

A Spiritual Journey, Strange Camels Group

1997 | Part 5 | Reading edition

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Transcript

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It says we avoid retaliation argument. That is fair either. But that's what my new mind does. I have to avoid retaliation argument. How can I be right if I don't argue with you and don't retaliate? How are you going to know what you just did to me if I don't retaliate? If we don't argue, I will never be able to convince you that you're wrong and I'm right. I may even get no little enough to say that you have a right to be wrong, but you are wrong.

I'll be glad to explain why, carefully, calmly. We avoid retaliation argument. My whole image is a man who's threatened by that. If I'm buying into the trips that have been laid on me, we wouldn't treat sick people that way. If we do, we lose our chance of being helpful. We can't be helpful to all people, but always God will show us how to take a kindly and toner view of each and every one. And I really put God to the test one.

One day in my palatial apartment and sell B-49 right with all my arrogance, I said, I got you. Show me how to take a kindly and toner view toward Adolf Hitler. It wasn't all that long when I found myself thinking about Volkswagen's. You know, that was his deal. Designed it and put it on the people's car. May have been the only decent thing the man ever did. I have no idea. But I know that God answered for me this prayer showed me a way for a moment or two to take a kindly and toner view toward the greatest monster we've ever produced.

Let me know he was there. What a wondrous thing, testing. Don't be afraid to test him. He can handle any testing throughout it. He also has made it clear to me that I shouldn't dwell a whole lot on Adolf Hitler. Things like that. Don't need to do that. Just answer my prayer. How nice that is in my daily life. I work for a system that works for a system that's designed to fail. Don't ride into the criminal justice system is the need to fail. And I work for a system that contracts with that system, which means quite often people in other agencies that I need to have do something.

So I can get my job done. Don't get it done. And I get really pissed at that because you know whose butt gets chewed when it doesn't get done? Mine. My boss wants to know why it hasn't been done. And I can't say because she didn't do her job. All he wants to know is that I got to get my job done. And I was really angry with this person. And I did the inventory on it and this is where I got free. God show me how to take the kind of intolerant view toward this person. And it was real simple.

I was having difficulty getting my job done because she hadn't gotten her job done. Maybe she was having trouble getting her job done because somebody else hadn't gotten her to do it either. Maybe so. I got the view that it wasn't being done to personally harass me. Isn't that how we always feel? You're doing this for me. Just hurt me. Come on. She didn't go down where I lived or died. She's harassed all the time. I got the view and the view set me free and I was able to clean it up and find ways around that roadblock.

They wanted me. Her bosses wanted me to start keeping a list of when she screwed up so we could build a case against her and get her out of there. And I had to refuse that. I will not participate in that kind of thing. I don't need to do that. But it sure was tempting on the day they came to me. Okay. God show me how to take a common intolerant view. Particularly toward the ones that hurt me. Can you see now what the new attitude is?

Only with this new way of looking at things can I then go on to what's really important about this inventory and that's to find out where I'm wrong. We go back to our list again and putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done. We resolutely looked for our own mistakes. As I said earlier, I do not ever look for my part in the deal. At this point, there are no parts. I am wrong. Where am I wrong? That's what I want to find out.

I'm to disregard, put out of my mind any wrongs you may have done. And then I find seven questions here and can make a case for eight. My sponsor says there's only fine to hell with him. I find seven. Okay. Let's just go home and take a break. We resolutely look for our own mistakes. There's a question. What was my mistake? I usually answer that one last because for me it simply means what's the mistake in my thinking that allows this to happen.

Yeah. For it has been selfish. There's a question. Dishon us. There's a question. Self-seeking. There's a question. Frightened. There's a question. There's five so far. Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person entirely. For a week to blame. That even has a question mark after it. There's six. The inventory was ours. Not the other man's. When we saw our faults, we listed them. There's seven. Where am I at fault?

And it seems nitpicky people tell me the difference between blaming fault. One has to do with my actions and I have to do with my thinking. And I'm so sick I really need to know all the way down the line because I'm going to make amends for this based on this. We placed him a force in blocking point. We admitted our wrongs honestly and we're willing to set these matters straight. Having done this and just stepped it, a remarkable thing happened and began to happen when I wrote it concerning that federal narcotics agent.

The truth was I brought him to my house with a hand engraved invitation. My actions made me his job. The guy that hired me to do the job, running that dope across is the one that turned us in. A couple months later. He was on my left also. That's a good reason to kill somebody from that world. Turned five of us in. And he set the deal up. And during that inventory I realized that I knew he'd do that. He was a snake to start with.

I just figured I was slicker and faster and smarter and could beat the system. Couldn't even be mad at him. But I take a look and I stand ready today. I don't look for that federal agent. But I did him a terrible wrong. I put him in a position on one day of his life for a almost shot a four year old kid. My actions did that. But a terrible wrong I've done him. I still don't like him much. I haven't invited him to dinner. Wouldn't if I could find him.

Still a crappy way to make a living. But I put him in a position. I owe him at least the acknowledgement that I was wrong. And I really, really wish I hadn't done that to him. He's got to live with that. He knows what he did. He almost shot a four year old man. I did him wrong. What a wondrous thing. I'm free of that. If I ever meet him, if he ever shows up in my life, he and I'll talk about that. And I'm free of it. Because I'm ready any time. If I don't ever meet him, I can still clean up and set the matter straight.

Because I've told you about it and I've told hundreds of other people about it. I'm clean from it. But that's that heavy here. That's all there is to resent my inventory. I get a new mine. I get a new look at life. It's not that you get close to bedtime. It's all the technical stuff I can stand. Okay. The rest of it's there. I'm going to spend about ten minutes just kind of easing inside of here tonight. We can do more in the morning. We're going to be here about ten.

It's been interesting for me because this is all brand new way of doing something and it's old at the same time. Having completed that inventory and the fear inventory and that's a separate format I'd like to show you in the morning is bloody simple and it's surgical the way I was taught to do it. In essence it simply says we put down what the fear is and ask ourselves why we had it. And then I get to look at what I'm trying to get out of the deal where self-reliance is failing me.

Or I'm busy assigning you roles gives me a great piece of news. I'm in the world to pay the role God assigns. And so are you. And my fear has always been that you wouldn't play the role that I assign. I'm busy assigning roles to you and to me. One quick piece of inventory. I'll just give it to you quickly. It's when you all got. This is what I wrote. I was afraid of being without money. I'm to ask myself why and there were five more fears based on that.

When I do fair inventory the base fear I'm afraid of being without money. Well what will happen if I'm without money? Well my wife will leave me. My creditors will yell at me. I will lose everything I've got. It will prove I'm a failure. My wife will stay. But she'll be earning all the money and she'll be down on me all the time. Yeah that's what I did too. By that time it really looks pretty funny. I'm simply not trusting her lying upon God.

I put in what am I trying to accomplish. My wife will leave me. Well I am selfishly trying to keep her around because I'm okay if she's with me. My creditors will yell at me along self what she's trying to have everybody like me even people I don't know. I'm afraid I won't respond to their yelling correctly. Blah blah blah blah. It's a simple thing. I have some of it here if anybody wants to look these yellow pages in the back or inventory that I carry with me. But the good news in the true inventory is the most powerful prayer and one of the most greatest whiteness I ever had.

The world is filled with people who are afraid and have problems with medication and psychiatry and all kinds of things to help people learn how to cope with fear. You know I don't have to learn to cope with fear. The prayer says God removed this prayer from her fear from me and direct my attention to what you'd have me be. I had one of those burst of white deals one time saying that prayer. It doesn't say what would you have me do there.

It says direct my attention to what you would have me be. And it suddenly hit me that I am no longer what I do. No wonder I've been afraid all the time. If I am my job any time I'm not doing my job I am nobody. If I am the folks I'm hanging out with when I'm not with them I am nobody. I'm afraid of losing all that. I'm not my house and my car and I'm not the money in my pocket. I'm none of those things. If I am what I do I'm always at risk because when I can't do it I am nobody.

One burst thing. So what does you want me to be? I'm really not sure yet. I know it wants me happy joys and free and I battle that. I mean a little that's fine but this is pretty serious business here. What would you have me be? And it doesn't what would you have me be if it'll put me in the history books. We're not talking about a single event that makes me be somebody. What would you have me be today? I am told clearly what that is.

Kind and tolerant in my view toward others. With a genuine tolerance for other people's ideas and opinions. Those are some things you'd like me to be. He would like me be of maximum service to God and to my fellow man. So he'd like me to be. That's what it says anyway. And that's what my experience tells me works when I'm

doing that. It seems to be right. That's what he'd like me to be. He wants me to be me so my style is unique.

I get along with almost everybody in A. All the different factions and there's a bunch of me. Any problem with that? Everybody's got their own style. And it's just a matter of style. That's all it is. And I've got mine and you've got yours. So let's have some fun with it. What would you have me be? Each day I'm going to find that out. If he reveals through me what he'd have me be. When I was 40 he had me be something that I don't have a strength for today.

He wants me to be something else today. I have been a father. I have been an uncle. And now I am already grandpa. What? Six times over now. Plus my other family. What would he have me be? He would have me be on time. Some of the things I've learned, God would like me to be on time. Because that's the only time anything can happen is when you're on time. If you later didn't go to happen. Okay. I had some fun the other day.

There's a time when it's important to believe that God got me a parking place. Okay. You got to let go of that pretty soon though. It doesn't time it's important. Because it seems that's what happened. Nothing ever went right in my life and all of a sudden I kept a parking place. Okay. There's a God of parking spots. And I was taking a friend of mine to launch a dario. It's a place in Denver for those who have serious garlic deficiencies.

But tie in restaurant that you can smell for three miles. Good food. Never any place to park. For blocks. But we got my van drove up there anyway. And as we pulled up in front somebody pulled out in front. Right in front. And he's new to the program. He said, didn't that nice God got us a parking spot. I had to tell him the truth. No I didn't. We were just on time. It would have been one minute sooner. We'd have driven right on by it.

It would have been one minute later the guy in front of us would have got it. We were just on time. So what would God have me be on time here now. Present. This is when it's going to happen. You can tell I play with my mind a lot. It won't shut up. So I let it think about these things. I want to be effective with you and everybody I talk to. And I constantly ask for images that will convey what I'm talking about. God would have me be attentive.

Not self absorbed but attentive. If I'm going to be a maximum service and help you meet your needs. I'd better pay attention when you tell me what they are. Otherwise I'll find out what her needs are but I think they're yours and I'll try forcing them on you. We won't get along at all. He would like me to be attentive. One of the things I know God wants me to be and I think it's funny is he has made me a listener. Some of the things he wants me to be is a listener.

And then you ask me to talk all the time. Well thinking about that has given me a wondrous experience. Listen to me. I'll try it sometime. Hear what you say. Listen to me. And I'm overwhelmed sometimes with the things that I hear me still say that I didn't know. Where did that come from? What a fun time there is. God would have me be patient. Really, really patient. Because my time may not be your time and I want to be there when you get there on time.

I may have to wait for you a little bit. I need to be patient. That's a hard one. I'm really impatient. Having been touched by the hand of God I want you to be touched too. I want it so bad I'll sometimes smack you with it. Instead of being patient and waiting for it. God would have me be loving. I really don't know the dimensions of that yet. It's too big for me. But Wesley Parish gave me one thing I can understand about it.

He said, Love is the active concern for the growth in the welfare of that which you love. I can get that piece of it. Active concern for the growth in the welfare of that which you love. I'm actively concerned that my granddaughter grow up healthy. By active concern I mean I touch her, I talk to her, I lift her, we play. I'm actively concerned that she knows that she is cared for and cared about. This one is going to be a talker because she's being raised by talkers.

I've learned to listen to her. I'm learning a new language. She repeats some of those sounds. It's got to be a language of some sort. God wants me to be a listener. It's now ten o'clock and I think God wants me to be quiet. Those of you that I haven't drawn, pushed completely beyond your endurance limits and people will be back here ten o'clock tomorrow morning and wrap it up. I am deeply touched by you. I've got about six hours of stuff to tell you.

I've got about an hour and a half left to do it in. So if you show up at ten o'clock we'll do that. There's some really good stuff about life and death. Particularly about death because I just went through with my dad. There's some good stuff about death. There's nothing wrong with death. Depends on how you live. Good night. Good night. Good night. I was able to do those first two inventories while I was contained. It was two years before I could do a sex inventory mainly because I couldn't remember much.

Most of my adult sex wife had taken place in my head. True. He just took a while. There's some really sick things. I ate wine, wine and haloers and shot speed and some pretty sick stuff. And he just took a while for a healing to take place. So I could just take a look at it objectively because our sex inventory, if you'll notice, is a very objective, very clinical approach. We're not going to say right or wrong. We're going to say if you harmed anybody and precisely how did you harm people?

It's a conduct inventory. So I learned to do it as a conduct inventory before I did it as a sex inventory. The questions are pertinent to business conduct, to my conduct at home, to any conduct that I'm involved in, these questions are pertinent to that. Am I arousing jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? Am I being self-seeking, dishonest? It helps me examine all of that in terms of my conduct. Of course my conduct always comes from my screwy thinking.

When I finally got it done, it fit on a 3x5 card because it had mostly taken place in my head. I walked away amazed that I'd ever had children. More of an accident than anything else. What's real money? There's a little twist here I'm going to pass on to you. It's a little different at this point and can be than the resentment inventory where you make a list. And then you go through the spreadsheet. This says, whom had we hurt?

If you'll ask that question with an open spiritual mind, the list will develop itself. It's just a little shift in what's going on. It makes me responsible to be more of a participant in the examination I'm giving the life. Who have I hurt? Ask questions. If you ask that question, having said the prayer and are now in a spiritual state of mind, you will get the answer. It asks another question. What should I have done instead?

First time we're being asked to ask that. What should I have done instead? The question, the answer for me is always just about anything but what I did. What should I have done instead begins to set me on the path of reconstruction and developing a new view, both toward my sexual ideal or any other ideal. I deviate a little bit from the book only in that it talks specifically about sex here because when we first come here, we need that

specific.

But this is so much broader than just sex. This is every relationship I have can be run through this test as a guide to my conduct. It's brutal. I have to become responsible for the fact that I know the difference between right or wrong. I'm just weak. Just weak. We subject each relation to this test. Is it selfish or not? Shit. Of course it is. If I'm involved in it, of course it is. And with that knowledge then I can modify my behavior and my attitude in such a way that maybe my selfishness can be part of the greater good.

I've learned over the years practicing this in critical situations with people. There's three questions I ask myself. The first one is what do I want out of this? What is my first agenda? I have one. I better know what it is. It's not a moral judgment. What do I want out of this? At my very best, I want something. I want to feel good. I want to be recognized, whatever it is. What do I want out of this? The second one is a mean question.

Is it possible that I could be wrong? Of course it is. This puts me in a frame of mind of being willing to listen to you. I could be wrong. It's pretty doubtful, but it could be. At least I will listen to you. Human relationships are about negotiation. Most of the time, it's just an observation. We each want something and we negotiate so that we can both come out winners. If I'm smart, if I'm stupid, I want to win, I want you to lose.

I want you to win so I can lose. I learned in World War II, who really won World War II. What kind of a car do you drive? What kind of a TV set? Who made that one? Who owns downtown Dallas? Anyway, we subjected each relation to this test. Was it selfish or not? We asked God to mow our ideals and help us live up to them. Help me with this. What a great prayer. I recognize that I am selfish and I will probably do something wrong without some guidance.

Help me mold this relationship. Now, one of the things that comes out of that, in the old days, everybody had to love me and I had to participate in everything. You know, busy, busy, busy people, please. The fact is today that there are people that I like to go fishing with. And there are people that I like to go bowling with. And I've learned not to take my bowling partner fishing. It doesn't work. There are people that I will go to play with.

There are people I won't go to dinner with. I will go to lunch with females other than my wife. I will not go to dinner with females other than my wife because there is something going on there. Is it selfish or not? What am I trying to get out of this? It's what I ask myself. And it comes out of here not being selfish, dishonest, and considered. Great God. This thing is really simple for me and it's all wrapped up right here.

Every situation in life is wrapped up right here. For me. Whenever the ideal turns out to be, we must be willing to go toward it. All I bring to life is willingness. That's all I bring. If I bring anything else, I'm bringing my agenda to the damn thing. I'm just willing to listen, to let it come about, to be a little less than selfish. Admitting I am really a selfish person, I'm willing to be a little less than selfish.

If you can just show me how. So it says we treat sex with any other problem. I'm going to take the word sex out and read that. We treat any problem this way. In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. There's no general rule. There's only a principle. Each specific matter. Now there's a guide, let me get real personal. There's one of the guides to being married for me. Each specific matter.

I was brought up with this idiotic notion that just because she's my wife, I have proprietary rights over her

body. What a bunch of crap that is. Each specific matter, day by day, one day at a time, each time, it's a new deal that needs to be negotiated. And I can tell you negotiating with my wife is fun. There's the guide. An interesting thing came out of that for me. I discovered that there are nights I have a headache.

Isn't that interesting? I'm not super stud. There are some other things in my life that are at least as interesting to me sometimes as sex. That'll blow your image. But it's the truth. And they're not all major propositions. Sometimes I would rather watch Hogan's heroes. I know. Keep coming back down. Can you hear what I'm saying? Each specific matter. I ask God for the right answer. And the answer will come if we want it.

Well, I really want the answer. That's the key. I am willing to hear the answer. Knowing full wealth when I experience on this deal, that most of the time I probably won't like it when I first hear it. It'll be okay afterwards, but not right away. Okay. Great guide. Very simple. It's all about prayer and meditation. Having a conversation with God. And I learned that by having conversations with you. Conversations is a two-way street.

When it's my turn, I speak. When it's my turn, I shut up. You speak. And then there's those wonderful times. And the reason we're still together, my wife and I, is because we have learned how precious those times are when we don't talk to each other. We just kind of hang out together. And that's what my meditation is about. We'll get to that. I'll get off base here. The principle of life are settled here for me if I will only listen.

And the inventory is so that I can listen. It clears out the noise. If I'm not focused on what I should be getting, and what I am afraid I won't get, or what I'm afraid you'll get, then I can hear. To sum up. And once again, he says, we earnestly pray for the right ideal. I've watched with great amusement over the years as people misconstrued that to think, what is she going to look like? What's the ideal one? It's not what it is.

The ideal has to do with my behavior. Okay. That's fun to watch. The ideal is tall, well away blonde, and guess who shows up. Short and nothing. And she's gorgeous. And you get all confused, and they don't know what the hell is going on. I just let them round them up. For guidance in each questionable situation. What is a questionable situation? Anything I'm involved in. It's easier that way. Yeah. I'm involved in it.

It's questionable. It means it needs to be questioned. What do I want out of this? Is it possible I could be wrong? And that third key question, how will this affect other people? If I go do this, or variations on that same? Is it important enough to do? But mainly what will be the effect on those around me if I pursue this course of action? That's a great question, because I seldom ever have an answer to it, and because I don't have an answer, I usually slow down.

And once I slow down, then I can begin to hear again, and get to guidance. Simple stuff. Those are the street terms for what's coming out of this book. In each questionable situation, I ask God for guidance. Isn't it silly to go to someone for advice and then not listen to them? Is that silly? We do that in prayer all the time, you know. God show me what to do. Be back later. I'm gone. Okay. I've got to sit still long enough to do the answer.

Let me get real practical about it. As a result of a number of things, a couple years ago, I had ballooned up to 215 pounds. And I tried dieting and eating right now. You know, these little disciplines, they don't work. I feel deprived. Where's mine? I just didn't work. I thought I got smart one morning, and in my morning visit with God said, look, I'm uncomfortable with sitting good and then unhealthy. Would you please just teach me how to eat in

such a way that I can get to whatever weight you think it ought to be at?

Because I always had targets. And I went to work, and I had some kind of trash rolls with me and offered one of my boss. He said, no, I'm not doing that this week. I'm on the soup. I said, what are you talking about? Oh, he showed me that Cabby's soup regimen at St. Thomas Hospital has for heart patients who are about to have surgery and need to lose some weight quickly and hopefully. I'm not an idiot. I've been here a while.

I had just asked for direction. I just got the next guy I met, gave me the direction. So I started the soup. He makes my family crazy. Cabby's soup stinks. But I lost 30 pounds and kept it off. I've been down in Louisiana twice in the last month and half and I put 10 back on. But the point is I asked for direction and I brought with it a willingness from that from the moment I asked the prayer of direction, I stay aware because I know it's coming.

I expect God to answer. That's the deal he and I made at the very beginning. His care and protection, he will give me guidance if I ask Lord, I expect it. What he expects is for me to listen. No big deal, but it's that practical. I'm at her through prayer. I had finally gotten through adolescence. I was 42 or 43 years old. Finally made it. I lived at the base of a 14,000-foot mountain, not Princeton in Colorado. The Arkansas River was my front yard about a half a mile away.

I worked six hours a day at the Reformatory doing what I loved, working with inmates. I had two teenage boys, an old black dog and a white Siamese cat. My life was pretty good. We went fishing when we pleased and we just kind of did what we pleased. As close to barbarians as you can get and not get locked up in this country. I clearly said to God one morning, thank you very much. I'm really satisfied. I don't care if there's ever another woman in my life, but I will do whatever you have in mind.

Dead the deed. Because two weeks later, when I came over to Denver, through a series of wonderfully romantic circumstances, I met her. We are people who normally would not met. She'd never even seen a real alcoholic. And I'm convinced today, as she known me when I was active, we would not have even visited for a minute. I have intuitive thoughts sometimes. I was in Denver, and it overwhelmed me to go see a kid on spots.

I hadn't seen him for a long time, because this was 120 miles out of town. And I couldn't shake it. So I went to see Jimmy. And he went white. I found him at work. I didn't even know where he lived. I found him at work, and he went white. He said, I've been looking for you. I was hoping you'd show up. I need to have you do something for me. My wife works for this lady, and I said, Jimmy, don't do this to me. I said, oh, come on.

My wife works for this lady, and she thinks you two guys ought to get together. And I said, Jimmy, don't do this to me. He said, please, just get by off my back. You don't have to marry the lady. You just can't do that. Okay. Well, I did. And we've been married now, coming up on 21 years without a fight. The prayer was, I'm satisfied as I am. Whatever you have in mind is better than what I had in mind. And it wasn't an easy choice.

For the first time in my life, I'm in a conscious, well-thought-out decision. Being in love wasn't enough. It was good, but it wasn't enough to uproot my entire life, and my boys, and effort her family. She had two little girls. It wasn't enough. Because what we concluded was that we either had to stop seeing each other or make a lifetime commitment out of this. Well, I went back to the mountain and thought about it for three days and prayed about it.

I looked over all the stuff I'd have to give up. You know, if there's always self involved, you've got to get to it. Okay. I married Jackie because I became willing to grow old with her. That's what I did. I'm willing to grow old with her. We travel well together. That may not sound very romantic, but it's been the basis of a pretty good deal. Our home is God-centered. And it's no big deal. It's not full of rituals. Well, it is right now because our daughter is a young Catholic and she does this kind of thing all the time.

I don't know what's going on. But it's all right. In fact, it's fun to watch the events then, because when we say grace at dinner, they're all doing this, and I don't. So it's not part of my ritual. I pray with him. And every night I watch him, he's watching me. He's trying to figure out how come I'm not doing that. I seem to be doing everything else. Well, I'm not doing that. And I'm not going to say a word. Just let him figure it out.

Somebody here will ask me. I don't have to tell him the truth. I don't know. I just don't do that. I guess. For guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity, I can pray for sanity. I pray very specifically for things. And I have to ask myself, what does that mean to me? Well, the definition in the book Alcoholics Anonymous is the one I use. This is simple. Insanity is defined as lack of proportion and the ability to think straight.

It's not just defined in the story about the car sounds by the name Jim. So we call this plain insanity. How could such lack of proportion and the ability to think straight be called anything else? So the only reference I have for sanity is that there will be proportion and I'll be able to think straight. So that's what I pray for. Serenity is one thought at a time. I'm getting the message. Established on such a footing, we became less and less interested in ourselves.

Does that happen to you? Scary. It was for me. For somebody who's totally self-centered, it's something to be interested in somebody else and we'll frighten her. My God, I don't care. I made 24 hours a day who's going to. You may be interesting, but I'm far more interesting. We became less and less interested in ourselves and our little plans and designs. More and more, we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life.

I remember the pain of really believing that nobody had let me help them. That nobody would let me love them. I didn't matter that I wasn't loved. I hurt because nobody would let me love them. It seemed that nobody would let me help them. But I had nothing to contribute that I was useless. That's a terrible time. And I begin to see even early on how I can make a contribution to life. If I don't do anything but show up, I have made a contribution to life.

I made the room less empty by just showing up. I know people watch us. I know people watch me before they make a decision to step forward onto this path. They watch me for a while and see if I really do what I said I do in meetings. You know how I know that? I did that. I watched Bruce. And I watched Phil. And I watched those out of you guys before I made a decision. I'm not following anybody anywhere ever again. I'm so sure that they're going the right direction.

As we felt new power flow in, have you felt any power recently that you didn't know about before? Yeah, tell me about that. It's scary. Aren't we funny? We are power seekers who are terrified when we get the power. Because now we've got to do something with it that we're funny. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, and not second on a new meeting for me, I used to think that means that we'll finally have some.

I finally realize it means just what it says. I don't know how to enjoy peace of mind. I don't like it. When it gets quiet, there's something inside my head that says, well, we better do something here. If there's something up, this is too quiet. There's something wrong here. Do you do that on the gym? Yeah. I've learned to enjoy peace of mind. Most of my mornings are absolutely gorgeous because I go into a little room I've made for myself and I sit in an old chair, I've been hollering around for, I've got twenty-five years.

I recover it and I've got to blank it over. And I just sit there. I have nothing special. I just sit there and enjoy peace of mind, wondrous thing. Have you done that? Have you had any moment in the last year when you sat still for a minute and it was okay to just sit still for a minute? If you've done that, that says here, that's a spiritual experience. As we discovered, we could face life successfully. Not that I always do, but I can.

As we became conscious of his presence, we began to lose our fear today, tomorrow and the year after, we were reborn. So does that describe anything that you had happened to you? Would you be willing to surrender your entire life from here on forward to whatever it is that can make that happen? Because that's what they're going to ask us to do next. It's another jumping off place. We're now at step three. However you can see God to be, if this happens, I'll give myself up to this.

A sense of purpose, a sense of direction, a sense of power. Just enough, I don't want to run the universe. I don't even want to run my house. I just want to have that sense that if I'm called on, I can come to the line with it. I'll be there. Well, if we want to do that, this is in all step three, and suggest a prayer. Now let me give you a view before we say the prayer. In spiritual terms, amen is a closure to a prayer, to a conversation with God.

So this is so. It ends this piece. There is no amen at the end of what we call the third step prayer. The only amen I can come up with is at the end of the seventh step prayer, which is actually the third step prayer with teeth in it. My view is that everything from the word God to the amen at the end of what we call the seventh step prayer is all part of the prayer. It's one prayer. Prayer will become activity and action.

But this process we're going to get into from here on is a spiritual process, not an intellectual process. God will help me with that. There will be power to do that. I need the power to even look at my life. I don't have the honesty or the power to look at it. I'm going to need some help. And I'm going to ask for it. Listen to what this says. This is a cheap shot. This prayer is. God offer myself to thee to do with me.

And go with me as thou wilt. In a street top that means from here on my life is none of my business. Do with it as you wish. That's a big commitment. Okay. I will go where you want me to go and do what you want me to do. Just tell me. I got to tell you something. If you say that, you better mean it. Because I have been called on since the time I took this prayer to do things that are way beyond me. Over and over and over.

This is one of them. My life is not my business. My conduct is my life is my business. I really love this woman. And given my brothers, I'd be home every weekend. We'd lock the door and shut off the phones. But I don't get my brothers. I got to go out and do this stuff. I had to go to Russia one year in November. That's a crappy time to go to Russia. I had a good time. I called her every day we've been married. Like every day since the matter.

Except for that 17 days. That was a hard 17 days. I'm really glad I got to go. But it's because I said this

prayer. I am not the kind of person you would send as an emissary to Russia. That's what you did. You're not too bright. You weren't paying attention. You sent me and four of my compatriots who had no more sense than I do to tell the Russian government about alcoholics anonymous in an attempt to make it possible for it to happen over there.

You're not too bright. But we all had made this commitment so we went. We just went fine. We didn't do anything special except walk through there. Vote with me and do with me as the world. It strengthened my character to make that trip. It wasn't because I had characters when I made the trip. It strengthened my character to make that trip because I had to do something that I didn't want to do. I had to get me completely out of the way.

Because every word we said to the Russians who ask us questions constantly, we had to be very careful what we said because they would do exactly and respond exactly to what we said. We were at a public meeting in Moscow. A doctor had written a book about AA and it was very pro AA and they were having a public forum which is customer there. Hundreds of people, government officials, regular people, big auditorium, critiquing the book so his second edition would be even better.

We were introduced as the Americans from Alcoholics Anonymous and when it was my turn at the microphone, one of them asked me that loaded question. How do you think Alcoholics Anonymous will work in this country? That's a really scary question. It could be. I was here. You put the words in my mouth and I heard myself say, I have no idea. I've only been here for 13 days. It would be presumptions that made even comment on how it would work.

And I started to clap. I became aware of the danger I've been in and any other answer would have shut them down. What a glorious thing is to be led like that. Then I was able to explain to them, well, I don't know. It has worked quite well in 144 other countries. That's the kind of direction you get if you make this. But if you make this commitment, that's the kind of stuff you're going to have to go do. Do you know where we really get it?

Someone will come into my life and say to me, I can't stop drinking. How do you do it? And I want to know right now, what do I have to do now? To not take a drink right now. I have to pray about that. Build with me and do with me as I will. Relieve me of the bondage yourself and I may better do thy will. That's me. It doesn't say relieve me of the bondage itself so that I get to feel better. Okay. Only so I get to do your will better.

Take away my difficulty. I said victory over them may bear witness. To those I would help. Your power, your love, your way of life. Don't take away my difficulty so I get to feel better. I've come to believe that what they mean by take away my difficulty has nothing to do with this out here. Take away the difficulty I'm having in being honest, in being thorough, in recognizing you and recognizing my faults. All those difficulties that I have take them away please.

So I can sit in this chair and tell everybody in this room that's exactly what it did for me. It would lead me of the bondage of self. I became free in a penitentiary. I got out of prison when I was locked up one night. And he took away the difficulty I had being honest and there's a price I've had to pay for that. I can never again have I been able to say I didn't know that. I didn't know that was wrong. I didn't know the truth.

I do. I just am too weak to do it sometimes. But I know what's right, what's wrong. The price to pay for this prayer is that you will know. The truth will set you free but it'll kick you butt along the way. But it's worth the price. I had to go, my little, my baby daughter, still my baby daughter, did something one time that really pissed me off. I won't go into the whole story. Jackie remembers it. She and Kelly were having a little argument and I didn't like the way it was going.

And I started to get out of my chair and fix it. And some in my head said, sit down, shut up, leave it be. And I got up anyway. And I fixed it and I created more chaos in our house that day. I've got the inventory right here. Everybody wants to see it. It was a beaut. And I knew the whole time I was doing it I was being stupid. I knew when it was over what I had to do and I did it. I had to go back to this poor child and tell her I was wrong.

That I still didn't agree with her. But I was wrong. It was a price to pay. We always talk about the upside of surrender. There's a downside. You want to do that? Is that prayer, Succì? It's a meeting. How would you like to do it? I'm convinced that God doesn't care whether we meet Him standing, sitting, laying down, kneeling, whatever. I really don't think God gives a damn. I really enjoy doing group third step prayers.

I must tell you one time someone had a seizure. But I think she had a seizure anyway. I don't believe it was because of the prayer. So if you're afraid of that, don't worry. It was the same kind of group as this. If you have a seizure, we'll just make sure you don't bite your tongue. I'm making a joke, I know. But it did happen. Would you like to say the third step prayer with me? Because I'm going to say it and get on about my business.

Okay? God, I offer myself to the, to build with me, to deal with me. Believe me, the body is so. But I know better to, I will. Get away. My experience with God has always been pleasant. I hope you had a pleasant experience too. The thing we do until we finish up the seventh step, because of what we just said is part of this prayer. Everything we do. The events are going to occur in my life from this moment on and for, until I get through this little house cleaning process.

Every bit of it will be applicable to what we call inventory. To house cleaning. Do you like what just happened to you? Just that sense of presence. That's all there is here. It's not going to get any better. There will be moments of great elation. But this is what it's about. It's about being still enough for me to hear the voice of God. In my experience, God has never, ever yelled at me. Never. It's a very gentle quiet voice and I must be still or I won't hear it.

Whether it comes through your mouths or in that special way he is of talking within me, I won't hear it less than quiet. And all the inventory is an effort to clear away the stuff that's making noise in my head. The resentment, the fear, the guilt, the anger, the self-centeredness, the wearer's mind is cleared out. So the mind is quiet. So it says next we launch on a course of vigorous action. The first step of which is a...

Because this will have little permanent effects. And that's where it once followed by a strenuous effort to face a mirror to the things that have involved us. We're not going to write all that inventory tonight. But I can say from my experience, if you do it the way the big book suggests, I'm going to show you a couple of things I do. You're already at inventory experts, so I won't take much time with it. For most people, there's three formats here.

There's a format for resentments. There's a completely different format to examine fear. There's a completely different format to examine conduct, starting with sexual conduct. But it's good for all conduct. There's approximately roughly, for most people, about eight to ten hours of actual work involved in the resentment piece. Unless you just have to go insane and have 2,500 names, in which case, find another sponsor.

I ain't listening to that. Okay, be thorough, but don't be insane. Quite often, that list of names that comes up is the same person with 20 names. And I expect you to write every one of them down. I only want to hear about a couple of them. You got to go clean them all up. I don't need to listen to it. Unless you need to tell me all of them. I had one kid do his first step, and after ten straight hours, he was like you, Bill.

He had one of those minds. I was literally dying. He just sucked the juice right out of me. And I said, I'm dying. We got to quit. No, no, no, no. I climbed up on his bed and went to sleep. I woke up about two hours later, and he was still talking. There's test step. One time I came home, and there was a ten minute test step on my answering device. He didn't care. He was on the other hand. Anyway, I use what I call a checklist method simply because it works.

I take it a little time because this is a delicate area. My mind is subject to get deliberately confused the issue. My ego really will kick in at this point and do its best to create trouble. So I do a little checklist thing. What simply means is we go through the direction book, and by the way, to my knowledge, this is the only place where there are specific directions on how to do it. We have a lot of good philosophical books written about this, but this is where the directions are for me.

Sentence by sentence, it takes me through the process. And it was written this way because Bill knew that somehow along the way, as much as we depend on each other face to face, there's going to be somebody with just the book. And they need to be able to get the same results. And so you can do this with just the book. We're lucky, we don't have to. Being convinced that self manifested in various ways is what has defeated us.

We consider it common manifestations. Are we convinced that self manifested in various ways is what's defeated us? It simplifies the deal. I don't have to look for any complex Freudian things. What's wrong with me is self. Resentment is the number one offender, and it kills more alcoholics than anything else. Resentment stem all forms of spiritual disease. Big piece of information there. Did you catch it? Resentment is not a mental or emotional problem.

Resentment is a spiritual disease. It must be the granddaddy of all of them because it says from it, stem all forms of spiritual disease. And I got to ask myself, what does that mean to me? Well, it means a couple of things. If I resent you, you own me. You can be dead, you can be in another town, and then make any difference. You're in my head, and you are running my life. You own me. And I do not want to be owned by the kind of people that piss me off.

Ever again, by anybody. The second thing is that resentment separates me. And isn't that what they're trying to tell us is a problem? A sense of separation. If I resent Bill, I am separated from Bill. And if I'm separated from the children of God, I'm going to be separated from God. It's just that clear. If I resent Bill, I miss Bill entirely, because I don't see him. I see him up here in my head who I think he is and what I think he's done.

And so I miss him. It's a spiritual disease that separates us. So we've not only been mentally and physically, oh, we have been spiritually sick. Whoa. I had to change my whole idea about spiritual. I thought spiritual was automatically cool. You can be sick spiritually. When the spiritual model is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. I'm a little goofy, but I straighten out mentally and physically. I have some physical problems, but what the hell?

I carried this model over some rough roads and rode it hard and hung it up wet many times. I'd be surprised if I didn't have some, but I straightened out mentally and physically. So what do we do? It says here, in dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. My question, if I'm sponsoring you is, have we done that yet? Oh, okay. We don't have anything else to do until we've done that. We haven't done that because we don't know how.

Well, maybe if it's really a textbook, it'll tell us how to do it. Let's read on just far enough to see. We set them on paper. Oh, we listed people, institutions, and principles with whom we were angry. Okay, go home. Do that. Then come back when that's done. And I'm going to do that too. And I always have mine done before you because I've been practicing longer. And my list is always shorter. And I'm a smart ass and I let you know that.

Okay. Then we ask ourselves why we were angry after we got the list made. Why we were angry? In most cases, we found it was our self-esteem, pocketbooks, and based on their personal relations, including sex, for hurt or threatened. I keep it that simple. The only reason I ever get angry with anybody is because you either hurt me or threatened me. Nothing fancy. That's just what it says. And the only way you can threaten me is to make it appear like I'm not going to get something I want.

Or I'm not going to get to keep something I think I have. There's all kinds of stuff involved in that. If you hurt my self-esteem, you can call me a big dummy. And if my attitude toward you is that you're a big dummy, it doesn't phase me at all. If I need you to like me and you call me a big dummy, you can devastate me. I need to be free of that. If you can hurt or threaten me, I need to be free of that. The only reason I resent anybody is my defense against my own pain.

So we make up a grudge list. This process is wonderful. I can take a brand new person, still smells like booze, and get this much done. Make a list of everybody you're angry at. That's easy. That's all I'm thinking about. Why are you angry at them? That's easy. That's tough, tough, tough, tough, tough. We put down all the reasons. They give us the format here. We get all that done. Why am I angry and what's being affected in my life by that?

It's very simple to do. The most important part of this whole process is what happens between the third and the fourth column of this inventory. Up to this point, I have a grudge list and I have an attitude. If I'm telling the truth, I'm already bypassed, but I shouldn't feel this way. I'm putting down, but I do. Here's why. He did this to me, and she said this about me, and blah, blah, blah. It's all down here. It's ugly, and I'm righteously right about it.

I'm beginning to get a hint at this point that there's something wrong. This is so important. I know you've read it. Do you mind if I read it? Because I love to hear it. So we went back to our lives. There's the direction I start from today with Bill, and I move on back. I talk a lily as far back as my memory will carry me without it. When it stops working, stop riding. First I'm going to crap away, and pretty soon I have millions.

You've got plenty of time to rest your life to try to stuff you missed the first time. My first inventory was a lie anyway. I didn't do it this way. I dashed off and spent two hours riding out of a catalog of some of the worst things I've ever done. I went back to my sponsor with it two hours I took. From the time he said, God, we're revealing yourself to you. As you reveal yourself to you, I was back two hours later with this list of stuff I'd done.

He looked at it and he said, that's garbage. You wrote that to impress me. Get away from me. Tell me the truth. I took my first first step to somebody else because I am an alcoholic and I am selfless. I'd spent two hours being scrupulously honest. I got somebody to listen. I awakened spiritually in that lie. Because I'd tell this guy something I'd done and he would say to me, well, that wasn't that bad. When I tell him something else and he'd say, well, that wasn't that bad.

I awakened to the fact that there's something wrong here because some of this was that bad. But I had picked somebody who would tell me what I wanted to hear so I wouldn't have to do anything about it. And if I didn't stop that immediately I was going to die an ugly death. Meaning I'd have to live an ugly life for a while for it. So I went back to it. So we get it done this way. My first real inventory was pretty shabby.

I didn't have much memory left. So when I say it was shabby, it was kind of short. But I did it this way and I got into some things. When we finished it we considered it carefully. When you got all this done, consider it carefully. And they even tell us how to consider what a marvelous mercy this is. They even tell me how I can go about it so I don't get confused. The first thing I see is that the world and its people are often quite wrong.

I'm a little boy's birthday in 1966 federal narcotics ages came to my house. They do not come gently. One came through the front door literally. One came through the back door. One came through the side window. They knocked me to the ground, handcuffed me, stood them and that called me several kinds of bad names. My four year old let out a shriek and this big cop swung around and almost shot him. And I went from resentment to hate right there.

And I carried that for a long time. That was on this list. Count on it right near the top. And he was wrong. And to this day I think that's a really shitty way to make a living. Breaking people's houses down, stepping on their necks and nearly shooting their kids. That's a hell of a way to make a living. And the world's people are often quite wrong. That doesn't make me right. But I can recognize they're often quite wrong.

To conclude to that as wrong as far as most of us ever got. The usual outcome is that people continued to wrong us. And we stayed sore. It just this moment occurred to me because I'm a word mechanic. Another dimension of the word sore. I'm talking about being sore and angry. A sore is a very painful lesion. Resentment is a very painful lesion on my soul I suspect. Anyway, that just went into my mind. Sometimes it was remorse when we were sore in ourselves.

It's playing a little life which includes deep resentment and leads only to futility and unhappiness. I remember so far talked about us getting a brand new mind. Here it is. Here's what the new mind thinks like. The old mind thinks that son of a bit broke into my house and nearly shot my son. I hate him. Shame on him. The new mind says it's plain that a life that includes this kind of thinking. This kind of deep resentment can lead only to futility and unhappiness.

Well, that's pretty clear. Well, to me I was in my second penitentiary and he was still loose on the street. I wasn't getting too far with this kind of deal. It was kind of hate. To the precise extent we've met these, do we squander the hours that might have been worthwhile? And I love the word squander. Deliberate waste. You can accidentally waste something. But squandering means you know it's value and you trash it anyway.

And I can't duck the past but I know that to be truth. I'm wasting my life in years and I know it and I can't do anything about it. But with the alcoholic whose hope is the maintenance and growth of the spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave, we find it fatal. For when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns from a drink again and with us to drink us to die.

The new mind has to understand if we're to live we have to be free of anger. That just doesn't seem fair does it? It really doesn't seem fair. Everybody else gets to be angry. If I'm going to live I got to be free of it. It doesn't mean I won't get angry. It means I better get free of it free damn quick. I cannot nurse anger. It's too strong a power. It will shut me off from the power I need. Do you like righteous anger? I do.

Well not too long ago I had a piece of that. I just deliberately stayed pissed for three days for our own inventory because it felt so good. I just wanted to get every little piece out of it that I could. I had to stay away from nice people because I hadn't looked like a wasn't angry but I just wanted to steam everything and I really was right. And that's the ahead and let it go. The grouch in the brainstorm are not for us.

I love the grouch in the brainstorm. After what he did I should have. Then he would have. Then I could have. And then I told him and he'd have done pretty soon I got it going. Give me another drink. This is good. It's not for us. You've heard of that we have to be free of the anger. The grouts in the brainstorm are the dubious luxury of normal men for alcoholics and poison. I just need to know that in my mind. I know when I get angry I know today I must be rid of this.

I will take actions. Do you ever have an emotional hangover? She's a normal person. I've seen her get angry in 10 minutes later. Be perfectly alright. I get angry. Fool with it for a while. And for the next day and a half I'm tired. He just wore me out. And I'm thinking how much damage does I do? Do I have to clean this up? What was wrong with me? I have done, done, done, done, done. And I make myself tired. Isn't that done?

We turn back to the list. This is the list we've just made. We're prepared to look at it from an entirely different angle. My book, by the way, says we're prepared to look for it. It was a printer's error along the way. We spent numerous hours debating whether it was for or at until I just went to New York, went to the archives, got the first edition and it's at it. We're prepared to look at this list from a different angle.

We began to see that the world-less people really dominated us. If I resent you, you own me. This man I hated from the bottom of my heart owned me. He dominated my thinking. He dominated my actions. He dominated the way I treated people. He ruled my life. The wrongdoing of others fancy the real had the power to actually kill. Like an idiot, I shouldn't own by now, but I didn't. I went to Bruce and asked him, how will I know whether it's fancy or real?

He said, if you are involved in it, it's fancy. And Kim put words on what that meant for me. The minute I

recall what that cop did to me and my kids, it was not what that cop did at all. It's my emotional flap going on over about what that cop did. It's fancy. It's colored by all the times I got. You know, I even came up with a plan to get a wonderful alcoholic plan. I found out where he lived. I began to stalk him. Jesus, how stupid can you get?

He's got a gun and knows how to use it and has already demonstrated. He's quite willing. But I'm stalking him in my head and I don't worry, lives. And I had a plan. I was going to Owsley's runners out of Brooklyn in the 60s. We had some liquid acid that would put you away for weeks. And I know about acid. It was discovered because it got on a sinus hand and went right straight into the bloodstream. You don't even have to swallow it.

You just have to get it on you. And death was too good for this guy. I mean, I was insane. I was going to get five double old caps of liquid acid and tape them to my hand, find him and shake his hand and forgive him and send him to the moon. It didn't occur to me that we're going to get a little on me too. You know, it's stupid. I don't have any problem at all considering how dangerous resentment is to me. I actually did that.

I didn't find him, but I was on the way to finding him. Resentment is a killer for me. Bad news. Fancy to rule has the power to actually kill. So if I'm involved in it in my head, it's already fancied. Just don't worry about it. How can we escape? We saw these resentments must be mastered. But how? We couldn't wish him away any more than alcohol. This is our course. We realized the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick.

That we did not like their symptoms in the way these disturbed us. They, like ourselves, were sick too. Whole new way of thinking. What does that mean to me? What does spiritually sick mean to me? It means I'm separated from God. I'm separated from my power source. And when I feel separated, I behave badly. So all that means is if I can take a look at you as perhaps being separated from your source, no wonder you're behaving the way you are.

You're scared as I am. You feel disenfranchised like I do. I wonder you're behaving that way. And I don't get the luxury of saying that sick son bitch. I got to say, perhaps, like myself. This person is behaving this way because they don't have any choice either. It's a whole new way of thinking. Spiritual leaders for centuries have tried to teach us. If you have anything against your brother, if you're angry with your brother, you've got to get it cleaned up first because you can't get in the temple carrying it with you.

And the temples within. Same deal. Forgiveness. I must give forth without reservation. To clean it up. They like myself and perhaps spiritually sick. A whole new way of looking at it. We ask God to help us show them the same tolerance pity and patience we had carefully granted sick friend. At that time I did not grant sick people patience, tolerance and pity. They scared me. I had to have a script for everything in life so you'd like me.

I did it so I could do it right. And there's only one script for visiting with sick people. Is there something I can do for you? And that scared me. I was afraid you might have something for me to do. Empty my bedpan. Stay here for a while with me and read. Out loud to me. Oh God, I've got things to do and people to see. Just sit here quietly with me for a while. I didn't know how to do that. I could not grant you patience and tolerance and pity.

When a person in the family said to ourselves, this is a sick man. Can I be helpful to him? God saved me from being angry. I do not ever, never have when I resent somebody, prayed to think of everything I want. How

ugly silly that is. I don't even pray that I get everything I want. I certainly don't pray that they get everything they want. I don't pray for justice for them either. My only prayer for you and I will pray for anyone is that God will be done in your life too.

My prayer is God saved me from being angry. This is the end of side one. Please turn cassette over now and continue to listen on side two. Do not fast forward.