

DON P ARCHIVE

Big Book Weekend

2001 | Part 8 | Reading edition

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Transcript

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Good, I just feel so good. I think Jesus, it's Christ. What did we find here? I sure wasn't anxious to share my shabby little stuff, but I guess, you know, it's his own. So, point is that we go share it with somebody. And what we share is the truth about ourselves and it begins to see the daylight. And anything that's exposed to the daylight is in its own way starting to die. The kind of stuff that I had to hit me. And the way inside of me. So, I share it. No matter how silly it is. I honest to God believed when I went to do this inventory the very first time I thought, you know, I know this guy. And when I tell him that, you know, I'm pissed off my mother because she made me wear a elastic jeans. I mean, this guy is not throwing me out of his house. He's tough hombre. He's a big time cook. I really do. I'm just concerned as hell. He's going to throw me out of the house and I'll never get a chance.

I have to go back there again. But I committed to do this. I committed to do this. And something inside of me kept pulling me to finish up what I had started. You know, I would tell you that I something inside, you know, some, I didn't have a whole lot to do with it. Or something inside of me said, I got to go do this. So I went off and I did this. Scared to death. Just petrified. Knew that this guy was just going to think, where did this little Weasley guy come from?

And so I shared all this stuff with him. And it wasn't big, big stuff. It really isn't big stuff. Just real, real petty little crap. But it was my truth. I am happy to tell you that a couple of years ago I stayed with him. My wife and I stayed with him for three weeks with he and his wife stayed in his house. Move back to Denver. Didn't have a place to stay at that particular time. And he made it possible for me to get settled in Denver again.

This is a guy I was sure was going to throw me out of his house when I got through this fifth step and never speak to me again. Don't be too concerned. It's the truth and we have to go share it with someone. Because see, there's a point to all this sharing. The number one, I mean, if we try to get real erudite about this, the book says if we don't share it with somebody. A solitary self appraisal is insufficient. We're liable to drink again. I mean, we have all of them.

But it's something even more crucial as far as my own experience reveals. And that is once I share this truth, it becomes the reality. I get to see it for the very first time. This is the reality. This is what I am. It may not be what I want to be, but this is what I am. And it becomes my truth, very clearly my truth. Because you see, in this little spiritual process that we're going through, that becomes crucial in just a very short period of time.

And I'll come to that in just a minute. We go share this with somebody. These are the instructions. We go share our truth with somebody. And when we're all through, we come home and we sit down quietly and reflect on what we've done. And then we carefully review what is it that's going on here. Well, number one, am I really alcoholic? Am I really an alcoholic? Am I more importantly, am I powerless? See, this all comes down to lack of power.

I know what I'd like to be, or I know what I don't like to be, but I don't have the power to be any different. So I have to reflect on that just for a little while. Do I believe that there is a power greater than myself? It will

change the way I think. Do I believe that? Have I truly become willing to go to anything? That's the third step, prayer. God, I'm yours. You do whatever you want. You do whatever you want. You build with me and then do with me as you want.

That's the whole deal. That's the willingness. For have I done the best job I can this time to find out what's the real truth about old Jerry? And number five, did I share this with another human being? And if I can clearly say that, then I'm about ready to very carefully stop and pause just a little bit, so I can do one more thing. Do I find the truth about myself objectionable? Because if you don't find it objectionable, we're all wasting our time.

That's a little secret I've discovered in this deal. I need to discover that the truth of what I am is so objectionable because it is totally different than what I wanted to be. When I discovered, you know, in that fourth column of the resentment inventory, how often I am dishonest, what it became very clear to me is I lie about the silliest damn thing. And I want to be an honest fellow. I mean, the word integrity carries such weight with me. High standards of integrity and unflinching ethics mean so very much to me, and that's who I'd like to be, and that's what I'd like to be, and when I look at my inventory, that's not who and what I am.

And that's nauseating to me. It really is. And it's so terribly objectionable that I get real clear on something. And what I get clear on is I don't want to be what I am. I truly do not want to be what I am. That's why when the question was asked, I think sometime yesterday, do we ever find anything good about ourselves? Well, that's not, no, trying to go someplace with that by the truth is no. There isn't anything good.

Because what I am is so terribly different than what I always wanted to be. And I find out that who and what I am is terribly objectionable. And the ideas that are in my mind are ideas that are no longer suitable for me to hold on to. That's all this whole thing is all about. Do I want to hang on to some old ideas? I didn't associate the fact that many of us try to hold on to our old ideas and thinking, old thinking is being one and the same.

So I was in an inventory one time. I thought, okay, that's what they meant. And once I get clear on the fact that this way of thinking that I hold, I mean, look at some of the old ideas that we have. To finish up with the sex inventory is a really good place to look at some of those old ideas. One of the things that we try so desperately to do is we try to get some of us guys. We try to get a woman in our life and then hold on to her desperately.

Have you ever, guys, I'll ask you a question. Have you ever had her come to you and say, we need to talk? Don't you know what that means? I do. That means that she is just about out of here. And I don't know what you do, but I start getting desperate and figuring out ways. Don talked about it. I have a modus operandi. I'll make her jealous. That's what I'll do. That'll keep her. I'll rouse a little suspicion or bitterness. That'll keep her. I mean, I've got all sorts of hooks that I know how to put out there.

It's sicker in hell, but I know what they are. Because there's been a spiritual change that has begun to occur in this fifth and sixth step. I look at that idea and now I find that it is so distasteful to me. Why would I ever want to keep somebody around or force them to let me stay around if they don't want me here anymore? I mean, that's the most, that would be a punishment, worse than death. I mean, I just can't conceive of it anymore.

And that's the change brought about by the Spirit. See, I don't have the power to have that huge displacement of an old idea. I don't have that power. The Spirit opens that up and all of a sudden you look and you think, how

can I have ever thought? Otherwise. How could I have ever thought that if I just manipulate things just the right way, I can make her make it possible for me to stay here? That's dumb. And it's cruel. And it's everything that I don't want to be.

I sometimes laugh. People come to me and they say, Jerry, can we talk? I want to talk about a relationship a little bit. I don't know what to say to them. I really truly don't. What do I know about relationships? I give everything I've got to give to her and if she lets me save, then that's the most beautiful thing in the world. That's all I know about a relationship. It's no more complicated. I give it all. I don't expect anything in return if she gives me some intern that's fantastic. What else is it? What else is it?

And I like to be responsible to her. You know what I really enjoy being? You know what I think every alcoholic really enjoys is being dependable? God, isn't it fun just being dependable? I thought I thought fun was some big lofty stuff out here. And I'm discovering it's just being dependable. I even take out the trash on occasion. I usually, you know, I like this thing about, you know, do something nice for somebody and not let them know, but God, that's hard to do.

Oh, that's harder than hell to do. But if I look at the truth of my life, I really come down to one final conclusion. Do I find that truth objectionable or not? And if it's objectionable to me, then I am probably in a position where I am willing to let go of those old things. So those old ideas, aren't I? It really gets to be that simple. If I find the truth objectionable, that means I am willing to let go of the old ideas.

And that's what we're really seeking to do here is to let go of the old way of thinking. I have sought now for a number of years, almost ten full years now, to see if I could find any one element of the thinking that I brought here worth keeping. Just one old idea that was worth keeping, and I have not found it yet. Everything that I brought with me into the halls of A, 23 plus years ago, I have not found worth keeping.

My ideas that I brought here I find objectionable, and as new inventory reveal more of those old ideas, I find that there's other ideas that I need to be rid of. But in this particular inventory I'm talking about now, this first one, I really could not tolerate the truth about myself. And when you get to that point you have completed step six. Now that's a very quick overview of five and six, but it's really that simple.

Share our truth, look at it, discover okay this is what I am, this is my truth, I now own it, is this what I want my truth to be. And if it didn't, am I willing to let go of the all the ideas that underlie this truth. And then we're at step six. We've been here about an hour this time, we're going to, at the end, right close to noon or when we're done, we're done, because we have planes to catch. You have homes to go back to.

Leave permission, we must go and take another little break, we'll just push a little bit so we can get this material done, and then when we're done, we're done. At noon being the latest, if you need to leave the room for any reason at all, just leave the room. I got it, I did too, look at that. Couple things, I'll start with what I'm observing with big book people. They're a large group, in fact my sponsor is sponsored by one of the people who share multiple fifth steps.

There's justification for it here if you're a big book lawyer. It's not a bad thing. What they do is you have your fifth step and you call them and somebody shows up and you share yours with them and make sure there's a use.

Then they leave and somebody else shows up and you do the same thing four or five times. And the purpose of it, initially was so that everybody finally gets the idea we're all the same. Because one of the guys a year sober, one's thirty years sober, it's all, we're not all that different, we need to break down the difference.

I have no objection to that, I don't do that. There's no right way here. It does indicate who I'm supposed to go to, close my trusted friend, it gives a description. I share my inventory with multiple people, I share every time I do one of these, I share some piece of it. I carry around with me so if you want to look at it, you can. Because I'm through with it, I don't care what to do with it. There are marathon fifth steps, it says we're to be prepared for a long talk.

I'm going to tell you something, long at thirty is different than long at sixty. If you come at me with a ten hour or twelve hour inventory, we're going to do this in two hour segments, three on a good day. I am not up to ten or twelve hours anymore. Paul did that to me, he had the intellectuals who always wanted to do it. They know I do what's in the book when they're fifth stepping, they feel they need to give me all the background at ten hours, because I really do listen.

I think it's really important, my function is to listen so that I can, if necessary, feed back to you, did you hear what you just said? I'm not going to tell you what you said, but listen to this. You understand, you just said that. Anyway, at the end of ten hours, I was tired. Paul said, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I said, Paul, stop for a minute. I'm dying here. I need to stop for a while. No, no, no, no. So I just crawled up on his bed and went sweet.

And woke up a couple hours later and he was still bad. He learned a great lesson. He's the same one that called me with some ten step inventory one time, left it on my answering machine because I wasn't there. He didn't care. He's still sober, apparently that works too. I tend to do it just like it says here. I took my first inventory and it was very shabby. It was good, but it was shabby. I didn't have enough memory left.

I got here burned in crisp. It took a while to restore for other brain cells to pick up from the burned woods that their functions were. I wasn't about to be rejected again by my sponsor, who I'd gone to with that first one that he called Garbage. So I'm looking for a closed-mile trusted friend. I was having an experience at the time and I didn't know what it was, but my friend Jim, who came into the prison with me, I had a new feeling for him and I didn't know what it was except to tell you that I wanted things to be better for him because he was in a peculiar situation.

I knew why I was in the penitentiary. I had done what they said I had done. Jim didn't know why he was there. He had done what every one of us had been terrified we might have done some night driving a car in a blackout. He killed two people and he got a three to five for vehicular homicide and he didn't know why he was there. I don't care what they told him, he had no memory. He didn't know why he was there. He was not criminal in the same sense that I was.

And somehow I got an idea that if I shared the garbage of my life with him, his life might get better. I know today this is compassion. It is not a natural thing for me. It was of the spirit. So he and I went up to the shop now. Anyway, he and I spent the whole afternoon up in that school while I did the first step the way it says here. And the only thing he said, the other guy said it wasn't that bad. All Jim ever said was, uh-huh, okay.

Or ever now and then he would say something would stimulate a little memory that hadn't shown up on the paper. Well, we got it done. And two experiences occurred in me. I paid very close attention to those changes. I've got to live with them for the rest of my life. I need to know when they're going on, what's going on. First of all, the sense that I was alone and an alien on this planet disappeared. It wasn't there anymore. The way you know something is gone is it isn't there anymore.

Prior to this activity with Jim, I had been alone because it was me and who I needed you to be. None of you were ever really real to me. You were resources. Following this activity for whatever the reason, there were not two people, me and Jim. Now that was a big deal. And I went back and did this review and realized I have finally finished something. I could never remember ever finishing anything. I was a sprinter in the game of life. Not a long distance, really.

Now I finished something. What an overwhelming, the ego is involved in this. Please let it be. It doesn't say the ego dies. We die to it. We take the keys away from the five-year-old, but we take him on every trip with us. If you don't take a kid with you on a trip, you're dumb. Adults drive from here to there and miss everything. The kid will stop and see the two-headed calf. Maybe he can't explain what that is. But in my review, I also realized we have just barely scratched the surface and I have a lifetime of work to this.

So I added to the prayer. I'm subject to do that. I'm not one of the militaristic, legalistic lawyer types. I go by the book. If I think it needs to add it to for me, I added this one. I said to seven-step prayer and then I added, please God, don't let what I haven't found yet. Kill me before I get to it. And I'm still here. And you heard some fresh inventory. I'm still finding stuff and it's really shabby now. I mean, my goodness.

But I had not omitted anything. Everything that I could remember was there. This is probably one of the most important areas here at the sixth and seventh step of the process itself, because this is where the power of God becomes observable and where the way I approach life becomes detailed. The power of God, the best I can tell, is willingness. It is so powerful that the moment I'm willing, it's already happened. There's no light time. It's instantaneous.

When I'm willing to change, I've already changed. When I'm willing to let go, it's already God. So it's just that much. And that's spiritual power. There is no human power with that kind of reflexes. And if I don't have it, whatever it may be, in this case the willingness to let go of things I still want to hold on to, I go to God and ask for willingness. I ask for God's power. I'm a power seeker. I've always been a power seeker.

And I don't want to ever stop being a power seeker. Like the power is my dilemma. The only solution to my dilemma is power. And I will get power. And most of us get blocked here because we know that. We are talking about an endless reserve of power. We are talking about the power to change people's lives by our presence and by our willingness to believe in the power. And you can't have my God, but you can by God believe I am in touch and you can count on that.

And it tells me later on precisely what to do and why I have this power. I have been given this power to help others. No other reason. The power is not for me. The strange things that happen. I come to this thing in order to acquire power to solve my problem. The moment my problem is solved, I am not to work on my problem anymore to help you with yours. That's the only place I can put the power. And this isn't noble and well thought

out. This is the way it is.

Now when that power hits, you can't shut up. You can't stay home. Oprah who? Okay. When you're ready. And sometimes it takes a little while. The suggestion of the sixth step is to spend an hour. And I'm such a big book Nazi. When you're through, you brought your book with you. Go home and put your book on the shelf so that you can follow the instructions and take the book off the shelf. Let's don't leave anything out.

Okay. Don't add anything to it. Let's don't leave anything out either. And that is so silly that the power laughter begins. You know, there's nothing like looking at yourself being silly. I've done all this incredible spiritual work. And it all hinges on me doing this silly activity of putting the book on the shelf, waiting a second, and taking the book off. It's only life or death lighting up. When we're ready, I'm either truly willing to let them all go or truly wanting to believe that the prayer for that willingness is already activating it.

We say something like this. My creator, I'm now willing that you should have all of them, a good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defective character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength to go off from here to do your bidding. Amen. And our prayer process then is completed. The house cleaning is done. Now, I've got a load of garbage that needs to go to the street.

I can clean house and put them in black paper bags and leave them in the garage and pretty soon house things again. Once I get all the garbage gathered up, it's time to take it to the street and dispense it. Get rid of it. Be done with it. What goes where? We have trash trash. We have recyclable plastics. We have recyclable glass. We've got all kinds of bins for our trash. We've got days when you can put this one out and days when you can put that one out.

It's not all that different. I've got to get the right trash to the right people. I'm not to burden them with it. I'm not to give you the trash that accumulated over what I did to him. I gave that one and did the fifth step. I'm going to go back to him and say what I did to you was trash. I'm getting rid of it. My blah blah. Okay. We said the third step together. I'm inclined to think we should say the seventh step together because this is a group activity.

Even though Jerry and I have done most of the bad ones. Would you like to do that? Okay. Now, it won't be right because we didn't do all the other work in between. But it won't be wrong either. My creator. Implicit in the prayer is the fact that I am no longer going to work on my character defense. If I work on something, I get really good at it. God will remove them. In his own time and in his own way, they will be removed.

If that isn't true, then there's no need to go any further with this. That's what this is. This path says now get on about some other things. Defective character. Just character traits that are defective. What's the difference between commitment and stubbornness? They kind of look the same. You know, I've been asked to talk about the experience at the 8th step because my experience of this is that I did not get free making a mess.

I got free at the 8th step becoming willing to make a mess. That's where the power is. Now, there is no question in my mind. There's no slack in my life. If I harmed you, I owe you. Period. That's not what sets me free. When we finished all this, I did go back to my sponsor because he was my guide. I didn't refit that with him, but we kind of went over it because from the inventory comes the clear harm that I have done and I have to get willing to make a mess from that from the inventory.

He said, we know who you hurt, who you harmed. It's on this list. But you are so insensitive while we know what you did to them. You're too insensitive to know what it did to them. So you'll screw it all up. And he was right. I'm ready to go make a mess to everybody. I'm filled with evangelical fury. I'm going to straighten. They wouldn't let me out. But they kept me another eight, nine months. They were just hard-nosed about that.

He said, here's what I want you to do. You go back to yourself tonight, take every one of these names and put it on a separate list. This was the list than this man I ever saw. Then add anybody else you can think of because if you met them, you messed with them. Now that does not imply I owe the whole world a mess individually. But the attitude itself was absolutely correct. If I met you, I'm messed with you. It's just another acknowledgement that selfishness and self-centeredness has entered into every relationship I have ever had.

And we need to get that down. Then he said, I want you to take, and by the way, that in the long list, three, four hundred people, one guy brought me 2,500. I threw him out. Come on. He was young. Young people have grandiose ideas. Anyway, he said, here's what I want you to do. Close your eyes. I'm locked up in the penitentiary cell, sitting on a steel seat with a steel bench. I love the drama of that. I'll buy myself.

I'm in God. He said, I want you to close your eyes and picture each one of them before you. And see if you can feel a willingness deep in your heart to lick each one of them right in the eye and say to them, I have been wrong and I have harmed you. Would you please tell me what I have to do to get these books to balance? And as I went over that list that night and became aware that I truly am willing to face anyone on the planet and square it in whatever way it needs to be squared, I was lifted from that chair and set free.

Nothing was lifted from me. I was lifted. That's the sensation I had. And I was set free. I've been free ever since. I don't do stupid things for your vengeance. Nor do I very often ask the question with that kind of directness. But what that has done has made it possible to make the impossible amends, meaning those that I can't think of any way to set this straight. My mother sent my dad to the door on Christmas Day to say, you and your children can't come into this house anymore because I can't stand watching you die.

How do you square that? I can't think anything to this day that squares that. So what that attitude does, what that prayer does, what that willingness does, is make me a listener. I can come to you and I can honestly say, I've harmed you and I've done you wrong. Here's what I see that I did. Here's what I see that I might be able to do to straighten it out. What do you think? I need your input. This may not be enough.

What do you think? That's the attitude I carry with me. So what that did is I began to listen closely to what people said. And months after I got out of the penitentiary, my mother allowed me to come by. She was very reluctant, but she did allow me to come by. Because my mother loves me. She's just been hurt. And in our light conversation, and believe me, I kept it light. We are to be hard on ourselves and very considerate of others.

She did not need any fast movements out of me. Of any kind. I found a way to ask the question, not directly, but I found a way to ask the question. And then I shut up and listen. She said, honey, all I've ever wanted was for you to be happy. So for 30 some years, now I've been going by my mother's house on a regular basis happy. That's all she wants. It works. For six years, she said she didn't believe I was going to amount to anything.

I don't go making amends so that you'll believe in me again. If I owe you, I owe you. She wanted some

regularity. A good part of the making of amends. The true amends means to change. It doesn't mean I'm sorry. I've been sorry my whole life. I don't use that. I'm changed. She needed to see that change. Before she could trust it. Don't tell my brother 22 years. I've watched him get my life in order before he trusted me.

I have no right to expect him to ever trust me. I just need to get square. My mom and I have a wonderful relationship today. She's 90. Still kicking ass and taking names. I'm telling you. She walks with a cane now. Don't irritate her. She loves to gamble. She's a big time gambler. She loves to go out to Vegas. She's been known to take as much as \$100 with it. So I had some fun with the other day. Dad died three years ago.

Through the disposition of the property and all that. She's got more money than she needed to live three lifetimes. So she's going to be fine. So I was kidding her the other day. I said, Mom, you need to trip to Vegas. I'm a good luggage carrier. We had a laugh. I said, look, next time you do go do me a favor. Go big time. Take 500 bucks. It makes her nervous. This is the lady that was unable to allow me and my children to come into her home on Christmas Day.

Because of the spiritual process. The ability to live one day at a time happy. Visibly. I was able to be there and help my dad die. My uncle Walt just died. My uncle Walt was an enigma. He looked just like an alcoholic. See, I'm the only alcoholic in my home. Although my son, my older boy, if he isn't he'll do till one comes along. So keep your eyes out for him please because I can't help him. And he's in great, great pain right now.

But Uncle Walt looked like one. And about 30 years ago some doctors said, Walter, if you don't quit drinking you're going to die. And he quit. No stamina. No perseverance. Didn't have what it took. But in the last couple years, Walter liked my granddad in the last couple years of his life. Really liked one jelly glass. I don't know if you do it back home but we use jelly glasses for table settings. One jelly glass of good sipping whiskey.

A day. I need sipping. Some days he wouldn't. He was not alcoholic. But I love my uncle Walt. What I'm trying to get at is that when Uncle Walt died my mother asked me to do the funeral service. What is God's bidding? I'm to be loving and kind and useful in every arena of my life. Most importantly are family. We're all family. And like in any family there's immediate family and there's kissing cousins. Okay? And I need to be with immediate family a lot.

I love the kissing cousins but they use the 12 and 12. And that's nice. That's a good book by the way. It's a clear report on the first weakening of the AA message. It is. Good writing. Good philosophy. Good stuff in there. But I need big book fanatics. People who know beyond a shadow of doubt and if they can't find a way to carry this message to somebody who doesn't want to hear it. They're going to die. That's the kind of people I need.

Okay? You want to go to the ballgame or you want to go find us? Let's go down and find us a drunk. That's the kind of people I need. Now if he doesn't want it then we've got time to make the ballgame. But let's go see him first. Otherwise I'll die. What is God's bidding? I know what it is for me. I know what it is for you. Have some fun with it. I'm inclined to think that my mother's message to me was from God. All I have ever wanted for you to be was happy.

The old timers, including our sponsors, give us some marvelous little tips on some ways to do things. I had heard Don's story about sitting in a cell, closing his eyes and going down that list of people to whom he owe to

men's and asking himself if he would be willing to make them. Now I don't know what you all do, but I tell you some things that I do. When I hear a real good idea, I won't tell anybody that it's a good idea, but I'll go home and try it.

And so I heard that story some ten years ago and I thought, you know, I think that I probably could stand to do that. Now I'm a fellow that was so desperate to find a solution to my problem that when I did the inventory and fifth step on a Tuesday I was writing my seventh step. I mean my eighth step on a Wednesday and starting my amends on Thursday. I just, I had to get this done, but in order to do that I had to sit down and try this, the lecture size.

And I asked myself, do I have that ability and the willingness to say I've harmed you? What do I need to do to make this right for you? How can I balance it out? And I discovered that I had some trepidation about making these amends. What it really came down to is I thought there's some of these that I can't do. But I would sit with each person on that list until it became clear to me that I can go do this. Again, you know, I've talked to you here this weekend about willingness and wanting to.

There weren't many amends that I've had to make. I'm trying to think if I ever had one that I wanted to go make. There are many that I simply became willing to go make. It's no different than what we're doing here. This is what we are. We do this, don't we? We share this message one with another. So I got clear on the fact that yes, I'm willing to go do this. And so I started off. Now you talk about something that's kind of a little mystical.

I told you that I had created a deal with my mother to where I had completely convinced her that she was the cause of my alcoholism. And you know, I had done the same thing Don was alluding to. I had run around early in sobriety talking about trying to get you to understand and to like me again and forgive me. That's what going around and saying, sorry, I got clear on that when I finally followed the instructions here.

And realized that what I needed to do was regardless of the outcome, I need to go do this deal. So I went home. I was living in Denver and I drove back to Kansas where my mother was. I sat down with her and I said, Mom, I need to talk to you. Now my father's been dead for a number of years and so my mother had remarried. And I think the fellow that she remarried knew that I was kind of a flaky fellow. And so he was going to hang around and make sure that I didn't do anything that would hurt her.

So no matter what I did that particular day, I could not get him out of the room. And so I finally said, well, you know, I thought to myself, there's not going to be any way I'm going to get this deal done without him sending her. So I began to try to clean this deal up with her and ask her what I could do. You know what? She used the same precise words that Don's mother had given to him many years before. I don't know about Don's situation. I will tell you this.

When I start trying to talk to my mother that way, she starts crying. God dammit, that's just what she does. Now, I don't know what you guys do when your mother starts crying. I start crying. I do. And so she said, that's all I ever wanted. So I was just for you to be happy. I swear to God I never heard that when I was a kid. But, and I looked back in retrospect and I realized that that's what she was. You know, I told you about the incident and wanting to go uptown and she said, I wish you'd stay home and study.

There's a lot I can tell you about this amends because it took a long time to get this cleaned up, by the way. Because I had done a lot of harm over a long period of time. And toward the tail end of getting really completely clear with my mother, one of the things that came out was I knew that she needed to know all that wasn't just that she had done the best she could do. That's kind of a cheap little deal to say, well, I know you did the best you could do.

That doesn't cut it. What I had to tell my mother and I had a great opportunity to do this. I entered graduate school a number of years ago and I focused on our courses that involved mathematics. And when I was doing this, it got clear to me that my mother, when she said, I wish you would study, was absolutely right. So I call her from time to time and I say, oh, listen, Mom, you remember when you told me I ought to study?

I say, you know what? I'm in graduate school now and I am barely keeping my head above water. You were dead right. And I was dead wrong. And she just giggles. She just loves to be told that she's right, that she was right. And the truth the matter is she was. I mean, I'm not stretching that. I just need to get clear with her that I now understand she was right. And I was wrong. No big deal, but I need to give you that gift to understand that she was right now as wrong.

And slowly but surely over time, I have seen a marvelous little change curve. But like I say, it came over a period of time. What early on in this process, I had a suggestion made to me and it said, the amends should be consistent with the harm done. Well, if the harm was created over many years, there's a high likelihood that the amends are going to take a number of years. And my job is to never be disappointed in how long it takes.

It takes whatever it takes. My job is to make it and make it and live the changed life that the power that I have been given to live differently and to just consistently live that way and let the chips kind of fall where they may, if you want to use that little cliché. And I've discovered that along the way. Now, and this amends deal really, there's some stuff that happens. And I want to share one little deal with you and then I'll close my little part of this with one other thought.

I told you about some of the stormy situations that I created for my children. And a few years ago, I was standing down with my oldest boy and he was in college in Manhattan, not Manhattan, New York, Manhattan, Kansas. And I love to say Manhattan because people think, oh, you kid went to school in Manhattan. You went to school at K-State? He did well, though. In any event, we were sitting there in his old room and I said, I don't know why fathers do this with their kids, but you do it from time to time.

I said, you know, son, I've been thinking, when I die, I just soon we do a little quick, easy ceremony, cremate me and let's go down the road and just know that I have really enjoyed my time with you all and you have been marvelous gifts to me as kids. You really have. And I want them to understand that they have been more of a gift to me than I will have ever been to them. And I really mean that. And so we're talking that way and he says, Dad, you want to do what?

And I said, a cremate. Let's just boom, you know, let's get this over and done with, make it cheap. And he said, we can't do that. And I said, why not? He said, I want you buried someplace where I can go to. I said, why do you want that? And he said, Dad, the reason I want that is because then I can go there. And I said, why do you want to do that? And he said, Dad, wherever you are, there's great peace. Now listen, there is no greater gift that

you can hear from your kids and to have a small understanding that maybe you've created peace in their life.

I have three children. One is a daughter and she's kind of a, she's an enterprising young thing. She has learned that there are substances out there that you can buy cheap and sell high. It's all in the distribution system. And she's also learned that she can call me from jail and I'll talk to her. And it's okay. I mean, she knows that I won't give her bail money, but then that's okay. And she's not anything that I know of for what?

About three years now, I think she's, but she's beginning to sense that she needs whatever it is we have found here. She's begun to sense it. I have two boys. They are boys. And they have had some dandy deals. But one of the things that they have discovered along with their little journey is that they can call dad and say, here's what's going on. And whatever it is, is whatever it is. Usually what I do with my kids when I get all through, or they get all through telling me something.

I'll just ask them a little simple question. Did you learn anything here? One boy, the youngest one, he got in trouble with a place a few years ago and it really got a little messy looking. And what it was involved was he was 18 years old. He was riding around the back of a pickup, drinking some beers. And about two o'clock in the morning, they got crosswise with one of the other young men riding around with him. And one of the young men got assaulted.

And so the police came and arrested my son along with several other boys. And it turned out my son said he didn't have anything to do with it. And finally the truth came out and he didn't have anything to do with the assault. But he was telling me about this whole thing and I said, well son, did you learn anything? And he said, yeah, I said, what did you learn? He said, you have always told me that there was nothing good going on after 10 o'clock at night.

He said, yeah, they learn this stuff on their own. They learn it on their own. And that's a part of my amends to my kids. The kids call me often and they say, Dad, what do you think I ought to do? I said, listen, you know what my history is? I really, truly don't know. You guys have great judgment. Great judgment. Well, Dad, what do you think we ought to do? I said, I just told you, I don't know. But usually they'll stay on me and I will finally share with them what my experiences have been.

Now see, there's a big difference between me telling them what they should do and sharing my experiences. They love, I tell you what your kids love to hear the experiences we've been through. Try it. Try it on them. My kids just absolutely love to know what this has been all about. And in that exchange they have begun to understand that there is something more to this life than just acquiring a few little things. They've learned something about the spiritual way of life.

Now I'm not pushing this on them. They'll get to it if that's what they get to. But they know what I do. And I used to hear people say, well, don't you think your kids should respect you? As part of my amends process, I believe this. I need to respect my kids. And if they respect me in return, that's fine. And if they don't, that's fine. I really owe them my respect. See, my kids, the reason I can say that so easily, number one, it is a spiritual truth.

I owe them respect. The other reason is none of my kids have ever gone as far down the road as I've gone. And I look at them and I think, wait a minute, you know, they put up with me for a long time. They put up with

me for a long time. And as far as I know, they never made any judgments about me. I'm the judge in the bunch. They make no judgments. So I owe them a great deal of respect. And some of them were in this nine step process.

See, I told you early on that I had suffered a great deal from depression, almost in my life. And I was sitting one day and I was about half way through the amends process, wondering if I was ever going to get this whole damn deal done. Oh, it was terrible. Just trudging through the amends and other amends. I mean, I had a fairly long list and some of them were amends that I thought I was going to go to jail on. One I thought I was going to go to a federal penitentiary when I made it.

I thought, God, I can't keep doing this. And the depression just seemed like it was never going to live. And I was about half way through the amends and I woke up one morning and I still am quiet as a falling snow. The depression wasn't there. And I, to this day, cannot tell you when it had been removed. I don't know whether it had been the day before, a month before, three months before. But I woke up one morning and I thought, you know, life is really not so bad.

It's okay. And the moment that my mind said that, I thought, you know, that's all I ever wanted. I don't want to be hot. I don't want to be particularly low. I just want to be here. Okay, now. That's all I ever wanted. And I discovered half way through the amends if that's what I was receiving. As I kept walking down this little deal, not knowing that that was going to happen. The old timers will tell you that that's when the power returns in the night.

I didn't know that was going to happen. Marvelous, marvelous experience. And it just came about just as a result of doing what we've been talking to you about this whole weekend. I just, literally, the book uses the word trudge. Have you ever seen that word in the book trudge? Isn't that an ugly word? God, I hate that word. But that's what we do. We just trudge down through this. There's nothing real glamorous about it.

Don used the word rigorous. It is rigorous. Most of my days are spent where I almost always can very clearly see I have two choices. I can go here or I can go here. One is clearly self-serving. But God, I want to do that. And I have to pause long enough for the spirit to show me the other option. Now that takes rigorous practice on my part. Because it's in my nature if I'm going to do anything at all, I really want you to know just how good I am.

It takes rigorous practice for me to let something go to where I am not focused on trying to take some little maneuver that makes me look good. And that all came out of or came clear to me in this part of the process. It's time for this gathering to break up. We have entered the world of the spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. At this point I'm always frustrated. We've taken a whole damn weekend to get to where there's something important to do.

And now we have to go home. We have so much to share with each other. The real program of action of Alcoholics Anonymous are recovered alcoholics sitting down plotting and scheming the method to get it to the next one. It's true. It's what our founders did. That's how the book came about. That's how my life has gotten meaningful. It's to sit down and plot and scheme how we're going to help this guy. He's hopeless. He's just like you.

So I need to hear from you more. And I have some incredible stories to tell you. But I don't have time to tell you. I think they're incredible. They were life changing for me. And I want to hear your incredible stories. So we're going to have to get together once in a while. I don't know how we're going to do that. But I do know this. One of my favorite stories is Jonathan Livingston Seagull because it's my story. It is who and what we are and how we do it.

And so after Jonathan has learned to fly and that was his initial goal and then he realizes he can do that now. And he can stay where he is in that clear blue sky with just a few birds. But he has a need to go back to the flock and talk to the young birds just in case. One of them is just tired of eating and wants to learn how to fly. So he'll be available. And he does that. And he gets several of them. And then his time comes when it is time for him to go on.

He wants to get back with Master Chang and do some more flying and there's other places to go. And he needs to leave now because they know everything he knows. He knows how to fly. And beyond that it's up to them. Anyway, he's getting ready to go back and one of the young birds says, oh Jonathan I'm going to miss you. And Jonathan says, no, no, no, no, no, no. If we've learned anything at all, there's only one time and that's now.

And there's only one place and that's here. And don't you think that in the here and now we might not bump into each other once in a while? Go well, thank you. There are some nice, nice fellows who have been back here working the whole weekend. One last little thought. Work as though you did not need the job. Love as though you have never been hurt. And Dan says though no one is watching. Hello everybody. My name is Bart.

I'm an alcoholic. If you just want to sit tight for one second, I want to thank Don and Jerry for coming out here and sharing with us this weekend and everybody for coming out and making this whole possible. Jane has a nice way of taking us out if you'll just want to hang out one second. Hi, my name is Jane. I've been asked to sing Amazing Grace to close this seminar. So if you'd all like to stand up and hold hands and sing along, please do.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound. That saved a wretch like us, Lord, now I'm found. Was blind, but I see a grace that taught to fear. And grace, my fears, really just did that grace appear. The Eiffer, we've been there, bright shot. The Staying Gods praised. Then when we'd first be gone, sweet the sound. That saved a wretch like us. Was blind, but I see a grace that taught to fear.