

How to Work the Steps

1991 | Part 2 | Reading edition

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Transcript

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The Presidents, The Religions, Don and I got a friend named Jim, got to save 43 times, never got so. It's not the Lord's fault at all, it just didn't work. We got another friend named Tom who was 19 years old, entered up in a very expensive psychiatric center in Denver called Mount Aerie. Great name for that house, and Mount Aerie for the air heads. And some of you know what that is, some of you heard me talk about it. A little setting, and it still goes on some places today.

It's medieval, but it still goes on. And they put him in a room that was roughly 12 foot square, I guess, and I saw their room in one of these places once. The walls are all mirrored, and their shells on the walls with all different kinds of liquor. And the middle of the room is a barber chair. And on one armrest of the barber chair is a stainless steel pot that swivels in front of whoever's in the chair away from. And they gave Tom some interviews, and they sent him into that room and told him, he could have anything he wanted to drink on all those bottles of liquor. And the idea of this, of course, is he's going to drink on top of the interview.

He's going to get violent on the yell, and he's going to watch himself in those mirrors while his hair falls out, his eyes crossed, and his toe nails grow. He's just going to be so enriched with it, he'll never take another drink. And a few years later when Tom came to us, he explained to us that it worked. He said it really did, he's not that reason or excuse to take interviews since. And I share that story, it becomes stone crazy. Crazy sum of each other, maybe still is.

But he was one of them that I watched, and he came in, there must be a God, it must be a work. I read all this, and it didn't make much sense other than in one line, and I'll share that with you in a minute. But I sat in that meeting, and we read this chapter to me. And all I know is God was getting the drums sober because I watched it happen in the evening. And somehow or another, I guess that was going to work for me. It had to.

There must be a God, there better be a God. And the second step happened to me, but what happened to me is on page 46 down there, it says that we found that God does not make too hard charms with those who seek him. To us the realm of spirit is broad, roomy, all-inclusive, is never exclusive or forbidding. To those who are earnestly sleek, seek, it is openly believed to all men. And I guess that's the first time I ever felt it. And that's the best way I can share the second step is it happened to me.

I can't say that I set out to take it. It was a natural thing that happened by what we were doing in our, with each other. We found that as soon as we were able to last-side prejudice and express even the willingness to believe in the power of being in ourself, we commenced to give results on page 46. Then I'm challenged on page 47. Whenever we speak to you, God, we mean your own conception of God. This applies to the other spiritual expressions which you find in this book.

Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter you from honestly asking yourself what they mean to you. And I began to realize one of my problems I had never thought. I never had an original thought in my life. I'd been stealing your thoughts and trying to live by what they meant to you. So the

awakening was all I had ever heard in my life were lies. I didn't mean you lied to me, all I ever heard were lies, because I heard your truth in my mind.

And once again what they had told me earlier, they said down we suggest you forget everything you think you know about anything, particularly spiritual matters, because none of it has worked. I've got to have my own experience in this thing, so it can become my truth. I screamed at it. I said, sure we haven't learned something. He says, it's doubtful, but it's possible, but if you have it'll still be the truth when we're all through.

And the rest of it's all I just let it go together. What do these terms mean to you? Well, when we finished it, it went through. The word God didn't mean anything to me. The truth came out. I didn't have a concept of God that was my own. And to this day I'd be hard pressed to give you a concept that I could describe a lot of things that I think are experiences. Not how much of a concept, but then I'm really challenged.

I hear around the age that there's no must, so there's no must for hanging around. Look, the book is filled with them, and here's one of them that I want to pursue this path. It says we need it. That's no way of saying must, I think. On page 47 it says, we needed to ask ourselves the one short question. Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there isn't an argument in myself? What a trick. I don't make the grass grow. There's at least something there.

We ran over that afternoon, all the different powers that I could see that were greater than myself, and there were lots of them. I've never had trouble believing there's a power greater than myself. In fact, that's my first step experienced. Everything I look at has more juice than I've got it. I'm terrified. Everything. Yeah, I believe there's a power greater than myself. It was all negative. And I had to come and believe in a power greater than myself. It was positive, and his name was Bruce, and his name was Roland.

And he said, no, it isn't us. We can't surrender to us. We haven't changed. So I guess I surrendered to the power. I thought I surrendered to the group. I surrendered to the power that changed their lives. By simply understanding, I don't have a concept. I think that one could choose their head to be a power greater than myself that could change my life. Because I was stuck in a body that wouldn't die carrying a mind that wouldn't work and all the other choices.

That's what I got led to. So, if you want to use it as a textbook, there's a question. Do I not believe or am I even willing to believe? There is a power greater than myself. Then there's the believer. Or he's the pious man. He says I know and he's still looking tempted. Prior to any investigation. Not willing to keep the guy that usually says, I saw that chapter, but I'm not an agnostic, so I went on to how it works.

There possibly be anything for me in a chapter called we agnostic. Because I know there is a God. They describe it later on in the book as contempt prior to investigation, contempt without any consideration at all. He's not so hard to work with. There's a little bit of that in all of us anyway. But then there's the guy that's really hard to work with because he not only knows there is a God, he believes there is a God, and he uses God to justify it.

Now, he's not filled with contempt. He's filled with acceptance. Just accepts everything. My friend says, you can usually tell him by the last guy he talked to. He's the nauter and the shaker. Hardest man in aid to work with it because he believes, approaching any of this, that there is a God. So, there's parts of this chapter that help you

see that maybe you don't believe. Just like there's parts of the first step that we could have touched on that help the guy that knows he's an alcoholic, look at the idea that maybe he isn't.

So, for some of us, as with me from time to time, it's not only beneficial to look at the idea that maybe after all this and all I know, maybe I'm not an alcoholic. It's also beneficial for me at times, it has been, to look at the idea that with all this great knowledge and all this wonderful experience and things that I can't write off to myself pulling off, maybe I don't believe that beyond here, beyond this experience, beyond what I've been given, beyond what I know, there's more for me.

In proposition, whether it's the new guy or the guy that's been around forever, do I believe, right with wear down just red, do I believe that for me there is a power greater than myself that can take me beyond where I am? Whether you're talking about day number one, getting to day number two, or whether you're 19 years sober and you're talking about making it pass what you believe after 19 years, or however many years.

So, there's some great stuff in this chapter that helps me see other things that I believe in that I disguise as God. People, sentiment, money, myself, the God of Reason, it talks about honest doubt and prejudice. So, sometimes using this chapter to see where you don't believe, so you can get to a simple place that he just read back to that simple willingness from a place of, you know, I really don't know, but let's go for it and get passed all these preconceived ideas that I have.

Sometimes to approach the second step with certain people, it's really beneficial to look at where you don't believe before you decide that you are willing to. And then for those that love to live in our heads, we get this idea that God is either everything or is nothing. And there's a big sigh of relief in people like me, because I can't figure, even my ego knows I can't figure out everything. And all of a sudden it's gone from something I could put in a little three by five box to something infinite and powerful beyond my own imagination.

That may be for me, but this time, there could be dimensions of peace and freedom and joy and love that I haven't even dreamed of. See, if this is it, no matter how long you've been sober, if this is it, then God isn't everything. Our choice. And I don't know how a guy like me the first time through this or any time since. I don't know how a guy like me gets taken to a place through a simple process where he gets to choose about God and power.

I don't know how that happens. But somehow between some kind of an admission about me and booze and some kind of willingness about me and power and some kind of openness to accept something beyond what I could figure out, I was given the grace to make a choice at the second step. Everything or nothing either is or isn't. What is my choice to be? Any questions? I think so, absolutely. There's a wonderful new definition for the term insanity.

That's when we go through the same thing over and over and expect different results. And yeah, I think somehow the new understanding of God has to come about whatever it is. But like Don, I couldn't give you my concept. I don't have the relationship. It's where we take a break because the continuity comes from this. I suggest I ask you to consider this. Summed it up again. First here's what it's going to taste like, feel like, smell like, and be like.

They found that a new power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction flowed into them. Do I want that? Oh, yeah. The consciousness of God is today the most important factor in their lives. And that can change forevermore. And I don't get balanced. The consciousness of the presence of God is today the most important factor in my life. Is that true or do I want it to be true? Can I tell you a little bit? There was a question on page 45, once confronted with this idea of lack of power, that says where? That's exactly what this book is about.

It's main object is to enable you to find a power greater than yourself, which will solve your problem. Isn't it amazing that in ten pages later they tell me exactly how and exactly where to find a power. On page 55, the paragraph starts off, actually we're fooling ourselves for deep down and every man, woman, and child is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it's there for faith in a power greater than ourselves and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives are facts as old as man himself.

We finally saw that faith in some kind of a God was a part of our makeup, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly. That's how. Same two words is in the fourth step. Searching in fearless. Search fearlessly. He was as much a fact as we were deep down within us. That's where. So they answered the question where and how they gave me a direction. They gave me a way to find this power and they gave me a direction to go because all my life I've been looking out here, the analysis.

It is only there that he may be found. It was so with us. Page 60. Step one. The chapter to the agnostic. Step two. And my personal adventures before and after, free pertinent ideas. What can I cannot manage my own life? Be that no human power can relieve my alcoholism and see that God can and will if he is sought. I needed to be convinced of these three pertinent ideas. Then I was ready to look at step three. Then I got pissed off when they told me there was a requirement.

Because I've been to a lot of meetings on the third step and I never heard anybody ever say. These were people that were doing this. I never heard that. Maybe I just didn't hear it. I never heard anybody say there was a requirement to take the third step. And in the next paragraph it says the first requirement is that I be convinced that my life run on my will can hardly be a success. And when you see that your life run on your will cannot be successful, then there's a good reason to turn your life run on your will over to the care of God.

And if you have seen it by then, they give you about a page and a half. That to this day I still hate because it describes me, me at my very best, without God in my life. This is what I do. And they go through it. I love when I get to this with somebody to have them read it in the singular. That rather than putting we or us or them to read it about themselves, this is what I do. The actor, even when my motives are good, even when trying to be kind, even in my best moments I'm a producer of confusion rather than harmony.

To move through that, to get to a state of consciousness where you've absolutely met the first requirement of the third step and that is to be convinced that your life run on your will can hardly be a success. Then to consider the third step decision on the bottom of page 62, actually there's a statement in the middle of that page that I want to touch on, but I'd like to come back to it when these guys talk about inventory a little bit.

But it is worth looking at now to begin to find some freedom from it rather than the way we used to beat ourselves up with it. And that's in the middle of the page and that's the idea which I think is one of the greatest

statements of hope in this big book that our troubles are of our own making. That we should come back to when we get to the fourth column of the resentment inventory. And at the bottom of the page we find what was told to me to be the third step decision.

I thought it would be doing the prayer. They told me the decision comes before the prayer and that is that I should decide that from here after in this life God is going to be the director, the principal and the father to consider what those terms mean to me. And for me to be the actor who wants to quit running the whole show, an agent of God and a child of God. In my own way to consider what those ideas mean to me. And from the first time they certainly mean more than they did then.

I don't know if that makes it any important or not probably not. And then we did that prayer. And then I learned to ask the greatest question. I ever learned to ask an alcoholic synonymous which seems to be a mystery in AA nowadays. And it's no longer a mystery to me because I got off my knees and I said if that was just a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God how do you turn it over. And thank God he said 4 5 6 7 8 9.

I mean we throw this term around nowadays like newcomers are supposed to understand what we mean. They share some terrible problem. And we go I just turn it over. And thank God he told me there were precise directions on how to turn my will and my life over to the care of God. And we began with an inventory. On page 63 as another one of those little mercy places, the beginnings of a spiritual event, a spiritual awakening and a spiritual experience, happened and should happen prior to taking in the prayer and did.

And it feels like this. We are a new employer. It's an attitude being all powerful. He provided what we needed. He came close to him and performed his work well. I can ask myself have I in any degree experienced some of these things. Not totally but to any degree do I have a sense that I'm no longer in charge. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves. In our little plans and designs.

Has that begun to happen to me? But as I'm probably feeling a little bit weird, more and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. I was beginning to experience that as we felt new power flow in. Has that happened yet? And you felt a little new power flow in? As we enjoyed peace of mind. Five, ten seconds a day beginning as we became conscious of his presence. We began to lose our fear of today tomorrow and after we were reborn.

I get my new mind in some way. Now I would we got so much to do I'd just like to share a couple observations with you from my experience about the rest of this process. I'm now going to be seeking conscious contact with God. I've made a decision and I'm going to open that up. At the end of the third step prayer you all know in spiritual terms the word amen means closure so be it. It's done. And I find it interesting that there is no amenity into the third step prayer.

But there is one at the end of the seventh step prayer. And in between there are a number of other little prayers. But I have concluded for me that this is a spiritual process not an intellectual process. So everything from the word God at the beginning of the third step prayer to the amen at the end of the seventh step prayer is part of the same prayer. I learned now that prayer is activity not just thought words, prayer is action.

That makes this whole inventory process a spiritual activity not an emotional or mental activity. I thought that I was going to have to spend my whole life finding out who I was. And this process says that isn't what we do here. We will help you find out who you're not. We'll dispose of that and whoever you are will just show up because God can't abide a vacuum. Now can I reconcile that with the big book? I can. No our decision was a vital and crucial step that could have little permanent effect.

God do I need permanent effect. Unless it was followed by a strenuous effort to face and to be rid of the things in ourselves which have been blocking us. That's what I need to face and be rid of. I'll find out who I'm not. God will remove that it says and there I'll be a new person standing there. And then I have to learn how to live by the principles. What a change in attitude that is for me. I can now face the stuff I'm unable to face otherwise.

I nearly got my children killed because of my activities. There's not possible to face that unless I know that I don't ever have to do that again. If I can get rid of the kind of thinking that brought that event up and I can face it otherwise there's no way. I can't face the things I did to my family unless I know I don't have to do that again. And there's the promise that made it possible for me to carry out the rest of the activity to be rid of.

Gary and I Gary can explain ways and checklist methods. We're now into specific directions on how to do this. And so I'll read a sentence. It will tell me what I'm going to do and how to do it. And I ask myself if I don't have you. We took stock. First we've searched out the flaws in our makeup which caused a failure. Have I done that yet? So how am I going to do that? Thanks for bringing that up. I was another one of those things that happened to us.

We discovered that if this is a text then maybe it would work that way. And so that's exactly what we did. If it had three lines that said go do this we would ask each other. As it went along if we had gone and done this. And that took us out of our heads. Today sideways and I draw that work. And with this at first dawn was sticking pretty close to the big book. And I got off them too. And it didn't mean anything. I would write all this stuff down and I'd look at what these things said.

And something was in there. And we got to the point where it said stop, wait a minute, take a break. And we threw that sandwich away. I've never seen one sense. I think started to work that way and they still do today. That's the resentment. And this is the gentle end, Mr. Brown. My resentment generally starts. I'm resentful at Mrs. Brown. The number of those people I run to in a day with sober men shouldn't back and go down the call.

And why they made the lift and all that. I'll do each one as I do it. As it's fresh and I think at that moment I'm willing to look to see where I'm all. And Mr. Sir, you may get my job at the office. You can do about that briefly. They don't mean that much more to me. I need to do it enough though that I'm getting at what's really bombing me. I got to write it enough. Sometimes that's not enough to do that. Sometimes I have to write further just to see it.

On the first step I took with the guy named Jim, who now is down in Kentucky. Now that you're 70, I get to Kentucky and say, you're some nightmare. He taught me a little for me to affect my sex relations or affect my self-esteem. He asked me to write down how does it affect. And I'm not just trying to escape by with one word. I'm saying it affects my self-esteem because it makes me feel less than I should feel. Or I already feel less than I

should see it feel.

And this is my job. I get specific on the page of 67. And we read a little of the selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened. And every other time I've ever taken this is a key thing to that point. And I'll look at it and I can't see it. And sometimes that's when a prayer is in order. Or just put it down and look out the window and get to find a situation where someone or something appeared on my resentment list.

Where I was not at least one of those things. But nearly always all about being self-seeking and frightened next year down in Nashville a thing in terms of dealing with fear and rhetoric. I'd like you to talk to you about that sexy mentality with each other. Just board the shit out of both of us. And for what it's worth just briefly. This is a piece of resentment inventory. Unless you think this is a horrendous forevermore experience.

There's only one person that it never takes more than one page. I've learned if I'm into the second page and this covers everything Gary talked about. Instead of when I do what I ask myself, why does this threaten me? Same basic idea. What was I wrong? What was my mistake? Self-seeking, dishonest, fearful. And because it says I'm willing to set these matters straight, I put down what a man's need to be made right here.

And it covered further off and ate the nice stuff. But that's all there is to it. It isn't that big a deal. You may have a hundred of these, but no individual one of them should be a good one. I'm going to read that to you. You talk about looking at this fourth column. Anyone ever tells you that all you write is the example on page 65 and you don't write what Gary just read. It does say we put it down in black and white.

We listed our faults. We put it down in black and white. Let's say they write the fourth column. They just didn't put it in the example. I think in watching this phenomenon, I certainly haven't been writing as long as these guys, but in watching this phenomenon over the last couple of years, I think one of the best analogies I've ever heard is that this tricky inventory process takes what you think is the truth and turns it into a lie and takes what you think is a lie and turns it into the truth.

For example, a couple of years ago, and if I would have been new, I probably would have had a shit happen bumper sticker on my car because that's what I wanted to remain of victim. A couple years ago, she left me. I was engaged to be married, and she left me. I put her name in the first column, and then I put she left me. To me at that moment, that's the truth. She left me. Then you examine these seven areas of self, and they do give you six or seven self esteem, ambition, pocketbook, personal relations, sex relations, security, pride, all the way down here in the example.

I examine these in a certain way also. Then I had to use a prayer, and they do give you one here. When it's hard to turn, there's actually a whole exercise of turning back to the list once and then turning back to the list twice. This first time they ask you to turn back is to look for the key to the future, to look at this person in a certain way so you can turn to be to your own mistakes. Sometimes those couple paragraphs are real helpful, and I had to do that.

Then I was given the grace to write about my selfishness, my dishonesty, my self-seeking, and my fear. You know what I saw? She didn't leave. I drove her away, and to get free, this is the amazing thing. She didn't have to come back or change. Now that to me, a guy like me is absolutely amazing. I've been waiting all my life for these

people in the first column to change or get well or sober, or come back to life from the dead for me to get free.

She didn't have to do either one. All I did was move through 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Fear the first time, and it said, to reveal your fears thoroughly. Now here's a great question. I reviewed my fears thoroughly. Well downshared that in his inventory, in the fourth column, he wrote about fears with that resentment. Now my fear list, I found my fear list by going through the fourth column of the resentment inventory, and I started pulling out specific fears, and I started listing them.

Now they start repeating over and over. You don't need to list them over and over, so I got a list of general fears. Then I prayed, somebody had no resentment and connection with. They weren't in my resentment inventory, heights, snakes, spiders. But most of them I found in my resentment inventory. If I found some repeats on my fear list, I crossed them off. You can only put rejection, you know. You don't have to put rejection from mommy, rejection from daddy, rejection from your girlfriend.

You put rejection. There's only so many fears. And then the book says we asked ourselves why we had them. So it used to be a two column fear inventory. Rejection. It's painful. I'll be alone. And I might take it out a little further of what I do with rejection. Scary thing about that is every one of them takes you right to alcohol. What I started doing recently is once you've done this kind of a fear inventory a couple of times, you can usually get to that there's really only a few.

They all come down to it just a couple. Most fear inventory is done with two columns, end up looking like a playoff chart. With 24, you end up with eight. Those are really about four, but there's really only a couple. We each have some of our own stuff, but I usually come down to the same few fears. And I like to write four columns on those now. And I like to see, again, why I have them, to see how they affect these seven areas in my life.

I like to see what my ego tells me about these fears, and then I like to see where those fears cause harm through selfishness, dishonesty, and self-seeking. And I found a lot of harm from my fear inventory, and I had never seen that when I did a two-column fear inventory. But the book basically says to list your fears and ask yourself why you have them. I was out front before someone and I, and it's kind of interesting to me.

I don't know if it would beat anyone else, but there's two thoughts here about fear. One on the bottom of 67. Didn't we ourselves set the ball rolling? Sometimes we think fear ought to be classed with stealing. Now, I'm not a kleptomaniac, and when I decide to steal something, I decide to steal something, and it's a conscious decision. The idea that I set the ball rolling when it comes to fear. So a friend of mine asked me, is it possible fear is a conscious decision?

List of fears, and I said, you must be crazy. I never decided consciously to be afraid of rejection, or pain, or snakes. I never decided that. He said, what if I could show you one decision that you have consciously made throughout your life, from time to time, that's set up every fear you've ever had? And I saw it. My decision to rely on self, and that's exactly what the book says next, isn't fear because self-reliance fails.

And I see that my conscious decision to rely on self sets up every fear I've ever had, and fear is a conscious decision. And I do set the ball rolling, and it should be classed with stealing. To move into sex, I was told to

make a list. Some people think that first direction means to review conduct. After you've made your list, I now do both. I make relationships that need to be looked at. All these lists came from prayer.

My fear list came from my resentment inventory. My resentment list came in prayer. People, institutions, principles. Now I'm asked to make a list. And I made a list of relationships. Thank God. I don't know if it's a testament to my health or a testament to my age, but the longer I'm sober, the shorter my sex inventory gets. Now, do that in paragraph for me if you choose to review conduct. I review conduct from the time we met until the time it ended or where it is now.

Motives, the book talks about motives. Specific sex conduct. And then I answer nine questions. Where was I selfish, dishonest, inconsiderate, around the relationship also. Not just her. There were kids. There was a boyfriend. There was a mother. There was a father. Fish and her bitterness. Where was I at fault? And the one question, Don Moore, may not to write if I didn't want to change in this area. And that's what should I have done instead.

So we find nine questions and I just did it in paragraphs. Answering specifically, each of those nine questions. And from this, we start to shape a sane and sound ideal. He said, go back through all these relationships where you wrote these nine questions and look at what you should have done instead, what you wrote there. And from that as a guide, you can start to shape this ideal. The book talks about it. And he said, write a couple pages about your chosen, because it does say it's a chosen ideal.

He said, write a couple pages about what your ideals for the future. Not the ideal woman. Your personal ideas of what you would like to take into your future sex life. Ask God to help you mold them. Ask God to help you live up to them. And then they tell you what happens if you don't. And that's the only part of the inventory he had Don never warned me about. He said, do not do that if you don't want to change in that area of your life.

Because it goes on to say the right answers will come if you want them. I just have another little format. This is a good way to do it. We're giving a little latitude here. This is a simple little format in over the years because I'm getting lazier and lazier. And this is so revealing. I'm the registered little of us so you get my days based on the big book. What is the fear? Well, that during this time I was afraid of being without money.

Because I was. The reason I was afraid, afraid my wife would leave me. And since the self-reliance fails me, that's the problem. So I asked myself, how's that failing me? And for me, I asked that question. I simply asked, what am I selfishly trying to keep, protect, acquire? Well, I was afraid my wife would leave me. I'm selfishly trying to make sure she stays because I need her. I'm okay if she's with me. And again to see, I'm not trusting any line on God.

Later on in the same inventory, I discovered I was afraid of being without money because I was afraid she would stay with me. But she would be supporting me and putting me down all the time. That's what I was afraid of. I was selfishly trying to keep her respecting love on my terms. I was afraid that my creditors would yell at me and not like me. And I thought that was funny. And I discovered that what I was selfishly trying to do was keep everybody like me, even people that I haven't met yet.

And that's goofy. Not relying and trusting on God. There's no format that really has, over the years, become a

simple, direct, in-depth way for me to look at the fears too. So what? Because it seems here that there's a childish thing. A childish thing. I think a childhood. And the only answer is that one of the mercy deals. I cannot work out my fears by facing them. A couple months ago, I did some damage to Marlon and part of trying to find what the damage was that gave me what they called MRI.

They got this cannon and they put me in it. I'm stuffed in a cannon and that thing's right here. And I promise you, I didn't like that. I didn't get out and I can't move, set up some fear deep in me that I didn't even know I still had. And there is no way I could work my way out of that. But years ago, one of my spiritual awakenings is that I found a quiet place within me where I can go. And I just went there. And then she'd say something about what they were going to next.

And I'd come out because I could give her an answer. And I'd get panic-stricken again, so I'd just go back. I could not, I cannot work out my fears by facing them. Some people can. I can't. It says, instead, we asked him to remove our attention to what he would have us be. And once we commenced to outgrow fear, the only time I can go talk to him is when I go to my quiet place and there he is. And it's over, it's worked for years.

But the kind of fears that will drive me crazy are the ones like this and that sent up in my mind. I couldn't remember things. Because I would become custodian when someone else would decide my life for me. That's what I'm afraid of. So, obviously, trying to control my own life and make more decisions. Again, I'm not trusting any line on God. What I found through that fear is that I was afraid I'd have to feel afraid and anxious all the time.

That frightens me to feel afraid. And the reason I wanted that is because I want to feel good all the time. And to not admit that my mind doesn't always remember things or function perfectly. I didn't want to admit that. So it reveals this to me. And I go to the quiet place and I say, please remove this from me and direct my attention to what you'd have me be. And I had one of the greatest awakens in my life going down that once.

I discovered I'm not what I do. It says, direct my attention to what you would have me be. Not what you would have me do. And I'll just let you play for me. It didn't take long for us to do that. And it got a whole decided prayer. We'd do whatever it was. These weren't people that were done in us. These were things that they'd long forgotten about ever being able to collect from. They'd forgotten I am, Julian. So we began to work on this process and a couple of years went by and are free.

And we weren't getting any more. I'd make a few payments here and there and then be in a straight commission type guy and not particularly good at what I was doing. I'd miss a payment by the end. It was crazy. We weren't getting anywhere. And Julie said a year and a half or so ago, maybe we ought to sell the house and take the equity out of the house and make these amends. And maybe there'd be a lot of notes left we could buy a mobile home or something like that.

God, I hope she isn't serious. I tried to dust it. I really did. I wanted to pretend she didn't say that. And the next day I came home from work and I said, I think you might be right. Let me check with Paul. And so I called that guy in Chicago. And I told him what we had been discussing. And I said, you've been real quick over the years to tell me when I'm local. What do you think of this? And I said, we're talking about selling the house, taking the equity, paying off all these old amends and living, maybe buying them up home or living out where

we have to after that.

But we think we need to do that to get all this taken care of what do you think. And he didn't say anything for a few seconds. And then he said, I think that's the funnest thing I've heard you say in 20 years. Are you sure it was your idea? And so I said, no, it's Julie. It's what we did. A few months, you know, to sell a house to get a fixed up so where we could sell it. And it sold a year ago, February. Year ago, February 28th, it was Julie's birthday.

And the next day was the most fun we've ever had in our lives. Because we got to call all those people. Find out where they were. Make the amend and then send them the check. I hope you heard that. I had to make the amend and then I sent the check. I could have sent the check and not made the amend. But there was a neatest thing that happened. I'll share a couple of them quickly. When Julie and I started this process five years ago, there was a man in the Laramie that I had worked for, along with attending college, going to a clothing store.

And when I left college, I left that job at the clothing store. And I was the best dressed graduating senior there regardless of Laramie. And I'd stolen all the clothes. I hadn't paid for any of them. And so I called John and told him what I'd done. And he said real quietly after a few seconds that he thought I had been stealing that shit. He hadn't forgotten and it had been year. I had made arrangements to making payments.

And I made him two or three. And then I couldn't make money, called me and done me. And then he forgave me in the same phone call. He said, no, I don't want the money. He says, I really appreciate what you do. And I think it's great. I don't want the money. And so five years later when I called him and said, all I said was, John, I'm in shape to pay that money. I owe you what's your address. He immediately gave me his address.

He forgot he forgave me. We could chunk a change. I'd have forgot too. And five years ago we went and we started on the men's process and we called Julie's folks. Because they had given us slash loaned us money over the years for this and that. And so we called him and her dad got on the phone. And I called him and got he'd given us money. He's tolerated me like he wouldn't believe. You know, I know I just put him in that kind of hell.

I can't imagine what he wants. Well, I can too. I'd have his daughters grew up and marry some real jerks now that I think about. I know what he felt like. Thank him for the love and the tolerance and the kindness he chose over the years. And I said, you know, I really love you. I wanted to try to set some of that straight. And he got all flustered and he said, oh shit, here's grandma. And he handed off the phone. And so I went through that with her.

And I said, by the way, have you any idea how much money you've given us over the years? And she said, right down to the last pan. And so we made razors to start panning. And finally, and that was, you know, all these were paid off as last gone. But there was a man in AA who lives in the Twin Cities who was on the speaker circuit a number of years ago and in our friends. And he called me one day to say, hey, I got to go make a talk in Virginia.

I guess it wasn't. He said, I got some extra time. I thought I'd stop by and see ya. Spent a day with you in Julie before we went on. So I met him at the airport. And he looked me in the eye. And he said, Gary, you look terrible. That's bad enough. And that's scary enough. But the worst part is, Julie doesn't know that far. She knew they were gonna be just fine. And I guess not gone. The first guy I told us. Nobody knew.

Not even gone. We're driving from the airport to the house. And he said, where's your bank? He said, let's go down there and talk. Let's go see anyone. To the bank. And we're walking in. And I know none of you guys ever had to go see the principal with your dad. Did ya? We went in there and he sat down. And he doesn't, he's not there to negotiate. He says, how much it take to get him even? And they told him. And this guy was carrying.

I had no idea how much money and cash and travelers checked. But he bought me up even. We walked out of there. And then I really felt like I was leaving the principal's office with my dad. And I told him somehow or another that had to be taken care of. That's really not what this is about. But I understand what you're saying. You might call him situation now. He's in trouble financially. The business he is in is shocking.

And really struggling and things are different. But I called him and we chatted to him for a while. And I said, I told you years ago I knew I had to set this straight and I can now. And I need your address. I feel like I owe you the amend because I have been afraid to talk about this for all eight years. And so I want to send you the check. And he says, fine. I understand. And he began to laugh. I said, well, what's the damn funny?

And he said, well, when we were making all the money, we used to tie. And our tie was where we could help people. And most of the time it was drunks with her. Fanning a crack here. And they couldn't get it out. And he said, it just happened. There's nothing special we did at all over. He says, the interesting thing is I'm just kind of sitting here and I'm struggling. And I'm trying to do my job and occasionally check shows.

I'm only sharing these things with you because I want to make a point here because my experience with it is pretty recent with this business of making a man. Julie and I are freer now than we've ever been. And I want to include her in this and we're running out of time. And they're sitting here doing this. And I've watched her go through some of her things with some of the men that were personal to her. And one in particular with my stepfather, real exciting.

And wife was not allowed to go with me to visit my mother. And made things a little tricky the last time. She had to deal with that. And I've watched the immense be made with she, with myself, with my friend Jim and some serious ones. And our friend Ed down south, the Pope of Morgan County. Much of the real effect that comes in sobriety from making them men. And I'm sharing this because I don't want you to make a mistake.

I overlooked them for years. And God what a whole of them. And the fear left as I was going through four or five sixes. So saying this seems so terrifying that God and there's no way I can go back to them and look them and I and make that a man. When you're there, not only is there no no way, but don't know. All are tough. I've used up our time two last time little things. There's a key word in the sixth step in the big book that turns the whole deal around.

Are we now ready to let God remove from us all those things which we have invented or objectionable? I will not let go of anything if he's threatened me. You can't frighten me. You can't make me angry enough. I will not let go for any reason except that I personally object to being that way. Somehow my ego has to be part of this deal and that's how it happens I believe. When I finally object to being this way, I'll quit.

Then I'm going to let God remove us. The making of men's we could spend hours on. In addition to setting it straight, it says this is not an end in itself. Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be a maximum service to God

and the people about us. And that's why I stay in this deal. If I were going to play football in that arena, I'd have to do certain exercises every day to stay fit to play in that arena. I need to be fit to carry God's word.

You don't just do that. There are certain exercises I do every day so I can stay fit to carry this message. And by fit that means willing. That's all. Tell me that from the beginning. That's all I brought to this deal was willing. I stay fit by staying willing to do this anytime, anywhere with anybody. And as a result, my life is better than anything I could ever have imagined and certainly better than I deserve. And I get to watch you all get better and that makes me feel better.

You really have been terrific. We thank you for your participation because if you hadn't been here, we'd have sit here and lied to each other for three hours anyway. So thanks for coming. I had one, I remember sitting in meetings with Alcoholics Anonymous before I was at the ninth step the first time. Before he had told me anything to do. And I'm talking about my earliest resentment that I can remember. My earliest memories were full of resentment.

I was 57 years old when I was born. And there were people in that room that said you will never be able to make amends to someone who's dead. And thank God that Don didn't sell the program short when we got two amends. Because that's a resentment coupled with year after year of other stuff that plagued me my entire life. Spent 12 years in therapy dealing with this stuff, pounding on chairs, banging on walls, crying, everything.

Never got anything but those feelings postponed. Let me see him or be reminded of him. And I did what I was asked to do in fourth or nine. And he told me to go to his grave just like I was going to somebody else. And they even gave me a format. Sometimes hard to pull the directions out of step nine as far as how do you approach somebody. And he said whether it was face to face or in a letter or on the phone. Whenever I could I should do it face to face.

Or if it was at his grave that I should follow a simple format. This last time through the work I didn't have a big inventory because I had done some work last year. I just hadn't finished the amends. I was so inspired by our visit last summer with Gary. I couldn't get back into amends. I did a short inventory. I fizzed up to it with a few people. I put those amends with my old amends and I finished them for the first time in two years.

And I too, the funny thing about it is I didn't have a big inventory. But some of the stuff in that inventory was about in my life. And as a business associate that Don and I know that I never wanted to be involved with ever again. And if it wasn't over but it was over. It was still in my head. Those old hooks. The group in Los Angeles that will remain unnamed. And everything in that inventory I was put right in the middle of before I was finished with those.

And by the time I was finished with those amends. Everything that I thought I was stuck with. Everything I didn't think was going to go any further. A business deal with some Christian people that I never thought I could be involved in again. Involved in a group that was in my last inventory. Everything I wrote about I'm right in the middle of today. And I went to this girl's house that I was engaged to a couple years ago and I told her why I was there.

This is the format they gave me. I'm a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous. And what I need to do to

stay sober is clean up the past. And I don't ever want to drink again. And this is the harm that I'm clear on. Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Is there any other harm that we need to talk about? And get it all out there on the table. And then I asked with reluctance. Do you need to tell me how any of this hurt you?

And I listened. And then I asked what can I possibly do to make this right? Is there anything I can do? And can you forgive me? And walked out of her house free for the first time in two and a half years. Saw it like a baby the whole way home and didn't know how free I was. I had spent several months thinking I was free. Didn't know how free I was until the next day when she called and she thanked me for coming over.

She said, you know maybe now you and I can be friends and the hook was gone. And the day I left my father's graveyard after not being able to go there for nine years, I was headed for the airport and this little quiet voice said, no, you're going to take a drive. And I drove through the neighborhood where I was born. And I drove through the neighborhood where I grew up and where I used drugs and where I drank. And I was free from those polls that had been there every time I'd been home sober.

I mean, the immense process is not to be missed. And I absolutely admire with all my heart. Not like out of a respectful way because I know they're drums. But I admire anybody in this program with the kind of time that these two guys have, who with that much time would be willing to submit themselves to this process one more time and then watch their whole life take off. That's exciting to me in Alcoholics and I hope there are always people.

As long as I'm sober, they tell me to keep going for it that there's always more and there's always more freedom and there's always more peace and there's always more joy and love.