

Big Book Weekend

2001 | Part 6 | Reading edition

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Transcript

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Our once the printer's area was found, GSO put it back the way it was supposed to be, and cut all kinds of hell because they have changed the Big Book. We are funny. I'm prepared to look at this list from an entirely different angle. Is that true, I must ask? Am I really willing to look at it differently? Because this will change my life. We began to see that the world makes people really dominate us. If I resent you, you owe me. In that state, the wrongdoing of others fancy to reel had the power to actually kill. Bruce says, how do I know whether it's fancy or real? He says, if you're involved in it, it's fancy. Because it isn't what really happened. We've already been over there. It's fancy. If I'm still pissed today about 1973, it's fancy. But even if it's real, I can get angry at it.

A lot of folks misunderstand that it says we must be free of the anger. Doesn't mean I won't be getting it. That's a natural thing. If you don't get angry at some of the stuff that happens on this planet, you're sick. I tell you, I did not feel kindly to the guy that stuck my grandson's hand in boiling water. Can't hold on to that. Oh, they have no use to him, his mother or his grandmother or anybody. If I'm holding on to that, I must be free of that anger. So how can we escape? We saw these resentments must be mastered.

But how? We couldn't wish them away anymore in alcohol. The next instruction is, this is our course. Meaning we, as alcohol economists, those who are involved in this spiritual search, this is how we deal with resentment. We realize the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. What does that mean to me? When I'm spiritually sick, I'm cut off from my source and when I'm cut off from my source, I behave badly.

I don't have to like what this guy did, but like myself, maybe. Perhaps he's spiritually sick, cut off from his source. And somehow he was trying to get the kid to stop crying for goodness sakes. And through some weird twist of the mind causing pain will stop a baby from crying. I don't get it. But I work with people like that all the time. That's the thinking. And I don't even get the luxury of saying that sick son of a bitch. I get to say perhaps that he liked myself.

And though we did not like their symptoms in the way they disturbed us, like ourselves, they were sick too. We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience we were carefully granted sick friend. Right into roadblocks first time out, sick people did not get pity and tolerance and patience out of me. They scared me. I had to have a script for everything in life. And there's only one script for visiting with sick people.

Is there anything I can do for you? There's no way I can say that because there might be. And I knew what it was. Change my bed pan. Sit here for an hour. Hold my hand and read to me. Run across the street. Do something for me. When I'm self-centered. No. More better, I just stay the hell away from sick people. And I am so petty. And I acknowledge that God. I can't do this. I don't know how to do that. Please show me.

When a person offended, we said to ourselves, this is a sick man, how can I be helpful to him? God saved me from being angry. I will be done. God saved me from being angry. Don't make him nicer. He's not the problem anyway. Save me from being angry or kill me. I will be done. Remember in Fiddler on the Roof, because there's some things going to piss you off. In the Fiddler on the Roof, the rabbi has come to town. And the boys are

asking him questions.

In the rabbi saying, there's a prayer for everything. And Telly is astonished. You mean there's even a prayer for the Tsar? And the rabbi says, of course. God bless the Tsar. Far away from us. And that comes to mind here. We avoid retaliation or argument. That's a new way of thinking. And I'm not talking about the one that will get you and I in a physical confrontation. It's the one that's going on up here I must avoid.

This is where it all happens anyway, because it's the only place I win. 100% of the time, and I win in 50 different ways. Never lost up here. I must avoid that. We wouldn't treat sick people that way. I'm warped and I get these bizarre pictures. My behavior is carried to this extreme. Going to the hospital to see Jerry's because he's sick and walking and shake the bed. Get up you lazy son of a bitch. Quit being sick.

You're scaring me. That's not that weird. If we do, we destroy our chance of being helpful. Then my ego gets slapped down again. We cannot be helpful to all people. But at least God will show me how to take a kind of intolerant view toward each and every one. First time out, I thought I'd test him on that. I'm a God tester, by the way. I do not believe that God ever tests me. But I have found great benefit in testing God at every possible opportunity.

So here I am. I got you. Show me how to take a kind of intolerant view toward Adolf Hitler. I think I got him. It went all that long and I was thinking about Volkswagen. Now he stole that whole idea from Porsche, but he put it on the street. He had been the only decent thing the man ever did. Oh, I've seen one of his drawings. It wasn't bad. The event didn't matter. The fact is my prayer was answered and that's what was important.

I was shown a way to take a kind of intolerant view toward the monster. A new way of thinking. That's what's going on here. These days I am afraid I have to go to God from time to time and say, I am so petty. And even in my spiritual eye, I'm so petty. I can't find a way to take a kind of intolerant view of this person. Please show me how. So I'm a heretic. I add to our own prayers. But I need that acknowledgement. You think it's 32 years of sobriety, I wouldn't.

Must be on sobriety. I've been living as a spiritual being for 32 years practicing rigorously. You think I wouldn't get pissed in petty ways. That's about the only way I get pissed these days. The big stuff doesn't bother me anymore. It's a little stuff. It just makes me ashamed of myself. Anyway, there's the new way of thinking. And unless I am willing to take that attitude, these questions become meaningless. There's no way unless I understand that they like myself are perhaps sick too.

And I'm looking for a kind of intolerant view of the person. How can I say, what was I wrong? Or as I had to fall account? So I'll go back to the list. Putting out of our minds that wrongs others have done will look for our own mistakes. There is running through my family, I am sad to say, a warp on that that I will set straight right now. Some members of my AA family are doing inventory right down their part in the situation.

As long as I'm only looking for my part, I'm still assuming you have a part too. That is not what this says. I'm to put out of my mind entirely any wrong with you. Now you didn't do anything. This whole business here is about forgiveness, which is all about making as if it had never happened. How do I get over the pain by making it as if it had never happened? That's what forgiveness is about. Every great spiritual teacher throughout history has

tried to tell us that.

It did not happen. It's the only freedom. So I don't look for my part. I look for what do I look for? I look for my own mistakes, my mistakes. Now I find seven questions here. And I can make a case for eight, but I don't because it's silly and pedantic. Let me go over. I look for my mistakes. There's number one. What was my mistake? I usually answer that at the end because it takes me that long to get some clarity, because it's a mistake in thinking.

One of the things I know about the alcoholic mind is that if I have one basic lie working, there's all kinds of mistaken ideas that trail off of that. If I can get rid of the basic one, I don't have to chase the rest of it. They just go up with smoke. So what was my mistake? Where have we been selfish? There's number two. Dishonest. Number three. Self-seeking. Number four. Frightened. Number. Wonder. Five. Well, a situation has not been entirely our fault.

We tried to disregard the other person entirely. Where are we to blame? I didn't even have a question mark after. That's six. The inventory was ours, not the other man's. When we saw our faults, we listed them. Where am I at fault here? Now that may be the difference between fault and blame gets brought up all the time. One is the way I think and the other's the way I act. And I just do that for me because I need both.

And it doesn't matter which one you put it under. The idea is to find it. My problems come from mistaken ways of thinking. Whole ways of thinking. I have rights. That's a mistaken way of thinking. Life is not fair. That's a whole way of thinking. If I get rid of that, then unfairness disappears. You did that to hurt me. That's a whole mistaken way of thinking. Whatever it was you did, you didn't do it to hurt me. I don't know why you did it.

That's the truth. Once I get rid of that, the pain can go. I've got a mind that works all the time and I've got to make sure it understands these kinds of things. What was I at fault? In 1966, on my older boy's birthday, I brought him a big surprise. Pardon me. My older boy ain't talking right now. I brought him federal narcotics agents. They broke down the front door in the back door. Inside, went in and came in making the noise.

That's on page four of how to make it a rest of the federal book. Well, they have to. They're used to getting shot back after they move fast. Knocked me down, handcuffed me, stood on my neck. Called me names that I wish I could remember. I've been around the world and in the Navy and they had some new stuff. It was good. My four-year-old out of shriek and this big cop swung around and almost shot my boy. Well, he made my list in 1968 when I made it.

And part of it was that he almost shot my boy. They didn't have a warrant. All they had was a telegram from a grand jury. Isn't that silly? I've been doing what they said I had done, but it wasn't fair because all they had was the grand jury telegram saying there's enough evidence here to bring him in. You don't have to wait for a warrant. I wanted a warrant by God. Anyway, we got through that whole deal. And what was I at fault in that whole thing?

I brought those people to my house with a hand engraved invitation. My activities made me their business. That's what they get paid for as guys like me. And I'd be mad at them for doing their job. Secondly, the operating

word concerning my son was he almost shot my son. He didn't shoot him. I owe him a debt of thanks. This was a highly trained professional. Thank God. I'd have shot the kid. Just out of reflex action.

So I'm free of that. If I ever run across him, I owe him a debt of thanks. And I owe him an apology. Thanks for not shooting my boy. And I apologize for putting you in a position where you damn it. You had to kill a four-year-old. How do I make amends for all that? I quit being their business. They don't come to my house anymore. I don't even invite them in for dinner. They made me nice people, but I don't want to know about them.

The freedom does come from that. Now that's high drama stuff. I love telling that story because it not only illustrates this, there's drama there. We could make a short movie out of that. Let me read you some fresh inventory. We make you cry. This is maybe four months old. This day I was tired of manipulative people, rude and demanding people. I work in corrections, and it's filled with them. Not inmates, they're easy.

And I sponsor a lot of people, and this fits them too. manipulative, rude and demanding people. Because they interrupt my emotional state by forcing me to respond to their agendas. Poor old me. I resent them because they're using up my time and my energy on things I have no interest in. They're forcing me to respond. Oh, this was real. I was steaming. I was pissed at them because they just kept insisting that I saw their dilemmas on their time schedule.

Both in and out of the program. Sound familiar? My damn phone rings. One more whiner, and I'm quitting this whole outfit. This interferes with myself, esteem. I'm afraid that I won't solve the right thing at the right time when somebody yells at me. My ambition, at the time my ambition was to just be left the hell alone. I've got a book I want to read. My security, if I make the wrong move at work, I don't have a job.

The wrong move when I'm angry is any move I make. Now, where are my selfies? Wanting to serve only at my convenience. But that was real. And I like the fact that so many people were calling me because I like them thinking that I know that I have answers. Hell of a conflict. Self-seeking because I keep indicating that I'm available 24 hours a day. Makes me look good. For the payoff of being spiritual and wonderful. And I have a feeling that I'm obligated.

That's just not true, but that's where it was. That's self-seeking. Dishonesty for not setting some limits and telling people I cannot always be available. Indicating that I am interested in their problems. That's really dishonest. If you call me because she just left you and you want to know what to do, you called the wrong guy. I don't care. If you're having difficulty in a relationship, don't call me. I've never been able to figure out how to have a sane, sick relationship.

So I don't have any answers for you. And when I feel like this, I'm not interested. Selfish and dishonest. No questioning about it. Dishonesty because I'm thinking that it's my time anyway. I used up my time December 25th, 1967. I used it all of it. Every last minute of it. Isn't this awful? Give me another federal agent, please. And it's dishonest for me to even indicate that I may have answers. I don't have any answers.

The people I sponsor know that. I only need, it's dishonest because I only need to be available to offer comfort. You've got a problem, go ahead and call. I've got a little tape that goes around and says, Huh? Really? And it goes off every 18 seconds. Ha, shall we? Where have I been frightened? Then if I don't respond to these,

then I will be thought of as too good for people. The hell do I care what you think about me?

On this day I did. I'm frightened that I'll be talked about in dislike. I really don't care. I'm being totally dishonest by even giving in to that. Where am I to blame? Well, I'm going to blame for setting the stage by indicating that I am the image of AA personally. Because I bought into a party line and made it personal instead of principal. When anyone reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA to be there. And that's true.

For that I'm personally responsible. But I got to thinking it has to be my hand. So I've set this whole thing up. The truth begins to emerge. How silly. Where am I at fault for not being clear about my time? I've been willing this to be a problem solver rather than a guide. Where am I wrong? Oh, this is awful stuff. To feel put upon it all. My life does not rest on being or does rest on being of use to others. I need to be clear about what that means though.

And I'm wrong to worry about being liked, admired and talked about or judged. I really don't care. It's over. The making of amends are simple. I didn't do any direct harm to anybody. But I have clarified my time availability. I've clarified for people what I am, who I am. I've clarified for me that. The phone still rings. I still get the whiners. I still turn on the tape. If you think there's a tape on there, ask a question.

That fixes the tape people. By the way, we found this very nice small crucifix out here on the table. I've got it. Okay. We'd like to take a little break. Get back to be one more little session. Then we're going to eat Chinese. Tonight what's available if you wish. There are some secondary benefits that calm as a result of getting firmly onto this path. And one of them is this. When I reflect upon my life, I look at a guy who would like to be called a stand-up fellow.

Only I'm not. I like to be a man who you would describe as he stays the course. Except that I'm not. I quit when the go on gets a little bit tough. This is truly the only thing I've ever started my life and stuck with. It's the only thing. And I can't even take credit for it myself. See, the book says way over at the end says we're an undisciplined lot. We let God discipline us and God does. Because if I get to the point where I'm missing you too much and missing what we have too much, I will do what I need to do to get reconnected.

And I've done this long enough now that I can't stay disconnected very long. The pain is too damn great. The road does narrow a bit if you get a chance to stick with it for a while. And once you start it, you will eventually stick with it. We're going to do some question and answer stuff. Before I do that, I want to share one little gift that comes out of that seemingly rigorous fourth column of the resentment inventory.

There's humor to what I'm going to talk to you about and there's truth to what I'm going to talk to you about. Most of all, there's an illustration of one principle involved in that fourth column, and I want to get it to you and I do it best by sharing some of my own experience around it. I had a particularly troublesome resentment toward my mother. I honest to God with all my heart believed that she had abused me terribly, physically.

I mean, I really believe this. And so I'm writing this inventory with the infamous D Don and calling him from help from time to time. And I finally got to that one and I'm trying to write the fourth column and I say to him, listen, I need to talk to you about a particular resentment I'm having a little trouble with. And he said, okay, what's the deal? So I began to talk to him. And I talked, and I talked, and I talked, and I basically called what I

was saying in so many words as I don't think I was wrong in any way here.

I can't find any fault for me in this particular inventory. And we talked about, I say we, I talked about four or five minutes and I wore his patience out and he finally said to me, he said, that sounds like therapy shit to me. I told you about the stiletto in the lung before I felt it again. But I also knew that I just heard some more of the truth. It was therapy shit. I had not been in therapy, but still therapy shit.

We have a lot of therapy around the fellowship. It happens. Again, he talked to you about confrontation without a real answer is brutality. I said, well, what do I do? He said, let's look at the instructions again. I said, okay, try to disregard the other person involved entirely. Entirely. Set him out of the picture if you can. This is not about them. See, there's a line that precedes the difficulties that I have with that little thing called my part. Don't talk to you about it.

About two pages prior to that, the book says when describing the alcoholic. Admitting he may be somewhat at fault, he is sure the other person is more to blame. See, there's the danger. For me, I say things like this. What that looks like is this. Well, hell, I know I didn't. You know, I wasn't perfect here, but. And then I launch into your deal. And I make that jump in a heartbeat. Well, sure, I know. I admit I'm wrong, but. And then we're going to talk about your stuff.

And it doesn't take me very long until your stuff is about 98% of the problem. And mine's about two and because it's so small and it's insignificant. Let's not even look at it. But again, I told you losing my rights in the third step and trying to disregard the other person involved entirely in the fourth column of the fourth step of the resentment inventory with another one of those spiritual gifts. Because when I was able to do that, then the prayer that occurs between the third and the fourth column began to take effect.

Once I take the other person out of the picture and try to disregard him entirely, I began to look at me. And what was going on with me and it begins to get so clear. So very, very clear. Now, about the being abused, here's what happened. Love these big-time stories. 13 years old, I'm wanting to go uptown on a Friday night. I say to my mother, mom, I'm going uptown. She says, no, I would rather you stay home and study. I think you should, don't you?

And I said, no, I want to go uptown. She said, I think you really ought to stay home. And we got going back and forth like that. And finally she said something to me and I changed my story. She said, son, I don't know when you're lying to me and when you're telling the truth. And we got into hell of an argument over the fact that I'm not telling the truth. I wasn't telling the truth before, but now I am. And such an honest guy that when I lie, I will eventually tell the truth. If you keep that made long enough.

And so I'm trying to tell this and she got frustrated. Now, I'm 13 years old at the time and I was a young boy who matured quickly. So physically, I was about as big at 13 as I am now. And my mother's a little slip of a woman. And all my heart, my time, my warped memory had completely convinced me that I had been beaten. And what really happened was this. My mother was frustrated. She's got a one boy out of four that lies to her on a pathological basis.

She doesn't know what to do. She's got three boys who don't and she is determined that she's going to raise

four honest kids. That's what was, honesty was revered in my family. It wasn't just a nice deal to have. I mean, my family reveres honesty. We didn't have a lot of money, but they all had some honesty. I had lots of it, except this one kid. And it frustrated her, so she began, so she had a broom in her hand and just out of sheer frustration, she took a swipe at me.

Now, she didn't touch me. She didn't even come close. Now, my three younger brothers are watching this. Now, let's find out where the damage really occurred and how my mind could twist this over time. She chased me because she was determined she was going to get in one shot. And so I had to run, big tough ombre that I am. I had to run for my mother, buy my little brothers, and that was god awful humiliating. And the only way I could comfortably remember that story was I was getting beaten within an inch of my life.

And I can remember that so clearly that that's all that happened that day, just a lot of humiliation. Humiliation. And I turned it into a deal where I allowed my mother to believe that she had been the cause of my alcoholism. For years and years and years, took a long time to get that a man's maid. Wasn't something I could go to her and do it one time and get it cleaned up. It took all that I had, all that the spirit had, and my wife's helped before I could finally get her clear on it.

But that's the crucial nature of trying to follow the instructions and hooking up with somebody who's been down this little road. Because they'll see things and they'll see where we're going in some strange ways. And if they're spiritually guided, they'll tell you the truth that they'll tell it to you with a real solution. That's enough of that, that sounds heavy and it's not meant to be, it's just meant to be illustrated.

Do we want to do some questions? Yeah, we still have two little inventory formats that we want to go through, but I'm tired, he's tired, you're tired. With your permission we'd like to pick those up and then move on, hopefully all the way through the 12th step. All that's doubtful and do that tomorrow morning. You have the toughest job of all and you've done it well. Sitting still and listening is the toughest job of all.

So we'd like to enlist your participation some. We've got a microphone there and we've got two up here. If there's something in particular you would like to address or ask or comment on, this would be a good time to do that. If that's all right with you all, we'll just kind of open forums, some questions, comments, whatever. Until the Chinese food gets here or 6.30 whichever comes first or when you're sick of it. Is that okay with everybody?

I did not pick any skills, so you're on your own. Please feel free to come to that microphone or this one. Either one of these up here. Reason for that is I've listened to tapes before where they had one of these and if you don't use a microphone, people listening to the tape will never hear the question, although here's the answer. Okay, so we've got plenty of mics around if you would. Thank you. Just some of the stuff that we were talking about yesterday, Jerry, about like if you could walk through a piece of resentment and inventory about like somebody like, let's say you really did get beat up.

You know, the little kid, the 10 year old that really did get beaten and walk through how you'd actually go through that all the way through the fourth column. Ruthie, that one is so old and I honestly don't remember all the little pieces of it. I'm talking about the beating I took when I was 11. I'll do my best because it's long gone. It's going to be hard to do it in the format without sitting down and hiding it. What is it you really want to know about that one?

It's more people that really were pretty severely, physically, sexually abused on an ongoing basis. And so for me, it's just, it's really helpful to walk through it. Okay, I think you want to talk about where it really did happen. Where it really didn't happen is really like I guess it's the fourth column. How do you make that shift to really speak? One of the things that Gary and I were talking about yesterday is that a lot of people have looked at the fourth column in those kind of resentments.

Like the place where I finally see that I'm at fault is that I harbored this resentment against this person for 25 years and I held them at arm's length. And some of the stuff that we were talking about is that doesn't really cover the whole picture. That perhaps there's a lot more that I'm not seeing about where I was actually selfish, where I was self-seeking in those circumstances. In those circumstances, and this is not going to sit well, I'm sorry.

The fact is I'm selfish because I think I shouldn't be treated that way. That's one place. I'm better than that that you should treat me like that. It didn't fair. It didn't right. I'm self-seeking because I just don't want to be treated that way. There's a lot about humiliation in that. The feeling of powerlessness. I am not big enough to defend myself. Nor do I think I should have to defend myself. I'm just a little prince.

I should not have to put up with this. That's selfish and self-thinking and it's dishonest. Ruthie, what I come to when it really happened is that there isn't no explanation for why it happened to me, except that I got caught in the midst of a whole bunch of circumstances, some of which had to do with the people on the other side who were passing on a lesson to me in the name of love. The main thing I can remember out of it is that I shouldn't be treated this way.

I was wrong because the activity that brought it on went on over a period of an entire summer, and we were hiding. There's a great dishonesty in my saying. I didn't know better. There's a great dishonesty in my insisting that I understand why this happened to me. There's a lot of things that go on on this planet. I don't understand. And if I try to, I'm going to mess them up. Then I get off into fantasy. It's not satisfying because it still leaves the question why me totally unanswered.

Why not as a joke? Why me? Who the hell knows why me? I can capitalize on it. I can tell you that you can get free from that kind of thing where there is no real answer. And what it wasn't fair, and it wasn't right, you can still get free of that. What's my mistake? It's that same self-centered thing that says I'm going to slip by one of the nature's most dangerous planets without any scars. That's a mistake in thinking. All the rest of you can get hurt, but not me.

I'm going to slide through it. I don't know if that's making any sense. The self-pity end of that is so devastating that I would rather be free of it than have an answer to it. Because if I keep insisting on having an answer, I'm going to start passing it on, and I'm going to start making demands on the world and on other people, and I'll end up causing the same kind of pain. The answer is I don't know. That's what came out of it.

Except the one little piece in saying I didn't know it was wrong, yes I did. I participated in something I didn't know why it was wrong. I just knew it was because we were hiding. And the big kid said don't get caught, and it felt so good that I was willing to risk it, but I wasn't wanting to pay the price. Those are the dishonesty that come out of that. Does that help any and all? It's totally unsatisfactory answer.

And I'm having to go back and redo it in my head, but that's what came through that. I have the same thing when I was in that marine brig. I don't know if you've ever been in a marine brig, but you don't want to be. Three months after I got out, we read an article in the newspaper that 16 of those guards had been arrested for maltreatment of prisoners. I could have told you that. Why me? Well, it thought I'd been on time. It wouldn't happen.

That doesn't excuse it or explain it. It simply means I'm going to accept it as it is. And I'm not going to pass that on. I quit war in 1953. I'm through. It's over. Don't draft me. I won't go. I have several physical, mental, and emotional ailments that's guaranteed to keep me out. I used to say I go when the old men go. Now I am one. It's too late. I would much rather be in a prison camp than fight anymore. I surrender.

One of my favorite characters, as a matter of fact, since we're just meandering, is that old man in Italy? Is that my phone? That's it. Mine sounds just like that. What's the book, Jerry? About the World War II Air Base. Catch a 22. The old man's 104 years old, living in the upstairs of the whorehouse. And the young 20-year-old soldier is just chewing him out because he's just found out the old man tolling. When the Italians was here, I waved the Italians' flag.

When the Germans were here, I waved the Americans, or the German flag. Now you guys are here. Yay, Henry Ford. The young kids tell him what a phony he is. Not terrible, but it says that he won't stand for anything. And he simply says, I'm 104 years old, and you probably won't live until next week. May not be a good attitude, but it's mine. Anyway, I feel inadequate, Rosie, but that's all I know from that. It's as if it did not happen.

Matthew. Matthew alcoholic. I didn't know if you're going to cover fear in sex, but the thing I wanted to kind of question about and get some experience on is the necessity of having a chosen sex ideal. The book talks about that when I worked with guys and just do what was told to me. Don't write this if you don't want it to change. I'm watching that destroy the unity in some groups in our area, and I believe that has something to do with it, so you can be sure the guys in my group are sure to give me hell about it.

You know, we just kind of stay accountable, but anyway, I wonder if you could speak to that a little bit than the necessity of having a children. First time through the sex inventory is an inventory of misconduct sexually. I look at that whole sex inventory as a conduct inventory. Whether it be my sex ideal or my business ideal or my home ideal, it's about my relationships. It has nothing to do with anything except how I'm going to behave. You know I understand that one.

This is how I would like to be ideally. It's not about finding the ideal woman or the ideal job or anything. It's about me and my conduct. Am I going to operate off of the principles that are laid out there? Will I be inconsiderate? Will I do any of those things? So my ideal comes down. God helps me mold the ideal. I come up with what I'd rather do because it says in the question, what should I have done instead? The first immediate answer for me is always anything but what you did. It would be okay.

Then we come down to, how's it going to be from here on? Matthew, I don't get all that complex with what my ideal is going to be because then I'll start searching for that. And I have no idea whether God wants me to be a monk or a whore at this point. And I said it that way because I want to keep my mind open to that. I need guidance for this ideal for my behavior. It got me thinking about God, about that relationship.

If I'm going to be one of his children and he's going to demonstrate through me, then that will be my ideal. How will that look? My ideal is that when you look at me, not when you listen to me, when you watch me, as I live, you see a child of God. You see someone who, if you happen to hear me talk, does the same thing he talks about. That would be my ideal. And how does that play out sometimes? Well, I get to thinking in this relationship with God as I understand him.

From my experience, God comes by invitation only. He's not rude, not inconsiderate. So I will try to be the same way. I will try not to be rude, and I will come by invitation only. It would never occur to me to stop by your house unless I had called ahead to make sure this is a good time to do that. That's very rude. One of the other things that seems to me in that relationship is when I am called, or when I do call God, God's there.

So I can demonstrate that same thing. If you call, I'm available. Now how's that play out in my sex life? I'm married to a very healthy woman. Not like gorgeous. She's rich. She's healthy. Well, she's rich by my term. She's got a pension coming. It's good enough for me, boy. Absolutely. Now it is, we'll take the sex inventory first off, Matthew. There's never any question about sexual activity. It's okay in the house.

As long as you're not there visiting, we try to be nice about that. That does not mean that I have proprietary rights over her body, and when I get horny, that's mine. That's not what that means. That's what comes out of that ideal. I will ask. Now I have found a hundred different ways to ask. That's been the fun of the deal. Oh, yeah. By being considerate, and asking, and learning about that very thing, and not being self-centered, my nature is, I think sex is the picnic. The truth is, it's the whole trip, and the picnic is just a nice stop.

Really nice stop, but it's just a stop along the way. So I've learned to ask verbally, with music, with little touches, with the blowing here, with a little flower. Wake up, guys. Seduction is where it's at. We're a short distance runners, guys. We are. We just let it load. We need little sprinters. And these women are long distance thoroughbreds. Yeah. Know that. And once you know that, live with it. And life gets to be a grand deal and one hell of a lot of fun.

Part of my ideal is to be worthy. I know that sounds silly, but that is true. I need to be worthy. I need to be worthwhile. I need to be responsive and responsible. I need to communicate. These are all just basic principles, whether it be a sex ideal, a business ideal, a home ideal. I need to be available. I need to try to be understanding. I live in a matriarchy. The best thing I have ever done. Oh, my goodness. There is no doubt about my house. I am surrounded by women of all ages.

And my little grandson and I have both learned already, be as incompetent as possible. Do not assert yourself. That's dumb. Be available. Be sweet. Be kind and be quiet. When we need you, we'll let you know. Who said that? That's just part of it. Part of my ideal also is that I did discover something, Matthew, through the actual process. I am a monogamous male. I am a family man. That's who I really am. I am not super stud. Never was. Don't want to be.

I think if God made anything better, he kept it for himself. But the fact is, there are other things that I'm interested in also, sometimes nearly as much. So the ideal will be to fit myself to be that. One at a time with a long-term commitment. That's the ideal. We're married for the game. I'm in for the whole game. She asked me early on what commitment means to me. Quote, if you want me out, you're going to have to put my shit on the

porch and call the sheriff.

I'm here to stay. So I know about commitment. The fact is, if she ever asked me to go, it would break my heart, but I would go. I want to be worthy of not being put out. That's a neat place to live. You've been here. It's full of babies all the time. That's the thing about living in a matriarchy, guys. If you wake up, they fill the house with babies. You and I can't do that. I don't care how hard we try. And there is nothing in life like a house full of babies.

Be sure you have your own room because there's times you're going to need to send yourself to your room and be in trouble. I'm meandering, but that's part of my deal. And I didn't write that down. It took me nine years to come around to understanding what I would need to do to have a long-term marriage. Because the first nine years, my tendency was to pick sick women because that made me feel useful. I have a zorro complex. Most of us do.

I'd love to have you just a little bit sick because then you'll get in trouble and I can dash in on my steed and rescue you. And the rewards of rescue are incredible. But I've got to have you sick enough so you'll create another crisis fairly soon because it's all temporary. And I did that for years. I rescued people. I don't do that anymore. Does that help? I don't want to just meander on. I love this topic because you can really stretch with it.

What would one of your ideals be? Diana? Yeah. Wow. That's a good one. To be useful. That's my idea. To be happy and content with whatever I had. I never had enough. Never was enough for me. My idea is to be content with what I have today. Do you think I wanted to answer this question? What is my... No, it will be short. I honest to God don't give this a whole lot of thought. To be honest with you, I'd live by these principles.

Basically, that's what I do. The rest come to me as I love. And that's really about that. I wanted to say this before. I'm just going back to what Ruth was talking about. The fourth column on stuff where we didn't get the ball rolling. I can't speak to sexual abuse. That's not to my knowledge at this time. When I was a kid, I just felt like I was wired together all along. Nobody here ever felt that way. It felt the times that you just don't understand me.

It always felt that way. One thing that made it okay was pouring a drink. Then I could live on a level playing field with you. The first time, and that worked almost every single time I drank it, almost every single time. Even for only five minutes, it didn't matter what happened before. I'd always go back to even if it was just five minutes. I didn't care how disastrous the rest of the evening would go. That carried into sobriety, where all the garbage that led us to drink anyway, resentment, being for me, definitely the number one offender.

There were times where, because I was sent to psychiatrists and stuff when I was a kid, because I was so emotionally unstable, that just exacerbated what was already in the minds of my peers and the faculty at the school that I was psycho-boy. Clearly, and that just made it more clear to me. That just separated me more, and so it seemed. I'm a big victim. Now, in my fourth column for a lot of this stuff, I had to, and this was given to me by one of your proteges.

I had to consider that perhaps I was selfish to expect other people to have been whatever it was that they were, which, in the level playing field prayer between columns three and four, is a child of God, by the way. So,

if I'm a child of God, then you must be too. I mean, that's just, you know, and if I have forgiven and not deal, then I can look at it objectively and say, I didn't get the ball rolling, but if I'm going to be useful here, I can't keep the ball rolling.

No matter how much it may have hurt up to now, I've got to break the habit of expecting you to have been something other than what you were. And that's a very hard thing to accept, but it had to happen if I was going to be free. I commend to you some reading that has helped clarify my relationship with God and with you. One of those is the story of the prodigal son, read not from the viewpoint that this is the story of the son, but from the viewpoint that this is the story of the father.

It'll change the meaning for you, and it really does some nice clarifying. It has given me perspective. I don't want to go into the story because I think you'll have more fun just reading it yourself. It clarifies all kinds of roles because like it or not, we're into playing roles. I want to play the role he assigns me, and how do I know which one that is? Well, when I live in a house where there's a woman I married to and two children, the role is obvious, husband and father.

How do I play that role? I model myself after the father. It helps. If the son came home, I can look at that as alcoholics. We'll understand this story, but I just commend that to you. And if the image that Don just set out for you, if you want one more image, let me share with you, and it was given to us by one of the spiritual giants out of the past. And I dearly love it. Bob White said one time in closing, said, let's look at the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come. If it's God's kingdom, then he must be the king. And he's our Father. And that makes us a prince and princesses. And what would a prince do in the kingdom of his father? Well, he would get direction from the king, his father, and go out and help the people and expect absolutely nothing in return. He's just doing the role that has been assigned to him.

More importantly, he's acting like a prince, or if he will, a princess, and just carrying out some royal duties. And that image sits well with me because I have a real clear image. Don has his Zorro complex. I have my princely complex. It works for me. All right. I'm working to get there. The point is, is that gives me a very clear image. What do I need to be acting like today? Say, I don't think that's phony. I think that's my role.

Am I acting like that? I can carry that into my sex life? You bet. I can carry it into being a father with my kids. I can carry it into it in my relationship with all of you. Do I fall off that high lofty place? You bet. And I crawl back up there and try to hang on to that image. And with God's power, maybe I'll get to live that way some of the time. Doing God's business, that's the thing, isn't it? Oh, Chuck C used to say that.

My business is to go about my father's business and it's my father's business to take care of me. That's what we're talking about. That we're talking about. Act like a prince or act like a princess. That's what we are. Oh, my name is Robin. Hi family. My name is Robin. And I'm an alcoholic. My experience has been that I'm very grateful to be in AA. And I'm grateful to do the step. Am I put? Like that? Turn them down a little bit because I've got a healthy voice.

When I first came into recovery the first year, I didn't have the privilege of going to rehab psychiatrists and all these pretty people. I had the privilege of coming straight to y'all. Y'all told me to put down the drink and do

the service. And in the first year, that's what I had to do. I was, I had made a commitment for the institutions to speak. And I had, I really believed in y'all as I do today. And I thank God for that.

Because I didn't believe or stop with anything else. So I'm a real alcoholic. When my daughter was seven years old, one of my boyfriends had abused her. And I had just come out of a drunken stupor and walked in and was catching the act. When I came in to recovery, y'all told me just come in early, do the coffee, you know, do you lose stepwork, things like that. Now, this particular day I signed up for commitment. I went to the institution.

And by the way, when I caught that boyfriend of mine, I did what society tells me to do. As morally as a mother, I was there for my daughter, and I had him arrested. I'm bringing this up because we're talking about sex inventory, and I believe maybe I could be a benefit to someone, because this is a true experience that happened to me. The most painful thing for me, this alcoholic, is to have my little baby being abused, especially for something that was my fault, having these unsavory characters around me.

I brought them to the home. So anyway, I went to the institution, and they have a key. And I work in the institution myself. You all know that key. That big skeleton key. They have to open up. Y'all know the key. I'm standing there. I'm so proud. I'm with my AA literature. I'm with my AA book. I'm with my AA friends. Y'all got my back. Everything's all right. And when the door opened up, who do you think was the first one that was on the other side of that door?

This is five years later. He had served this time in jail, and this was part of the other part in the mental institution. There he was, right in front of my face. What do you do? What do you do? I'm representing AA. Y'all told me to put down a drink. Y'all said get a higher power. Y'all said it's not going to be a happy ride, but this will happen if you do certain steps. And I believe y'all. And thank God I believe y'all.

Because when I did my inventory, and I've done many of them since then, but what do you do in a split second like that? Okay, this is the person that, the last time I've seen him, he abused my daughter. I'm one year sober. What do you do? What do you do? And what I did? First thing I did was pray. I prayed. And I realized God give me the understanding about this situation. Give me the understanding. What is it to understand?

But I gave him the message of AA. And I really sincerely believed y'all, and I believe I was so happy not to be drinking. I was happy not to be drinking. I was happy that at the moment I didn't forgive him, but I understood he was sick. I understood that. Why? Because the fourth, those columns that you're just talking about, those columns that had went through it. And I don't know what the heck I was doing these columns for.

I don't know why y'all telling me to be writing rehashing old stuff that I choose to forget, but y'all told me to write on the top of the page of the prayer to ask God to see what's blocking me from him. This week, this week, the same daughter of mine, she's 24 now. She called me up 12 o'clock and half Wednesday. She called me up. And she said, Mommy, I have to tell you something. So I said, go ahead, baby. You know, we all have kids, and you know, it's a certain way your kids talk to you.

You can hear that. You hear it very clearly that, oh, oh, this is serious. Stop what you're doing. Just listen. And she told me about that incident. She was seven when that happens. She's 24 now. This is part of my inventory. This is part of my men's. What do you do when your child tells you? I'm hurting because of what you

did, Mommy. What do you do? I stopped and I listened to her. I didn't pick up a drink. Didn't pick up anything else.

I didn't offer excuses. I listened to her. And as I listened to her, I heard her pain. I cannot erase her pain. I don't intend on doing that. I cannot erase my pain. I cannot erase my past. I cannot erase my conduct with the different men that I had when I was drinking. But what I could do is today, stay with my higher power, tell my daughter I'll be there for you any time you already discuss it any further, and continue my fourth step inventory to forgive myself and to forgive those abuses.

And that was my answer. That has been my experience to what the lady in the back here was talking about their sexual experiences. And there's nothing worse than a mother seeing her children be abused. But I'm not going to tell you that I'm completely over it today. I'm not going to tell you that. But today I choose to live my life. Not to have different men come to my house. Not I choose to conduct myself as a lady as best as possible as I can.

Whether you think I'm a lady or not, doesn't matter. I'm at peace with my higher power. That's the difference. That's the unselfishness that I've learned. Thank you for letting me share. Thank you. Let me give you a marker Matthew that I've loved. It picked up the other day. There's nothing that I have done today that it wouldn't be alright for my mother and my wife and my daughter to know about. There's no marker. Hi, Kevin. I'm Kevin. I'm an alcoholic.

Hi, Kevin. I'd like to thank you and Jerry Don for coming here. It's been very rewarding for me. I belong to the Cornerstone Group in Bedford Village. My sobriety date is April 3rd of this year. I won't make this too long, but other people want to share. I came into the rooms and I stopped drinking because my wife stopped. And I thought it would be the right thing to do. And then when I stopped, she stopped. I realized what I was doing.

And it was pretty bad. And I was about to be evicted from my apartment because I hadn't paid my rent on time for years. All the monies I borrowed from people. Like that was incredible. So I started going to meetings every day right away. And I'm very grateful for that. And I started to do some service. But then my bottom was when my wife, I started to change with this program. And she was my soulmate. And she was a gift from God eight years ago.

And I started to change and she didn't know who I was anymore. So I had to leave. And I had nothing. I slept in my van for a few days because I had no place to go. And I had no money. And God told me how to be humble. And they asked for a meal. They asked people for things. And I'm very grateful for that today. But as I went more and more to meetings and met people in the rooms, I walked many times because she wouldn't help me with a car.

So I walked in a rain and I learned to ask people for things and rides. But I got there every day. And to this day I haven't missed one meeting. And at ninety days I was in another miracle. And things started to change one day at a time. As I did more service and made coffee, God started to give me things back. And I have a lot of spirituality. And this was a path today for me to be here. He's giving me back my business, my customers.

He's giving me back myself. I have peace. I have a little serenity. He's giving me back honesty and trust and

faith. He's giving me tools for my business I couldn't afford. And last week he gave me back my wife just as a friend right now to talk to. She's starting to believe in me again because she sees the changes that I'm making. She sees the changes every day. But coming down here, as I said, was a path, it was in my path.

And since I've been here since yesterday, two other what I consider miracles have happened to me. And they just happened because I just believe in faith and help people. And I'm just very, very grateful. Thanks. My question is, in the section in step 11, I believe it is, it talks about its situation warrants. We invite our wife to join us in our prayer and meditation. Specifically, how do you guys, do you do it, first of all, invite your family and your spouse in your meditations, either the evening review and or the morning meditation.

And how has that affected your relationship as far as intimacy goes and help you achieve your sex ideal along those lines. And is there anything else to do? Do you go to couples meetings, family afterwards meetings? You know, what do you guys do out in Colorado along those lines? Yeah, we are. I invited my wife and family to join. I was nine years sober when we got married. I invited them to join me and they chose not to.

They have their own religious practice. And as far as the practice went, it has stayed individual. Have prayed together. It has always been spontaneous. We don't go to couples groups because we, I don't understand why I would want to do that. If we got any more intimate, I'd probably give a heart attack. We communicate. We definitely communicate. I gave her the big book when we first got married so she would understand what we were about and her comment to me when she read it was, that's about what I did.

She understands our conditions to the point where frequent I hear her say they can't do that. And she's right. The last couples group I was involved in, we had four of the best meetings I have ever been involved in. And then it was over. Nobody else ever showed up again. Don't know what that was about even. So I'm afraid I can't help you with that. To say we have prayed together but it's always been spontaneous. And my meditations are very private and they change on a regular basis.

They are different from contemplative prayer time. Both are necessary in my life. One is conversation with God. The other is silence. Nobody wants to go into the silence of my mind with me. I don't blame them. And I'm not all that eager. There are absolute necessity in my life is a certain amount of solitude. And I need more of that the longer I'm alive. And it may just be a function of aging. I don't know. I need more solitude.

And it isn't that they aren't welcome. It's simply that it would never occur to me to bring them into that part of my life. But mainly I'm married to a bunch of really fine Catholic ladies. In fact there's some fun with that you ask about. We sent the kids to Catholic school because it's a better education anyway. And one of my grandsons, he's eight now. From the time he's been five or six my youngest daughter insists on the family eating together.

It's just that important. Jacking out reached that stage in life where you grab a snack here and then move on. And if you sit down that's cool if you don't that's cool too. And they were living with us for a while so they sat down. And she insists on doing a standardized Midwestern Catholic grace. And Nick knows it too. And they do this at the end of it. And I pray with them. I love praying with them. But I don't do this.

And I watch Nick. It's kind of fun because he's watching me. He knows I'm right in the middle of this thing with him. And he doesn't understand why I don't do this. What to cross. And I'm not going to say anything about

it until he does. Okay. Because if you ask me why I'm not doing it I don't have an answer. So there are prayerful activities. Prayer is more than just routine prayer too. When we go on a trip we particularly pray.

Particularly when the kids are there. The prayer is really simple. They've got a good driver. Get us some here and let us enjoy the adventure. Anyhow, Jerry you got much of what Don just shared with you. It would just be a repeat if I told you everything. So I'll just touch very briefly. When I met my wife I was about 15 years sober. And I told her a little bit about this. And she heard me talking about God one day. And she made it real clear to me that she's a pagan.

And I thought oh we're in trouble. But I went ahead and showed her a Chuck C's book. A new pair of glasses. I thought that would maybe make it a little clearer to what we're all about. And she thought that was a pretty nifty book. And then she watched alcoholics come and go on our living room. And she just loved watching these guys change. And so along the way she decided that there's probably value to what we do. If you heard me carefully you'll hear what I said was along the way she decided that there was value to what we do.

She knows there's a power of the universe. She's got a different name for it that's all. Pretty much along one little principle and people have a tough time grasping this. I give to her everything I can possibly get to her. Everything. With absolutely no thought of getting anything in return. Nothing. Let me tell you the neat part about that. She gives to me a thousand percent of herself with no thought of getting anything in return.

And I'm there every morning because she wants me to be there. And I tell you what, that is a fantastic deal. To be there because somebody wants you to be there. Not because you're forcing yourself on them. I loved one of the words that Don used earlier because it ties in with the prince thing. To be worthy to hang around with her. See I know I'm not but I got her fooled. I'm just going to keep giving her everything that I have to give.

And we are having the time of our life. Absolute time of our life. It's a great, great formula for living. Just give everything you've got to give with all the enthusiasm you've got to give every day. And along the way you'll make promises to them that you can't keep. And they'll remind you, you can't keep that promise. And I have to learn that she's absolutely right. Like I said, if you get a chance to hook up with somebody who's saying, God do it.

It's just a marvelous experience. My wife was described by our beautiful Neil who was out and on before there ever was such a thing. As one of the three most naturally spiritual people she has ever met. And I concur with that. I however have a deep need for a variety of changing rituals in my spiritual life that she doesn't need. I don't know why I don't care why. I like to hang out on the Red Road with my brother sometimes.

It is nothing like a good night of drumming and smoking. I absolutely adore solemn high mass. There is nothing like a bunch of real good Catholics making a joyous noise unto the Lord. I would get on my knees and getting a river with you if we can sing, we shall gather at the river. She doesn't need that. I'm sure she would go with me, but I have a need for more dramatic things. So I'm careful and try to be considerate with that in the home.

She likes my Indian stuff, paintings and all that. But not necessarily all the other paraphernalia like the drums and the fives and the feathers and the chants and all that. That's okay in the backyard, but not in the house. I can

do this quickly because I want to hear what Ben has to say. We become observers. We've always been for years and years flapping our mouth and doing all sorts of goofy stuff. As we walk this little journey, we become listeners.

One day I was watching my wife and she was outside. We lived up in Rhode Island. The house where we lived had a pond out in front and a pond out in back. In the fall of the year, geese would fly in and landed on those two ponds. And because our house was located up on a hill, the geese were very low when they crossed over the roof of the house. And they literally came in every autumn just by the hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of these geese.

And she'd stand out there in front and watch them. And one day I asked her, I said, what's the fascination here? She said, Oh honey, can't you hear the wind in their wings? She's talking to me about being part of whatever it is those geese are doing. Does she need what I need? I don't think so. I really don't think so. She's got something that's quite spiritual without what we do. How she got there, I'm not quite sure.

She uses our little process from time to time. And it works very well. But they just watch these same people. They've got something that's awful nifty. Benny. Thank you. For someone to thank you for coming down and sharing your experience, strength and hope with us. You know, the fourth step that tells us we disclose our unsaleable and damaged goods. But I've heard some people say, well, if you're doing a moral inventory, you know, you would put down some of the good things that you do.

Or what you are. I mean, is that necessary? Or is that just a... God, I was hoping that'd come up. Yeah. I don't see anywhere in the Big Book that exists to do that. So I don't do that. And then neither do I. In part because it's not about the other part of it is if I... If I look at my life carefully, I only time I ever did anything that would be called good was if I thought there was a payoff. I mean, I'm the world's greatest bargainer.

I'll do this for you, but there's a silent, little...