in a thick blue paper towel and put him into the tree for me. They said one person. I'd manage to talk this out there and call the public mission back tomorrow. And he's called back and dead. God bless him. They said they said I found everything in a little shape and credit. Because of that, they're a check out and count. I didn't have any money. And as usual, I was really meant to pay for them the things the world should have said and checked out there.

Unfortunately, the police would be checked. And they had that for Christmas. The kid came there. Thank God. When we went down to see my folks. My last day's in the hole. We all have one. No matter what. At the end of the road, you can always know him. And my dad managed to go. And he said no, I'm sorry, but your mother says I can't let you in anymore. Because she can't stand seeing you die anymore. And I found I got to see exactly what I've been doing in a moment.

And I would say that I'm not hurting anybody but myself. And it was a lie. And then dad made a lie out of my other thing. I said no, that he cared for years. Nobody really loved it. So he shook my hand because he loved me. And made another lie out of it. And another piece of me broke. And I got to look at that that I had been doing in

my children. They'd been in another crash pad. And we spent the last three years, I hit bottom three years before I quit.

And we lived on the bottom. Traveling back and forth across this country on my thumb. My children were glad after Hell's Angels. And bombed with streets. And I thought that was normal. I'll never forget to forget what I had before. The guy who sent my old boy back to school. The man who had to stop somewhere. And the man who stopped and said, got me. I just got to see, well, I was a creep. I was a boss. It was nothing less.

That's the best place in the world when alcohol is going to be. I did the only thing I could do. I quit. Very true form of surrender. I took a two-month supply of amphetamines, shot it up my arm, and laid down to die. And I got to tell you the next morning, I really was disappointed. Then the police were at the door, and I knew I wasn't dead. Now, they were upset. They had nine charges on me this time. The first one called for three years to life.

And the Denver District Attorney told me about meeting on that. I was going to bring the others one at a time. But I was through. But I didn't much care. I really didn't. I had a brand new problem. I was a complete failure at living. And now I was a complete failure at dying. If you're walking around in the body, there's still hope to the mind that didn't. I'm not supposed to care. I couldn't feel anything. They asked me to do it.

I laid in jail for five months waiting for a trial. And they offered me a deal. They said, we know you're pretty sick. And I told you this story because I need you to know immediately about the power of God. God had gotten into my life before I had heard His name, they offered me this little deal. I said, we know you're sick. And we'll talk to the federal people. I still owe them four years. I would agree that if you plead guilty to this other charge, we'll sentence you and give you back to the feds and they can take you to Fort Worth, Texas and fix what's wrong with you.

Well, my mother didn't raise no dummy. She said, a hospital is better than a penitentiary, no matter what they say. I have two things going on. There's always a way to make work in here. It's not any good situation. I had an opportunity right back to work with a schizophrenic. I told you I was a rank amateur. I was a rank amateur. I had an opportunity to stay with me where I was willing to go anywhere anybody said and do anything anybody said.

Because it meant I didn't have to be me anymore. I also knew that if you put me in a hospital with doctors and drugs, I'll be on the street. They would come and know what's wrong with me. And about how long it would take to fix that. And they would give me a list of all of the symptoms. I would have to present to you and convince them that I would get better. I've been doing that since I was a little bit. You can't? I was going to walk in a room that you tell me who I was.

And without you, I was nobody. Well, I took no deal. And if you don't want to get all about power, you might have won the federal government and the state government said that I was from here to here. That's exactly what happens. And they kept their promise. The five days later, I was in the Colorado state penitentiary. Disturbed. I didn't want to sign up for it. Thank God. Thank the most of the God for that. Because I'd have been on the street six to six months.

I might be locked away some more stuck waiting there today. Had that deal gone through. Because I truly believe that I no longer have, as an out for alcoholism, death is no longer an option for me. I tried and I didn't

work. I would have to live with it. Well, I'm laying up in that fish tank. The third week, the guys last week said, you walk them down and you were listening to these people. I didn't have any help to do.

Okay, now I'm not listening. There were three convicts standing. There were numbers on their chest. One of them said, one of them said, "My name is Doc, and I'm an alcoholic." And that means that I'm powerless over alcohol. And in all the circumstances of my life, my life had become unmanageable. And if any of you smart bastards think you can still manage your life, look at the reward the state has given you for the nifty job you've been doing.

That did for me in that moment. The real service is an alcoholic phenomenon. And he put the mirror of truth up in front of me in such a way that I couldn't duck it anymore. I don't remember a whole lot else that they said that day. Some general loving stuff like you've heard that thanking fit you in the penitentiary. You're not doing the good. They did give me a piece of information that I must tell you because some of you in this room don't know this, unfortunately.

If you're an alcoholic, you don't ever have to drink alcohol again. Ever. You don't ever have to hurt the way you've been hurting ever again. And I really wanted to hear that. I didn't know that. I didn't know I didn't have to do that. I had an entire lifetime experience to feel the hell I don't. He said it with such conviction that I heard him. And then they invited us to come up when we got out of the fish tank to the Twelve Step Study School.

And Jim and I hadn't been invited anywhere for so long. They promised us to feel the things we could learn there. And I desperately needed something. See, I was not afraid of that penitentiary. I don't know how to live there. My great fear at that moment was that I knew in about 18 months they were going to put me back in the world. And I didn't have a clue on how to live out here. Not a clue. So I went up there, and they gave us some more interesting loving information.

They sat us all down. The new guys who sit now for the next five weeks, the new guys, that's nothing to say. If you knew anything at all, you wouldn't be here. And then they began to show the miracle. I spent most of my life running around in desperation, asking anybody what's wrong with me. Because I've known since I was a little bit a kid that there's something desperately wrong with me. I laugh at funerals and cry at a hockey game.

I'm in a pulpit. If there's six of you, I'm not afraid. I'm a psychopath. If I'm supposed to be to work at eight, I'll be where Wednesday. And when there's nothing at all to be afraid of, I'm afraid. Afraid of nothing. So, they told me what was wrong with me. And they told me especially where I could understand this. I was in my second county jail. Well, my first county jail was when I was 19 years old because of alcohol.

I didn't know that. You see, one of the symptoms of my alcoholism is when I began to drink, I get lost and I can't find my way home. And there was a federal law against not being able to find your way home when you're there. And I will. And there's never a liberty. And I love the nature. I was baffled by my own behavior. I got the 17 wars exciting. It looks pretty dumb to me today, but it was exciting there. I was on a destroyer.

And we ran up and down the Korean coast and went to Russia and over to China and into Japan and all of that was fun. And the war was interesting. I was a radarman and a radioman. And I was learning how to really drink with the big guys. I could never get back to the ship. I'd be ten minutes later, an hour later. Two days later,

one time it was twenty-three days later. And when I got home, I wasn't there anymore. So we ran up there in Korea and they were really good.

He told me what had happened to me. That happened to me because I happened to have an allergy. Now, I've always felt we live on a very strange planet. And I'm convinced of it. This is the only place in the universe. I know, although you're going to prison for being allergic to something. I don't know. If I had an allergy to tomatoes and I ate tomatoes, I'd break out with an itch. My allergy was alcohol. If I put alcohol in my system, I'd break out with an itch for more alcohol.

And it's stronger than anything I can bring to bear on it. And it has absolutely nothing to do with whether I love my family or not, I love my work or not, or whether I love me or not. The fact is, if I put alcohol in my body, I've got to have more alcohol and there is nothing that can stop that. That makes sense to me because I could relate to that. On day 22, I'm in personal school in Los Angeles, making drinks and quarters and food.

I'm wanting to do anything to keep it going because I hadn't found it yet. It's out there and I've been looking for it but I hadn't found it yet. And you couldn't have driven me back to that ship. On day 23, the madness was gone for some reason. And I turned myself in and went back like any other rational human being to face the consequences of my act. So I know about that. Dr. Silkworth was talking to us about men who had been working on an important deal.

And several days before it would be successfully consummated, they had a drink and they missed their appointment. I found myself in this book. That's me. I can't tell you how many times I should have been somewhere to my benefit and missed my appointments. And my sponsors let us get kind of comfortable with that and then told us that if everything happens to alcohol, it only happens after the first drink. If I never take another drink of alcohol, that'll never happen to me again.

So what's really wrong with me? Why would I keep taking a drink of alcohol when my experience tells me that's what's going to happen? My real problem is up here in my head. There's a piece missing. It's just in here. My neighbor's got it. He got it. He's got it. He's got it. And the reason I know he's got it is because we talk once in a while. My kid drinks with his bar. He watched one of me over here someday. His big, good looking, he told me about five years ago that he got drunk.

And he threw up. I made a fool of himself. I've never done that since. That was such a momentous deal. This year he told me, for some reason, he had a drink. He drank. What was that? Money was that piece. He can remember five years ago he can remember trying to make a fool himself. My last experience tells me that I can't. And the big, good-looking alcoholic from Akron says that those first hundred people discovered exactly the same thing.

There will be certain times when all that won't come back. I won't remember what happened last time. Now with enough strength to stop me from doing it this time. Last year I was sitting at home. I had a home now. In a chair that I paid money for. And then in here with a black Lab puppy. I still inherit neurotics. And that's something that's treated me with a mask. I couldn't say that. Everything came into my house. We were on the road.

So I heard him in a paper and threw him out. And he came back in the next day. And he went on the road again. So I popped him in the butt and threw him out. After about four days he quit wetting on the rug. And I'm sitting in my chair thinking, you know, that dog's smarter than mine. The dog was very much the worst. The pain is the past experience though. I never was. So I understand how I listen. I'm glad about it. I was powerless to keep from going stark-raving mad if I gave it alcohol.

And I've got a mind that's stark-raving mad and keeps giving it alcohol. And there's nothing I can do about it. Nothing. I tried everything. I've been baptized and unbaptized. I've gone to catechism. I ate peyote with the Indians and had vision. Went to Dianetics for Scientology. That was fun. And then to play games. I wouldn't try playing. But I always played out here. My tendency, when I don't feel good to take something from out here and put it in here to make me feel better.

I'm powerless. I must have something that will work for me during those mental blind spots. And I'm convinced and I'm twenty years sober now and I'm convinced that they will still occur on any given day. I don't know which one. And when they do, I better be in some kind of spiritual condition because I don't have any more power over the day than I did then. And I had an experience in my sixth year of sobriety that drove that home to me.

I had a certain time. I had a job. I was pretty stiffer when we were having lunch with some business men and leave them in Denver. Pretty classy place. And one of them was Kevin and me and the two. Twenty-three letters. I had that rock gun. This step was green and it came in a tall, skinny glass and wasn't enough in it to do anybody any good. All of my defenses came up because he was going to pass it around so everyone at the table could have a taste.

And I knew I wasn't going to taste that. I knew I wasn't. And it came by me and I thought I'll flip it and see what it smells like. I had it here at my nose. And at most things in my mind, the difference between life and death to me at that moment would be the twitch of a muscle with no thought. When my arm gets here and my wrist feels like this and I would die. And then I knew it was a God because I watched my own hand move that thing off.

And I don't sniff anything anymore. I truly believe alcohol is in that theory. A twitch of a muscle will kill me if I get careless. I can't learn enough about alcohol. And I can't learn enough about alcohol. It's in my mind to prevent me from taking a drink under those circumstances. So I don't try. I came to believe that it was a power greater than myself that could restore me to sanity. And I wasn't sane. The state had me certified as a sociopath type 2.

And the state had me certified as a psychopath. And the reason I wasn't in the federal hospital is that neither one of those is treatable. One doesn't know the difference between right and wrong; you can't help him. The other one knows the difference and just doesn't give a damn. And I was both. And then you have to have the third, unfamiliar, integral terminal illness. Thanks. I really needed that. I failed with you because the only thing I needed was to be changed.

And the people who came into my life had been changed. And I could see it. Wilson committed another murder in the midst of a stick-up one morning. I've not done that. But he talked about how I felt that morning. He

woke up that morning, knowing that my brother and his pilot killed whether he let the die. And that hurt. And so he began to drink to kill the pain. And that day it didn't kill the pain. It got him involved in it.

And it turned into rage. And he went downtown to get his. And he killed some people. Well, I have awakened one, and nobody killed one other than the die. And it hurt. And he got me involved in the pain I did moments or stuff. I was a really nice sponsor. Pretty good sponsor. Meer now. David Ferris is my favorite. Phil's gone now. I died filming. Phil turned left me wrong. Because in one, he was too violent. And they had to send me to the United States.

And two years later they had to send me back to the wall, but to take me some time, what have you been carrying today? Phil is a truth man, but when Phil's right he lost his favorite things that I wanted. And the last time he did that it was people. And it was a first-party month, and then there was several, seven years when I came along, and I was the first person you'd ever saw. He said to me one day, you will stay sober.

And I lived up on the fourth year, so I thought me about my mother. I had never met a more gentle man. He taught me to touch physically and attention. I've never met anyone who has my family more than he did, and he used to say to me, I don't do this to them. I do this to me. When I did this to him, it didn't work. So I do this to me, and now they have me. It's quite a guy. He'd been changed. Grandma told me he used to put a gun in his hand and take things away from people.

And I couldn't do that anymore. But I found that they couldn't do that anymore. And they said to me that God had done that for them, and I really didn't care who had done it. I wanted it. They told me that God loved me as I was, there I was. And I told them to believe that because they did, and they were involved. If they could do that, maybe there was some kind of power that could just take me as I was. Because that's how you had to take me.

That wasn't any less. And we had no trouble. I was afraid I'd have to spend the rest of my life on a septicile. I was trying to unravel the madness, and I had just failed on unraveling thirty-four years. And they told me about God's mystery. You have to do that. They said I would get a new mind, and they showed me in the book of common experience that they hadn't made that up. Dr. Silkworth says we get an entire psychic change.

And if we don't, we probably won't stay sober, which is a pain. I got a new mind. The Big Book uses the word renewed, or start over: renew. If I were to do certain simple things, I'd get a changed mind. And that's all I wanted. Okay. Not justice. I used to rail in the streets of America because there was no justice. I didn't have to tell you today I was ever so grateful to God that there is. Oh, justice. I couldn't kill you.

They didn't have any time for me to tell you through all the stuff that I did wrong. Well, they said God did this. And I could turn my life over to God. He'd fix me up. He'd take care of me. And I wanted it so badly I did. I went back to myself on a septicile step and had the worst experience in my entire life. I'm an alcoholic. And if it goes boom, I can handle it. From God talking out of class to having visions and eagles.

I went back to myself instead of a searshed up prayer and absolutely nothing happened. And I can't deal with that. That scared me. Just that time I really believe that if I did that everything would go poof. And I'd get kind of saintly and blow a little bit and they'd let me go. I thought that the spiritual awakening was the end of the path. And I discovered that the spiritual awakening is the beginning of the path. But at that time it scared me.

I'd learn enough by that time to know that if you do what your sponsor tells you to do, and you don't get the results you think you want to get, go get your sponsor. And I did. I ran back to Bruce. And I said, what is this? And he said, "Dummy, get up here." You know, 38984 in the morning; by afternoon I'm Dummy. He said, "Dummy, you ought to be grateful." You didn't have a flash of light. They nearly killed you. Oh, you're lying.

I've had some duties. And we talked a bit about a power greater than I was. I know we're a whole lot of. Do you think of it? It was greater than I was. Talking with me and giving me some time that afternoon out of his own life, Bruce helped me understand and discover I had no last reservation. We think I'd have had enough. But I had a reservation. God had work for me to do. And that was supposed to be good news. And it wasn't because I didn't know what the work was.

If I really truly totally surrender to God, he'd put me at the corner of Colfax and Broadway in Denver, handing out Watchtower magazines and asking strangers if they'd been saved, I couldn't be doing that. And I told him that I can't be here. And he said, let's talk about that. Now, if you start your everything, let's talk about that. Hang on. What it means is, dummy, shut up for a minute. Well, I'll tell you what's real.

Now, he led me into the process to love. He said to me, now, let's talk about that. Do you suppose that the guy that's hanging out watchtower today had breakfast? Well, he wanted to. And I said, yeah, he said, well, you didn't. He said, do you suppose that that's all of this humiliating himself by asking strangers if they'd been saved, head to the clothes that he's wanting to do that? And I said, try. He said, well, you did?

We went over a number of them. And he finally nailed me. He said, do you suppose when he's all through, he gets to go home. So he's got good care. And he's a great love of me. He's helped me into a state of mind that I stand before you tonight. Anything at all that God may have in mind for me is better than any thing at all that I may ever have in mind for me. I'm curious. My life is no longer any of my business. My best thinking puts me in a penitentiary.

And look at what has happened since that decision came into my life. If I had a choice this weekend of where to go, I certainly would not have picked one of those eggs. I left the webinar for those two, right? But because I let God pick what I'd do and who I'd go, I get to be here with you and be filled with the spirit of life. My Higher Power runs my life. I asked him, how do I make this real? This has to be real. This isn't a flight of fancy.

And he said, Don, God will reveal Himself to you as you reveal yourself to you. And he sent me off to take an inventory. And I did have instructions. I didn't bother with any instructions. I went back to my cell. I'm two hours later when I'd finished that marvelous thing. I ran back to him to take a Fifth Step. And this guy has been so kind to me. Look at this. Look at me. And he said, that's garbage. You're looking to impress me.

Get away. I have written down a whole bunch of the bizarre things I've done. I thought that was inventory. He saved my life again. I did what any self-respecting alcoholic would do. I took that garbage to somebody who would listen to it and had a spiritual awakening. By the way, I think spiritual awakening is a simple thing. Anytime any alcoholic, anywhere understands any part of the truth, that's a spiritual awakening.

What happened to me was I told this guy I wanted me to do a lot of things I'd done. And he'd say, well, it wasn't that bad. And it wasn't very long before I realized there's something wrong here because some of it was

that bad. It wasn't very nice. I awakened to the fact that once again I had picked someone who would tell me what I wanted to hear. So I didn't have to do anything about it. And if I didn't stop that immediately, I would die a very ugly death.

I'm not afraid of death. I haven't been for a long time. I've died three times that I can recall. I'm not eager about some of the ways of dying. I'm not afraid of death, but an ugly death. It means that sometimes just before I die, I have to live a very ugly life. And I can't stand the thought of that ever again. So I got real. In the Third Step Prayer: remove my difficulties. Take away my difficulties. And I'm convinced that means the difficulties I'm having, they're honest enough to even look at myself.

I got that goofy book out. Now I'm an action guy. And I like heavy duty stuff. And they finally convinced me that resentment is my big problem. And resentment is not an emotional problem or a mental problem. And resentment is a spiritual disease. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, the book says. And in therapy they used to let me hang up a punching bag and picture my dad's face on him. Just beat the hell out of him.

Exercise my anger. I loved it. I got involved in it. That never did anything good. Do you know how many action folks get to do with resentment? We get to put it on paper. Isn't that wonderful? I have to make a list of all the people I'm mad at. And my mind has trouble with that. This is why I really shouldn't be mad at them. But it says put it down there. If I'm mad at them, Put it down there. Put down all the reasons I'm mad at them.

And I found that. It's pretty easy to do. I can tell you some of you still know that. It's not going to get them to do that. That's all I ever thought about anyway. We could have mad at why I was mad at them. We came about one of them because it was important. The federal agent who arrested me in 1966 came through my front door and through my back door and through my side window, literally, and knocked me to the ground, panicked at me.

One of them put his shoe on the back of my neck. I'm not sure he really got a squawk in this big cop turn. I almost got my boy in the head. Just a response. I hated him. I hated him so much that even while I was away in the penitentiary. I found out where he lived. And I was going to get him. Well, he's been on my list. There were twenty-three reasons I was mad at him. He'd made me a criminal for one thing. My sex life was shut down and it wasn't that good to start with.

My relationship with my people has been damaged. I know. Just all kinds of stupid stuff on all that thing. And I found, as our book says, to take a different view of this man. To understand that he, like myself, was perhaps spiritually sick. And I could buy that and I'd go and eat any. I was supposed to grant him the same sympathy and pity I'd give a sick friend. At that time, I did not give sympathy and pity to sick people.

They scared me to death. I didn't like sick people. I had to have a program for my life, a script. And there is only one line that you can use with six people that's appropriate. Is there anything I can do for you? And it's the last thing in the world I can ever say to anybody. So I didn't like sick people. That's the way you do. But I went and heard him in good construction and said that what I'm supposed to do next is disregard what the others had done and look at my own mistakes.

Where had I been selfish, and where was I to blame? But I didn't think I just did that. And it burst on me

again. I didn't invite a good guy into my house. I'd been smuggling marijuana out of Mexico and wasn't paying tax on it. And that made me his business. I invited him there. Everything that happened out there, up to and including my son, nearly getting killed was my fault. And I'm very careful when I take people through this process.

There is no end of the world. I took a lid with that. And if I had no one in touch, two very important things. God has forgiven me from the very beginning of time for that. I didn't have to make it up to him. But most important of all, and the greatest promise of all, an alcoholic sonotima. If I were to admit this and let God remove it, I would never ever have to repeat it again. And that's why I can live with that. I know I don't have to put my kids in that kind of jeopardy ever, ever again, because I have a new mind.

I'm tired of being arrested, quit going where there's cops. And I've finished that thing up. When I learned about you, I had that feeling there in my stomach, because that's where I felt it. I found out I have a high-grade manufacturing plant here in my head. So, how are you this morning, John? What do you want to say about that? I can turn it that quickly. What do you want? I just get the new job. And I forgot to set your arms so we can come and wait and panic at me.

And I picture this. I'm going to get caught in traffic now. I'll be 20 minutes late. And I'm going to walk in and my new dog can't like the town of his wife. And I'll say, well, what do you care? And he'll say, I say, I say, I say, I say, I say, you're celery. I'll say, no, you know, I quit. I don't even get out of it. I get the flu, all the stuff. And then I go drink at him. I walk home at night, one night. In my own neighborhood.

And something went, it's good. And in my mind, it became a bullmastiff. And the next boy is going to eat me. And I walk six blocks around to avoid that. It felt like a coward. Which it was. I don't have to be that way anymore. It was two and a half years before I could do a sex inventory. I really messed my head up. I want to go down and sit on the tree by five cards. That was not super sad. In fact, I'm surprised I had children.

Discover some other things in there. For the first time in my life. With God's help, I get to determine my conduct. And I made an interesting discovery. I live one moment at a time. I'm a married man and I like it that way. I like to go home at night. I'm leaving. I'm sorry. I had a friend named Jim and I really had a special feeling for Jim. You see, Jim couldn't remember why he was in the penitentiary. I knew why I was there.

In a blackout, driving his car, Jim had killed someone and they had put him away for three to five years. And no matter what they told him, his mind did not remember the crime. And so he never felt right in there. And I wanted things to be better for him. I didn't know what that feeling was today. I wanted him to be better. And I didn't know enough for me to know that the best way for me to have any alcohol I killed better about themselves is coming about the garbage of my life.

And I was to pick somebody he said he wouldn't be able to be affected by the things I was going to tell him. And Jim was not something I could say to his body. So I picked Jim and we went and did my Fifth Step. And so that day I stopped being alone. Up until that day there had been me and whoever I needed you to be. None of you were ever real to me. I've never given anyone the dignity of just being there. But in this process of sharing this with my friends, Jim, we ended up with two people in that room, me and a guy named Jim.

And as long as there's two of us, I can't be alone. And if I'm not alone, I don't have anything to worry about. Two of us can handle anything that comes down the line. I made a spiritual contact with another human being. And I can't count on human beings, but that's who God sent me as his first messenger. And He still sends them to me. And I was back in my cell when I was over with a grand new feeling I'd never felt before.

So the first time in my life I finished something. I was no longer a spinner in the game of life. I was a long distance runner now. I'm into the game, guys. I don't care if it rains or it snows, or if I lose my legs and my eyes, I don't care. I'm into the game. And I'll play every single day. I'll play every inning and every out. I don't care. I'm into the game. That's what came out of that system. Wherever I am, I'm into the game.

She's got the neat feeling. I've always wanted that. And I got that by admitting what I really was and why. Believe me, for all of the odds that I have told you in this, that God will remove all that from me and change me. And I went back to myself and made amends. And when I came to the seventh step, I knew that I had a lot of work still to do. This was a shabby inventory. I'd done everything I could remember. I did a lot of damage to this mind.

To this day at this time, I can't remember your name. Functioning isn't there. I call a lot of people honey and sweetie. How are you? He calls me Tiger, because he can't remember me. I asked God in His mercy. I say remove these things. Please not call out anything I haven't found yet. Kill me before I find it. And I'm still here. And I've got some inventory of my briefcase. I found some more stuff just last week. Stuff that I would not have been able to live with.

Shabby stuff. I was 12 years old. I helped another group of guys gang up on a kid who was different. We wore jeans and he wore knickers. We washed his mouth out with soap. Because he was a carrot. He wasn't saying the things we were saying. And I joined with them because I knew full well. He was saying those because he didn't fit. And he was trying to fit. And I didn't fit either. And I didn't want them to know that.

Give yourself time. It took me 20 years to be able to just admit that I'm ashamed of that. I'm the only girl I can pay for guilt. There's nothing I can do but feel ashamed on a shame. Forgive yourself some time. And then I'm going to come the first time out. But you get to learn what it did. I have. The king who told me it was just the willingness. Not perfection. It's the willingness. I learned that in the eight steps.

When I finished all this up, my sponsor said, now you go back to yourself and you make a list of all the people you've harmed. And you take most of it from the rest of people, it helps you the worst. And by then we understood that. And then he said, you've got any photographs you can think of madam, he messed with them. He said to me, God, you will know a good deal about what you did to these people. But you are so insensitive that you have no idea what it did to them.

So he said for you, what I want you to do is picture each one of them in your mind, close your eyes and picture them in your mind, and see if they feel wrong to look each one of them straight in the eye and face your mask. I've been wrong. I've hurt you. Well, you please tell me what I have to do so we can get the books to balance. And in that simple exercise that I'd locked up in a penitentiary, I was set free. I had the experience I've always looked for.

I was lifted and set free. Because if I harm you, all you need to do is tell me what I have to do, and we'll square it. I'm a little gangster, give me a little rhyme, but I still use. As good as you are and as bad as I am, I'm as good as you are as bad as I am. We are truly all God's children were equal, truly truly. Well, I still have to pay for my ticket. And I don't know why. I know God forgave me, but if I harm you, I owe you.

That's all. I got to pay for my ticket. And other things I could do down there, he said, and some things I'd have to wait for. And I was to make a list of those people. God, he was cruel. He had to make a list of everything. And he's not made me feel that. He got lost. And it seems that most of the people when I was going to run a letter to, he said, I think you probably ought to go see them when you get out. And the folks that I was eager to go see me, you can probably handle that by mail.

We got in a set of Christmas tree lights from the drug store, where I used to get my prescriptions also. I was a good prescription writer. A buck and a half on credit. I owe them a dollar and a half. I had to write this guy a letter and say, here I am. Here's where I am. I get 10 cents a day. And I had to buy all my stuff out of that. Oh, you're back and half. Will you take a quarter of a month to sell a photo? That's hard on my time, Gaxley.

I dropped some bad checks from Wyoming. I had to write to them, they said. And risk it. That's on up to the fact that I owe you this money. I'll send it to you. Or when I get out, I'll come and bring it to you in due time. And you'll pay attention to it. I had to do that. The most important amends of all were to my family. I'm not going to choke up over this one. My folks, I was thinking about four years ago, I came to the only home meeting they've ever been to.

I was a 10-minute speaker. It's a call out of convention. And I was able to tell them. And they've never been back. We get along fine. They've never been back. The banks and dentists you will supply are sorry for me. And they brought my folks. The big one that bothered me was, how do you go back to the mother that you have put in a position to say you and your kids can't come in here on Christmas Day? You don't go back and say, Ma, I wish I hadn't done that.

I'm sorry. My sponsors told me I could never again say, I'm sorry. They said, you've been sorry your whole life. You must go and say, I wish I hadn't done what I did, but I did it. With God's help, I won't do it again. But what do I have to do to straighten up the mess? Well, giving me the key. What you do after you say, what do I have to do? Shut your mouth. Well, look at me. And I, I gotta ask those who have said the most later, my mother, let me come by.

And she wasn't too happy about that, but she's the kind of person that she let me come by. And I didn't say those exact words to my mom, but I found the way saying, what do I have to do? She said to me, honey, all I've ever wanted for you is that you be happy. So from that day to the day I got on the air trying to come here, I'd go by, happy. And it worked. She told me nothing was such years before she really believed I was gonna make it.

But I wasn't going by to convince her of anything. I was going by so she could see me happy. You guys have created a real problem for me with my mother. Because you trust me. You have given me some really important work to do. I'm not important that the job you've given me has been. I've been a delegate. I'm currently a trustee and a world-service delegate. I'm, I've got it. It blows my mind what you've asked me to do.

My mother, I heard her talking to one of her friends a couple years ago. She thinks I'm the president of AA, by God, ain't he? I heard that you and my employees did totally out of proportion. And I thought I better straighten her out on this deal. But I don't do things that will affect other people unless I pray. And I pray about that. And he asked if it came to me with it after all the years of pain that I'm giving that lady.

If she wants to think I'm important, she can. As long as you and I remember I'm not. My dad has joined my wife. He hasn't mind that hasn't been measured yet, literally. He lives in a 48 room house full of stuff. It's a reflection of his mind. But his body doesn't work anymore. He gets so irritated. Because his mind, this is sharp as the day it first started. Except for his memory. He said the other day, when your mind is three things go, your memory and.

But he gave me one that I've given to the eight people because it's such a lie. He said I'm seventy-seven years old and I don't know how I learned. But they are really only two things at first. And they used to live a good life. Honor and wisdom. You must have enough honor to keep every promise you ever make no matter what the person will have. And enough was them not to make too many promises like that. So many years ago I had the good sense to say yes when a sane lady asked me if I'd like to move in.

Three months later she said we either get married or this is over. And I agreed. And so we got married. God, she's a joy. She has been described by people who I respect as one of the three naturally spiritual people living her best. And I find that I gave her a big book. She read it as she says yes, but what I did. She has taught me some wonderful things. She never tries to fix me. She has two daughters. And they were real little when I first moved in.

They're fourteen and sixteen now. And I really wasn't too sure I wanted to raise anymore kids. I'd already raised seven. I thought I'd done my first year. And raising two girls turned out to be interesting. They pick at each other. And one morning I made a mistake. They were picking at each other. And I said stop that. That's the dumbest thing I ever did. That took me in their ballpark. And I was in really first spiritual condition that morning.

I mean, I was humming. My meditations were right. And I was just like I said stop that, knock it off. Second dumbest thing I've ever done in my life. It wasn't just a couple seconds later. I said get to your rooms. And if they went in they slammed the doors. And I was up the stairs in a single bound. And I had the doors off the hinges and on the way to the basement. But I got it. We're going to slam them. We're not going to have them.

So my house has been put in privacy and solitude are very important. They went to school. I'm down at the bottom of stairs with these heavy doors when they hit me. Dummy. You've got to carry these things. Back up, keep that upstairs. We hang them. And when those little baby girls get home, you've got to say I'll send them down there. I really wish I had them down there. Oh I asked if they would say nothing about them.

And they told me don't take the doors off it. That I had learned is when the girls must behave I send myself to my room. What's wrong with that? If I was on my day with that, after about 20 minutes I thought, now Jackie's going to be in here in a minute. She'll come in and say sorry honey, you can come down now. We're going to all stay down. Two hours later, so she wasn't sure if I woke up to the fact she didn't come.

I'm going to scare up the death out of her. If her came in, then if I got a problem, it's just a meaty soul. It's not her. Thank God for her. I tell you about her because I can't tell you enough about how precious the family is. I traveled about 80,000 miles for you last year. Then I was gone most of the time. I was home Monday, this week. And some of you have said to me, what a sacrifice you're making. And I must tell you this, I don't make any sacrifice.

I love this. Do you know what you made me do last year? I had to go to Hawaii twice. You've made me go to Guatemala for goodness sake, and Puerto Rico, in New York City, and Winnipeg. I still think airline food tastes good for crying. I love to travel. The sacrifices being made tonight, by my wife and kid, they're holding up me. They're sitting in the hard time because they love you more than I do. My family loves you more than I do, and I don't know how that's so, but that's so.

My 14 year old, but I didn't want to raise. Give me rest of the precious if God takes me tonight. I've had all one human being can have anyway. Her real father is a dental technician, and that's strange. I thought you can't tell one lot. The other was a scorecard anyway. She had an opportunity in school, and you write a theme on her father, and she picked me. And I got a chance to read it. Oh, Lordy. Seven or eight pages is some of the nicest stuff you can imagine.

I was really glad to know me that day. Oh, what a guy. But in her final paragraph, she said, if I had a choice, I would have put Don for my dad, but I didn't have a choice. God picked him and brought him to me. And that's him, but it hit me at a desk that I didn't understand. He really got me. So I got thinking about that. Why would that hit me so hard? Well, it's because that's how I feel about you. If I would have had a choice, I would have picked you, but I didn't have a choice.

So God picked you and brought you to me. So I belong to you. Whatever you ask of me, I'll do it. I particularly like the tough job, once I know I can't do it. Because then I have to hit my knees and say, let's put you guys in a single day. But if you'll come with me, we can do anything else. I love this fellowship. I do not believe this fellowship will keep me sober. The reason I don't believe that is I see people come to our fellowship, and that's all they do, and they go out and they drink.

And I don't believe just reading the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous will keep me sober. Over the years, I've watched people come here, and he's a big book. He's a long drinker. Please don't misunderstand me. Without you, I don't have a chance. And without reading that book and doing those things, I don't have a chance. It's that combination of things that I can't put my finger on that leads me into the presence of God.

I know as sure as I stand here, he's here. And that's what keeps me sober. And I love working with you and for you. But if you suddenly say, you can't do any of this anymore, Don, I've learned a new skill. I sit real good. You taught me that there were times in each day when I was to sit quietly in my chair without a radio or a television or a telephone and be still. And I had difficulty with it because I think in pictures.

So I took the picture from an old Baptist hymn in the garden. I come to the garden alone when the dew is still on the roses. And he walks with me and he talks with me and he tells me I'm his own. And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known. And I never used to go to go to the garden. And I used to carry all my bags in and say, well look at this. Well, I'm not going to do any tell me. And over the years of practice, I've

learned to leave the stuff outside and just go into the garden and visit with him.

And usually when I leave, I either have the strength to pick it up or the wisdom to leave it to sit. Because I had said yes to one of these deals one time. I used the airplane as a place to be still most of the time when these clowns are traveling with me. And I was thinking of that and I was in the garden. It was as if it was to come to me and sit down, become the gardener. Become the garden. I already am and I know that.

Well, what a fun exercise has been this last year. I go into the garden and I move this plant from here to there. I'm pulling weed or two here. I'm tidying up my garden. When I came back from Guatemala, I got an outer demonstration that I have a room in my house. I'm a neat freak. Everything's got to be in order. I stuffed up on the wall. When I came home from Guatemala, so moved and so changed. Because all we did for six days was talk about how can we better carry the message to those who don't know.

In every language imaginable. I came home and I didn't sit in my room anymore. It was too small. It was too much stuff in it. In the floor I placed me into my house without raises. Stacked up. Any of you who ever been in general service know that they send you three copies of everything. That's how it is in service. And I found stuff from 85 and 86 and it hit me. If I hadn't heard that stuff since 85 and 86, it didn't need to be sorted.

It just needed to be dumped. So if you wrote me a letter in 85 and 86, please write it again. I got it down to three little stacks that really needed to be sorted. That was a year ago October. Just still there. I figured if it was good enough for 86, it'll be good enough for 87. But an incredible thing began to happen. Some of the things I have in my room are very cherished. There was a great picture of a Masai warrior painted for me by a convict and I cherished that.

It's gone. I found myself giving it to a friend of mine because instead it fit his home better than mine. I was reminded not again that all of the things in my heart, in my mind, in my home, are on temporary loans to me. I'm a messenger boy and sometimes some of you are lost. So God gives me your stuff to hold for you till you show up. And I get to get all the joy I'm looking at your pictures. But my place just crowded in.

And so I have to grow out looking for you so I can give your stuff up, make room for some new stuff. And that may be a flowery bit of imagery for you, but I truly believe that. If I get tied to anything, it owns me. But if I enjoy it, when you show up, I'll recognize that it's yours and you can have it. Whether it be a painting or my time or my life. A great one now said that great love has no man to give his life for his brother.

And I don't think that means that he would lay down and die. It means that he would live his life for his brother. That's what I've known here. My life is none of my business. It's yours. The height of egoism it is as far as I'm concerned for me would be to think that my sobriety was for me. How selfish could I get? My sobriety is for the person who isn't here yet. And I have an unpayable debt to that person. And I have a responsibility to make sure the one that person shows up, whether it's tonight or 50 years from now, when I'm dead and gone, the doors are open.

And the message that's being carried that night is the same message that I got that worked. And that means it isn't so much what I do. It's what I don't do. I have got some wonderful ideas on how to make this thing work better. And I promise you, you will never ever hear them. It's time for me to shut down. And I get really

frustrated when I come to this part of my talk. Because I have just now, right at the time when I have something really important to say.

And the only solution to that is that you and I must gather at the coffee table and at the meeting and talk with each other. Because the most important thing I have to say to you is that not only do I love you, but it's okay if you love me. I welcome you. And I thank you for letting me be here tonight. If I weren't here tonight, I'd be some other place of my own choosing which wouldn't be good. Let me give you my little gift and we can all go down.

My life was a mess. And I'd become everybody I ever met. All read about or heard about or talked to. And I thought I was going to have to spend the rest of my life shorting the hallow. You came to me and said, no, that isn't how we do that here. What we do here is much like what happens when the fellow first saw the statue of David by Michelangelo. And he was awestruck with this incredible thing. He went to Michelangelo and he said, how on the world did you do that?

Michelangelo said, well, I took this block of stone and I shifted to where everything didn't look like David and that sort of guy. And that's how I see Alcoholics Anonymous. Glad of the sculpture. And our little finds and our meetings and all of the little things we do here. That's the chisel. And I am a very willing block of stone. And one day at a time we're chipping away everything that doesn't look like Don. And so far this is what we've got.

Thank you very much.