

Big Book Weekend

2001 | Part 7 | Reading edition

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and do that. And then neither do I, in part because it's not about the other part of it, is 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 pay off. I mean, I'm the world's greatest bargainer. I'll do this for you, but there's a silent little string attached. I want you to do it back. So what good is you're in that? My mother said to me, son, virtue is its own reward. I never lived that way. I did something, I tried something good, but underneath that was the real truth was I was doing it to get something so I can't find any good in my life. So I don't put anything down.

I've been in the food in here yet, but unless you're all just absolutely insistent while I'm sitting here looking at us. Let's break this thing up. What time are we going in the morning? Okay, we embarked on some of the techniques of the house planning process yesterday. Did everybody finish your resentment inventory last night? Well, we'll go ahead anyway. I find three separate inventory formats in this book. The four column that we'll use for resentment can be used for fear too, but it's unwieldy I find. There's another format I was shown that's right out of the book. So let me go through that. First of all, there's a little lead in and tells us what fears an evil and corroding thread that permeates everything. It seems to be the rock bottom of most of the difficult.

Bill thinks it ought to be classified with stealing. And that's not pertinent today when everybody steals everything all the time anyway. It's no big deal. When this was written, stealing was worse than murder because these people had nothing. I'm just coming out of depression and to take what little person had could affect the whole family. It was a heavy duty deal. And so in context, that image makes sense. Makes sense today too on the spiritual life. You can't steal if you do, you lose it.

And fear will steal your spirit very quickly. So that's just to review the fears thoroughly. And it gives the shortest little format. This thing is really weird. The alcoholic mind says good. We got about six pages of work to do here. Now, no we don't. This is what the whole bloody thing looks like when it's done. It says we put down our fear. I'm going to walk you through one just so you understand how it is that I do it.

This was at a time when I was afraid of being without money because I was without money at the time. And that's usually when it happens. Or the other time that it happens is when you have money and you're afraid it's going to go away. Now get the picture of this. I'm sitting in the basement of my home with my car in the garage. I'm a family and a dog upstairs. And you'll notice it's upstairs and downstairs. It's not a bad home.

And the feeling that's going through me is, where's mine? I'm sitting in the middle of it and can't see it. I had been on the general service board for four years and about a half so my business had gone to hell. But I was without money. So I was afraid of being without money. Then it says we put them on paper even though we had no resentment in connection with them. There's a transfer from the resentment inventory. Anytime my self-esteem is involved, fear is involved.

So I can examine some of those things that are on the resentment inventory. But there are a lot of things that don't make the resentment inventory. I've got one. I'm going to just leave these laying around rather than take up

a lot of time in case anybody wants to look at them. I brought two that hit almost everybody. Afraid of being without money and afraid of losing my mind. Of course that happened in a time when I was losing my mind. We asked ourselves why we had them. Hell, I'm afraid of being without money because I'm afraid of my wife leaving me.

I'm afraid my creditors will dislike me and yell at me. Putting it on paper already, I'm beginning to think, wait a minute, you're a grown man. The hell do you care? And that's what they get paid for. It's to yell at you and coerce you and frighten you. But it's just there. I'm afraid of losing everything, which is a trigger for me because I don't own anything anyway. But I'm afraid of this will all go away. I'm afraid of being thought of as a failure.

She's think of me as a killer, but not a failure. Okay, scum of the earth, that's good, but not failure. I can't handle that one. I'm afraid of being without money will prove that my whole wife's a sham. Suddenly, I'm concerned for you, of course, all the people I sponsored will think that what I talked to them was why they will all die. Come on, don't tell me you haven't thought that. I don't have an ego problem. Then I came to the end of it. I was afraid of being without money because now I'm afraid my wife will stay with me.

But she'll be supporting me. She'll be down on my head all the time. And there was nothing left to write. It was over. That was it. Sometimes a fear inventory will lead. Most of the time will lead to the bottom line being, I will die alone. Now, the way this plays out the way I was showing you take the basic fear, and each time I'm writing something, we're looking at another fear. What will happen if that happens? What will happen if I'm without money? Then I'm afraid this will happen.

If that happens, then what will happen? Until there's nothing left and it's done. So it's very easy to come to the end of it when there's nothing left to happen except die alone. It's over. Now it says, wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? And I was just taught this simple thing. In trying to find out where self-reliance fails me, I'm to ask myself this question. What am I trying to do? And then what am I trying to do?

To keep, to acquire, to postpone, whatever it is. I'm self-recutrying to do something. And I was given a little mnemonic image as a guide. Let's say I have an irrational fear of elevators. Why? Because I'm afraid the cable will break. And if the cable breaks, it will fall and I will be either killed or maimed, most probably maimed. I seldom get killed in my fantasies. I do get maimed a lot. Because you can do things with maimed.

Get sympathy, become a world-famous study, whatever. You can do things with maimed. So I'm afraid the cable will break, it will fall and I will be killed or maimed. What I myself is trying to do, continue my life on my own terms. To even determine whether I'm supposed to live or die. Now, what it causes problems is that irrational fear will keep me from getting on elevators. I'd be stupid to get on one that I knew had weak cables.

But it prevents me from any activity that I must be free of because God may need me on an elevator someday. I don't know. But that little mnemonic just helps me. So what I myself is trying to do here, the fear being that my wife will leave me. I want to make sure she stays because I need her. I'm okay if she's with me. And I begin to see some truth. I must also be okay when she isn't with me. Our marriage is not based on that mutual need for each other to be okay.

We're okay. And that's why we're able to get together. This will affect my relationship with God while I'm

afraid of being without money. And what I'm really afraid of is being without God. For the same reasons. The business about the creditors. I'm just selfish in trying to keep everybody liking me. Even people that don't owe me. It begins to get a little silly, doesn't it? I'm afraid this person who's paid good money to intimidate me will intimidate me.

They won't like me. Well, why should they? I'm afraid of losing everything. I'm selfish in trying to keep everything I have because it proves I'm a success. I begin to see some more truth. I'm starting to rely upon the house, the car, the proofs that I'm okay. Which tells me right away I'm not. These are the things that are blocking me. I'm afraid of being thought of as a failure. I'm afraid of myself as you trying to maintain an image as a success because nobody liked me if I'm a failure.

That really burst into my mind. I'm here because of my deepest failure. You liked me. Who am I kidding? You took me as I was where I was. And there will be some people that won't like me if I'm not a success. But who cares? It'll prove my life as a sham I'm selfish in trying to preserve the image that I'm okay and living in the truth. And I'll have to do to look at my circumstances and I got the truth of that. I'm sitting alone in my basement.

I'm afraid to go upstairs living in the truth. I'm afraid that she would stay with me but be supporting me all the time. I'm selfish in trying to keep her respecting love on my terms. And that ended it. I'm simply not trusting and relying on God to care for me and protect me. And that's how I do fear inventory. It brings me to that place where I realize how silly I really am. But what do you do with that? The truth won't get me out of the chair in the basement.

This is all true but I'm still sitting in that chair. And I don't know any techniques to get rid of fear. But this tells me a way to do it. First of all, it says we're now on a different basis that of trusting and relying upon God instead of my finite self. Trusting and relying. This is where life begins to get real. If I'm going to rely upon the power of God, I've got to get out of the basement and hit the street with it while the fear is still there.

I want to ease your softer way. Don't send me in, coach, until all the little guys are playing so I don't have to be afraid. Put me in now, coach, while it's the big guys. And I've got to trust, I've got to rely upon that. We're in the world to play the role he assigns. Now there was another burst of truth in any of these. I can see me assigning everybody a role here. I'm assigning her a role. Stay with me, make me okay.

I'm assigning my creditors a role. Be nice. Be patient with me. In fact, if you really want to do nice, don't call me at all. I'm assigning me a role. Living in the truth. Being a success. Being a great example. And it goes on and on. We're in the world to play the role he assigns. Not the role's I assign. I think Bill did a wonderful thing for that actor and he carried it all the way through to it. Now question pops into my mind when I do this.

It leads me to more inventory if I wish. How much role playing am I doing? How many roles am I assigning people? Am I assigning to people I sponsor sobriety? Don't have any right to do that, you know. I am not to determine whether you need sobriety or not. Am I assigning either role of being either alcoholic or not alcoholic? Am I afraid that if you drink it will reflect on me? That are not being because most of you will.

That's the odds. Most of the people who come through our lives will drink again. That's the odds. We beat the odds all the time by the way. That's the odds. So I don't get to assign the role as to what you're supposed to be. I

heard the scene coming down on me. Do y'all do that? There's a reason I'm hanging on this because I've got to get to a place here. The entire solution to life is right here in these few pages. The entire program is here.

The end result of all of this is coming up. It's right here in this next page or two. Just the extent that we do is we think he would have us and humbly rely on him as he enables us to match calamity with serenity. Serenity is not floating like a zephyr on the soft summer air. I had trouble with the whole concept of serenity because I have bid serenity. 150 milligrams of good disoxing and two of ours is caps. We'll get you serenity everyone again.

I knew that wasn't it. So I looked up the word serenity in the big dictionary. One of its definitions is clarity of thought. That one fits. Interestingly enough, when I experience clarity of thought, it's kind of like floating like a zephyr on the soft summer air. Calamity purely subjective in my life. There are real calamities. But most of the time your calamity is my entertainment. That's true. Most comedy is based on somebody falling on their ass.

And as long as it isn't me, it's funny. There are real calamities and when they come along I really need to be have clear thinking. When the baby's hand gets dipped in boiling water, I better be clear and calm. I do not need to be in a panic. I will do the wrong things. When a real calamity comes up, I need to be ready to go. I cannot be overwhelmed with fear. I need to be present. And if I'm afraid it won't be. They hit one of my great weaknesses here.

We never apologize to anyone, depending on our creator. What an awakening that was. See, my whole life, all I really wanted to do was stand on the street corner and say to anybody who passed by how much I really loved my God. And I stopped doing that when I was real little because they make fun of you. We don't have to apologize for that. What a wondrous thing I am part of here. You not only encourage that, you pay my airline ticket to come and say it for God's sake.

Isn't that funny? If you want to say that, just go to meetings and tell them that. And then watch the reaction. So how do I get past this? I'm giving a prayer on page 68 that is so powerful that no more work is needed and it begins to lead me toward what I'm to do with my entire life. We never apologize for God. Instead, we let him demonstrate through us what he can do. We ask him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what he would have us be.

And I had an awakening on that one time. It does not say what he'd have me do. There are many, many places where it says what he'd have me do. This is very specific. What would you have me be? That once we out commenced to outgrow fear, I am told precisely what God's will is there. I don't know if you read it, I do. He wants me unafraid. If I ask him what he wants me to be, suddenly I am unafraid of commenced to outgrow fear.

Well, that's a piece of news. A quick story and I'll throw this over to Jerry. I had occasion to go to North Carolina six, seven years ago and go to work for the Department of Corrections. I've always found that amusing because I'm a three-time loser and I stood outside to Captain's office while he handed me the keys. The thought went through my mind. I wonder if he knows what he's doing here. In the midst of all this, I was in my second month of inner fear on treatments for active hepatitis.

I didn't feel good. I had to leave my home, my group, my family, all of my support, anything, period, which will happen if you get attached to anything and you've already chosen to rely on God, someday you'll have to

give it up. But most importantly, and Jackie helped me understand this, I was dying not from the hepatitis. I was dying from becoming useless again. One of the symptoms of the hepatitis was simply fatigue beyond what I can describe to you.

I tied my right shoe one day and didn't have the energy to tie the left shoe. Couldn't move over to tie. I would just stuck that over. That kind of fatigue. Which brings along mild depression. I didn't want to kill myself, but it wasn't sure that it was easier to not breathe for a while. So all this drama is going on and I'm moving into Little Town in North Carolina where they don't speak English. They speak Southern. Wonderful language, but I didn't understand it.

I'm giving a job to do that I had no idea how to do. My hero, instead of training me like I thought he would, had me the keys, said here's what I want done. See you. He walked off into the woods somewhere. What I'm saying is I was brought to a state of being where I had to rely entirely upon the power of God because there wasn't anything else. The AA group was the best in the country, but they weren't doing it right.

Some difficulty there. I don't want to spend a lot of time with that. Got all of this worked out over the next couple months. We got a big book workshop started at the group, an hour and a half before the regular meeting. We gather and just go through the book word for word and do things. One of the things they weren't doing right is that the step meetings were done on the 12 and 12. And that by the meek is I don't find any instructions there.

That's a really fine book, but there's no instructions there. Except in the 10th step, those instructions are contrary to the big books. I get confused. Made peace with that. They'd read out loud from the 12 and 12, and I didn't have anything to share except out of the big book. Some people came to me after one of the meetings and I said, what did you get that? I said, well, I'm going to show you. I always believe in making sure they want to see it first.

And they'd say, yeah, so I'd get it down, show them where I got that. The next thing I know, I've got a little workshop going and I've got five people to sponsor. They want to know more about this. So all that's working out. I learned I can do this job. Jackie had come down to visit me and I had gone home and everything got right. Everything was fine and I was dying spiritual. And I knew it. And I was baffled by it. You can feel spiritual death coming on.

Just like you can feel dying physically coming on. And I was baffled and I talked mostly to my new people. My sponsors too often sometimes. The new people understand desperation. They make no mistake about it. 30, 31 years of sobriety does not lead you immune to desperation. In fact, it's even more desperate because you get the new illusion that at this point in time I'm not supposed to have this kind of force. Yes, you are.

Anyway, I'm dying spiritually. And I said to one of the new guys, I don't understand this. I'm doing everything right. Everything is going right. I've become a good demonstration for God. What's wrong? Now I've been taught to listen to myself. I was told early on, try to remember everything you hear at meetings. It's one important to know what you say, because that will tell you where you're at. I heard what I said. I've become a good demonstration for God.

That's what was wrong. This isn't about me demonstrating for God what I can do. It's about God

demonstrating through me what he can do. And that little shift is a matter of life and death. It's not serious. So there it is again. We let him demonstrate through us much more better. I'm not here to demonstrate for him what I can do. I can't get even locked up in the right place. That was pretty well covered. And I'll just share with you a couple of thoughts and perhaps dispel some misconceptions that we hear around our little fellowship from time to time surrounding the fear of enduring.

One of the things that I hear is that there are healthy fears. And I've not found any. I really haven't. I don't know what a healthy fear is. I've also been told that I need to learn to face my fears and walk through them. And let me share with you that I would not be here in a meeting or a fellowship of alcoholics anonymous if I could face my fear and walk through it. I wouldn't need this. I have to be rid of that fear because it absolutely paralyzes me.

And one of the things that I discovered along this journey was if you're in fear and you're 25 or 45 years old, and you've never done a fear inventory before, you don't even know what it is you're looking for. Because we've had it a whole lot. I've been afraid as far back as I can remember. I don't know if you all can remember when you started grade school or not. I do. I can remember that I started kindergarten. I said to my mother, my stomach feels kind of funny.

And she says, oh, those are just butterflies. They'll go away. I'll tell you, they never went away. I lived with that knot in my stomach until I finally discovered this old solution here. Now, I didn't know. You know, somebody said, well, Jerry, why don't you make a list of your fears? I said, I don't have any. I had a fear. Now, there's always some fun stuff to talk about on fears because they... Don mentioned Jesse, you know, it's not the stuff that I know about.

I mean, at the unknown, it's the stuff that I know what's going to happen. I don't worry about big stuff happening. It's when I ask a pretty girl if she wants to go drink a cup of coffee. That's when I get petrified and terrified. I really do. And that period was with me for years and years and years. And I, again, because it's something we've lived with most of our life, we don't even know that we have it. If you pray a little about this whole inventory process, sometimes that fear will turn to terror and then you'll begin to recognize that, oh, that's what it is.

So if you have to experience a little terror and through one of these inventory processes, don't be too concerned. It's just God revealing your fear to you, okay? As a kid growing up, I was always taught to pray for courage. Do you ever, anybody ever tell you to pray for courage? I was. I was taught to pray for that sort of thing. What I've discovered along the way was that courage is nothing more than the absence of fear.

I don't ever have to pray for courage. All I have to do is get clear on what my fear is and have that removed through this very powerful prayer and courage just automatically shows up if you want to call it that. But courage is nothing more than the absence of fear. This little ordeal on this period of inventory is probably one of the greatest gifts that we're given in this entire process. We are so terribly full of fear when we get here and truly don't know it.

At least I didn't. I've driven my car through the streets of Denver one time when my fears were just about to completely and totally overtake me. And I can remember situations where I would pass a particular intersection. I

had known precisely where I was and ten minutes later I would pass another intersection and not be real sure where I was. And not real clear on how I got from point A to point B. That's how bad the fear can sometimes overwhelm you.

And so when I started this fear inventory for the very first time, I got real clear about something because it kept going through my mind. Hey, this is a free shot at taking everything that's ever troubled you your entire life in that area of fear and let's get rid of it. Let's be rid of it all. And so the things that look petty to some people which are not petty to me are things that I get to write down. For example, I'm afraid that if I walk across that gymnasium floor when I'm 13 years old and I ask that girl to dance and she says no.

I say I know that that's what she's going to say. We know that, don't we? That's guys know that you're going to tell us no. And so we walk across that floor and we get there to ask you to dance and we do something like, I don't feel like I'm dressed to you. Isn't that a sterling invitation? God, I don't know how you could turn me down with something like that. I'm supposed to want to dance to you. Just terribly, terribly fearful.

And the humiliation and loss of self esteem as we turn around to walk back across the gymnasium floor and look at all of our friends. So why put ourselves to that kind of torture? So what do you do as your fear progresses? Well, you'll do perhaps. And this is what Bill was talking about when he said autoclified stealing is you don't want to put yourself through that humiliation and that torture. So the best thing to do is just don't ask.

Just begin to withdraw from little pieces of your life. I've had a chance to talk to some folks here this weekend. And one of the constant themes that I've heard throughout this is as our disease of alcoholism progresses, our tendency to withdraw from life and to live out there and experience all that we want to experience. And we'd like to experience and have the opportunity to experience all that begins to be put on the back shelf because just out of pure fear, we just can't go do it anymore.

And if there's a lot of great promises throughout this little process of ours and the way it's laid out in the book, but perhaps one of the greatest deals is that you began to really truly experience life and you began to experience everything here and now. See what fear did for me. It totally prevented me from being here. I lived in two states of mind. Great fear and regret over something that had just passed. You know, guilt. You ever felt guilty over something you just did a week ago, a month ago, an hour ago?

And so your mind is dwelling on that. Or you're living in great fear of what's going to happen five minutes from now or five days from now or five weeks from now. So your mind is never here. You know, as a kid growing up in school, I used to have teachers say, Jerry, you're a very bright kid. You have a lot of promise. You have great potential, but you just haven't learned how to pay attention. And I would decide that, okay, this year I'm going to learn how to pay attention.

I really am. And I'd start off the beginning of a semester and I'd just be given everything I own to pay attention. And a week or two into that particular semester, my mind would then begin to drift off. And I'd be thinking about something in the past or something in the future, and I can't pay attention. In strictest terms, you would say I suffer from attention deficit disorder. That truth of man is I suffer from alcoholism.

Because I'm living in fear. I'm living in fear of the past and fear of the future. So when I get here at finding

dawns on me with all the terror that I have in my life, which is just a high grade form of fear, it's all it is. For the very first time, see I look at other people. Do you ever do that? You look at people around there and you look at them and you know that they're not living in that fear. You can look at them and tell, can't you?

And God Almighty, it is a grand deal. It really is a grand deal. So look at them and just know that they're all right. See I've never chased anybody to get what they had in this fellowship and unless they looked like to me, they were okay. I don't want their cars and I don't want their jobs and I don't want their money. What I want to know is how did they get to be okay and okay is the absence of fear. Wherever they are is okay right now.

They don't want to be back there and they don't want to be up there. They're fine with this. They're fine with this. And so I discovered that no matter how silly or how petty my fears might be, I'm going to put them down on paper. It just got to be so very, very simple. Besides that, I was about worn out from a resentment inventory anyway. Just in here kill me. I didn't have much resistance left by the time I got here.

The fight was just about gone. So I thought I'd out with it. Let's just write it down. So if I have a fear looking bad, you know, I had to fear one time when my mother, when I was nine years old, she made me go to start the third grade in a new pair of jeans that had an elastic waist. That hurts. You don't laugh because I had to work. Say I knew that was what was going on. You were laughing at me back there. I knew that.

God almighty nine years old and half to go to school wearing jeans with an elastic waistband. God bless America. And how can you be cool wearing elastic waist jeans? You can't. See at nine years old, I'm already afraid of what you think about me. I'm afraid of what you think about me. Afraid of not being cool. I've come to understand that I'm not cool. So who cares? But at those days, that was a major deal. Oh, God, that was a major deal.

But we look at that today and we say, how petty could that be? I'll tell you how petty it can be. We can carry that same fear forward for another forty years. We're not careful. How do they think I'm going to look? Am I making a good impression on these folks? God, I'm obsessed with that. I'm obsessed with looking good. So I start down through that fear inventory and I think I really don't care. I am so tired of this. So terribly tired of living my life driven to get you to like me, driven to look good, driven to have all these things.

You know, I'm the kind of a guy who can be in a state of panic thinking about having to drive an old car. Well, you know what happens if you drive an old car? Well, you pull up the stoplight. And your car is sitting there, it's missing about on two cylinders. So, and it's smoking out things off. And it just doesn't look very good and she pulls up beside you. And all the humiliation of that. You don't know who she is, but it's God.

Well, I think it's worse though. You ever think about public transportation? Isn't that a bummer having to be a hip slitting cool guy and stand on a street corner of the bus stop? Oh, God almighty. I mean, it's almost unheard of to have to think about doing it. Because she might drive up. Those are the kind of fears that showed up. And I stick waste of jeans and old cars. They won't be cool. And if I'm not cool, she won't like me.

Now, have you ever stopped to think how deep we are, guys? We're really deep, aren't we? All these years, I think I'm hip slitting cool and great intellect. And the truth of the matter is, I am interested in her if she's interested in me because I have a nice car. That is deep. If I ever lose a car, I'll lose air. If that's the way it looks,

if I think that through a little bit. So I look at these things and I realize what my whole life is based upon.

It's based upon a bunch of strange ideas, but rooted in all of those as a fear of things that I won't have, things that I won't get, things that I will lose, and that great fear of all that I really will look silly. And I will ultimately be alone. And I don't know about you all where your minds will take you. Years ago, I had an old man who lived across the street from me. His name was Art. And it was in the summertime. And Art was an old man of about 80 years old.

And I would watch him leave his apartment each morning. He'd come down this rickety flight of stairs and he'd walk up town. And then he'd come back home. And in July and Kansas, it's awfully hot and exceptionally humid. It's just miserable. But one night, I needed to see Art for some reason. I don't remember now why I needed to see him. But I walked across the street, walked up the stairs to see what Art was doing and see if he was home.

And I knocked on his door and he said, come in. And I walked into the kitchen of Art's little apartment. And he was sitting at the table, one of those old 1940s chrome tables. Remember those? Oh, God, they were ugly. And he was sitting there eating oatmeal in July wearing sweater. And the elbows were out of the sleeves in July. Heavy sweater. And I looked at him and I thought, that's what it's like to be old and alone.

And I carried that image very clearly with me and I knew that that's where I was going to end up. There were a little apartment in Kansas wearing an elbows gone sweater. And I could get there in a heartbeat. Money, cars, jobs. Those are all the things about which I had fears. This is a marvelous opportunity to find out what are the fears. What are the fears? See, a God, I think, does have a grand sense of humor. I can write these fears down no matter how petty they may look.

God will still remove them. It's a little tough to drive over to your sponsor's house and start sharing these kind of fears, though. Isn't it? But they've had them, too. They've had them, too. Anybody have any questions on fears and the fear inventory? It's really a simple free shot at starting to become a whole, whole spiritual being. Just before we take a little break, I want to visit the one that causes terror and almost everybody I've ever talked with.

I know it did for me. Then we'd like to take a short break. We've got till about noon. And we've got some ground to cover. Come back and go through the sex inventory philosophically as well as structurally and then get on to some other things. So if y'all don't mind a shorter break, this morning would be good. My greatest fear of all, because I knew there was something wrong with me, is that I'd get caught during one of those wrong times and put in a mental institution.

The insanity that went along with the drinking made that even worse. And the image was this. If you go to prison, you know when you're going to get out and give you a date. If you go to a mental institution, they can keep you forever. And I knew that I would get caught during one of my weird times and they'd put me in. And I also knew that one of the ways they gauge when it's time to let you out is when you understand that you're sick.

And I'd be sick going in and I'd get okay and if I told them I was okay, they'd keep me forever. As long as you think you're okay in a mental institution, you're crazy. And I had that vision that I would be okay. I'd come out of the insanity and I'd be okay because I did it all the time. But then I'd be left in there again alone because I

wouldn't be able to relate to the nazos and I wouldn't be able to relate to the doctors that'd be alone.

That you'd catch me at the wrong time and put me away forever. I'd never be able to convince you I'm okay. And that was very important to get rid of that one in order to continue this one. Because this one says, let's take a look at the nazos side. Let's really look at the fact that I'm a terrified little boy and I don't have any resources. And a lot of the stuff we talk about in these rooms, if you talk about a psychiatrist to a psychiatrist, they're going to put you away.

There's always at least two of me at work here. Well, we got a live one here. Who's speaking this afternoon, please? Okay. Anyway, that fear goes away when I ask, what would God have me be? Whatever I am, wherever I am, it doesn't matter what my location is anymore. I will be who I am. And how do I find that out? I find out who I'm not, getting rid of it and who I am shows up. If I read carefully, we've been told a number of things.

When I ask what God would have me be, He'd have me be one of the spearheads in His ever-advancing creation. That's what it says here. Damn, I like that. I don't want to be on the handle. Put me out front where the challenges are, where the blood's the thickest. Let me in. He wants me to be happy, joyous and free. What do you have me be? Useful. Kind, loving, patient, tolerant. That's what it says. I don't have to go into philosophical daydreaming. That's what it had me be.

So now I know what I want to be, and I can't be that alone, so I get to rely on Him to provide that and demonstrate through me these qualities. I learned in a penitentiary how to touch the kindness of a touch. I learned in a penitentiary how to have manners. The spiritual life is really one of just good manners. Ask before you touch. I got that when I was little. I just ignored it. Don't be rude. Be kind. Yes, I would love to challenge you and tell you what a jerk you just made out of yourself, will make me look bigger.

More better I keep my mouth shut. Part of every sponsor's kit for early people should be duct tape for himself. Anyhow, can you get it done in 10 minutes? Okay, we'll be back in 10 minutes. At the break, someone asked me and I'm going to try to see if I can capture as nearly perfect as possible. The question that was asked on a fear, and the question that was asked by this person was their whole life. They felt like they didn't belong, and they got sober here in AA, and now they have a fear again of not belonging.

Did I get that correct? Okay, so the question is how do I get through that fear of not belonging? No, not. That is just another fear. It's just that simple. I mean, we just list it. I have a fear of not belonging. And you ask yourself, okay, then why do I have that fear? And if you can find out the answer to that, then you put that down. I was going to an AA meeting in 1989, almost 13 years sober, and I had a real deep sense of not belonging in the group that I was at.

I mean, it was a sense of not belonging and a fear of not belonging all at the same time. I was experiencing it all together, and it was going in intensity. And when it finally peaked out, the thought was, I don't even belong in AA anymore, and I don't belong out there anymore. Now, where do you go when you don't belong here and you don't belong there? That is a terrible spot to be. What I discovered was that there are people who do what we do on this particular path, and for me to hang out with them, which I dearly want to do, but if I am not doing what they do, I can't hang out here.

Not to take exclude me, but I exclude myself. I can't stand to be around somebody who's honest when I'm a little cheap weasel. Well, it's too uncomfortable. Spiritual people radiate the spirit. Man, it just happens. You know anything you can do about it. And if you're just a little sizzling weasel and you're trying to hang out with spiritual people hoping to somehow rub off, which I do, that's been a characteristic of mine.

I'm a spiritual thief. I'll take what you've got if it'll make me feel better. So if I want what you have and I want to be able to hang around with you, then I need to ask you what are you doing. And that's probably the way it has been the basis of mine being sponsored. As I asked the fellow, I said, what do I need to do? And he said, hell, I don't know. I said, oh Christ. I'm asking this. I'm about to die. And so Brian and I asked this guy, what are you doing? He said, I don't know.

I said, well, what did you do? And he said, that's a different question. And that is a different question, isn't it? And I'll tell you the same thing. If you ever ask me, what do I need to do? I'll say, I don't know. If you're talking to a guy that was almost locked away, if the rest of his life is not in that house, what do I know about what you need to do? But I will tell you, if you ask me what I did, precisely what I did.

And on fears about not belonging, I would simply write down, I have a fear of not belonging. And then I would ask God to remove that fear. Real simple. Don't you say it to him until he's good, okay? I say, when he's right, he's right. I have learned through some hard lessons that whether I feel like I belong to a group or not has absolutely nothing to do with whether they accept me or not. It has to do with whether I accept them or not. Period.

I have some stories behind that. That's just an inflammatory statement, so you have something to think about later. I had an occasion along the way to work in a casino, help build it, and then help Blackjack for a while, got bored with that. And went into the cage. They put me in the cage as Dave Alt Manager, primarily to see if I could figure out any ways to get money out of there, because they knew my background. In the first week, I found five ways. It's not that hard.

Four of them, they closed up. The fifth one, they wouldn't even believe it was so stupid. So I had to close it up myself, because it really was. It was so simple. It was a shame. They should have been locked up, not allowed to run a casino. But one of the kids that I sponsored, we got him a job as a fry cook up there, a prep cook. And he was kind of a mess at the time, emotionally. And this is not an environment that is conducive to serenity. I enjoyed the hell out of it for a while.

But he came to me one night and he said, I'm going nuts. I just don't fit. How do you do it? And the answer is, it truly is simple. I don't fit here either. But I fit here. And because of that, I can fit in anywhere. That's what this comes to. Vocation does not matter. God wants me here, being me, wherever that may be. I'm going to kind of blend some things in this sex inventory, because the first time through, and perhaps subsequent times, it's about sex. But this isn't about sex. This is about conduct.

This is not a pornographic inventory. This is a conduct inventory. Well, that's what it says. We reviewed our conduct over the years past. And they're directly addressing sexual conduct, but no one's I talk. This is the method I use to also take a look at my business relations, my home relations. Any relationship, what's my conduct? And the format is different for me. For resentment, we make a list and then analyze that list.

Here, we ask the questions and the list develops itself. I have a new consciousness now. If I've done the work to this point, I am conscious now that my troubles are my own making, and this is about me, not you. So it doesn't say make a list and then ask. It says, we review our conduct. Where had we been selfish? Well, the list will occur. I could just be a little honest with myself. Where have I been dishonest? Or inconsiderate? Whom have I heard?

It doesn't say make a list. It says whom have I heard? The list develops itself. What this allows me to cover then is not, if I just make a list, I'm going to make a list of how I define sex conduct. And we know a very highly placed figure that didn't really have sex with it, by his definition he was right. I've got one of those kind of minds. I'll do the same thing. This allows me to cover those times when I withheld sex, and that's what was inconsiderate, are harmful.

This will allow me to cover all kinds of times that won't be covered if I just look for sexual acts and activities with other people. They will come out in this, but I need to cover a much broader spectrum here. This is about what's blocking me from God. And it's the stuff that is so subtle I hardly see it that's blocking me from God. Did we unjustifiably aroused jealousy, suspicion, and bitterness? It's one of the best techniques in the world from manipulating people, you know.

When you're worried or in doubt, run in circles, scream and shout. You're about to get caught, create a diversion. If I see you coming at me and I know you just caught me between the time I see you and the time you get there, I've already figured out how to turn it around so that before we're through, you did it. Or if you didn't do it, you caused me to do it and you'll be sorry. And you will apologize to me. Nobody here ever did that?

They weren't going like this or I see you doing one. No wonder people don't like me. No wonder I feel left out. I am. Who wants to be around somebody like this? This is my conduct. Where are we at fault and what should we have done instead? I love my sponsor. He was so funny. What should you have done instead? Anything but what you did? I don't have to go through all kinds of philosophical stuff. We got all this down on paper and looked at it.

For me it's that simple. There's a format. It's simple. It lays out. I'm having trouble with that. I need to back up a little bit. I haven't gotten honest enough to take a look at it yet. You got a good sponsor to help you with that. In this way, we tried to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life. Well, that's so bloody simple. If I'm wrong for being inconsiderate, my ideal will be to be considered. All I've got to do is just turn these over the first time and I've got a really nice ideal here.

If I'm arousing jealousy, suspicion or bitterness, I want more of her attention. And one of the sick ways I'll get that is to begin dropping hints that there might be somebody else and then take some little actions where I've got little periods of time that can't be accounted for. Stop that. Stop that immediately. If I'm doing that, stop it. You don't need lectures on that. This is easy. Turn them over. There may be other things involved in an ideal, but that's a good place to start.

We subject each relation to this test. It's a selfish or not, and that continues for my lifetime. Each relation. We're now entering into something I need to caution people about when I work with them. You're about to enter a spiritual life. The one reason most people don't want to go is that this is a rigorous life. From here on, this is not

for sissies. This is not for weakness. This is a rigorous life. It's not tough, but it's rigorous.

I must pay attention to how I behave. God, it's awful when I suddenly hear myself say something and I realize, you dummy. You got to go back and clean this one up. Now, my greatest weakness in the mouth of the department these days is when somebody irritates me and they do. I start collecting allies. I don't put my mouth on you because you irritated me. I tell him about you. Now you're outnumbered, and then we tell him about you.

Then we tell her about you. We've got a gang now. You better straighten up. What a dreadful thing to do. I put him in a position where he's forced to respond. He may like you. He may like me. Now I put him in a position where he has to respond, so I got to watch him about. I caught myself doing that at work one day several years ago. I started talking about the bitch. Well, a lady in another department who wasn't doing her job right, which put pressure on me.

Those are guides I can look for. When I heard myself say the bitch, I knew you're out of line. Absolutely out of line. Between when I caught myself in a couple of days before I had begun with my own staff to get them to thank him for the bitch too. Which undermined the morale of my staff. What a stupid thing to do. But we are caught in that. That's inconsiderate. That's arousing jealousy, suspicion or bitterness. Stupid.

So, we got it on paper. We asked God to mover our deals and help us live up to them. We began entering into the answer to all problems. We asked God what to do about each specific matter. Oh, I've got to tell you. I hope it doesn't embarrass her. She's heard me tell it before. One of the people that used to come into the penitentiary was an old assembly of God's preacher. And I adored him. I don't care about your denomination.

Spiritual people are spiritual people. And I'm with you. And he was. And of course through him I learned how to sing again. I love singing hymns. Oh, look, the Baptist lost a dandy when they lost me. And nothing like splashing around in the river making a joyous noise under the Lord, boy. But he was truly a spiritual person. And he would talk with us. And one of the things that he brought up that smashed one of my illusions is that he sometimes had difficulty.

I didn't think spiritual people had difficulty making decisions. That there would be temptations. There would be two ways to go and he wouldn't be sure which one. And we asked him, well, how do you deal with that? He said, well, I take the master by the hand and say to him, if I go do this, will you go with me? Simple. I go to the master and ask for the right resurrection. Now, I know that wherever I am God is. So the answer to that's always yes.

But in terms of my conduct, I'm looking for I'd rather not. I either get a strong yes or don't go. I know it's strong. I'm no longer able to pretend I don't have a conscience. One of my problems is I've always had a conscience. And I nearly died because I'm a conscience. So it's either no or yes. If it's in between there, I don't go. It had never occurred to me even, and I was pretty sick, sexually. A lot of speed and weirdness and stuff.

So I just did what the big book premise is. If you want to get over something, stop doing it. Then work steps and you probably won't have to start again. But the first thing you got to do is stop doing it. You can't get sober while you're still drinking. You have to stop drinking first. That'll get you sober. And if you want to recover from alcoholism, then there's other things to do. But anyway, I just became after that.

Until I can have a sane sex conduct, I won't have any. It's just easier that way. So by the time I met Mary Jackie, I was nine years sober, tripping through. We have a very good sex life, by the way. I don't want to embarrass her, but she's taught me some really interesting things. Oh yeah, I didn't know anything about it when I got here. But it occurred to me one night that I had never gone to God first and said, if I go do this, will you go with me?

And I'm getting ready to make love with her. And it occurred to me so I did. And I got to tell you, the answer was, oh yeah. What a wondrous thing that was for me because I came from a place of sexual sickness. Oh yeah, this was always an oddie thing. I'd been beaten with a rubber hose when I was 11 years old for having sex. Got carried, got rid of that, and then found something new. Oh yeah, if you don't get, oh yeah, wait for it.

We asked God to mold our ideals and help us live up to. What kind of an employee can I be? Each specific matter. God, I show up this morning. What would you have me be this morning? What do you want me to do this morning? I work for him now. Isn't that weird? Please don't tell him I'm on comfort and I really am. But the job I have today is outrageous and I won't tell you about it because I'll just piss you off. Five years ago I quit the job I had in North Carolina because it was time to come home.

I was about to get a big promotion and I don't want to be an executive. I really don't. I'd rather be nobody. Executors weren't way too hard. They have to do everybody's job. It's just, it's no good. Anyway, I quit, came home. The day after I quit I got a call from the fellow that said they're giving me a million dollars to put this project together. I'll take it if you'll come help me. And I didn't have anything else to do.

I knew I was coming home anyway, so I said sure. We got there in the place with such a mess. Neither one of us could actually go to work there. I went in a week ahead of him, talked to the guy who was running the place for one minute and left the building. I'm called George and said if this is who I work for, I don't work here. So things got turned around and the job I was supposed to do is to develop alcohol and drug treatment programs in correctional facilities.

That's what I've been doing. That was not available because of the administration of the place. So I took on a job as a van driver. Eight bucks an hour, driving the van, checking to make sure people work. Our inmates go to work, checking the various things. Just scut work. Run this errand, go to Home Depot. I had me a ball. Just drove around town all day and had fun. And the kid that was doing the job was taking eight or nine hours and was getting it done in three.

And four. And I get bored very quickly. God, what would you have me do? Well, you got too much to do. You're a case manager. You got way too much to do. And you got this that isn't getting done. Oh, I got time. I'll do that. Same thing. And I began just, I got time. I'll do that. And I began taking little pieces from each department that wasn't getting done. Just so I'd have something to do and so I could be of service.

I'm not, service is not nobility to me. I don't have any choice. The next thing you know, I'm a department. Yeah, I've got enough to do that I became a department. And so they needed a name for it, so I made one up. I'm an intake coordinator. It sounded really good. Didn't mean a damn thing, but it sounded good. And eventually things got straightened out so that I could then begin to do what I was supposed to do, which meant I had to leave the van driving job, which was really fun.

I got to pick the prisoners up with the jail and bring them in. Critical time. That's the scary time. County jail receiving units are terrifying. You are in limbo. Nobody gives a damn. Nobody can get at you and nobody knows where you are. You're not on a computer anymore. You are in receiving. You can't use the telephone. You don't know what's going to happen next. You don't know where you're going. This is a terrifying time.

Put yourself in those boots. Someone else has complete control of your life and you have no idea who they are or what they are. Wonderful time for me. I love that job, going in and getting them out of there. And the ride in. I have fun on the ride in. First thing I do is ask them what they want to be called. They've been called everything but who they are for months. Now I picked up a kid one morning whose name was Clay Office.

And I knew that isn't what he wanted to be called. I was getting his shoes and think of the years that people called him Clio. No wonder he looked bad and was angry. So I said, what would you like to be called? He says, what do you mean? I said, well I believe in calling people what they want to call. He said, call me butch. So I did. On that ride in is service. You and I are in the business. The life business of touching other people's lives in such a way that it changes them.

If you think it's anything less than that, go to a meeting. Our job is to touch people in such a way that it changes them. I don't get to decide what the change is but it's got to change them. Well the change I need to bring about from the jail to our place is the anxiety needs to leave before they get there. And the only way that can happen, I tell them what's going to happen when they get there. I tell them who to watch out for.

Stay away from security as much as possible. Their job is to make sure you fail. It's the job. We have a visit on the way in. I want to know where they're from. When we get there there's an intake. I bought a great big old chair whose only purpose is to put the new people in. It's a great chair. Overstuffed, wonderful. And that's where we do the intake. I sit on a hard chair and I sit in this nice chair under a nice lamp.

I want them to understand clearly you're going to be treated differently here. So all that goes away. It's self-interest. I don't want them nervous when we get there. Anyway, I got to do that. I was loving every minute of all that. I love getting friendly with the deputies in the receiving unit because I've been there. They weren't friendly. Last time I was there. I got a cell phone from the company one time. And you're not supposed to take those into the jail.

But I'm forgetful. And I was inside with the cell phone. Or when I discovered I had the cell phone and it came over me. I had to do something for everybody who's ever been in jail because you can't make a call home from receiving. You can't do it. Period. So I went in the men's room and called home. My wife works there in the hospital and one of her nurses answered the phone. And I think I told her, tell Jackie that I'm in jail.

And I'll call her later. And we've been able to have some fun with that because over the years I'll call her from the jail. I use their phone now. I'm in jail again, honey. Just wanted to let you know just in case. That attitude will carry into what you do. The greatest change that can happen to people in pain and suffering and sickness is a little laughter. Just that much. Just a little bit of fun. Well, I had to give that job up.

Wonderous thing. And I got a great gift out of it because it wasn't just a job. It was a department. I had to find somebody to fill the position. So I recruited a friend from Rhode Island and brought him in. We talked about

somebody who needed to get the hell out of Rhode Island and who was anxious to get into corrections and was on fire and fill with the evangelical fury. So we got our old Richard here. By the grace of God, we talked about a useful life.

Just before I die, I can honestly say that by the grace of God I was able to live my life in such a way that I was able to help create a position where somebody could do some use for it. I got to help make the job. That's what this will bring out if you get rid of this. And I don't consciously do this. Please don't mistake. When I tell the story, I'm telling you about what happened. This isn't in my mind when it's going on.

This is all intuitive. This is all of the moment. You get to look back on it. And I think, my goodness, look what happened here. Let's see. What was the last title I made up? We've been making up titles for me ever since I want to work there, because nobody knows what it is that I do. Because I'm not what I do. My boss finally got that one. He said, I've got to finally figure. It's not what you do. It's who you are. And that's something that's nice to know, because that's what this is about.

It's not what you do. It's who you are. It's just, see, I've been... My last one was liaison. I liked the word. I was... The dark liaison. You liked that one, right? Leza? It's the second greatest title in the world, because you don't know what it is. In the contract, what it means is other duties as a sign. You're never sure who's going to sign them, but it really is. That's the guy who brings what you need. He has it.

You need it. I get the two of you together and get out of the way and go looking for trouble somewhere else. What were we last week? I think I am now special projects consultant. No. I am consultant slash special projects. Is that wonderful? It doesn't mean anything. But it means everything. Has some fun with your life, okay? I don't have to manipulate that. Whatever the ideal turns out to be, we must be willing to go toward it.

The ideal would be to be like Brother Lawrence, and I can never make it. I commend that book to you. It's called The Practice of the Presence of God, and he is my ultimate hero. Brother Lawrence was so in touch with the presence of God that everything he did was for God. Everything. But it was mopping floors or doing dishes or shopping at the monastery. People came from all around because where he was, God was. And he was in constant communication.

And he had a great dilemma. Every time he did something for God, it seemed to him there was this overwhelming reward of love returned to him. Overwhelming. And he wanted more than anything at all to do something for God without any reward. And he could never pull it off because it's not the nature of God. Well, there's the ideal. I'm never going to make that. That's way above me. But I can ask some fun along the way trying.

Want a good exercise? Do something truly meaningful for someone else. And don't get caught. Almost impossible. I did it once and found out about the alcoholic ego. Nobody else ever caught me. And my ego says, well, boy, you did it. You pulled it off, kid. And I realize now I got caught. I'm whole ego. It isn't going to happen. We keep trying. Whether it be sex or business or my group. Do I manipulate my group this way?

So they'll do what I want? Yeah? I'm going to be careful. We must be willing to make a man's role. We've done harm provided we do not bring about still more harm than so doing. Lots of counsel with others is a good

idea here. In other words, we treat sex with any other problem. I hear it. Any other problem can be treated the same way. This is our treatment. Nothing less than this. In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter.

No more rules. Each specific matter. What was okay yesterday may not be okay today. In terms of my conduct. In terms of who I am. In terms of who you are. The right answer will come when we want it. In every situation, we just go to God. If I go do this, will you go with me? What would you have me be in this situation? What would you have me do in this situation? This specific one. Before I start a talk, my prayer is simply fill me with your loving spirit and let it flow through me and into the lives of others.

Help me to tell it like it is and carry the message you would like carried to this particular group and to me. Because I have 15, 20, 25 hours with a talk. I've been here a long time. I've got a good memory. I don't know what you need to hear. I must have guidance. The guy who isn't getting the physical thing, the psychiatrist, I need to ask God. How do I say this any simpler? I don't know how to do this. What can I bring to this situation?

I've done what I thought was right. I read the doctor's opinion to him. And he's a doctor. His opinion is stronger than the doctor's opinion. He isn't getting it. What do I say? I need that constant guidance. Do you see the dimension of this part of the inventory? My God. I've entered into the world of the spirit to ask God about each specific matter. How should I write this? Don't ask me. Ask God. What needs covered here?

I don't know. What do you think needs covered here? Did you cause any harm? You come to me and say, do you think this was harmful? I don't know. You were there. I wasn't there. Oh, show me. Oh, God alone can judge our sex situation. I'm out of the judging business. Part of my trouble is that I'm assigning me a role and I can't keep up and I'm judging my own actions. God, please remove the judge from my mind. Cause I will judge you just like I judge me.

And I judge me really harshly. I don't have any idea what's right and wrong. I'm a sociopath and a psychopath. I just have a conscience, but I don't know the difference between that and wrong. Well, sure. I do know. I'm so worried about what you think about me that I don't know whether or what I did hurt you or not. So I will hurt you by asking you. Dumb. Do you ever go back and make amends to somebody that looks at you like that?

I don't remember that. We have this exaggerated ability to make mountains out of monsters. Also with other persons is desirable, particularly in this area. I'm very, very careful here. This is probably the second most powerful force in the human condition. It's one of the reasons we get the screwed up. We are power seekers. And this is about power. And this is powerful stuff. You learn real early that you can manipulate people with this one.

So we heard a lot of people all the way. So counsel with other people is often desirable. But we let God be the final judge. If I go do this, will you go with them? Who do you want looking over your shoulder? I'm going to leave it at that, Jerry. It's your turn. One of the ingredients required to live in the fashion that Don just shared with you. And to be a part of that spearhead of God's ever-advancing creation. One of the key ingredients is we've got to be able to look the world in the eye.

We need to wake up, be a bright light each and every day. And go out there and be in the middle of us. Get

out on the street. In order to do that, I need for somebody to know who I am. To know the truth about me is objectionable as it may be. I need for at least one person to know the truth about me. And that's essentially what the fifth step is all about. See, by the time we get through this inventory that we have been talking about for several hours now, a truth will overwhelm us and that truth is that the person we wish we were is so far removed from the person we really are, that I can't hardly stand it and we need to go talk to somebody about that.

We need to go tell them the truth about ourselves. And I won't try to get into all the magic that occurs in that exercise or this little action step. But the bottom line is we pick up our inventory and we go see a person of our choosing whether it's a sponsor or whether it's a religious individual, some of us belong to religious organizations. And we need to make our confession there, if you will. Or it may be just a closed-mouth friend, somebody you can trust that they're going to keep this stuff quiet.

You know, one of the things that I think is so crucial to what we do is that whatever it is we share is going to stay with that person unless we give them permission to talk about it. Now, Don knows that my life is so squirly. But I have told them anytime you can use something of mine and it'll be put to a good useful purpose, use it. And we're talking about maybe some other alcoholic getting a chance to live. So why not use it? It's goofy stuff anyway.

But to a long and short of it is, I need to go share this with somebody. I always kind of chuckle at some of the fifth step stuff. I made an appointment to go do my fifth step the very first time. And all God, I didn't want to do that. I really didn't want to do that. And I kept thinking, is there some way I can avoid this part of the deal? And I knew that I couldn't. One of the great joys that I'll share with you or discoveries that I'll share with you is this.

If you really, really get some clarity, just some clarity about your first step, you will take the second step. And if you do the second step, I'll guarantee it, you will do the third. And you can see where I'm headed with this thing. If you ride a fourth step, you will go share it. Do you've been awakened to the spirit, should go share it, or you go nuts? But the thing that's kind of comedic to me is that I have people come to me once in a while and say, God, Jerry, can I come and do my fifth step for you?

I say, sure. When do you want to do it? Well, I'm just so anxious to come and do it. I just feel so good. I think Jesus, it's Christ. What did we find here? I sure wasn't anxious to share my savvy little stuff. I guess, you know, it's on, so the point is that we go share it with some.