

DON P ARCHIVE

Big Book Workshop

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Transcript

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Let's take a look at the 6 and 7 step. I've done the review. I'm clear. I'm truly willing not to set right the wrongs. I'm ready to be changed. I'm going to make a conscious commitment to be changed. This is the step that a step separates the men from the boys. It's because this is the departure point. There's some keys here for me. I've done the review, and if I can answer my own satisfaction over in page 7, page 6, we have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Without the willingness to change, I will not change. The instant I am willing, I have already changed. It's indispensable. It must be there. One of the nice things about riding inventory this way shows me how reprehensible I really am. I just don't want to be that way anymore. I thought when I felt guilty and ashamed that my behavior that I felt bad when I found out why I was doing that, I really felt bad because that's petty. It's just petty bullshit. And I don't want to be that way anymore. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things we have admitted or objectionable? I believe that's the pivot word. Objectionable. I must firstly object to being the way I am, or I won't change. You can't beat me and make me change. You can't threaten me and make me change.

You can't give me great rewards and make me change. It all changes my behavior as long as you're watching. I only change when I personally object to being the way I am. And the instant that happens, I have already changed. Then I go, and if there's something I'm going to hang on to, it says here, I ask God for the willingness to let it go. I pray until it comes. Then we have the end of the third step prayer. We call it the seventh step prayer. It's just the end of the third step prayer for me. My creator, I'm willing now that you should have all of it. Good and bad. I made you this offering earlier before. Now I'm clear as to what you're getting. Take this package if you want something to work with. Do whatever you want with it. I pray you now remove from me every single defective character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.

I don't even get to pick the ones that are going to go. Whatever you think is going to be useful. Sometimes things hang around because I'm far more useful being an asshole than I am being seen. And as they go, I can be a great use along the way because some people say, man, I don't want that. Grant me strength as I go out from here to do your bidding. Amen. That's always my basic prayer. Grant me the strength. There was a time along the way when I would pray for relief. And I would get it, but that's all I would get. And relief's like aspirin. It's wonderful. It gives you relief. And then it wears off. You've got to take some more. And then it wears off. You've got to take some more.

I found out that if I prayed to get the strength to finish whatever has to be finished here, that I never have to do it again. Give me the strength to do his bidding. Give me the strength. I quit smoking that way. We know a big deal. I couldn't stop. I didn't want to smoke anymore. I couldn't stop. I tried riding inventory on it. It was a waste of time. Because this thing doesn't work as long as you're doing whatever it is you're doing. You have to stop doing what you're doing.

That's the worst word. And basically I got sick and tired of all that and just prayed. God, I would like to stop this, I said. And I think you'd like to have me stop it too. But I don't have what it's going to take. So please grant

me the strength to get through whatever I need to get through so I don't ever have to do this again. And I had five of the worst days I've ever had in my life. I've got no relief whatsoever. All I got was strength. I don't want to ever do that again.

I'm just too old. That's worked in every other area in my life. Give me the strength to do the right thing. See, I know what the right thing is. This damn process will give you a conscience. Now give me the strength to do the right thing. Great prayer. Smokers are getting nervous. Ten minutes, five minutes, go home, which place? Ten. Sit and run your mouth. It's so easy. What it is. See what I want to do in as much as we're not meeting again in the morning.

And we've covered a lot of ground. I'm amazed at how much we have covered. We've got a half hour, four to five minutes at the most an hour. What would you like addressed? Where do you want to go from here? What do you want me to share? Messengers, huh? Yeah. Well, we kind of stopped at six and seven. The rest of them, okay? Because the messengers is part of that. Yeah, okay. I got free at the eight step. Locked up in a penitentiary cell. Completely free.

Like I told you about it last night. My sponsor had given me the exercise. He said, you know what we did to these people. But you're so insensitive. You have no idea what it did to them. So what I want you to do is go back to that cell tonight and take all the people from this inventory list and make a separate list. Then at anybody you can think of, because if you met them, you're messed with them. To get the right attitude. He said, then I want you to separate each one separately. Picture them in your mind.

And see if you can feel the willingness to look each one right in the eye and say to them, I have been wrong and I have harmed you. Would you please tell me what I have to do so we can get the books to balance. And in that exercise that evening as I went over the list and realized I really am willing to do that with everybody, the experience was it felt as if I had been lifted up off of that seat. No, nothing was lifted from me. I was lifted up and out.

And I had a sense of freedom and I've been free ever since. They kept me another eight months that didn't make any difference. I was free. Made what amends I could from in there. Some things you can write letters to. Some you need to go see. My sponsor in his cruelty had me separate amount according to who I thought I could go see and who I could take care of my mail. And most of the time I was wrong. A couple of them were kind of interesting.

On the 24th of December of the year, we got the tree for a dollar and went down to the drug store where I had been writing my own prescriptions. We got some Christmas tree lights for a buck and a half. A buck and a quarter. I don't remember exactly this right in there. On credit, I didn't have any money. We got those cowboy boots and the shirt for the boys and the public merchandise marked on credit because the welfare check hadn't gotten there.

I got arrested on the 26th so none of those got paid. And he seemed to think I could take care of the Christmas tree light by mail. And the boots and shirt had to be done in person. So I got to write a letter to the drug store. I would have buck and a half to tell them who I was, what I was, what I had done to them. And I made 10 cents a day on my job in the dishroom and acknowledged the debt and asked them because I had to take

all my own toiletries and things out of that 10 cents a day.

Would they accept a quarter a month until I got it paid off? That's really humiliating. And I said, yeah. I had them with an all quarter and probably took eight, nine cents and posted. I could get it done. Didn't matter. That's what we do. Christmas tree light thing was wonderful. See, I've been taught before I make any amends. Once I'm clear on what they are and I need to be clear on what I've done. And what I think I should do is square it away. I also need to be clear that I do need to listen to the people if there's more than I'm aware of.

So I can really get it clear. If they need to brow beat me for an hour or two over the incident, okay, you got one shot at me. You don't get to brow beat me over nothing. Or if I've forgotten, so whatever I just need, what do I have to do to get it straight? And what that did for me was make me a listener. See, when you ask somebody that and whatever words you use, what do I have to do, I have to do a shut up and then listen.

Well, I tell you. And almost everybody without exception will tell you precisely what you have to do to square away any harm you've done to them. Anyway, I told you about that little truck job I got with dicks and paper. It turns out that I am not delivering paper sacks every other week to the place where I got to cowboy boots in the shirt on credit. When I was taught that I'm trying to put my life in order making these amends, that is not an end in itself.

My real purpose is to fit myself to be a maximum service to God who knows about me. So before I'm making amends, now that I'm willing to make them all, I'm to pray first about when and how. So every two weeks I'd pull up out in front of the place. I owed him \$10.95. He's this today. And I'd carry the sacks in and I'd wait. Because I got to tell you something. Once you start having conversations with God, you develop a sense.

When you hear things, not voices, but you hear things. Well, sometimes voices. I sometimes hear this sound. It's exactly what it sounds like. And I really listen. That's my grandpa's voice. Don. Because God uses what's in hand to get my attention. And I recognize grandpa. But that's another story. Is this today? And I'd go in and we'd deliver the sacks and he'd sign the thing off. And I never had that feeling. It was two or three months down the road.

And I got a job now. I'm making the money. I've got the money in my pocket. I'm ready. It's this today. And we went in and delivered the sacks. And while he's signing the invoice, it came over me. And I thought that was a little strange because he was really busy. The store was full. He was running around. It was a busy, busy, busy time. And I asked him if I could have a minute or two. That I really needed to talk to him.

And I told him I was an alcoholic. I told him what had happened. And I told him in my very life. I depended on my giving square with him and everybody that I had messed with. And I watched this kind, kind man stop his very busy thing to listen to me because I had said it was my life. I told him what had happened. I told him I needed to make amends for that. And I had to money him a pocket. And I saw that glaze look that comes over people's faces when they don't know what the hell you're talking about.

He got down on his hands and knees under one of his counters and pulled out some shoe boxes full of old receipts and started going through them. Pretending he was going to find my bill. And I knew he was pretending. But I told him my life was a stick. A couple minutes of that and he stood up and he said, well kid it looks like we

wrote that off. So can you. And I saw a thing happen for him. And I don't know what it was.

I think if I knew what it was I'd probably take credit for it. But I became fully aware of it for whatever the reason he needed me that day. He needed to do that for me that day. For whatever the reason. So once again God can use me as a messenger, as an example. So I used to go by every Christmas and not to go out in all my progress. Two years ago I went and he was dead. He'd go out. So I talked to his son. I told his son the story.

I watched the kid beam. He said that's the kind of man my dad was. And just what happened for him again was an example of if we'll do this right in God's hands it can become very useful. And we don't even know how. The big book's very clear on a couple things. I'm to address when I've done something wrong I need to get it taken care of right away. If possible. Some things take time. Some people can't be found right away.

Some people do not want to see me right away. I still got one of those. Every time I put the word on the street the word comes back you keep that crazy son of a bitch away from me. Don't want to ever see me. I'm willing. When I tell him he wants to see me I'm not pushing it either. It's not right. God my financial demands have been a riot. I never got to make them the way I want to make them. If I owe you a hundred weight a little bit while I save up a hundred then I'll give it to you.

And of course it never happens. At eighty-five I find something I need desperately and we're back to fifty. Now the dimensions of my wrong do I can remember. I'm talking chicken shit stuff here. That's what next time it is. I'm giving a square with my dad one day I was just visiting him. Because that's one of the ways I may convince. Go visit with your people. Don't have to be a big crisis for God's sake. Just go buy and visit.

Anyhow I'm visiting with him and he said you know. I need to have you do something for me Don. I bought gas from old Mac up at the Texaco. Every time I go in Mac it says to me. When's Don when I come in and pay the money he owes me. I hadn't even remembered that. It had been so long. I burned Mac and skipped him. I had no idea. He says I'm just tired of listening to it when he straightened it up. I went right away and went up to see Mac.

Old Mac's seventy-five dollars in gasoline bills. Three or four years before that. I only had five. So I started my little litany. Mac I really made a mess of my life. He says yeah you sure as hell did. What do I get my money? I said old Mac I've only got five. He said I'll take it. I said tell you what I'd like to do. I've got a job now and I'd like to set up a little plan. He said no give me that. You never kept your work in your life.

Whenever you get to yours you can buy them and give me some money. So for a while that's what I did. I went buy and took abuse from Mac every time. Until that was done. I finally got a job. I'm in a coat and tie. I'm the job developer for an agency that gets jobs for ex-cons. I'm reasonably prestigious. And they call me up front one day to the desk. And here's this bone. Had not a bath in some time. Obviously living on the street.

And as I listened and he told me who he was. This was a former landlord of mine from Overland Park, Kansas. When the kids and I were on the road we'd skipped. We owed him \$70, \$80 or something like that. How he tracked me down I don't know. Except I'm in the phone book now. And he wasn't off I had any money. So I owed him money. And I'm a bad sheep here. I'm embarrassed. My co-workers are looking on. Well I'm looking good in this bum that reminded me that I owe him money.

I only had five and I gave it to them. And I said you know I've got this job. Where can I reach you? Because on my next paycheck I'd like to pay you off. I said I don't have a home. I'm living on the street. And he left. And for some period of time after that every now and then this guy would show up. And I'd never had more than five or ten dollars. And I finally understood what God was doing here. On the days he showed up he wouldn't eat unless I had five or ten bucks for him.

So again he took my wrong going from this place and used it to be a service at this time. And once the bill was paid I've never seen the man again. But for a period of time there I was able to help him eat. So you never know. Stand wide. Show me how to do it. Don't make a run of luck. I'm glad they kept me locked up when I was first ready. Because I've screwed them all up. Screwed them all up. Mom just wants me to be happy so I'll go by and show her I'm happy.

And we've developed a really nice relationship over the years. I told you about my brother. It was 22 years getting that squared away. That's still really tentative. He likes me now. We get along fine. We understand each other. But it's going to be tentative forever. There's a piece of him that's never ever going to trust me. And he shouldn't. Got things squared with both of my boys. It took some time. We talked about things.

Chuck Chamberlain helped me immensely one time. He said there's nothing we can do about what we did to our children. It's done. Can't change it. All we can do is create an arena where they have an opportunity to heal. And we call that home. So I began building a home. Got things squared with Sean and Terry both. Terry was a matter of calling him one day and thanking him for taking care of Sean when I couldn't. Because of the eight that had been arrested with me.

And Terry had to grow up to protect his little brother. He missed some time there. Took him all to have caught one time. We've done a number of things over the years to get square. Currently my youngest boy Sean, hell he's in his 30s now. He and my grandson who was six foot six for God's sake. I was amazed at this kid. They come by. We were visiting him. My older boy hasn't contacted me for two years. Top train just the other day.

He's really pissed at something. And I have no idea what it is. In order to like hear. Because it's not mine. I've done everything I can do. And stand ready to do anything else that's necessary. And I've asked him. Wrote him a letter the other day and ask him once more. You're pissed. Just tell me what I have to do. What's wrong? And I'll wait for that. I've come out from my three other grandchildren for two years. My little granddaughter who's now 15 wrote me the other day.

She's moved out. And she wants to stand in touch with her. She said her dad wouldn't let her. And forbid him to see us. What I've had to learn in circumstances like that is I'm not to push that. I've done everything I can do. The door is open. I will continue to keep it open. He's got to get done. Whatever he's got to get done. And I'm not to tamper with it. I learned that with his younger brother when I kept rescuing him when he was early.

I just kept rescuing him. And it hit me one day that what I thought was love was really not love. Because every time I rescued him he was in the middle of a life lesson. And I rescued him and pulled him out of it halfway through. And he didn't even get to start halfway through. He had to go back and start all over again. And that was not love. So I had to put him on the street at 20 below zero one night. And said he hated me for that for a while but he's come back since and thanked me because he got down what he had to get down.

That's all part of this eighth and ninth and tenth step business. I'm to continue to watch for selfishness, self-centeredness, dishonesty and fear. Because they will crop up. And when they do I'm going to go to God at once and make a man's at once. They're not talking about tomorrow morning. If I screw up today I need to do my best to clean it up today. And it's always so petty it's ridiculous. When I was up to last year it just makes me sad.

Working in corrections you get shot at a lot. Not by the inmates. Prison administrators are interesting people. The whole system is goofy. It's a dysfunctional family of the highest order. And things had happened and I caught myself ally building again. You did this to me so I get hers and ally and then we'll gang up on you. And it took me about two weeks to catch that one. How destructive that really is. Instead of me helping you get your job done.

I'm busy interfering with it which interferes with my non-piston to you. It was really in it. There's inventory on it. Did you do that? Yeah. Got to keep watching for. If I feel hurt or threatened I defend myself. Why should I feel hurt or threatened? Because I am what I am. And periodically it's too hot or too cold. But the 10 step goes beyond just me continuing to watch. I'm to commence this way of living while I make my amends.

The 10 step kind of encompasses all of the first nine for me as far as I can tell in principle. Got to understand I don't have the power to change anybody. All I can change is your feelings. Can't change you. Can't change me. How can I be of service? Those are attitudes they're supposed to go with me all the time. And I don't always want to do that so I have to pray. I've got some exercises in here on the 10th and 11th step that are really very specific.

I'm to check myself every night. As I kind and loving toward all is my catch all. I can sometimes answer the other questions okay. I've never been able to answer that one yes. Even if I didn't say anything to you. At least one of you on any given day was a son of a bitch. At least one. The guy that cut me off on the freeway. Whatever it was. The waitress that doesn't even speak English trying to take my order at Arby's.

I've grossed and grumbled about that and go home and complained to my wife. What a lovely thing to come in. God damn it. Those are great questions. I'm sure you've read them. I'm Paige Eddy. He talks about before taking grass to cash me what might implicate other people with security consent. Now I was on federal parole and state parole. When my memories began to come back and I remembered that a previous Christmas in Cheyenne, Wyoming when the kids and I were on the run I had gotten some amphetamines with this prescription that I wrote using a check that I wrote that didn't have any bank backing at all.

I'd committed two felonies is what I'd done on that run and now that it came up I had to do something about it. Once I understood, once I remembered I got to do something about it. So I went to my sponsor and he said well your federal parole officer is going to be implicated. If they arrest you in Cheyenne he's going to have to do something. So we ought to go talk to him. That's kind of scary for me to have to go talk to a parole officer and tell him I'm facing seven years in Wyoming if I go do this but I've got to go do this.

What do you think? And he said yeah you do you got to do something about it. I'll give you permission to leave the state and I will not violate you if they arrest you. So go do it. And Gary said now he also says we don't want to be hasty and foolish martyrs and just throw ourselves in the Lions cage. He said I know the guy because he grew up a shiny. He said let's write him a letter and ask him how he would like you to handle it.

Go ahead and lay it all out for him and if he wants you to come up there then he'll go out. Whatever he wants to have done. Okay. And I wish I had a high drama answer for you. I don't because the guy was dead. The shop was closed so I came back marked that way. So there's nothing I could do about it. Then we went back to parole officer and said don't I owe Wyoming some time. He said let me tell you what will happen if you go up there.

You're going to confuse them. They don't have any record of this. The records are gone. The man's dead. He didn't make a formal complaint. You're just going to irritate him. Don't do it. Gary asked me in his presence are you willing to do so if they ever ask you to? And I said yeah. And they both said good. Go back to work. You're starting to get your children back. Your life back in order. Don't go mess with them because you'll just piss them off.

Okay, I'll take that word for that. I still stand ready. I don't have to worry about it anymore. The statute of limitations is way past. But the essence of what I'm trying to tell you is I had complied here. And what happened to me spiritually can't be measured. I became aware I really am wanting to go to any length to maintain this spiritual contact. If it means seven more years in prison, take me. Whatever it means.

And I haven't had to challenge that from that day. It was so nice to know I really made business. Y'all needed that. That makes me nervous. We just had more of that than we could stand. Is that it? Yes. That's it. Wow. He's looking nervous. Yeah, we had three inches in one hour the other day. They're still trickling. Oh, you jinxed it. I hope you get lots of rain. The principle that I was taught on when I lived by is simple.

If I harmed you, I owe you. Period. There is no slack. I get guys these days that come to me and say, well, I burned my drug dealer on a deal. So I have to fame back. Damn right. Let's don't play any games with that one. You welched on a business deal. You owe him that money. I don't buy that. I welched on a business deal. Iowa. I don't give a damn what he does with it. Absolutely no consequence. That's just the way I feel about it.

I'll tell you about Jaime. You know about Jaime. This will curl your hair. Jaime's out in New York, and he used to be a wholesale heroin dealer for the mob. And he ripped him off. So when he got sober out of California, and it came time to do this, Jaime's got two things he's got to do in New York. I was able to go back to the mob and try to get that straight. And New York authorities would also like to see him about all this.

And after lots of prayer and looking at it and setting it all up because you don't just dash off into it, Jaime came on back. And they didn't hear from him for two weeks. He went to the mob first and nobody knew for sure what was going to happen. Two weeks later he called Joe and says, well, I'm in jail now. It seems that the mob kind of said, Jaime, this is too confusing. If you'll leave New York and never come back, we'll just kind of forget it.

And now he's in jail and the authorities after a couple weeks gave him essentially the same deal. Get the hell out of here, Jaime. It's just too much trouble. Do you know that going in? If I owe you, I owe you. GW was a little crypt out of the barrios and was able to identify and remember over 350 burglars he had committed. And over 100 a time knocking on the door to each one of them to get it straight. And he got some spiritual.

We lost him. He became useless. But Jaime, oh, yeah. What do I have to do? Half the time I don't even remember who you are or what I did to you. All I need to do is stand willing, with God's protection and care, to

square it. And I found over the years a real interesting thing. There's only one thing I really have to say to anybody. I was wrong. I don't get to say I was sorry. My sponsor said you've been sorry your whole life.

I went over here. I was wrong. I get to say that. And I'm an observer. Have you ever watched the people in a little group talking about the one in Disney Derek who's didn't like him anymore? Almost invariably what I hear is, if they could only admit they were wrong, I could forget about it. Well, that's true. If I'm willing to admit to you that I was wrong, the healing has begun. Because part of making amends is for me because I owe you.

But a larger part is that I need to give you an opportunity to get free too. I've put you in a place where you're carrying some resentment. You're going to be cut off too. I'm diminishing you. I need to give you an opportunity to get free. I didn't know that until I'd been doing it for a number of years. There's another aspect of making amends is purely selfish. I don't want to be blindsided. I really don't want to have to be afraid of anybody coming up on me with something.

And I'm blindsided. I need to stand willing, whatever you say I did. Okay, if you say I did, I don't want to square it. Be careful. I've got a pretty good memory. If you jog it just right, I will remember. And I don't humiliate myself for anyone. I'm one of God's people. We do not crawl before anybody. But I will make it right. And there's all kinds of examples in there.