

DON P ARCHIVE

Big Book Workshop

1999 | Part 1 | Reading edition

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Transcript

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I'd like to take just a minute to go around. My name is Don. I'm an alcoholic. I'm a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. My home group is an AA group, meets in Denver. Every Friday morning at six o'clock in the basement of the Community Corrections Center. I have been continuously sober since December 26, 1967. I also belong to the program. I don't have much of an agenda. In fact, I'm completely lost this weekend. I've been waiting for her to tell me what to do. So, I have a rough idea of what we have in mind here. Generally, it takes Friday night all day Saturday and early Sunday morning. We're gonna do it all on Saturday. I would like to get some idea of what you would like out of today, why you came. If you could give me just some brief idea to remember with this many people, if you take more than two minutes, we've already used up an hour. Which is fine, because it's your party. Could you do that and start here?

Who are you? Where you come from? What are you here for? Yeah, I'm miles of alcoholic. Good to be here and good to be sober. I guess I'm here, because I'm an alcoholic. And I found the solution and I called it synonymous. And to be my own experience, I found what to do and not to do. And I found that I just don't know a little. I know knowledge. I can study this book all day and all night. But it's no good to me, unless I do it.

I'm looking for an experience this weekend. Hi. It's your turn. I'm Delaney. I'm an alcoholic. Thank you. And I would like to learn more about handling the pounds of my heartache when I get a little bit upset or angry or somebody threatens my heartache or something like this. Snuck right in on me. I'm 4'11 alcoholic. Well, I am definitely about that. I'm here with my friends from Davisburg. I went to life as good through my Friday day to December 12th, 1970. And I wanted to make it to the one who gave this work, but I was at a wedding and a wedding and a wedding here to the Rhode Island.

So I'm here now and I'll just follow them wherever they go. Our job this weekend is to intimidate Carl. I'm an alcoholic. I'm an alcoholic. This Friday day is January 23rd, about 93. And I'm with the male groups to continue the journey that we did start the time. Okay. Is there anybody you want to throw out? It's important to know that. Okay. No. Good. Then I can stay. Ah. We have one more. We need to know who you are.

We have just finished introducing ourselves. You're welcome. A couple of little housekeeping things. I'm a former smoker, so I'm tuned in to smokers. Just before you go in saying we'll have a break. The session is running from an hour to an hour and a half, never more than that. Because everything I'm sensing is the fact that people have to go. And I have a 73 minute bladder myself, so you're all safe. It's critically important if we're going to walk as spiritual people to be on time.

It's only one time anything can ever happen. That's right now. And if you're not here when it happens, you missed it. It's also my greatest defect in character was my rudeness. I would impose myself into your life and not ask you whether you wanted me there or not. I would make promises I didn't keep. Numerous rude things. Now, as a group, we need to agree that after the break that we'll be back here on time. Because everybody here affects everybody else here for as long as we're gathered together.

And that's the responsibility you're going to have to take. I just assume not set down any rules because life doesn't run on rules except in boot camp. The spiritual life runs on principles. And that constantly changes the rules. So if you want a 10 minute break, we'll decide that this is where we take the break. And I will be back in this chair ready to go in 10 minutes. I also believe the most important thing that will happen this weekend is you talking to each other.

So when we get back together, as long as you're talking, I won't. I really believe it's that important. When you get quiet, I can't stand dead air than it's my turn. So do we all understand that little piece? And it's not an admonition. It's simply that's how I operate. You may be talking to each other about something vastly more important than anything I would say. And I really don't want to interrupt that. If you want a 20 minute break, we'll take a 20 minute break.

If you want to go home and say this is enough, go home. It's enough. This is what life is. I was at one of these things once and I heard myself say that the reason I was here was to have a closer relationship with God. And as it came out of my mouth, I realized that's the most selfish thing I have ever said. It's not up to me to determine what the relationship with God is. God determines that. And I comply with it. When I decide how a relationship is supposed to be of any kind, I screw it up because it will be based on what's in it for me.

I will always try to cut the deal to suit me. I may even be good enough to cut you in on the deal. But believe me, I'm going to get the best piece of it if I'm working it. And I learned from that experience that that's not for me to determine. Everybody who had something that wanted to be addressed or will be addressed, I can tell you this right now, you already have what you came here to get. This whole thing is an inside job.

All of it. I know nothing that you don't know. The fundamental idea of God is deep within every human being. And so this pathway for me has been one of not finding God out here because that's where I get lost. But acknowledging the presence of God here, and that's what happened for me. So to start off with, I'm going to give you free charge the perfect prayer as far as I understand it today. God, that's it. Everything from there is love.

All I need to do is acknowledge the presence of God and it's over. Then things begin to happen. So it's the acknowledgement that starts the whole thing. I was brought into this way of living through the Big Book. So it's the only one I know. Now I'm going to do a lot of talking because I assume that's why you haven't come. And I've heard that this morning. It doesn't mean you can't talk. But I'm going to get on a roll here and get used to it.

First of all, they came to the fish tank and told us who they were and then invited us to come to their 12-step study school. If it sounded like this was something we wanted. They were alcoholic. That's what they said they were. They didn't drink anymore. They said that. And the young out there said what we can do is we can show you a new way of thinking. We can show you how to learn to live a way of life that makes sense to you.

And this was a new thought for me. I've been trying to live my life so it made sense to you. And it never made sense to anybody. So I've learned to live a way of life that makes sense to me. And my life still doesn't make sense to a lot of people. And I really don't care. I really, truly don't. I'm not going to hurt anybody's feelings. But until you put red on my table, don't tell me what to eat. Sounds a little negative but does come in.

I got that from an old convent. He took me aside one day and he said, Prince, what are you so worried about

what other people think? There's not one of them going to put a scrap of bread on your table. And I got the idea. Now they had an AA group that met every Friday night and they let real people in from the outside. Because of two-hour meeting. We took up an hour of it and then real people took up an hour of it. And we weren't allowed to go to that meeting to start with.

We had to go to this 12-step study school first. Which meant every Saturday and every Sunday. And we gave up our yard privileges and our movies. And for five weeks we went up to this school for four hours every afternoon. And the very first thing they told us when we got there was that you knew guys for the next five weeks have nothing to say. If you knew anything at all you wouldn't be here. Which was true. I hear stuff today.

It's the vault to build self-esteem. I'm alive because they made damn sure I didn't have any I knew that. This is about ego deflation at depths. Otherwise I won't quit playing God. At depths. It doesn't mean humiliation at depths. It means ego deflation. If you're doing some damn good what are you doing here? Okay. What they were saying to me and I had to agree. I've been doing my very best and there I was. I get the lovely contrast of knowing that I started out as a number.

Not a person. So everything from there on has been a bonus to me. They gave me back my name when I went and complained to my sponsor. He called me dummy. And I thought what a lovely thing. I'm no longer 38, 984. I'm dummy. He loves me. So I see two aspects of alcoholics anonymous. There's the fellowship. Very important. Without it we would be in bad shape. One is the recovery process and they're separate. They're interdependent but they are two different things altogether.

We were brought into the recovery process first so we could have a spiritual awakening because that's what's going to solve my problem. Then having had a spiritual awakening then I was brought to the fellowship so I could do something with it. Because it isn't about me. My sobriety is not for me. My sobriety is for you. I've already got it. What else am I going to get? My sobriety is for you. My life is none of my business.

The conduct of my life becomes my business. But the outcomes of my life are none of my business. It solves the ambition problem. I don't have any. It's been a real ride since I got on that track. 31 years ago I became conscious of that. I will be what he wants me to be and I will go where he wants me to go. I don't care. I've had five major careers since that time. I just finished giving up all my authority and all my power where I work.

Now everybody thinks I've run the place. It's really fun to watch. I can't even make a decision down here. Everybody wants to know what decisions should be made here. And I give them the best answer I can. I don't know. I was an administrator for a while and I resigned. He was driving me crazy and I did the inventory and discovered that the reason it was driving me crazy is I don't care if the word gets done or not. It's a bad attitude for an administrator.

So I resigned. And they gave me that position and they put me somewhere else. It makes me easy to get along with. If my life is none of my business, your certainly isn't. You know what time I get testing with people is when they try to tell me I live. Well, I won't tell you. You don't tell me. How's that? Is that a deal? That's kind of what the fellowship produces. We encourage you, if you're a little bit insane, to keep coming back.

You don't know it, but you're our entertainment. We won't tell you that until later. When it's your turn. So I

was hand carried through the steps. And the way they did it was the way I've been doing it ever since and what I'll do this weekend. They shared their experience with this book. They read it out loud to us, shared their experience of it, and then gave us precise directions on what to do, when to do it, and how to do it.

And Smith left us our greatest legacy. You must walk day by day with a new person for a while. I have grandchildren in my house a lot. I can't conceive of the meanness that it would take to wake that child up and then walk away. And leave the room. So it's the same thing when we're working with others, I believe. My job is to help you wake up. Now that you're awake, my job is to walk with you for a while until you get used to being awake.

The big book uses the word reborn. This is a transforming experience. We get a new mind. And I don't know how to use it. So don't wake me up and then just dump me somewhere. Because I'll screw this deal up. My ego will get it. I have known people who got the power here, and then they appropriated it to their own use. And it ate them up. I've watched it. And it's heartbreaking to see. So you're in great danger today because what we're going to do in this walk is discover where the power is and how to access it.

And if you're feeling powerless this morning, by tonight you will know where the power is and how to access it. And I put you in great danger. I'm told here that I've been given the power to help others. That's the only reason I've been given the power. From the very beginning of the big book, we're being taught how to trust it. How to pass it on. Because it's clear, it's not for us. I'm going to pick on some people I don't mean to.

But I've heard some things that are so contrary to what my experience is. I know I'm going to pick on some people. So I'll apologize in advance, but I much don't give a damn. What's the truth? Well, let's see here. I have a second edition big book. What I'm seeing, most of the earth, third editions, there's not many changes. There's a radical change between the first edition and the second edition. Radical change, major change.

In all first edition big books, the doctor's opinion was page one. Now it's been isolated into a separate section. I don't know why. I've tried to find out why for 15 years. There is no smoking gun. Nobody knows why. I've gotten six different reasons. None of them are true. Nobody knows why. I went to the archives and asked Frank Mauser. He said he'd been looking for it too. There's no smoking gun. Nobody knows why. It doesn't matter why.

What concerns me is that we began to notice some people who were drinking again. And they would say they didn't understand why because they'd done everything that the first 164 pages said to do. And we'll hear what they were saying. They're leaving out the doctor's opinion. If you tell anybody the answer is in the first 164 pages, you're leaving out the doctor's opinion. And that may sound petty. But a new person will do exactly what we tell them to do.

And most new people, they look preface. Well, I don't need debt. Ford, I don't need debt. This is just some guy's opinion here it is. I've got one of those minds, I know. So, I am currently one of numerous members of Alcoholics Anonymous who are saying, since we are now considering the possibility of the fourth edition of the book, this might be a good time just to restore our book to its original condition. It won't happen this time, but we might talk about it some more.

In the meantime, we're going to start at the beginning of the book. Without the doctor's opinion, I wouldn't be

here. It defined what was wrong with me when I didn't know. I will skip the preface. We can't read the whole thing. I'm going to kind of jump around here and give you how I use this book and what my experience with it has been. Let's go to the forward of the first edition. It says this is how it appeared in the first printing of the first edition in 39.

That's not exactly true. The words are all the same. The words are italicized. In the first editions, it was big, bold, black print, heavy print. It changes the emphasis a little bit. The way we work, is that above moving up there? Come on in. We've been talking about you. To address some things I heard, you can study this to your blind. The way you approach the program will determine the outcomes, unfortunately. And this is my approach.

Thank God they got this to me real quick. We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than a hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. I'm no longer in recovery. I haven't been in recovery for years. I am a recovered alcoholic. There's a period of time in any disease when you must be in recovery. But you can't stay in recovery forever. You eventually are as recovered as you're going to get.

And now it's time to get on about to business with them. Without that promise I wouldn't be here. If you offered me a way to cope with my problem, I left you. Because my cope were broke years ago. To cope means to fight, to good fight. And I am plumbed out of fight. I don't need to cope with this. Being in recovery is a very difficult time. Everything still hurts for one thing. And there's days I suffer from certain kinds of chronic pain.

I can tell you there are days when there's just let me out of here. I don't want any more recovery. Just let me out of here. And it's that way with alcoholism particularly. This is just too hard for me. Well, you can recover from this disease. And to show others precisely how we're recovered is the main purpose of this book. I died because I had become useless. I am now given a reason for living. To show others precisely how I recover.

So my recovery isn't for me. It's for you. As long as I can show others how I did this. Precisely, I don't have to be smart. I don't have to have a lot of knowledge. I don't have to be hip slick and cool. All I have to do is tell you, oh, this is what I was like. And this is what happened when I did this. And this is what I'm like now. And it's all I have to do. And then pass you on to the next guy so we can do the same thing.

My friend, a real husband whom I loved early. He's one of the guys 50 some odd plus years sober that I hang out with. When we get talking about sponsorship, this book doesn't tell you a single time how to find a sponsor. It teaches you how to be one. Now, I'm a contrary person. I think there is one place where it tells you how to find a sponsor. Y'all got to disagree with your old. This is it. To show others precisely how we recovered is the main purpose of this book or anybody who's a member of A.

So if I'm going to pick a sponsor, I want to pick somebody who can show me precisely how they're recovered. First of all, I want them to be recovered. And how will I know they are recovered? They don't suffer from the symptoms of alcoholism. And what are the symptoms of alcoholism? Well, we're going to get to them. It's defined and described precisely here. Knox Elcore talks about an allergy of the body. If I add an allergy to tomatoes and ate tomatoes, I'd break out with an itch.

My allergy is alcohol. If I take alcohol into my system, I'd break out with an itch for another drink alcohol.

That's a symptom. Go so far as to say it only happens to certain kinds of people. They're called alcoholics. Never happens. Never happens. To the average temperate drinker or any other kind of drinker. Only the alcoholics. That's a symptom. I sponsored a psychiatrist one time. God, he was funny. He was the founding psychiatrist of one of the finest alcohol and drug treatment programs in the world, the University of Colorado.

Just couldn't stay sober himself. And we're reading the doctor's opinion because that's what I do. I have no illusions that I know anything. So we're going to read this thing just in case you can get it. And I'm watching the information go in his head and get lost among all the stuff he knows. And we're getting into the yeah, butts. And I love working with new people because they help me pray effectively. Oh God, what am I going to say to this one?

How can I make this any simpler than what's right here? Sometimes I'm cold upon to make it simpler than what's right here. But thank God my sponsors did that for me. They read what this said and they said for you that means. So I'm praying because I know I'm going to lose him and it came. I said, Don, what happens to you after the first drink? He said, well, around the fourth or fifth or sixth drink. Forget where I'm supposed to go next tonight.

Keep drinking and I end up getting drunk. I said, well, Don, what happens to you after the first drink? Oh, around the fifth or sixth drink. Well, what happens to me after the first drink is the second drink. That's all I need to know. If that happens to you, don't give up your seat. It only happens to alcoholics. It happens to all alcoholics. And it doesn't mean that I'm going to have the second drink ten minutes from now.

It may be at the end of the week. But I will have another drink and another and another and I will end up drinking. Isn't that easy? That's the doctor's opinion. At least that's section of it. So there's one of the symptoms. If when I take a drink, I'm unable to predict how many I'm going to have. I have a symptom. One of the other symptoms is a mind that can't seem to remember that. Regular minds have something happen to them.

They don't do that again. They say, oh, this causes this. Psychotic minds say, I want to try that once more just to be sure. And then what happens is they say, yep, I'm sure. We'll go do something else. The alcoholic mind says, no, that didn't would cause it. This is what caused it. Two, three steps down the line from that first drink. This would cause trouble. I have an awful lot of high drama in my life because I'm the kind of person that just loves high drama.

I have since I was little. So my alcoholic story is filled with drama. My recovery story is filled with drama. I just love drama. I'm an actor. That does not define alcoholism. Non-alcoholics wreck cars when they're drunk. Non-alcoholics do all the behaviors that alcoholics do when they're drinking. But they're not alcoholic because they can start or stop when they want. They can moderate when they want. I can't do that.

The big book discusses three kinds of drinkers. The moderate drinker who can stop when they feel like it. A certain kind of hard drinker who looks like me and his behaviors, but given a sufficient reason to quit, he can. He can stop or moderate. I have an uncle like that, Uncle Walt. Twenty-five years or so going, Uncle Walt really drank. He and that roof were drinkers. His doctor said, Walter, if you don't stop, you're going to die.

Well, he quit. He didn't have what it took to be an alcoholic. Couldn't make it. You got to really be tough to

get into this game. You got to be lonely sleeping gutters and those families and jobs and hurt people and sleeping gutters. Oh, you got to be tough. You got to be able to puke and like it. Oh, yeah. The day comes, if you like me, when I'm drinking and I've had so much, I'm about to go into a coma, but I'm not through drinking.

So I'll stick my finger down my throat, get rid of that, now we can go back and drink some more. That's not normal. I'm sorry. These are little identifiers. I've got a mind that just can't wrap itself around. I began to come into the truth. Now, when I got here, I was pretty much a clean slate. A lot of horror behind me, but I was a new person. I had the memories of a man who had died. Christmas night in 1967, I died.

I'm absolutely certain of it. I took a two month supply of amphetamines and shot them at Marham and drank everything in the house and I laid down and I died. That will kill you. I woke up in the morning, I didn't feel good. Not even close. Everything hurt. Particularly my soul, because I woke up. And I wasn't supposed to be here. And the police were at the door and that's how I knew I hadn't died. Whichever place you go, they don't need cops.

I'm still here. A failure at living and a failure at dying. Finally willing to do anything at all anybody said. And that's really all I brought here. If you brought that here with you today, you'll make it. If you're wanting to do anything this says. And this is the bullshit sifter. I listened to everything everybody says. And then if I can reconcile it with this, okay. If I can't, I'm either too dumb or it's bullshit.

So I don't mess with it. It's the greatest little gift I've been given. Because what it does is, while I'm trying to figure out what you said if it fits here, I'm getting the truth. Anyway, I ended up where you came and found me. I was certified at that time as a sociopath type 2, a psychopath, and a manic depressive drug addict. Because everybody was assessing me on my behavior. And if you watched me, that's what it looked like.

My alcoholism was hidden behind bizarre behavior. It's a distraction that we use quite a bit. Okay. When you're worried or in doubt, run in circles, scream and shout. Create a diversion. The old skin get here. You do that really good. I just didn't want to be that anymore and I wasn't. I think one of the messages I'm trying to get across today is that what you're looking for, you're looking with. You've already got it.

There's nothing to get. You've already got it. It's a matter of waking up and becoming conscious of what that really is. And so that's what my sponsors did for me. I couldn't identify with their drama. Now my first sponsor was a killer. He'd kill some people in a shootout in downtown Denver. I'm not that exciting. But I could identify with the way he felt and the way he thought. And particularly his inability to not drink.

They said they didn't think I was a psychopath or associate path. I was a good actor. Bill uses that analogy all through here, the actor. And it's an easy one for us to get ahold of because that's what we are. I can remember time and time again somebody would confront me with the truth. And before I'm through, there it felt. We're not going to discuss me. We're going to discuss you. Okay. You know what that one too? Yeah.

Move away. Now, there were some things that concerned me. Because I was in a place I had never really figured I'd be. I didn't know what I had in mind for my life. Bottom is the morning I wake up knowing what I had in mind for my life isn't going to happen. And so I pick up a new set of dreams and a new kid of tools and start off on a new path. I just simply finally ran out of paths. I was too tired. I couldn't get up anymore.

But I had this fresh mind that was willing to do anything. I'm stuck in a body that won't die. Carrying with her mind that won't work made me really willing to listen to anybody. And I'm so glad that God intervened because the state, the federal government, and me had all agreed to send me to a different place where I'd get a different kind of treatment. See, there's no treatment for what's wrong with me. It says that right in here.

There is no treatment for what we just discussed. This allergy to alcohol. I still got it. It's there. If I take a drink today, it will be as if I had never stopped. And I'm believing that because I'm watching people with 25 and 30 years of sobriety drink. They're not getting back. They're dying within weeks as if they had never stopped. They're not starting when they left off. People with 15 and 20 years are having difficulty getting back.

The magic's gone. Well, there's no magic here. That's why it's gone. There's miracles here. Not magic. Magic is illusion. Magic is trickery. I'm a good actor and a fine magician. I can turn my wrong doings into your fault. With a little fufu dust. Throughout most of my life, I would have these same periods where I'd wonder, what the hell's wrong with you? Yeah. Because when I'm in my right mind, I'm a really decent human being.

I'm a family man. I love to work. I want to accomplish things. I'm kind and gentle to people. I'm a good human being when I'm sober. So what the hell's wrong with me? That I would go do this. This being anything contrary to that. I've never got an answer. Well, I've got thousands of answers. Everybody has an answer to that one. Don't go out there on the street and ask people what's wrong with you. They'll tell you. And we don't have any answers here either, by the way.

Tom will solve them and be clear with that. We don't have any answers here. If you want an answer, go on the street and ask anybody and they'll give you the answers. What we have here is a solution. And if you'll immerse yourself entirely in this solution, you'll come up with your own answers. So I'm wondering about this. What caused this? I'm in my third penitentiary now. And this really isn't what I had in mind. And it's not what my family had in mind.

This is not what we wanted to have where Don should be at 34. Where I wanted to be was home with my kids. And my kids were now in a foster home with the sergeant of the Denver Sheriff's office. Not only do I get arrested, the poor babies get arrested. What's wrong with me? Because this is the third time it's happened. So I've gone past psychotic. I tested it now. Now I'm really into it. And I'm doing the numbers. Okay.

Let your mind go. I did three months in my first penitentiary. Six months in my second. Now this is an 18 month deal. This next number is going to be a hummer. It's the mathworks, right? And that's what will happen. It's clear to me. Whatever's wrong with me, this is the path I will end up taking. But what put me in the first one? Because I didn't commit a criminal act. I didn't become a criminal until later. I made that as a conscious choice, by the way.

I work in corrections. Most of us chose that way of life. Based on self. It's a conscious decision. It's this at the end of a long resentment. I hate it. This is what I use in my half ass, right? Now in the doctor's opinion, Bill writes some things too. They're critically important to the approach to this book. On Roman numeral page 24, Bill's talking about Dr. Silkworth's statements. He said that in the second statement, he confirms what we have suffered alcoholic torture must believe that the body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind.

In our belief, any picture of the alcoholic, which leaves out this physical factor, is incomplete. That means this is going to be incomplete also. Any picture of the alcoholic that leaves out the physical factor is going to be incomplete. Y'all go to a lot of meetings. When was the last time the doctor's opinion was discussed at a meeting? I keep looking for it. So for 15 years, I don't care what the topic is. We're going to talk about that first.

Because I don't hear it. And yet Bill's telling us without it, the whole deal's incomplete. Maybe that's why some people are hanging around here and drinking again and not getting this. Our friend Jerome, God Jerome was a joy. He had one of those intellects that they couldn't measure. And he had a really hard time getting sober. Smart people just have a tough time here. Eager deflation of death helps. The dumber you can get to better chance you have a living.

The absolute mark of real sanity is, I don't know. Jerome finally got it. He had to lose absolutely everything. I was his confidante. As something else was removed from his life, he'd call me and tell me about it. The bastards of the ballbacks got me again. And he was down to, he had a little room and he had a collection of Sherlock Holmes and a cat. And that's all he had left. And he called me one day and he says, they already got me today.

Somebody took me to lunch at a Chinese restaurant. Everybody got these wonderful fortune cookies. Mine was blank. I was Jerome. And about a week after that he says, it's over. I just finished the books. Nothing left to read. And a cat died this morning of leukemia. Couldn't even be distemperate. It had to go dramatic for Jerome. Ah, yeah. Well, I hope not. Jerome began to get it. He went through the steps. Denver's a big book town.

We just take everybody through the steps. He woke up. They came the director of the Parkside Treatment Center for a while. Was ready doing well. Met a lovely lady. Very cultured lady. Very bright lady. And they established a home. He began to write. He found he had a talent for sharing our message with real people. The church of divine science put him on the road sometimes. Getting talks to folks. And he wrote some books about it.

He was really there. Twelve years sober. Tom and a couple of the other guys found him in a motel on his Colfax drunk. And they loved him enough that they went and bought whiskey. On the site where they want me to drink himself into a coma. Because they understood this. Stopped alcoholic half way through. They're going to finish. That's why detox didn't do much good. Three to five days this thing may still be, this allergy may still be kicking.

Anyway, they let him drink himself into a coma and then they rest in the hospital. We talked to Jerome afterwards. I'm really interested in why people who have been sober for a while drink again. Particularly when they're doing the deal. And he said that it was because he never really believed what Doc Silkworth said. Never really believed me. And he had this lovely wife culture that drank wine with meals. She never got involved, which is not the problem.

But she kept asking him, you've been sober long enough. Why can't you have just a glass of wine? And he said for several years, I can't. And then one day he said, you know you're right. And he did. And he ended up in a motel. He said he never really believed this. This picture was left out and sure nothing was incomplete. When the time came, he had a way he could drink. Jerome died last year in the Denver City Jail, drunk.

Never got sober again. Tried and tried and tried, couldn't make it. Just couldn't make it. I have the same disease he has. It behooves me to believe every blessed word in here. Okay. Because these people are me and they didn't drink again ever. And that's all I want. So I believe this. And then in applying that to me, I'm wondering what put me in that penitentiary when I was 19 years old. What did that? Doc Silkworth explains it.

Over on page 27 from a normal page 27. That's X-X-B-I-I for those of you who didn't get that experience. Wouldn't it be easier if this is just page four? That's what it was in the big book when it first came out. Down on the bottom, I do not hold with those who believe that alcoholism is entirely a problem of mental control. I've had many men who had, for example, worked a period of months on some problem or business deal, which would be settled favorably to them on a certain date.

I took a drink of theirs so prior to the date. And then the phenomenon of craving, it once became paramount to all other interests. So the important appointment was not better. These men were not drinking to escape. They were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control. Then it went click. I was in the Navy and I absolutely loved the Navy. I was going to be a hero and come home, a hero. You know, I loved it.

There's still no experience quite like being on the high seas at night and watching the ocean turn and it fluoresces and it breathes. Oh, man. And I was a radar man at the time. Very exciting. We were hanging out in the whorehouses and the bars in the Orient. You know, good for any 18, 19-year-old life of a sweet cuspid Jew. Two man things. I just loved it. And just before we went to Korea for the young teen at the time, they gave us a 24-hour liberty and I want to shore.

I had a drinking long beach. And 23 days later, when I got back to the ship, it was gone. That's what put me in the penitentiary, messing the ship, moving it to a war zone. High crime. At that time. But what really happened, for the first time in my life, because God had already entered into me working actively, I saw what happened. I had a drink in Long Beach and this happened and I had a second drink in Long Beach.

And then I moved up coast and I ended up in Pershing Square in Los Angeles after 22 days of mooching drinks and doing things that are completely contrary to my character, to who I am, in order to continue drinking. And on day 23, the madness left me. On day 22, I couldn't go back. You had to take me in chains because I needed a drink. On day 23, I turned myself in, went back to face the consequences like any sane human being.

Now that was not enough information, but there's the foundation in my entire recovery. At every cell in my body, I know that's what will happen to me, because from that point all of the memories linked up with that. I've got a new mind. It puts things together the way it ought to be. If I take a drink anywhere, I will take another drink anywhere. I nearly died on my first drunk from alcohol poisoning, because I drank too much.

Too much bonded bourbon. At that time, my keen alcoholic mind said that bonded bourbon makes you sick, so I haven't any bonded bourbon since. I won't drink that shit. I'm sure if that's all I could get, I would, but there's too much other stuff. And I learned how to drink other stuff that wouldn't make me sick. And how to mix this chemical on that, to enhance that. I loved speed when I first discovered it. I made it possible for me to drink again.

I was 19 and drinking wasn't working. I was continually getting drunk. He talks about men and women drink

for the effect produced by alcohol. Early on, I have some memories to go with that. And I suggest when I sponsor you bring your own memories to this. Early on, if we were going to go fight, I learned to drink vodka. Because when I drink vodka, I get me. And if you're going to fight, you ought to have a little mean edge to you.

I still got my ass kicked. But I was mean. If we were going to go to a party and there might be some girls there, I'd drink dark Bacardi rum. Because it makes me sensitive and warm. And with coolers, beer, and fern husky, I can cry. With Moghad David Wine, I was a poet. You're in a painter. And eventually it just got me drunk. But I began to cry. Well, yeah. Because I take too much. I can't stop. The great frustration of most alcoholics that I've talked to is that that first time I caught that edge and chased it forever.

Because never again was just quite that one. And I'm convinced today that's because the first time was what Carl Jung describes as a spiritual experience. And it can't happen again when you steal it. You don't get to keep it and you can't reproduce it. It brings about a sense of ease and comfort. And a sense of place. But when I need a drink, I'm out of place. I'm either talking about the old days when things are right, or planning the new days when things are going to be all right.

I'm not here. I'm out of place. When I'm sound or if I take a drink, I suddenly end up in place right here right now. The problem is my body says, well, that's good. Let's have some more when I'm out of place again. In fact, I'm out of my mind again. That's what happens when I drink. I had to identify all that with drinking. Because I hid behind psychopaths, sociopaths, and I didn't get pressy and don't get it. Many people press him as a game for me.

Love it. You're getting too close and I'm busy in here trying to figure out who the hell's running this thing today. You want to visit. I got no time for that. I learned early, throw a couple mood swings, and I'll drive you back. You got to get good at it. If you do it too much, they lock you up. If you don't do it just right, you invite you to parties to be the entertainment. OK. These men were not drinking to escape.

They were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control. I can give you a hundred easy reasons why I drink. All of them are true. The truth is I drink for no reason at all. They're no calling. At the time I took the first drink, I am doomed to drink. There's no treatment for it either by the way. That's what he says. Doc Silkworth goes on to describe different types of alcoholics because we have different personality types.

And then he makes a really powerful statement for me. All these and many others have one symptom in common. Just one. They cannot start drinking without developing a phenomenon. Great. Whatever the personality type, if I can get it down to here, you and I can work together. You don't have to be me and I don't have to be you. It doesn't have to be doctor, lawyer. None of that separating stuff. It's alcoholic to alcoholic.

If when you start to drink, you develop a craving for more drink, we can work together. That's our one common. So when I hear people say that's typically alcoholic, I'm sorry, I don't buy that. There's only one thing that's typically alcoholic. We have a lot of similarities. We also lie, cheat, steal, but so do a lot of other people. I was not a violent drunk, except twice. I tried to kill some people. Well, they had it coming.

But in the main, that's not part of my personality. I don't do violence as well. I do screaming really good. And I do cold-hearted, passionless killer better than anything. It's one of the things that used to terrify me. Because I

would go from okay to this kind of killer rage. I didn't say anything. I didn't move. I just stood there and looked at you. And what was in me was death. And he used to fright me. Because if I ever lost control of that, I knew I'd kill somebody.

That's still where I let God contain it. Because that's an instinct that was given to me back when my ancestors crawled out of the youths. If you threaten me, I will kill you. That's what the genes say. If you threaten my family, we don't even have to talk about it. You're in real trouble. If the bear comes out. That's frightening to know that a peaceful, gentle man like myself has a buried in a grizzly, mean son of a bitch.

Leave it in God's hands. It's okay. You may not have that. So that's not typically alcoholing. That's genetic. If I take a drink of alcohol, I will have another drink of alcohol. Does that happen to you? If it does, we can get along fine. We have something in common. So my job in 12-stepping is to help you find out, first of all, does this happen to you? So we have common ground. Because alcoholism is a lonely disease.

I truly believe when I'm caught up in it that nobody understands nobody. And the reason I believe that is because I've been listening to you. I drank and something happens to me. And when it's all over, you say to me, why did you do that? And early on I would tell you the truth. I don't know. And you would say, but you must know. You did it. So pretty soon I understand. You don't understand. My dad, God bless him, only came to 1A meeting.

I was a 15-minute speaker early on at our state convention. And he was there. When it was over, he said I had no idea that that's how you felt growing up. Of course he didn't. You think I'm going to tell people how I really feel? She, no chance. It's too scary in here. Everybody's talking about butterflies and flowers. That's not what's going on in my head. I heard one time that you don't even have to have done it. All you have to do is have thought about it.

You're already in trouble with God. That was a bad day. Because that's what I was thinking about most of the time. Or another guy say that you are what you think about. I don't believe that. If that was true by the time I was 16, I'd be the good hamburger or a girl. This phenomenon, if we have suggested, may be the manifestation of an allergy. It's differentiates these people and sets them apart as a distinct entity.

My God, that was good news. I have always felt different alienated from my family. I'm the only alcoholic in my family. I didn't fit. Alienated and set apart. And Bruce said to me, lovingly, the reason you feel different is that you are different. And this is how I'm different. And thank God you're different the same way. But we're different. My mother loves peppermint schnapps. She really does. And I like to watch her on the day.

Because it comes up. And she gets the schnapps down. She's got this tall glass and pours this stuff in there. I like altoids for peppermint. But she likes the schnapps. And she'll take it and go. Which is a very disgusting sound. She likes the wood that tastes and the oily. Doesn't just, it's kind of like fingernails on it. And then she'll sip some more. God, she just, I'm with her. And then she'll say, that's enough.

I'm starting to feel it. There's a difference. So I don't fit here. There's something weird about me. You pick it up as a kid. I'm different. Because at the time of my first drink, if schnapps is all there is, I'll drink it. Screw the taste. I really am not interested in the taste at that point. I need an effect, an immediate. Okay, now I'll sip with

you. But we're going to sip faster than you want to. Because I need more.

And pretty soon you're going to bore me with the schnapps. I've got to get to something that's going to do the job here. This is too slow. It isn't. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I'm different. I don't fit. Of course not. I fit here. Every time I talk about that, I watch your head. Yeah. Yeah, you understand. Isn't that nice? And that's what I'm to bring to the new people. My whole job is to help you understand that I understand if you're new.

So that you can have some kind of hope. Because at this point in time there's no hope left. How many of you have tried other things? Psychiatry, psychology, church, good books. Bad books. Yeah. Nothing had any sustained power. I found power in every one of them for a while. But no sustained power. But I found something here that has sustained power. It's been going on for 31 straight years. It ain't bad. And it's not because I do this right by the way.

There's no way to do this right. And there's no way to do this wrong either. It's just the best way. Set some apart as a distinct entity. So I'm different. Okay. I can quit pretending that I can think like my brother because I can't. Never going to be able to. Don't even want to. I love my brother dearly but I watch him at work. He works. I'm far too lazy to put in the kind of effort he puts in to write a symphony. I'm a musician too.

But if I can't do it first crack out with a half hour a week of practice, I'm going to move to a different instrument. He stays with it until he masters it and then he goes to another one. My wife is so sane. She knows I love music and would like to play. I play trumpet and trombone and harmonica. Just enough to irritate everybody. And she knew that we were down south. This is some south. We were way south. And heard somebody playing the dulcimer.

I watched Tom Colter play Scotland the Brave on 120 straight Dulsomer. And it moved me so much I said I am going to do that before I die. And it really got me. My wife knows there's no way in hell I'm ever going to practice long enough to master a 120 string instrument. I'm just not going to do it. So she got me a little four string mountain Dulsomer. And now I can play Scotland the Brave so I can die any day now. It's okay.

Our insanity is characterized by lack of proportion in the ability to think straight. I watched him do it. I know it's in me. I can do it. I just get me a Dulsomer. Okay. Which is bullshit. But that's where I live. I'm seven. I can drive a car. I've been watching. I know I can do that. I can fly. It's not familiar. It has never been by any treatment with which we are familiar. The entire permanent way eradicated. The only relief we have to offer is entire abstinence.

Good. That's the solution to the physical problem of alcoholism. Don't drink. And that's all. All the stuff that happens afterwards like the second drink and the third drink and all that bizarre stuff won't happen if you don't take the person. There's no treatment for it. There's nothing I can take. No exercise. No books. No pills. No diet. There's nothing in the world I can do. No can science. We can put them out on the moon and bring them back.

We haven't figured out how to keep this thing from kicking in. We've talked about it being enzymes and THQ and all kinds of really interesting stuff. I'm in the business. I've had the study all that. I find it fascinating. I don't use any of it. It's crap. Because it doesn't stop this. The only thing that will stop this is don't drink. Which brings us to the second real problem. The real problem of the alcoholic centers in the mind.

If my mother drank her schnapps and got passed to falling on the floor, she would stop. I guarantee you. She'd never do that again. But she's never gone that far. Hell, I don't care if I fall down. In fact, I'm an actor. We will do a little drama, so you'll be entertained by the fall. Somewhere along the way, you'll become responsible for it. Oh, I've got you again. Damn. Oh, yeah. Isn't that wonderful what can come out of this?

What I'm doing is letting... I was told by the big book that I'm a set aside, prejudiced and asked myself what the spiritual terms mean to me. And I've taken that to heart. I asked myself, what does that mean to me? And I'm encouraging you to do the same thing. I'm telling you these little vignettes in the hope that maybe it'll stimulate a memory for you. And it has for some of you. Yeah, that's me. That's me. Isn't that weird?

Yeah, that's weird. Yeah. You mean I'm crazy too? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. How long a break would you like? I can feel the smokers hating me. I will be in this chair ready to start in 15 minutes.