

Big Book Weekend

2001 | Part 3 | Reading edition

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Transcript

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One thing, yeah, this is off the record, and it is off the record. My life is scary that there's no point in trying to keep any of it secret. I, years ago, I would look at some people, and I would just know that they had integrity. When I had absolutely none, and I could look at them, and I knew they had lots of it, didn't that a discomfoting feeling? God almighty, that is a tough deal. You just know that they have it. They just have that wonderful sense of integrity. And when the doctor wrote his first opinion, he said, when talking about some of those early alcoholics, he said, I personally know scores of cases who were the type with whom other methods had failed completely. And he goes on to talk, but the most important thing, he says, you may rely absolutely on anything they say about themselves, rely absolutely on anything they may say about themselves.

See, we share our truth one with another, and in the process of that, you may get well. I know, if you allow me to share my truth with you, I will become more well, or at least stay well. That's just a curious little dynamic about how this works. But I always wanted to be able to do that. I wanted to be able to have some integrity, and I thought, my God, I just don't have it. I'm not who I'd like to be. And this ties back into that seemingly hopeless state of mind and body, because what I'm talking about now is discovering some of my own truth. And one of the things that I had to finally discover was I do not have the power to be what it is I'd like to be. No matter how much I might wish to be that way, I don't have it. I just don't have the power. And that's part of that hopeless state of mind and body. I can have the festive intentions. The question that I always dearly love to ask in a group like this is everybody written in the backseat of a patrol car and handcuffs. Has anybody ever done that? Or the front seat, she says, great. Okay, picture that time when you were in the, and if you haven't done that, think of something else that you might have done, and ask yourself on the morning of the day when that occurred. Did you wake up and have a plan to be in the backseat of a patrol car with handcuffs? No, I had different plans in that. I took this step and then this step and then this step and I don't know what happened, but suddenly things were going rapidly downhill and I was trying to explain myself and I got nowhere. A terrible, terrible powerlessness to not be able to be who and what I knew that I wanted to be. I just didn't have the power. And the conflict that arises as a result of having the grand intentions, but not having the power to live up to those intentions creates more discomfort than I can bear. And so the alcoholic, it's been my experience, has no choice, but when you get into that conflict, ultimately you have to drink. If my life has lived in such a way that I can't stand it and I don't like the truth about who I am, then I have to have some kind of solution for that. And the solution was simpler to drink. I mean, it was just that simple. And it was absolutely necessary to take a drink. I mean, there's no particular drama about that. It just happens to be a fact. So integrity. I called my sponsor one day and I said, you know, God, I don't think I know anything. I mean, I've been in this process for a while and I was trying to do everything right and so on and so forth. And I just wasn't a bad spot. And I said, God, I said, I don't know anything. And he started laughing at me. He said, I don't know anything either. I see that's a statement of integrity. You think about that? But as I said here this morning with you on a beautiful morning in New York, I'll tell you the same thing. I don't know anything either. We're here together. And at this moment in time, at the second in time, I'll ask you a simple little question. Are you okay? Are you all right? Yeah, so am I. But this is similar to the experience I had the first time I took a drink. Suddenly, I was changed and I was all

right. Whatever else had occurred in my life up to that point, I had been an unknown quantity for me. When I took the drink, boom, I was a different person. And I was okay. It was a little in a weird way.

It was a little touch of the spirit. But I want to finish off this deal with integrity. Talking about integrity in it. I had a course because this has to do with what this is all about. Don mentioned to you, we can't stay in inventory. We have to get out there and be open for business. And I had an opportunity here at Walbach. I wanted to make a business decision. And it had to involve finding someone who had an uncompromising sense of integrity. And I found somebody in our fellowship. Happens to be a dear friend. And I knew the quality I was looking for was that uncompromising integrity. And that's what you can have the opportunity to experience in this little deal of ours. Is you can get a chance to experience some of the things we've always wanted to experience. The team have ever thought to yourself, God, I just wish I could start over. I have. I just I thought, God, I just wish I could start over. Just wish I could be something else.

And this is a marvelous opportunity to experience an entire psychic change is starting over. That's a new mind. And then we get to grow into it. And it's a fantastic opportunity. And you wake up in a morning like this in New York and thank my God, you know, I should be in a mental institution someplace. And I'm not. I'm here with some fine friends and a beautiful wife. And I just this is this is going to be a grand experience. And I'll leave you with this little thought.

We'll take a break with the spirit's help. We'll begin to do some exploration on what is your truth? What's your truth? See, my whole life, people kept telling me what I needed to do. And I thought I could do it. And I tried to do it and it didn't work. It just never did work. And finally, I was given an opportunity 13 years sober to begin to experience the discovery of my own truth in my own way at my own pace. And it was a grand grand deal. And for the very first time you've heard the expression already once this morning, we get to live a life that makes sense to us. I'm living a life that makes perfect sense to me. My family sometimes looks at me and they're not too sure. But there's no patrol cars in front of the house either. And they like that. Get a chance to discover your own truth. And in a group like that, the spirit moves among us and that's that will be one of the opportunities you'll have what you do with that opportunity is your call. But you will have a child opportunity to discover your own truth. Let's take a little break. What? Well, it was clear from last night that 10 minutes is not enough. You also need to know that I think the most important thing that will occur this weekend is when you're talking with each other. And as long as you're willing to do that, we'll keep these microphones shut down. But since you also want to gather as a group, we need to truly be on time for that. So how about we try 20 minutes this time and then we'll adjust again next time. It's five minutes to 10. A quarter after I'll be sitting in this chair and you'll be sitting in that one ready to go. Can you hear us equally well? I'd listen to him more than I would may, but that's how you already are. Okay. A little bitty touchy history because I made a promise to remain integrity is important to me too. And there's some misinformation that new people get that this book hasn't been changed at all from the beginning. And that's not true. One of the major changes is a critically important change. And this is not in order to do war. It's simply to inform the fellowship that allowed it to happen to start with. What we have done to our own message. If you will turn to page one, please follow with me. You know, I got it. We of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the reader will be interested in the medical estimate of the plan or recovery. You with me? Oh, well that's page one in all first edition big books. Why is that important? We noticed 15 or so years ago, despite our best efforts, an awful lot of people were going back and drinking. And we would

hear a common line that went sort of like, well, I did what you told me I don't understand. And what they were being told was to read the first 164 pages of this book, which leaves out the doctors' attention. If you start with a second or third edition, page one is bill story. And when I'm new and doing what I'm told, if you tell me to read the first 164 pages, I will miss the foundation of recovery. And they were. So I now belong to a growing number of AA members who have asked, what was I when this happened? How did that happen? Because we've compiled a large number of bills writings that indicated how important he thought it was that this remained page one. And I'm only bringing it up because we are now discussing the possibility of having a fourth edition big book. What a wonderful time to restore the book back to its original condition. That won't happen unless we asked for it. This is our fellowship. And unless we ask for it, it won't happen. It won't start no war. There's a little skirmish around the edges will hurt. And it's not that important because the integrity that really comes through is I don't care what the page number is or what the step number is. I'm interested only in the result. And if I work with you, we'll clear back to the preface and we no longer use the circle and triangle structurally. We can still use it, you know. It's because of integrity that we don't. I don't know if you know that. If you hold a copyright or a trademark to anything and someone else uses it, you are required by law to either defend it in court or lose it. And we came upon that decision where we had to either defend the circle and triangle because there are 55 other organizations that use it. Either defend it in court or lose it. And Bill and his writings told us, don't trademark any of this. Don't copyright any of this stuff. You'd be in trouble if you do and we did it anyway. And the decision was made a very wise decision to let it go into the public domain. We're not going to defend it. So we stopped using it so we don't have to defend it structurally. The groups can still use it. And any day now it's going to go back into the public domain. And when it does, we can use it again because we won't have to defend it. Interesting spiritual principle. And you need to know that one of our leaders at general service knew that principle and applied it and caught all kinds of help for it, but stood pat. So just a little historical stuff. This isn't about just regular book and go to meetings. We have a fellowship here that is, as Bill described it, a society within a society. We're not an organization in a normal sense of the word. We are a society within a society.

We are a family. We have a charge on us, not just a job to do. I am charged with making certain that the person that comes through that door in 50 years when I'm dead and gone gets the same shot I got. Big charge. Because I know there are better ways of doing this. I've tried some of them. They didn't work but they were better. I've got some things I know are going to make this work better. I just promise you I'll never tell you about it. So we have before us in this book more than just a book. We have a report by some people who overcame a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. A report to us about not only that they did that but how they did that precisely and who to get a hold of if you would like to do that.

Big book doesn't answer sponsorship except in one place. It tells me how to be one and the whole book tells me how to be a sponsor. It doesn't tell me how to find one. But there's one place it tells me exactly how to find one too. To show others precisely how we're recovered that's a main job. So if I want to be a sponsor I should be properly on the facts about myself be recovered or even in recovery that's fine. But I can show you precisely what I'm doing at this point and what I did to this point.

It got me to this point if that's what you would like. And if I'm new and I'm looking for a sponsor by someone who can show me precisely what they did I'm theoryed out. I better be able to go sit down in my private place and do exactly what you said and I better if I get the results you said I'm going to get or I won't be back to see

you. That's the truth my life's on the line and I've had that incredible experience of doing precisely what they said precisely the way they said it and every time got the result and then I took it out and tested it on some other folks damn same result and they took it out and tested it on some others same result you new folks I can't tell you the joy that comes from meeting somebody eight nine ten generations down or out I don't like down but you've never met and you have to get the same results because it came through you from somebody eight nine ten generations back that away it's a clear line but I can't tell you the aggravation that comes when you meet somebody two generations down it has a new improved way of doing what you showed somebody else how to do they showed them how to do it my mother told me if you can't say something nice don't say it also I will move on so just a little history of the book when we say read the book we really need to know which book what are we telling them to do and since that's open during interpretation it's just much easier for me to say once you come by my house and I'll read to you from my book and my book's going to be a little different in content than yours depending on which one I pull off the shelf and I like this one this is my original big book it just falls open where it needs to it knows more than I do and so I keep it and when I'm through with it just trash it because you're not much left of it anyway but mine's a second edition and if you've got a third edition there are going to be some early things that will be different and we need to read both of them so you can see the little changes that are taking place in the organization you're about to be asked to join if you join this organization you don't get to go just go to meetings like you want at the else you don't have any dues or fees so you can't buy you to win we'll take you money but we'll trust you my old Denver young people's group used to pass the basket and say if you have some put it in if you don't take it out we quit that and we saw the pot build over here on that side of the table it just dwindled no if I belong to this organization I am charged with the task and responsibly taking on people who are dying and going insane and will without some kind of intervention on my part not that I'm smart but I do have something to offer for people who suffer from alcoholism and are dying and going insane and I must do that I don't have any choice if you really belong to a unit and it isn't because we tell you that it's an inner imperative I was left with I woke up spiritually got struck by the spirit and you can't shut up when uh uh you can't riding on a bus better be careful who you're talking to if you're talking to me within a couple minutes we're gonna be talking about alcoholism and god and blah blah blah so I have to quit riding buses and get self-suffering ride a car you can't stop I am charged with the responsibility of making sure there are places my compliments to reckon the guys who this incredible place they met the task it gave us a place to meet but you know we'd meet anyway because it's an inner imperative the building had been locked we'd have found that tent over there's nobody in it we made it happen my group one night we were irresponsible young people only trusted one person with a key and they didn't show up for the name so we went to the park we had a meeting anyway you can't stop us when we're together we're going to talk don't even try we also had a group conscious and had everybody in the group got a key which created its own problems framework I'm just talking about framework you point how you see this deal the doctor's opinion is that important because without it I would not be here I did not know I was alcoholic could not identify with being an alcoholic until we got in there wasn't the amount I drank we got down to what happens when you do drink I was my first federal penitentiary when I was 19 years old because of alcoholism and I didn't know that until the doctor's opinion it made it clear doctor said he'd been working with men who had been working on a business deal or proposition that would be settled favorably to them on a certain date I had a drink a day or two before and I missed their appointment I was given a 24 hour liberty and came back in 23 days I missed my appointment same deal and why did that happen there was no reason it happened I wanted to go with that ship to the war zone that 19 war on a destroyer is fun you get to cuss and spit and chew and talk ugly and

dirty and fight throw your weight around and pretend you're big boys you're on a on a machine it was designed by geniuses to be run by idiots scarcity the open ocean is still one of my favorite places because I can hear the planet breathe on the ocean at night you can watch the fluorescence in the waters it turns it's just an experience I wanted to go there's no reason for me to not go except I had a drink of alcohol in Long Beach California at the beginning of a proposed 24 hour period and I had to drink 23 days couldn't go back under any any threat at all wouldn't have gotten me back on day 23 the madness was gone it wasn't there anymore it had run its course when I turned myself in knowing full well I'm going to prison over this one didn't matter I was saying again I identify with the doctors opinion with the phenomenon of craving and when I'm working with new people thank god that psychiatrist helped me with that too that doesn't mean it simply means I've had a drink alcohol now that is the most important thing in my life is to have another drink of alcohol and I'll be a fine father and worker and everything as long as you understand that I'm going to have a drink yes I will come to the kids ball game let me get my six pack that really it's that important if I can't have that I'm sorry I can't go got to have that drink I've got that there's no treatment for it thank god I can quit battling it I've just got it it's over you can't stop me I can't stop me good and once it runs its course then we run into what's really wrong with me what I did between when it started and when it stopped when I look at that I think my god I've done things that are contrary to who I am I am so ashamed this is not me why did I do that how can I behave like that I don't want to ever do that again and that's a natural and good response and regular people have that response they don't want to do that again but somewhere down the way something in my mind that I still don't comprehend except it is selfishness and it needs the insane idea I'm supposed to feel good all the time kicks in and says have a drink sometimes it's when I feel bad and I want to feel good sometimes it's when I feel good and when I feel bad sometimes when I'm not feeling at all sometimes when I'm feeling too much I drink to be taller to be shorter to be noticed to be invisible those are all valid reasons for drinking the real reason I drink there's no reason at all something comes up some dances I'll have one or in this later stages I don't even think of that I just go do it thank god Doc Silkworth made it that clear if I do that I will have another and another and I'll drink until it ends maybe a week maybe overnight that psychiatrist got it finally when we were able to talk about the fact that you have one on Monday doesn't mean you go start craving mad Jim the car salesman didn't the experiment was so successful whatever immediate distress he felt was gone just like that it was that successful so he had another it may be Friday before you have that second one you'll have it if you're alcoholic and then pretty soon I find myself struck drunk talking to Tony who was headed from Iowa to Denver and ended up in jail in Indiana sounds reasonable to me because somewhere in Arizona had a drink well that's easy to identify with him I was headed here I had a drink and ended up here my sponsor said that he lived with that feeling about 86 percent the first time he had a drink a hundred percent gorgeous so I went back and he did it again he worked from 86 and the one drink that got into a hundred only got into 92 so he had another that got into 98 he had another and he was 102 ever never quite captain and once the start I'm bound to go beyond where I wanted to go just the nature of it sponsored one kid we had trouble with it because he said we were talking about it this is all a matter of mine he said I just went into half two then I just changed my mind that's how we finally got it he finally heard what he was really saying I had a drink and my mind got changed that's what will happen to me too more better I don't have a drink except I don't have the power to say no to that if I have this drink it will be a devastating event I'm gonna have it anyway sometimes I convinced myself it won't be the same and it won't it'll be worse sometimes I'll do it deliberately out of rage and anger you think he I was destroyed things last time watch this one I'm too much of a coward to just break up the furniture which any decent human being I gotta break up the furniture and then puke on the pile anyway just little

ins and outs of them there and working with others I hear it all and the wonder thing is that I've thought it all and so I can I can recognize it and I know a truth if you're alcoholic you don't have any choice so when I carry that into my fellowshiping what does that mean when you come back from having drunk again I'm not one of the stupid people that says oh if he didn't want her to stay sober more than he wanted a drink he wouldn't have had that drink I know better than that she didn't have any choice and it doesn't matter how much you want to the time comes in the life of every alcoholic we're told when the greatest desire to stop drinking is an absolutely no avail and that came for me and it has not come back I still don't have that power so when somebody drinks that's what I expect first that little girl had just had a one-year birthday yesterday that's absolutely phenomenal I've had 32 of those years there's no there's nothing phenomenal in that you expect that now that's true anybody over five or ten it's expected they will stay sober nobody ever believed she'd make a year why should we that's what's remarkable with any alcoholics today sober even a day but particularly a year so my goodness and my impressed with you I don't let that go to your head it's by some form of grace neither you or I understand what that happened okay enough of my bad would you pick it up I love it you know what one of the one of the disadvantages of doing something like this with the person like Don as you it doesn't take much to get engrossed in his insanity about the time I'm sitting on the edge of my seat he says do you want to take it now Jerry no I don't I want to listen for some more Don mentioned to you about not knowing that he was alcoholic when he got here and there are others of us who get here and we're not terribly clear on just what alcoholism is number one or even worse we are led to believe we might be alcoholic and something else because we possess some symptoms that look strikingly similar to some other problems out there and one of the great gifts that was given to me was that 10 years ago when I was 13 years sober I am a slow learner well I thought that step two said something about the pain to believe a power greater yourself could restore your sanity and I thought when I quit drinking I was restored to sanity I didn't realize that the alcoholic mind was just a predisposition to drinking so the insanity was already there and so 13 years sober the best option that I could come up with was to I was on the 32nd floor of the embassy suites hotel in downtown Denver and I thought you know if I can find one of these windows that would open I think I'll just jump and that's not meant to be dramatic it really isn't it's just I'm telling it to you as factually as I know how to tell it to you but 13 years sober that looks like the best thing to do and then it came to me that's not a real good solution because I just intuitively I have a sense that I'll come to somewhere else and what I want is oblivion and that's where the disease of alcoholism untreated will carry you to it's not that I don't want to be here it's that I don't want to be here anywhere else either so unless I can experience an entire psychic change there's little hope that I'm ever going to recover now sadly I was told early on that I just needed to get a relationship with God now listening to quietness of my own mind I know that I'm not entitled to a relationship with God I haven't lived the right kind of life that's where my mind has me when I get here how is a fellow like me who has done all the things that I have done how am I going to get a relationship with God can't be done and way down deep inside I know that because see I understand something very clearly and there is truth to what I'm going to share with you I am fatally flawed or another way of putting it I am a born loser God that's hard to chew up and swallow but it just happens to be true didn't some of us are parents here I intended to be a good parent I was going to be a good father and I was going to be a good husband most importantly I was going to be a good son for my mother I'm the oldest of four boys the oldest boy is supposed to set an example aren't we I have three younger brothers none of whom are alcoholic all three have experienced at different times in their life to accept they have all drunk one time and just got in terrible condition for them one of them parked his car up on a curb in Boston the police officer came to his room in the middle of the night and said son is that your car out there up on

the curb and he said yeah the police officer said well would you please go move it my brother got up went down and moved it and I said well what did you do after that and he said well I said I thought I'm never going to do this again and I said well and then then what and he looked at me he's a very strange man said well I've never done that again I called one brother one time I and you know I was in a deep philosophical frame of mind and I said you know Nick how do you feel about being at work today he said what that's well how you feel about being at work today he said I don't even stop to think about it he said how I feel about being here is I'm not even relevant I have some bills to pay and a family to feed and he said I where were we going with this conversation Jerry but I'm obsessed with how I feel about something kind of I start in one direction and I end up someplace else uh we're talking about symptoms other symptoms in that doctor's opinion it says you know that we drink for the effect that alcohol produces we drink for the effect if you ever have an opportunity to marry a sane person try it it has benefits beyond anything I'll never be able to cover all the benefits that it provides we do things like go into a little wine store because I am in a magnanimous mood and I'm going to buy my wife a bottle of wine because she likes get this she likes the taste of it so we go in this little wine store up here in in a little town of Hopkinton Massachusetts and I'm shopping and there's about 10 or 12,000 bottles of wine in a store I mean it's absolutely gorgeous uh have you looked at the labels on the bottle of booze lately their bottles are shaped pretty the labels are nice they just have an attraction to me that is almost irresistible so we're in this wine store and I go to a she's scotch uh or Scotty so I'm sorry she's Scotty so so we go along these shelves and I and I find a medium price wine because if I go to the good stuff she's going to say no we shouldn't spend that much money so I'm not you know I'm I'm insane but I'm not stupid and so we go to the uh and she says no I don't I don't think that will work I said why why not she said well that's that's rosé and I'm looking for something a white wine I said okay so I go find the white wines and how about this and she says no no it's got kind of a woody taste okay so we look some more and I find another one I said how about this and she said no no that's kind of dry and I'm beginning to get my magnanimous spirit is draining away and we tried two or three more of these and one's not right and this one's not right in the bottom line she says to me why don't we just go home I ask you one little question have you ever gone into a liquor store and walked out empty in with the strangest of all reasons because I didn't have anything that tasted good I can remember choking down hot vodka straight out of bottle after it's been sitting behind a spare tire in the trunk of the car in july in kansas and saying oh that's good terrible gasoline taste in the world and we say it's good god that's good point I'm driving out is that normal non-alcoholic people don't drink for the same reason that we drink I drink for the effect and so this little just a little short piece of this doctor's opinion begins to have a a depth of meaning to me that I had I had not experienced before I was led to this part of our little recovery process and I began to get clear on something about what my truths are because I do I do love the effect produced by alcohol see I was 27 years old I'll never make it to be a circuit speaker because I didn't start drinking when I was 16 all circuit speakers start when they're 16 the rest of us start some other time I started when I was 27 years old I went just for years and years and years went to a little college went to four years in the Navy only reason I didn't miss ships movement because I wasn't on a ship but anyway um god Auggie don't do this to me started to drink when I was 27 years old and you are a dear for reminding me of that started thing had my first drink when I was 27 years old and the most beautiful thing happened my entire life up until that point I had never belonged or fit I mean I've been searching now for a number of years about how to describe that sense of not belonging never fitting wherever I was I didn't fit in my family uh have you ever awakened on Christmas and watched your whole family have a grand time and you're just thinking Christmas sucks and you want so desperately to fit in to what they're doing and you can't I was 27 years old I took a drink of bourbon and

coke and I thought this is okay this a pretty nice evening and then I had another well I learned something and then I was really for the very first time I was okay I mean I was the most okay I'd ever been and I never saw it after that to be anything but just okay and I use that word okay very cautiously uh there was just a sense that always I was different I was different and it just it just changed me so marvellously and I just there there is no way that I can describe what that first drink did for me now in that doctor's opinion it also talks about the inability to distinguish between the true and the faults one of the things that I with a great sense of humor finally just got clear on not long ago was this little untruth of my life have you ever said to someone hey you want to go down have a drink I have I've said hey let's stop by so-and-so's and have a drink do you know what in my entire drinking career I never had a drink never one time from the first time on I've always had drinks plural but yet my mind told me over and over and over again let's have a drink and once I have a drink then it's more than that it's just automatic for me and I like to point out and I use my wife simply because she is number one she's saying and she's cute her now but the other reason because it's such a great disparity between the way she does things in the way I do things and it serves to illustrate some of the things that I've learned about my own truth she can take a little glass of wine and drink sometimes she'll drink all of it not always and when she gets one time we went into a restaurant and she drank some and she got about halfway through and I could tell if she was not enjoying it it didn't taste right and so when she was about and she's about halfway through she pushed it aside and said I just don't care for this and and the clarity with the fact that I don't have that I don't have that capacity I mean I don't care if it's watered down lukewarm don't waste it don't waste it I mean you just don't do that and so the disparity between what the non-alcoholics is like versus what I'm like began to get cleared and so we were going through this I began to look at some of these things and the point I'm really going to come down to is I was having great difficulty with the fact that people had alerted me to the fact that this is a spiritual program don't we hear that early on and that scares the heck out of some of us it really does and I'm thinking about this spiritual element to this whole thing around alcoholism and that's sharing with me these physical attributes or physical characteristics of the disease and I began to look at these and finally I came to an ultimate truth and it has served me well now ever since 10 years ago and that truth was by God you know the way alcohol reacts on my body is different than it reacts on a lot of people it really it does I just have a different reaction to it which means that I am physically different now that is a fact of my life I am physically different from other people from non-alcoholic people being physically different allowed me then to finally cross that bridge that okay because here's the idea I resisted I resisted the idea that I am mentally different I have tried to fit in I have tried to figure out the rules and see what it is that I need to do what is it that everybody else seems to do so well and I can't do it and it turned out that once I accepted the fact that I'm physically different then boom I can make that then it becomes only a small step say well how if I'm physically different why wouldn't have they been only different so I am you know when I was about three and a half years old my little neighborhood I lived in this little small southeastern Kansas town was really in the 40s was a very tame place and so as little kids you could kind of go several blocks away from home and I was walking not far from home one day about three blocks from where I lived and there it was springtime and the iris were starting to bloom and these iris were sticking through this little white fence and I looked at those and I thought you know I'll pick some of those and so I picked some of these little flowers and I took them all and I gave them one another and I will never forget this and it's been a long time ago I handed those two and she says where did you get these and I know from that tone of voice that I'm in deep trouble my pathological lying started at least then because my response was immediate and swift I don't know I wasn't real practiced yet now just for the hell of it I will tell you where I got those flowers at the corner of 10th and Osage in the Otisade

Kansas the man and a woman who lived there were Archie and Effie Bollinger I know them to this day they've been dead for you because they were old in I know them I know them well and exactly where I got the flowers but I knew that there was an inherently where'd you get those flowers I knew that I was in trouble now let's look at the rest of the pathology there if you want to call it that just for the hell sounds good what I felt like I could do was steal something take it home for a good reason give it to somebody they'd think I was a good kid that's what's really going on there if you strip away all the silliness you're so yeah but that you're only three and a half you know I had those same thoughts when I was 33 and a half so there's a pathology I already started that that ability to begin to fabricate my own truth based upon what I intended it to be so there's that little mental twist that I experience 13 years sober and I was telling you about sense standing in this 30 second floor of the embassy suites there was a reason for sharing that and it's not just for the drama here's here's the thing that concerns me from time to time I thought I was alcoholic and severely depressed I did not know that you can be alcoholic and as a part of the untreated alcoholism have a lot of complex problems and suffer a great deal of depression I didn't know you could do that I thought it was a separate deal but that's not what the doctor says he says his alcoholic problem was so complex and his depression so great that may be a part of the disease is what the doctor saying in fact he goes a little stronger than he's saying that is part of the disease now the good news to all this I'll tell you is I think there are times once in a while when I'm depressed but I'm kind of like my brother now these days so what now I don't know I know that I know we have some smokers in this in this crowd I went to a doctor here about a year and a half ago and he he said the howler you know I said 58 he said you might want to consider a quick smoking and I thought oh god can't do that and he said well I said I can give you some medication for it and I said why would I want to take medication we said that will make it a little easier and I said well tell me the nature of the medication so he told me about it and I said well what does that do he said it acts as a mild antidepressant I said why do I need a mild antidepressant we said what do you think the cigarettes are done I thought Elkins you hypocrite here you are you're telling people that you're doing this thing and without medication for your depression and you're sucking down 40 little antidepressant each day having to be called Marlboro Reds well I'll tell you what as you grow along this path there's some things you can't do anymore now don't get me wrong I didn't go home and immediately lay them down and say okay bye god I'm done I don't have any more power today than I had when I got here what I had to do is had to ask for some willingness I have a sponsor and he had gone through this many many many years ago he had never one time criticized me for my continuing smoking we were setting at breakfast one time just about a month before all this occurred and I was listening to him and he was talking about he had to pray for the strength to quit smoking and so I'm sitting there when all this has finally come to me and I'm thinking you know I'm a prayer I thought you know god there's no point in asking for the strength there just really isn't any point because I don't even have the willingness I had asked for willingness to quit now I'm an out-key so I will still try to make deals I said I'm asking for the willingness to provide it you don't have to give me lung cancer or or emphysema for me to quit just this is a little willing this is all I'm looking for I got terribly sick got the worst case the flu I've ever had was in bed for three days when I got up I thought there's no point picking up a cigarette again some fun stuff along the way it really is fun but it starts with getting clear on what what is my truth and so I'll leave you with this little thought now let's see what Donna wants to ask as I went through this doctor's opinion there are just so many nifty little things to help me understand what I really am is an alcoholic I have some other things that make it look like I might suffer some other things but those other things seem to diminish or they hold no power over me now do I still suffer from or you know emotional extremes I don't suffer from them I have them my mind can still come fully awake

at 2 30 in the morning thinking the best thing I could do is put the gun up here and pull a trigger my mind will do that to me don't be afraid of that the reason I say don't be afraid of it is the spirit is now in charge and I don't have the power to do some of the things my alcoholic mind throws out of suggestions see how's the other thing I one of the reasons that I enjoy you all so much when you allow us to come and do this as I thought my alcoholic mind was going to be taking completely away and I didn't happen I have the alcoholic mind over here just not much power left it in it anymore there's some and then I have my new mind and I can go over here to my alcoholic mind from time to time just for the hell of it just to see what's going on and explore it all you do things like I wonder if I'm really alcoholic I don't have to do this stuff and I went to my sponsor one time few years back and actually not a moment just a few about 10 years ago my first time through the book um through the process and and I said you know I go to a lot of AA meetings and I was trying to write a four step inventory that's where I was in this little process I said I go to a lot of AA meetings and he said yeah and I said well listen there's a lot of people who don't have to do this and what I was saying in such a subtle little way was why are you making me do it I understand I've asked him to help me he hadn't come to me and said I want to help you I had asked him if he would help me and I said I just there's a lot of people who they don't have to do this he looked at me and he said well do you want what to have and I said no I don't he said they must not worry about what they do and we put that deal to bed one other time I was in a particular inventory and it came time for me to resolve them in and I said I think what I'll do in this particular instance I think I'll leave the country it's a good way to make an amendment it's probably people that would have made happy anyway he uh I said I think I just don't leave the country he said that's not what we do and I'm the good alcoholic that I am a spiritual giant that I'm growing into I said well then what is it we do many of us have recovered some of us are still only growing there are no experts up here just two old guys who have grown into some dear friends having a grand time with this thing called a spiritual life recovering from alcoholism and getting to share it with you all see I I want you all to find whatever you're looking for and I want you to find it so badly and I have a hunt that if you'll try this you will find it and I can't force you into it I can't get you there sooner I mean I just but I want you to have it but that gives me a purpose isn't it perfect I get to lay it on to you if you want it you can have it if you don't well we'll go drink orange juice we'll have a grand time can we eat any time we'll get ready to bark well it's 11 15 I'm just we don't have to wait until the magic noon number good all right on page 11 of Bill's story in the second edition big where I'm headed is it we really hope that we can have an actual experience out of this weekend this is not an exchange of knowledge and opinions and all that we'll do a lot of that but I'm trying to get us to where we can have a third step experience together then we can show you what that means to us and what we do following that based on this I'd come to believe that sanity was possible meaning that there could be proportion and I could learn to think straight proportion in my thinking and in my emotions everything's out of proportion when it's out of proportion when I'm selfish there's never enough that's the bottom line there's never enough anger so I generate more there's never enough love there's never enough appreciation there's never enough of anything there's never enough booze it's just never enough that's not saying sanity says I'm living in the midst of an abundance and if I don't start giving it away quickly it's going to fill a room up where you ain't room to move you know me in my mind and my heart based on his own spiritual awakening every Thatcher went to see his old friend Bill Wilson knowing full well that Bill was dying and I suggest to you as I read this I become aware of the fact that at the time everybody's talking to Bill Bill is drunk and getting drunker to the point where they have to take him to a hospital when they're through because he's ready to go into it's he's been drinking all day and all night for several weeks he's counted the amount of booze it's going to take him to get through the night which

appears to be about a court I notice how much it's going to take him when he's awake this is why sleeping it's going to take you to court man it's not in good shape he's drunk I need to remember that as I work with others you do not have to be sober to have a spiritual awakening if I'm the kind of sponsor that waits for that I may kill you I contend that if you got this far drunk or sober you're already spiritually awake this isn't about a method to awaken you spiritually it's about a method to make you conscious of the fact that you're already spiritually awake if I'm incapable of being honest with myself in my self-centered state this is going to be a lick of good I've already had a change I truly believe for me that the most demonstrable visible tangible sign of the presence of God is willingness there is so much power in willingness that the very nanoseconds that I become willing to change I have already changed I've changed from being unwilling to being willing that's a lot of power I can bring that to in fact it tells me here that that power that particular demonstration of power is indispensable I must have that there's a number of places along the path where without that a muscle just going out and drank or go to a movie or something because this won't mean anything Ebby just kept talking with Bill the only thing he didn't do was accept a drink from Bill which didn't bother Bill a whole lot he had more for himself anyway he was a little surprised because he knew Ebby was a drinker like he was and Ebby just kept presenting himself from the path he had found and and Bill saw this I contend that he must have been awake to see this you don't see this when you're asleep I saw that my friend was much more than inwardly reorganized he was on a different footing his roots grasped new soil that's what I needed here I've got to be a new person I cannot be the same person in 1966 my two boys and I were on the road I had tried to be Superman I want to work for security benefit life out in Topeka on a debit you don't know what a debit is that's where the salesman comes around you got a five-hour premium he collects it every month because he doesn't come out and collected he probably won't get paid small premium insurance and it was either 800,000 in seven months or 700,000 in eight months of new premium I sold on that debit because I didn't know you couldn't do that I just did it I'd have been in the millionaires club my first year in the business I didn't know what that was then it didn't matter I just and then I had to quit that job because I hadn't learned yet that the money that I was collecting wasn't mine until it went through their books I'd have to take my paycheck to make the books balanced which left us short and then I had to take the premiums and pay the bills and as soon as the check got you know I was getting tiresome went to Kansas City and went to work for an IBM training school and three months I was sales manager and within six months my wife and children were gone I drank a little that didn't why she left it doesn't matter why she left a month later the boys came into my custody and I was no longer able to be superman I was unable to be that so we hit the road anyway along that road which was a difficult and highly dramatic road I was restless irritable discontent we moved every 30 days at least because I'd smell the red cross and social services coming my way and late hit town at least that's what I thought I got in with a really interesting group of artists with small blue dope which had a lot of speed got hooked up with Alsey Stanley and got into the finest acid in the world I'm not a drug addict well I'm not just taking drugs as a mechanic I always had a choice for the drugs I could start or stop if moderated or whatever that was not an obsession I just liked it but I could quit anyway in the midst of all this the real drama was the pain inside that was driving me on out trying to find a place to live trying to find home for these kids couldn't do it uh in 1966 we got hooked up with some Indian folks and the peyote people nice people got hooked up with some really good marijuana sources out of Guatemala and that's what get the best prices are really high then at around about two hundred dollars a kilo and in the midst of all that I got a call from Alba Kirkley only Albert called me from Alba Kirkley this is we got a problem we just picked up 30 keys down deep Mexico we got it as far as whereas and our driver got busted on some pickle-ass little deal and he's in jail and the stuff's in the hotel room

waiting for somebody to go and get it you want the job and I said sure Albert I got these two little boys with me once four one six sure Albert I don't know good and looking back on that I can define I used to wonder why do they think I'm an associate path why do they think I might be a psychopath I got these two little boys it's natural to go into war as and pick up an illicit load of marijuana and bring it back why not I didn't do it for money my price was two kilos which at that time was four hundred dollars there's nothing chump change I did it for prestige I did it for self-esteem I'm the only one in a whole United States that they thought of calling who had what it took I had no problem with insanity now again I'm not an idiot what I found out later is that they called me because somebody said Albert called Prince he's crazy he'll do it they knew so we got a VW bus I had them run a VW bus I've got a good mind I worked out the dimensions of 30 kilos that's perfectly into a single bit air mattress well the kids and I got into war as I made them get it out of the hotel that was the only danger spot that I could see open up that air mattress and stuff the 30 keys in there and resealed it but dirty diapers on top of that and then put my kids on top of that so the one we hit the border crossing just before we hit it I turned around and screamed at the children so they'd be crying because they don't mess with you I got to be a different person it is not possible for me to live with the kind of motivation and the kind of thinking that allows that because my children were not in any physical danger had we gotten busted they'd have been taken to a foster home which is far better than they were made what I did to harm my children is it right out of nowhere they're only linked with life the only person who really loved them screamed at them for no reason at all for self-centered purposes I cannot be that ever again I've got to be different and there's the promise I can be get my roots into a new soil it's incomprehensible for me to even think but I could ever do that again because I couldn't but if you have come see me I can show you how to make the change so you don't have to do that that's surprising not just not cracking and we've all done something stupid like that in one way or another do you ever steal from the kids piggy bank do you ever get caught I got caught and stood there and lied to him about it and then wonder in later years why don't you trust me I got the damn piggy bank I'm busted no not me why don't you trust me different footing despite the living example of my friend that remained in me the veggie vestiges of my own prejudice of course just because I see it happening for you I gotta get past yeah but you're different but I'm different I don't deserve it or see I had done the one thing I'd been taught growing up it was unforgivable I'd killed myself someone along the way told me that God won't forgive that one if you've been told that it's a lie trash it it's just my personal experience if I hadn't been forgiven there is no such thing so Bill's fighting with his conceptions of God or actually his concepts of God and I point out to you the difference in the words we do things with words so I'm a word mechanic a concept of God is a rigid boxed in structured no room to move idea this is the way it is there's death in that and this doesn't talk about having a concept of God every said to Bill why don't you choose your own conception of God the conception is kind of a loose idea it's got room to move about and be added to and discarded from it and that may sound like a petty point but in my kind of mind that's important so I have to it affects the way I do things because it means I have to spend much more time learning how to describe than to define anytime I can define for you I have just limited whatever I just defined for you in for me I don't want that kind of mind anymore I've been to the first day before the first day of creation and all these assets will do that for you put that on a resume someday you think that's important what did you do last year went to the first day before the first day of creation higher hand let's just what we're looking for putting up in the VP's office we can really use that kind of thing that statement hit me hard Bill says and he's drunk he's been drinking all night he's been drinking all day with Ebby he's drunk when he hears why don't you choose your own conception and he says that statement hit me hard it melted the icy intellectual mountain and whose shadow I had lived and shivered for many years I stood in the sunlight at last

it sounds to me like a spiritual awakening you don't want to describe there's one what I want it looks like I stood in the sunlight the icy intellectual mountain was melted that cold cold I see cold mind that I had got melted and then became open it sounds like a spiritual awakening to me it was only a matter of being willing to believe in a power greater myself not even believing just being willing to believe that's for the power yes nothing more was required of me to make my beginning if anybody in this room is having difficulty with that that's really all it takes just a willingness to believe our old timers used to say try it for a while if you don't like it we'll refund your misery on the way out the door and you can take mine with you it's stacked over in the corner I saw the growth could start from that point from the willingness to believe all of my experience in life sober has been based on willingness that is the foundation it's all I brought here it's all I have today if I lose that I will stop growing I am willing to not know anything so that I can learn the more I know the less I can learn so I just soon know nothing it's easier and everything becomes interesting scary but interesting anyway you all kind of hungry these guys have put together the ugliest sandwich I've ever seen in my life it's big enough for the whole crowd with seconds even and if that's what what time would you like to get back together it's 11 30 now one o'clock 12 12 31 what do I hear let's see the hands for 12 30 let's see the hands for one o'clock what does it want it for 30 I heard one I would say that the 12 30 was represented the majority would I would to yeah 12 30 okay that gives us an hour and we'll be a little late we may be we may be in a little trouble here this afternoon I was sitting over here pondering where to start this afternoon session and I don't know how it is no big deal I just follow Prince and I walk over there and he talked to me and we got all through and so so what do you want to do and he said well I'll just follow you so so we're all in trouble here I too a little bit of a wordsmith simply because my alcoholic mind has a tendency to read into words meanings that aren't there well you can tell me that this is simple but not easy and what I really hear is if it's simple it should be easy I hear that and it's just you know and so when it gets hard I want to quit I'm always going to quit if it gets hard but the word I want to talk about just briefly as we pick back up and move forward just a little bit is Bill was talking about the willingness to believe in a power greater than myself a willingness to believe and one of my great difficulties with all of this was I thought if I were willing that man I had to want it and doesn't are you willing and that's the deal are you willing I don't care if you want it or not one time I I was contemplating where this little process might take me if I got into that third step really and in sincere and complete and total surrender I thought well god if I give my life to god I mean no telling what he may have me do and then I got clear I I knew what he was going to have me do he was going to make me a missionary down in for a down in Mexico I told this story a couple of years ago here it got me a sombrero so I'll tell it again but I gave you the short version the bottom line was I got clear that if I do this thing God's going to send me to Mexico and I'm going to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to just an all male group never get to be close to a woman again blah blah blah I have no money and I thought I am not willing to do that and the deal was that I didn't want to do that and took me about four days in a lot of prayer to finally get clear on the fact that am I willing to do this I don't care if I want it or not see I don't have the character I used here the old-timer talk about this deal is about building character you ever hear that then I just send chills up your spine when people talk about building character I don't want to build character not in my nature to want to do something like that because it sounds like work willing to believe in a power greater than myself tell you what this little deal of ours is real nifty in this sense you can fight and resist this as long as you wish there will come a point in time Don mentioned it in his own words your coper is broken for me I did I don't have anything I'm beaten and when I'm beaten I will give up and I will no longer wrestle with this deal about my conception of God either he is or he is now it's just going to be that simple and and you'll get there if you're a real alcoholic you'll get there we talked

this morning about how much we had to drink over our lifetime did anybody start out drinking a quart no we don't and well wait a minute wait a minute there's always one she says yeah I did I hate to ask you what did you end up in the in quantity wise and per day he started off drinking a quart where did how much did you drink at the tail end five to six words okay points still being the same is that it takes more medication for our disease because our disease is progressive in nature isn't it willing to believe that a power greater myself can restore my sanity and when it got clear to me was when it finally gone on me that no matter how hard I try to do this thing I cannot do it and why I resisted that idea for so long I don't know the truth matters I can't do the right thing it's not in me to do the right thing I have no discipline I'd like to say that I'm a real spiritual discipline giant I mean it sounds so good but I'm not I'm just a weaver the lackey who will not do this if god does not give me the strength of character to keep moving forward so everything good in my life has come as a result of this and the power flowing into my life and then on back out to whoever I can get to stand still so I can talk about it you see I again there's nothing noble about me being here I'd like I'd love for you to think I'm noble but the real truth matters this is just what I do it's what I am nothing more than anything less just what I am but there's a marvelous sense that comes with that and that is out of all the insanity that's appeared in my life there's now something useful and I say to each of you out there no matter what your experiences has been a few months ago I was with a young man in Maine and he was 21 years old and he said I said well Charlie tell me what's your story he said oh I said I'm not gonna bore you with my story I said why not Charlie and he said well he said you guys you you've really been around he blah blah blah talking about how big our stories and how dramatic our stories sound I said well Charlie we got two hours to drive from Fort London up to the middle of Maine uh what's your deal tell me about it anyway bore me and so Charlie told me his story and by the time he was 15 he was in serious trouble but time he's 18 he was in jail but time he's in 21 he was in serious serious jail uh prison trouble his story was absolutely fascinating and his recovery process absolutely amazing and he had me totally captured a totally audience all the way from Portland up to the center part of the Maine so whatever your experience has been let me share with you it's valuable it's valuable we talked early on in this session you need to be armed with the facts about ourselves see I want to be armed with what I intended to do the truth matters I'm powerless to do what I intend to do and I really would like to do better but I can't so it all comes back am I willing to believe that there is a power greater than me if I'm willing to do that I'm really placing myself in a position to begin to think about a total and complete surrender now I it's easy for me and I think it's probably not that difficult for anybody else to do kind of a little bit of a check and ask yourself where did I get to when I was running the show where did I get to when I was running the show I didn't get any place either and see I was 27 years old and I was president of a financial institution in Kansas and at that time I was the youngest president of any financial institution in Kansas I was really on the way eight years later Kansas Bureau of Investigation and Judge and a couple of lawyers and a good doctor we're all sitting around saying what are we going to do with this boy which was a familiar topic and people sitting around in meetings since I was about five saying what are we going to do with this boy I'm never real bad I am just just enough I'm just not all upset