

Big Book Workshop

1999 | Part 6 | Reading edition

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Transcript

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and thank Will before taking this step. Down North Carolina, I got the opportunity to sponsor a warden down there. That was fun. He was so cute. He called me into his office and asked me to sponsor him. I said, well, yeah, I can't do that one. I've waited for years to get my hands on one of you guys. I don't even can't. So I better check with Tom about it. I said, well, I don't know if I checked at the time. I think it's a good idea. Had some wonderful times with him. When we finally got to here, he said, I am truly ready to take the third step. And I said, good, go home. Think about it. Come back and tell me tomorrow. And he called me the next day. He said, I've been thinking about it. I'm really not sure I can do it. So I got this prison to run. If I don't tell Pete to pull the stumps and move on, I can't do it.

They don't get moved. And if I don't stay on the cook, you know, he's saying, God don't know how to run a prison. I got to take charge of this. And we worked our way through that. His great fear was the same one I had. If I do this, I'll become a snowflake. That's the way he put it. Become a snowflake. And he had this view that as a warden of this prison, he had to be man. He calls me now, and he says, this is a snowflake. Remarkable things happen. Tipped this step and pursued the rest of it. Made his amends, began working with people, and resigned this warden of a prison. He became an auctioneer. And he's loving his life. He resigned just about the same time he retired, so it wasn't a big deal. But he understood. He didn't belong there anymore. And that mirror may not happen to you.

He knows. I love my snowflake. He's a piece of work. When we got to resemblance, he didn't have any. He hated a lot of people. We had to redefine what resentment was before we could even do it. Got through with that, and he didn't have any fears. He was a fearless human being. We had to redefine what fear was so we could get a handle on it. Oh, yeah. Of course, he didn't have any fear. He was terrified most of the time. He didn't have any time for fear.

We think of the step or the prayer. I have difficulty these days because there are no numbers on the steps for me. Only when we're doing them this way. This is a whole process here. If you look at the seven step prayer, it's the same prayer with teeth in it, essentially. What happens in between is me clearing away the things that are blocking. Let's see what the purpose is. First plan, no wait. You all want to say the third step together? It's a nice experience. Oh, we've had some fun with this. It used to be. I let everybody take all the time they needed to come with this conclusion. This same Los Angeles bunch up in Santa Barbara. They were my training ground. We've gone over all the stuff we've gone. It took us to a late Saturday to get here, starting on Friday night.

We spent nearly two hours debating whether we should do this or not. This is from people who came to the monastery just to do this. Beautiful alcoholic bunch. We finally got to debate down. Everybody got underneath. We said the third step prayer. We got up and two people said that didn't count because I didn't mean it. So I gave everybody a break. I came back and just said I'm going on the garden to see the third step prayer.

Everybody wants to come and come with me and they all came. It was nothing but aren't we funny? I'm not going to ask you if you want to do it more than once. I'm going to say the third step prayer so we can go on. I

don't believe God cares how we meet him as long as we do. We can sit, we can stand with the kneel with the whole hands. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter to you. One time we did this and the fellow says I really don't want to join with the group. It's a very private thing for me. And that's perfect. It doesn't diminish the thing. God.

The next one launched out on the course is vigorous action. The first step of which is a personal house plate, which many of us have never attempted. The organization was a vital and crucial step that could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face and to be rid of the things in ourselves which have been blocking us. That promise made it possible for me to face the past. There's no way I could have faced some of the things I had done, had it not been for the promise, face and be rid of. That's the freedom.

So it's not about me finding out who I am. It's about me finding out who I'm not. And we'll get rid of that. Whoever I am will simply show up. It becomes a discovery process. I couldn't have faced what I did with the children. Putting them in jeopardy like that, yelling at them, running around the country. I never beat my children. They weren't constant jeopardy. How you face that unless you know you're going to get a position where you couldn't ever do that again.

Our liquor was but a symptom. We had to get down to causes and conditions. We're walking away from alcohol. Make no mistake. Alcoholics and animals are still about alcoholics and drinking alcohol. But eventually we have to understand that alcohol is just a symptom of the real problem. My real problem is my sense of separation from God. That's the real problem. Thinking I'm unique, thinking I'm different, thinking I'm separate.

That's my problem. Lack of power. So we start on the inventory. I find three different formats for inventory in here. I'm going to just briefly run over them just because you asked me to. The first one talks about resentment. First of all, I have to be convinced that self manifested in various ways is what's caused my failure. You didn't cause my failure. Self manifested in various ways is what's caused my failure. So we consider self's common manifestations and resentment is the number one offender that kills more alcoholics than anything else.

From its dem all forms of spiritual disease. Bingo, I got it. Resentment is not an emotional problem. Nor is it a mental problem. Resentment is a spiritual sickness. It's the granddaddy of all of them. That's what it says. From resentments dem all forms of spiritual disease. We now have been mentally and physically ill. We have been spiritually sick. I didn't know you could get sick spiritually. I thought of your spiritual. You were fine. You can get rid of sick spiritually.

Remember old Gert Bahannanjo? She was 62 years old when she got sober. It was over six years before she came to a wonderful old lady. A very spiritual old woman. She was in her age and she told us one time, kids, things spiritually and so much different. She said, when I was sick, I used to look down on people. Now that I'm spiritual, I look down on people who look down on people. Because we were going for perfection at the time. She wouldn't let us know, lighten up.

When the spiritual model is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. What a relief that is for me. I don't have to go to a psychiatrist. I don't have to take medication. I just have to bear up under it until I get clear to this and then I'll straighten out mentally and physically. That's the promise. And the promise has been kept. I straighten out mentally and physically. I'm getting old. Some of the parts don't work quite right anymore.

In our days when goofy is just a lifestyle.

But I'm no longer mentally or physically ill. They're spiritually sick. Now why? We've been asked to ask ourselves what these spiritual terms mean to us. So I'll tell you what that means to me. It's going to be important. But I understand that the reason that resentment is a spiritual disease is that it separates me from you. First of all, anything that separates me from the children of God separates me from God. And the only thing that separates me is my resentment or fear to you.

Secondly, if I resent you, you own me. You don't even have to be in the same place. You own me. Running my thinking. If I'd have said this, he'd have said that. I'd have done this. He'd have done that. And I'm stirred up and my life is a mess. And you're not even here. You may even be dead. And I am sick to death of being owned by the kind of people who piss me off. So in dealing with resentments, we set them on paper.

And when I work with people, I just use the checklist. And we've done that yet and all. How do we do that? And there's a format here. And I don't want to spend a whole lot of time going over it because it's here. And the writing of the inventory, as far as I'm concerned, is nowhere near as important. There's a section between what I call the third and the fourth column. There's three columns here, who I'm mad at, why I'm mad at them, and what aspect itself is being hurt and threatened.

That's easy to get a whole lot of. But I have to eventually get down to where I search myself and ask myself, where have I been at fault here. I won't be able to answer that until I go through this. And I am going to spend some time here on page 66. We're promised a new mind. Here's what it looks like. And here's what it thinks like. This is the change, the first of the changes. When we finish the inventory and we take a look at it and realize that the life that contains deep resentment leads to only fertility and unhappiness.

To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours that may have been worthwhile. And I love the word squander. That's a deliberate conscious waste of a resource. Knowing full well I'm wasting it, throwing it away anyway, squandering it. For the alcoholic who so fears the maintenance and growth of the spiritual experience, this business agreement put in its infinitely grave. We found it was fatal for when harboring such feelings, we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the spirit.

The insanity of alcohol returns when we drink again for us to drink us a bite. If we are to live we have to be free of anger. It's a whole new thought. Didn't say I'm not going to get angry, but I must get free of it. I cannot harbor it. I cannot nurse it. I cannot let it fester. When they first sent me into therapy when I was 19, I was really pissed off young fella. I was just beginning to learn how to make resentment pay.

And the technique they used was they put up, I was mad at my dad. They had a punching bag and they had me picture his face on the punching bag and then whip on it so I could express the anger. Didn't work for me. Got me really involved in the anger. I loved it. Didn't diminish the thing. So those things won't work for me. I have to be free of the anger. It's a whole new thought. People talk about justifiable anger. Okay, in fact it will still kill me just if I do not.

I've got to be free of it. Grouch the brain storm are not for us. You've taken away all my toys if you do that. Grouch the brain storm, that's what I do in my spare time. I've watched guys walking down the street these days

holding conversations with people I can't see. And I know what they're doing because I used to do that. They're talking to that son of a bitch. I think they hope they never find, but they're talking to him anyway.

And they went every argument. Hell I used to do that. The grouch in the brain storm. Brain storm flashes the light. Brilliant ideas. I'll get him. They are not for me. Because I love them. To this day one of the most comfortable emotional cloaks I can put on is righteous anger. It just feels good. A while back we were doing a step run with a bunch of people and I came on one of those and I waited two weeks before I rode on it because I knew it would go away if I did.

It was just so warm and nice. Didn't express it. Didn't go after any allies. I just nursed it till we thought they'd kill me when I finally got rid of it. And of course they're petty. The grouch in the brain storm are not for us. Those are ideas that I have to get a hold of now. Because when those things come up I cannot nurse them. I need to know down in my heart. Not for me. I got to get free of this. It's really not fair you know.

The rest of the world gets to get pissed and stay that way. I don't know. Even when I'm right I don't get to say that to the person that was wrong. They may be the dubious luxury of normal men but for alcoholics these things are poison. I accept that. That's part of the new thought process we're going to enter into here. Now we turn back to the list for a hell of a key to the future. We're prepared to look at it from an entirely different angle.

My second edition says we're prepared to look for it from an entirely different angle. Because it was a printer's error. But in the Denver Young People's Group years ago we probably spent three weeks of meetings wasting time on which it was for it. Coniferst edition found out it was it and then spent three more weeks deciding that they both mean the same thing in this context. But you know, kept us off the street. We began to see that the world once people really dominated us.

If I resent you, you own me. In that state, the wrongdoing of others fancied a real. I had the power to actually kill. When I asked Bruce, how do I tell the difference between fancied and real, Bruce? He said, if you're involved in it, it's fancied. Where's that up? We discussed that earlier. That's true. If I'm emotionally involved in it, it's fancied. It's not what really happened. It's my reaction to what really happened.

And I'd rather believe that than die. How could we escape? We saw these resemblance must be mastered. We couldn't wish them away anymore and we could alcohol. This is our course. It doesn't say it quickly writes some more. This is our course. We realized the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. I'm to ask myself what that means. And he's got a kicker in there. I don't get to say, that's a sick son of a bitch.

I get to say, perhaps they're spiritually sick. Now what does that mean to me? When I'm spiritually sick, I'm cut off from my spiritual source. And when I feel cut off from my source, I behave badly. Maybe, just maybe, you're behaving badly too because you're cut off from your source. It's just a change in my viewpoint for you. It doesn't make you right. It doesn't make you anybody wrong. It just means I'm going to look at it a little differently.

Maybe there's a reason you're acting the way it is and it has nothing to do with me. I tend to take personal attacks personally and they're not always personal. But we did not like their symptoms in the way they disturbed us. They, like ourselves, were sick too. So our answer is we asked God to help us show them the same tolerance

of pity and patience when we were cheerfully granted a sick friend. At that time, it was really hard on me because I did not grant sick people, patients pity and tolerance. They scared me.

I had to have a script for everything. And the only script for visiting with sick people is, is there anything I can do for you? I did not want to ask that question. With sick people, there's only a few things you can do for them. Sit with me for a while and read to me. Hell, I'm busy. I've got things to do. I couldn't do it. So I'm giving it out. When a person offended me, we said to ourselves, this is a sick man, how can I be helpful to him?

God saved me from being angry. By what we've done. God saved me from being angry. So here we're in the middle of a prayer and here's a couple more prayers. Isn't that nice? We avoid retaliation and argument. And that usually doesn't mean not here for me. I don't do much arguing. I never am. I just walk off screw you. Well, if I stay, I get beat up. But I have to avoid as a retaliation and argument that goes on here. I must avoid that.

This one will kill me. We wouldn't treat sick people that way. If we do, we destroy our chance of being helpful. We cannot be helpful to all people. But at least God will show us how to take a kind of intolerant view toward each and every one. And I figured now I've got him. I'm sitting in a cell. At this point, he said to God, okay, here's one for you. Show me how to take a kind of intolerant view toward Adolf Hitler.

My smug little alcoholic mind set and waited. And it wasn't all that long that I was thinking about Volkswagen's. Well, it was his car. He stole it from Porsche, but he gave it to the people. It may have been the only decent thing the man ever did. That was unimportant. It was important that I had asked to be shown how to take a kind of intolerant view. And that prayer got answered. I was shown how. That's what's important.

So I began to have a different mind. I'm thinking a little bit differently. Today it's even more specific when I make that prayer. Dear God, I am so mean-spirited. That I can't seem to find a way to take a kind of intolerant view. Please show me how. I need to admit my own meanness. The longer I stay sober and living as a spiritual being, the fewer defenses I have against my own nasty meanness. Please show me how to do this.

I can't do it. It always does. There's a whole new way of thinking. Now I can go to these questions. Putting out of our minds the wrongs the others have done. And there's a new thing I'm hearing among people who disturbs me. They go into this fourth column looking for their part. That isn't what this says. If I'm only looking for my part, I assume you still have a part. And that isn't what this says. I'm going to put out of my mind entirely.

I think you may have done. I'm looking for where I was wrong, it says. Putting out of our minds the wrongs the others have done with resonant wheel for our own mistakes. I'm totally at fault here. Entirely. It's as if you had never happened what you did. It's an ancient spiritual principle that we're getting a chance to work with here. And I ask some real specific questions. Where was I selfish, dishonor self-seeking or frightened?

Or was I at fault? Trying to disregard the other person entirely it says. Or was I to blame? What was my mistake? Set me free. My first inventory was a lie because I didn't do it this way. I just made a list of important bad shit that I had done. I took it to my sponsor and he wouldn't look at it. He said it's garbage. He wrote it to impress me. Get away. So I went to somebody who would listen. I'd tell him one of the things I had done and he'd say well that wasn't that bad.

When I tell him something else I had done and he'd say well that wasn't that bad. And I woke up. And I had

once again picked somebody who'd tell me what I wanted to hear so I didn't have to change anything. Because some of it was that bad. And if I didn't stop immediately and it was immediate that I would die a very ugly death. I'm not afraid of death. A lot of things I don't want to die of but I'm not afraid of death itself.

But to die an ugly death means I'm going to have to live an ugly life for some period of time. I can't think about that. So I'm back and did it this way. It was a shabby little inventory. Hell I didn't have that much mine left. But I got this. Out of it comes the beginnings of my amends list if you will. Once I identify where I'm at fault then I know what I have to do to get square with you. 1966. It's hide on the time.

Huh? Yeah, you should buy a tie drum. 1966 my little boys and I have been on the road for a number of years and we finally got in just a little place. We're trying to put it back together and federal narcotics people came to my house. And they don't come gently. One came through the front door literally and one came through the back door literally and one came through the side window. They knocked me to the ground and handcuffed me and stood on my back and called me 16 kind of sons of bitches because that's the job.

My young son let out a shriek and his cops walking around with his pistol and almost shot my boy. The reaction. When I come after people like me they used to get a shot at it so they're really touchy. I end up in a federal penitentiary and the kids end up locked up in their own place. And I hate this guy. I nursed that resentment for a long long time. He was on my list and I did it this way. And what I discovered in essence is that I invited him into my house.

I was his job that day. I've been bringing marijuana into this country and not paying the tax on it. And then it pisses off. Well that's what the federal tax act is. The federal tax act. I had a dollar and an ounce of tax on this stuff. The other guy was mad at was the guy that hired me to do that job because he's the one who turned us all in to keep him going to penitentiary himself. He turned a father who was in. I wanted to find him either.

But in going through this process what I realized was I should be grateful to that cop. He almost shot my son. He didn't shoot my son. He was a thorough, competent professional. I had complete control of the situation and as a result did not hurt my boy. I hurt my boy by putting him in that situation. It was my fault. I still don't like their way of coming to the house. But then if you're tired of getting arrested quit going where the cops.

And the upshot of it was that if I ever encounter that officer I owe him an apology. For putting him in a position where he almost shot a five year old. And I stand ready if I ever meet him to try to get square with that. I don't think he even gives a damn. But I do. I put him in a bad spot. And you know what I can make him real true a man to any of those guys is that I don't smuggle dope anymore. So I'm no longer their business and they don't come to my house.

I don't have him for dinner either. I'm not really not interested in people who think like they think. But I'm really glad that they're out there. Now Albert who hired us for the job turning us in. Rich of me that I picked him. I can't be mad at Albert. I knew Albert was a snake when I said yes. That's kind of people hung out with. I just figured I was slicker and faster. And I thought everybody in a system would play fair.

I thought they had to catch you doing it. No they don't. They bring their own. I do. They had enough evidence to convict us. It wasn't Albert's fault. It was my fault. I put us in the position to do that. This began to

get me free. That's what I'm trying to tell you. Inventory my dad who I was angry with for some things he did. I got to realize that he'd done the very best he could have what he had. He had been passed on to him.

And there's no guidebook for raising children in the thirties and forties. He did the best he could. In fact he did better than I did. My dad was always there. I didn't like him but he was always there. We didn't move around a lot. He never went to prison and put me in the foster home. I couldn't say that for my kids. I must have passed that. Maybe I don't like nothing to get off his back. He'd done the very best he could have what he had.

It wasn't good enough in my mind. And then I realized, hey, I've been doing the very best I could too. And it wasn't good enough. Maybe I can find a better way. There's some freedom here. Okay, that's one format. Four columns. However you want to write it, it shows four columns here. We got experts here that will show you how well. You show them how. Watch Val. She's nuts. You got to do it just right. Wonderful thing happens here in the fair in Detroit.

It's a separate format. The way I was taught to do it. I've got samples here, but we're short on time too. What I'm afraid of, why I'm afraid of it, and we're self-reliance is failing me. Got a real short piece here. A clear, clean example of that. Old, timely stuff. Some people throw the stuff away. I think it's important that the people I'm working with see just exactly how I do it. And then they can decide what they want to do it that way.

Come on, Val, what do we do with that? I was afraid of being without money. Of course this happened when I was without money. It happened right after I rotated. Being your trustee just broke me. So I'm sitting in the basement of my house with my car in the garage upstairs. I'm a family running around upstairs, and the dog running around upstairs wondering, where's my? I'm sitting in the basement of it. I'm afraid of being without money because I'm afraid that my wife will leave me.

I'm afraid of being without money because I'm afraid my creditors will yell at me. I'm afraid of being without money because it'll prove that I'm a failure. I'm afraid of being without money because I'm afraid that my wife will stay. I think she'll be making all the money and she'll be down on me all the time. And of course by now I'm beginning to see you. This is really silly shit here. Okay. And it's all based on self.

I want her to stay because I'm okay if she's there. I'm going to depend on her, which she does not like by the way, then allow. I'm trying to please everybody like the creditors, even people who don't even know me. Their whole job is to yell at me. No. They're trained to yell at you. That's their job. They should be yelling at you. You made a promise you didn't keep. And they want to know why. And when you're going to take care of it and have a right to ask all that.

Anyway, the upshot of it was I began to see once again how silly the fear itself was. And what was happening is that it truly wasn't trusting and relying upon God. So I got up from that inventory and went to work. You know, I had a job. All I did was go to work and I'd make some money. I was afraid of being without money. We're so goofy. Perhaps there's a better way. We think so. This is marvelous stuff. We're not on a different basis of trusting or relying upon God.

We trust Him from the God rather than our finite selves. We were in the world to play the role He assigns. The inventory showed me who I was assigning goals to. I'm assigning Jackie a role of being with me and taking

care of me and making me okay. I'm assigning the creditors a role. Don't be nasty with me. I'm assigning everybody roles and I'm afraid. No wonder I'm afraid. I know you're not going to get your lines right.

That's applying God. I've got to quit doing that. Just to the extent that we do is we think He would have us and come to your land as He enables us to match calamity with serenity. And serenity I had to look up because I had the picture that serenity was floating like a zephyr in the soft summer air. You know, I've been there. That's not what we're talking about. I can get that with some really good Guatemalan gold. And I know that is dead.

I looked it up in the big three volume Webster's and one of the definitions says that serenity is clarity of thought. And that's the one that I look for. If I have clarity of thought, if I'm clearing my thinking, it's like floating on like a zephyr on the soft summer air. Nothing much faces me, okay? Bruce hooked me with that. He said, now do you know it's possible for me to think one thought at a time? Oh, man. I ever want that.

The way to do that is to clear all the other thoughts out of there. That's all I got left. When resentment and fear leaves, it really quads down. There's people that we're talking. Quit talking. They won't think anymore. Along the way, we let him demonstrate through us what he can do. A very important stance that I'm to take. I do not demonstrate for God what I can do. He demonstrates through me what he can do. As long as I can keep that idea straight, I'm okay.

And I'm giving a prayer, a last ditch prayer, I can always say, we ask him to remove our prayer and direct our attention to what he would have us be. And somehow along the way, that came alive for me. Did you hear what it said? It doesn't say, what would you have me do at this point? What would you have me be? And I realize one day, oh, I'm not my car. I'm not my job. I'm none of the things that I do. If my identity is in what I do any time I'm not doing it, I don't have an identity.

I don't exist. If I am a salesman and I'm not selling, I don't exist. I'm not the money in my pocket. I'm not the gang I hang out with. God, what would you have me be? Now, I can do almost anything as long as it's me. There are some things I can't do. I can't play the violin anymore. But then I never could. So what the hell? At once we commence to outgrow fear. Fear is a thing of childhood, this kind of fear. I learned through going through this that I have never been afraid of the unknown, like I thought it was.

I love the unknown. That's what all the excitement is. You just don't know what's going to happen? That's what makes this past so appealing. I have no idea what's going to happen next. What I've always been afraid of is what I think is going to happen. I create these scenes, and pretty soon they are so real, that I make them real. I'm afraid she's going to leave me, so I start hovering. Yeah, and I start driving her crazy.

Trying to get reassurance is constant. I'm afraid she doesn't love me, so I keep trying to say, tell me you love me, tell me you love me, tell me I'm okay. And pretty soon she's pissed that she leaves. And I wonder why? Right? I'm afraid I'm going to get fired. So I start doing things on the job to impress the boss, and he eventually has to fire me. Because I'm not doing my job. I'm trying to hit his. Mine never gets dug, so he fires me.

Fear creates the very thing I'm afraid of. I've got to trust the unknown. The unknowable. Now about sex. This is a conduct inventory. For most of us the first time through, it's a sex inventory. It's not a porno inventory. There's a difference. Now the way I see it and the way I use it, in the resentment inventory I made a list of

people, institutions, and principals with whom I was angry, then I asked the questions about how I was making selfish.

By this point I've got a different view, and the way I use this one is that, just like it says here, I review my conduct over the years past. It's going to be about my conduct. Where have we been selfish? Oh, a list will develop. Where have I been selfish? The list develops itself. Where have I been dishonest or inconsiderate? And the list will take care of itself. The inconsiderate part is a bitch. Most everywhere. When I'm caught up in self, most everywhere.

Whom had we hurt? That question will develop its own list. If I'm willing to be honest now, it will present itself. This is surgical. Did we unjustifiably, we aroused jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness? That's a basic business technique. Of course I did. That's what you do. You want to get something and he's got it? Start something going here. And then add this into the mix and get everybody confused and jealous and bitter and pretty soon.

You got the deal. You've done that. I see it. You've done that. You dirty dog. Where am I at fault and what should I have done instead? For the first time, what should I have done instead? For the first time here I have to acknowledge that I know the difference between right and wrong. I can no longer carve out. I always know. Now my life depends on my wanting to say what should I have done instead. Well, just almost anything to what you did to start with.

But it gets clear what I should have done instead and that makes it clear how I'm supposed to make amends for this. When I was sick and needed money, I'd go to the folks' place and I'd shovel the walks for two bucks or cut the lawn for a fiber or that kind of stuff. What should I have done instead? I should have just gone and shoveled the damn walks and chipped the lawn. So over the years, and making amends us one of the things I did.

So we back and did that. Mom said all she ever wanted for me was that I'd be happy. So over the years, I have gone by my mother's house and a regular base is happy. Right now, she loves to go out to lunch. She's 89. Sharp is a tech. But it's a little hard for her to get around. So I'd go out and take her to lunch. It took her months just the other day. Got to have some real fun with it. My mother has one weakness. Money.

It's a weakness in that she kind of always carried a little low grade resentment because she worked with Dad and he parceled out the money. And it was kind of cute to watch me. They both had pensions, Colorado State pensions. When my mother's mother died, she inherited a little bit of money. And she's a straight arrow. She went to the state and told them she had this money. So they canceled her pension and his. Now, she's got all the money.

And she's nickel and diamond him to Dad. Well, God helped me square some of that away. I mean, that's their business. But I had borrowed and taken a lot of money from my Dad and one had gotten around the square night away. He said, we can forget it. And I said, no, we can't. I really can't. I've got to give it back to you. He said, OK, if you have to, but I don't want to be any part of your bookkeeping system. He says, whenever you feel like it, combine, give me some money.

And whenever you think you're done, you're done. So while she's nickel and diamond him to Dad, I go buy every now and end of the 20. God, she's pocket money. So that all shook out. Well, Dad died a couple years ago.

My mother became rather wealthy right away. They had this big old house. She got nearly half a million bucks and she got to put in the bank. And there were some things left over. And I had some real fun with her the other day.

I sold a bunch of old film cans, 16-minute-minute film cans for \$800. And they gave me 400 in front. When I took her lunch, I gave her 400 bucks. And they just kind of tickled me. She didn't know what the hell to do with it. She wanted to give me some. I wouldn't take it. She's kind of juggled with this. I said, look, you go to Vegas once in a while and you're a big spender. You take \$100 with you. Next time you go, take the four.

Spurs go wild. But I got to tell you, 31 years sober in fit spiritual condition. I got that 400 dollars in my hand. Nobody but me knew. But I'd sold those things. And I was tempted to just put that money in my pocket or find a way to keep it. It's still there. God's hands goes away. It's still there. I don't even feel guilty about it. I just know it's going to show up. The worm's going to come out of the hole. Shine the light on it.

Didn't do anything about it. Just let it play for a few minutes. Disgusting like the mining do. In this way, we try to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life or any other relationship. Okay? We subject each relation to this test. Was it selfish or not? That'll get you. Of course. There's nothing I can do about that. At my very best, even though I'm really trying to help somebody else, there is a selfish motive.

Okay. If it's the minor one. Okay. I can't get away from the fact I'm going to get something out of every transaction. I try not to cut the deal with my favor, but I'm going to. I'm going to get something out of it. We ask God to help mold our ideals and help us to live up to them. Now here's where I got my guide for every problem in life. Remember we were promised this? Here it is. It's on page 69 at the bottom. Whatever the problem may be, in meditation we ask God who we should do about each specific matter.

The right answer will come if we want it. I'm married to a lovely lady. Look, we're in the sex inventory. Let's talk about that for a minute. She thinks I'm cute. She's healthy. And I'm not slouch either. That does not necessarily mean that it's automatic and that I have proprietary rights over her body any time I feel like it. That's crap. And it goes both ways. There's nights I have a headache. It's hard to admit, but I do.

The entire sexual relationship between us is enriched because I am willing, each time, to invite God into the transaction. Is this okay if I go do this, will you do this with me? I've learned to be very patient and listen, and you listen with more than your ears. My wife sometimes works 12 hour shifts and has to drive a half hour each way. She's 13, 14 hours in an extremely high stress job. She's the administrative head nurse on an infant research unit at Children's Hospital.

She comes home really tired sometimes. Babies die. I really need to be paying attention when she needs held, when she doesn't need held, all those kinds of things. It's up to me to pay attention to it. I'm going to be out of self to do that. You want a good relationship? Pay attention to it. Get out of self and pay attention to it. In meditation I can ask God about each specific matter. It's more fun that way. It also focuses on what you're about to do.

And I really don't want to ever get careless with that. It's too much fun. It leads me into some of the 11 step attitudes I'm supposed to pause when agitated and doubtful. It's what you're saying here. Whoops, I don't know

what to do here. Back off, relax, meditate for a minute and ask me, what should I do here? And quite often the answer is sit still. I'm an actual person. Something's going on. I really want to get something done about it.

What should I do? Nothing. None of your business. Most of my recent inventories have been, it's none of your business. I get all upset by other people getting upset. I work in a pressure cooker. Corrections. And every now and then I think out of fix what's going on. I can beat up every time I do. Pause and wait for it. Anyway, to sum up on page 70, we earnestly pray for the right ideal. That doesn't mean what's my ideal person going to look like.

It's what my ideal conduct. For me, it's very simple. I'm a married family man. The ideal is that I stay that way. That's the ideal. Now, give me the strength to do that. Okay? Some advances occurred. Gave me the strength to do that. To remain faithful to the life. Isn't that hard? For guidance in each questionable situation. How do I know if it's questionable? If I'm involved in it. Always. I'll just assume that. It doesn't mean it's going to be a bad thing.

It's just if I'm involved in it, it's questionable. I need to ask. For sanity. We were told insanity is lack of proportioning the ability to think straight. So if I'm saying there's going to be some proportion here and I will be thinking straight. I have to pray for that. I don't have it automatically. For the strength to do the right thing. Well, for me, that's the one. I know what I'm supposed to do. I want to do that.

But I just don't want to do that. Well, I have a prayer for that. It has worked for me for years. God, I don't want to do that. I really don't want to do it. Because of what you have done for me, I will do this one for you. And I don't know what the power is, but it changes my mind and allows me to get the strength I need to go do it. I'll do this one for you. And sex or anything else is very troublesome. We throw ourselves a hundred into helping others.

We think of their needs and work for them. This takes us out of ourselves, requires the imperious urge when the yield will mean heartache. Some good stuff there, huh? We just what it says here. There's all kinds of variations. I have no opinion on them. I just do what it says here. And it doesn't say that here, so I don't do that. Nothing wrong with that. I've seen great benefit from variations, but this is all I do.

There have been a couple of times in inventory when I've had to put in between that third and fourth column. Why that would threaten me. Usually I get that information from the fourth column. Sometimes I need to know why your behavior would threaten me just so I can get honest with it. But I don't do much that isn't in here. I see. I believe inventory has only one purpose. It tells me it's to facing the rid of the things that are blocking me from God.

My answer is always prayer, always. If I can't pray effectively, then I need to go write some inventory to find out what's blocking me from effective prayer. We get into the tenth step and that whole scene changes, you know, that continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. Then we talk to somebody about them and write them down. It's changed.

I go to God directly. I'm now busily engaged, truly engaged in life. It's a very busy activity if you haven't noticed. There's something happening all the time. I don't always have time to cut out new little book work. I've

got to have direct access. Go to God quickly remove this. Then I'll go home and comply with it and write it out because I want to find out it's part of a bigger picture. But I need to go to God first and always.

The practice of the 11th step, my sponsor and I had three wonderful years where we did 10th and 11th step daily with each other. Just for practice. And it was a good experience because he never tried to fix me and I never tried to fix him. It was done when it was done. And it made a possible man for both of us just to pause when agitated or doubtful. And it was in that experience that I learned you don't have to be agitated just because you're doubtful.

I tend to get things all mixed up. Anytime I have an decision to make I'm doubtful, which way should I go? What should I do? I didn't have to agitate me. It does. But it doesn't have to. Sometimes I can't make the decision along. Other people are involved. I suggest here if other people are involved I consult them. There's a novel idea. If we've got a move it might be a good idea to ask my wife if she wants to move. Okay.

When to communicate. These are the things, anything that blocks me from communicating with you will also block me from communicating with God I found. So if I clear this off then I can make that communication direct. And that's what I need to be able to do. Then I can communicate directly with you too. Then I took this little thing. I wasn't going to go back to my sponsor who had told me my first inventory was garbage to get away from him.

I'm not going back to him with it. And in here there's a section that says certain parts of our story where they tell us somebody who will not be overly affected. And I just used that to my own benefit. I picked Jim. Now Jim had come into the penitentiary with me. He was doing a three to five for vehicular homicide. He had done what all of us had been terrified might happen to him. In a blackout drunk he killed some people in his car.

Now I had committed the criminal act that I was locked up for. I knew why I was there. But Jim had no memory of the act that put him there. He was not a criminal in the same sense that I was. He was lost. They told him he'd done it. He accepted he'd done it, but he had no memory of it. He couldn't deal with it. And I was getting kind of a new feeling with Jim. I don't like him, but I wanted things to be better for him.

I had no idea what that feeling was. It's called compassion. I didn't know what the hell it was. I just knew that somehow if I had shared the garbage of my life with him, his life would get better. I don't know. I guess you told me that or something. I just knew that. So I picked him to do that fist up with. I had a glorious experience. Because he sat and listened to me most of the afternoon. He would only speak up when some little thing had come up and he'd just nudge me a little bit.

Because we found some things that didn't get written down. My memory wasn't that good those days. And I came out of that experience with a couple things. I stopped being alone. Up until that point in time, it had been me and who I needed you to be. You didn't have your own existence. And somehow on that process with Jim, we ended up with two people on their own, me and Jim. And I haven't been alone since. And I also had this wonderful feeling that I had finally finished something.

I've been a spreader in the game of life the whole time. Off the lawn, I'm good, but I never finished anything. Well, I'd finished this. I'd done the very best I could with what I had. There was nothing left. We probed. It was

done. I went back to myself with that feeling. I did the review of the big book suggests. It spent an hour with it. Look it over. Make sure it's solid. And it was solid. My also was fully aware.

It was a shabby little effort. I had just scratched the surface. And I had a lifetime of work ahead of me. So in my seventh step, in addition to what it says here, I added to it. Shame on me. God, please, don't let the stuff I haven't found yet. Kill me before I get to them. And I'm still here. And I've got some fresh inventory for a couple of weeks ago. Some more shabby shit. And that's what it is, you know. We go into the inventory looking for a till of a hound.

I find a little boy who wears pants.