

Steps and Service Workshop

2002 | Part 1 | Reading edition

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Transcript

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I believe the most important thing that will happen this weekend is when you all are talking to one another. So as long as you're doing that I will not interrupt. The toughest part of any group activity comes after any break in the regather. It's very difficult and it's a life thing. That's just an automatic response to so many photo shoots. For 11 years I did a little retreat in Santa Barbara, California for a group of loonies out of the Los Angeles and Santa Monica Basin. I love them dearly but I'm glad I don't live there. Monastery outside of Santa Barbara up on the hill. Lovely lovely place. But regathering was always difficult and on this one particular occasion we had a couple of professional singers who were sitting next to me. I'm not used to hearing myself at the top. That's terrible.

Don't listen. Everybody's busy chatting and we're not getting back to it and they know how I operate. I want to interrupt. So one of them went hmm. His partner just reflexed with hmm. It was just gorgeous. It just went out over the room. Like the next break when we came back in they did it again and a couple of people out there joined in. I got this vision. My head, oh my God. They're going to go back down into the L.A. Basin and say look what Don taught us at the retreat.

Being on time is absolutely critical to the spiritual way. I'm not talking about the clock. The clock comes from that. It doesn't come from the clock. There's only one time. There's only one place and that's here and now. The only time I can experience the presence of God is now. So I must be on time in order for that to occur. We've had a lot of fun with that and I'm going to turn this over to Tom real quick and follow his lead. But being on time sometime it does translate down to the clock because rudeness was my worst character defect. Imposing myself into your life without asking if you had time for me or even want me there or making appointments and meeting either too early or too late. It's all rude. So I watched for that. So being on time is very important in human relations. If we say we're going to do something together and pick a time and a place to do it we should both be there at that time and place. And on time for me on the clock there's a ten minute leeway on either side of it. We live in a world that you can't get too precise. It's a principle and not a rule. Where I worked was three blocks away from a place in Denver that was built to serve people with garlic deficiencies. It was a little place called Dario's, a little Italian restaurant and I have a serious garlic deficiency. It's so good at last night. We dip the garlic and garlic dip boy. It's the good that at one time there's no place to park within three blocks literally. That's not just because of Dario's but that's part of it. As a result of mistreating this poor old body I now have neuropathy in my feet so there's days I can walk in there's days I can. And one of the guys I sponsored came by to take me to lunch because I allow that. Never expected but I sure do like it. Pay attention. Anyway it was one of those days I couldn't walk too well. So we went over to my van and he said this is silly you know you're not getting in a place to park. So just get in a car. That's sponsored talk. Just get in a car. We drive up to Dario's and as we pulled up a car pulled out in my park right in front of the place. Now I expect that he was stunned. I said my God God got us a place to park and I wanted us slapping him. God doesn't care where I park.

We were on time. That's all. And I promise you there's a rhythm that you get into beyond your intellect that helps you to be literally on time. Both on the clock and within your personal life. And it's worth getting ahold of.

So we were in New York in December. And one of the guys I sponsor and Hilton Head has a guy in New York and when I asked how we're going to get from LaGuardia to here he said he'll take you. That's sponsored. John Calisanto.

Lovely young Italian boy. Understands. So he picks us up at LaGuardia and a couple with us were staying down in the East Village and we were staying over in Brooklyn Heights. So we're going to deliver them first and we discover on the way that John's never been to the East Village. She's driving the car. And I promise you in the East Village there's no place to park. You might as well just go on uptown. We pulled down to the corner of where these people live and a car pulled out in the park. So I told him about being on time. All weekend it was wonderful watching him be on time. Then on Monday morning at 5 30 we're supposed to go to the airport and get an airplane. John didn't air and we're staying at his mother's house so she called.

He somehow has still asleep. We just barely made our airplane. And he told me on the way over he said I got so intrigued with this business of being on time I started managing it. Thank you that wonderful introduction. I tell you there's a buddy of mine who uses the term the power of now and that ever a powerful concept because history has no power. It has value in that power and the future doesn't either. If I'm living in one or the other I'm almost powerless and so real real important concept of being where I am and recognizing that this is it. This is the same preparation this is it. I'd like to sort of continue along with Ross. Let me ask the mic won't pick up stuff from the group will it. Okay now I personally really like interactive stuff.

You know I think there's an absolute relationship between participation and value and might make this deal with you if to just selflessly get a little of that. Let me just just make it available if you want to ask a question or make a comment and can do it in a sound bite style. You know what I mean not a long long question. Sometimes I'll get to listen to those C-SPAN program and I swear to god the question is longer than the presentation. So but if you can just sort of distill it and then what we can do is repeat it because it is maddening on a tape to listen to an answer that's not connected to a question. So it's brilliant answer but what's it about you know and so if you would and if you just want to make comments same thing just just kind of just not because it wouldn't want to hear you because it couldn't remember it and just might make it sound bite style but I would really appreciate that because what I'd like to kind of lead us into is continuation of this effectiveness deal. Now I suspect that the this group is essentially I know we've got some pretty new cases here but but that's the minority.

I suspect this group are people who are involved fairly heavily in the business of working with others and there are some real tricky grounds in that business of working with others that sometimes the harder we work the less we get and that old cryptic kind of comment that less is more really applies sometimes in this business of effectiveness and so I'd like to just kind of talk talk a little bit more about that and for that read I'd really like to get some interactive stuff in there if we can. Now I'll have to warn you I'm not somebody who who milks a crowd you know so I make that offer but it's up to you to get in because when I get going it's kind of like jumping on a running train I mean oh man. So just just give me a signal to just speak up if you want to do something like that. Jumping ahead just a little bit to 19 that first paragraph the other one is talking about that those personal qualities that sort of earn the confidence and open up the dialogue with an alcoholic and we spent some good time last night out on the porch chasing mosquitoes and talking about effectiveness and the frustration that comes from working hard and getting in our own way and so that one paragraph I'll just kind of go through that paragraph with none of us makes a sole vocation of this work nor do we think its effectiveness

would be increased if we did. I was sitting in a meeting last night or last week in my home group and we have a little spinoff group that's a big book just a big book discussion type thing and there was a gal there a fine person who who was who was talking about this this paragraph in this statement in the context of working professionally in field and and that's that's a subtle trap involved in that because there is a tremendously important difference between work that I do professionally and work that I do as an avocation in this given for free and for fun and and and so this thing here uh this I guess it was kind of an interesting case you know that I won't beat you to death with the case but this this gal is fairly new to our group and she's got some disease I don't know what it is none of my business but it has put her in a wheelchair and she's pretty profoundly disabled and so when she was talking about what she did as a vocation in response to this paragraph she talked about what she had done as a professional evaluator and teacher of drunk driving I mean I don't know I don't think teaching drunk driving whatever they teach I never have been through that but thank god but she was talking about that in in the context of of of this business about how how doing this as a vocation can interfere with our effectiveness but let me talk about two levels of that just one is the obvious you know if I can't learn to distinguish what I do professionally from what I do personally I got no business in that profession because I get nothing but trouble it caused nothing but grief and I know a lot of me I sponsor a lot of folk who who have worked in treatment and the biggest problem that happens is when folks forget where they are and forget how to how to distinguish clearly and importantly between the two uh so so so tremendously important thing recovered out of the house have a great contribution to making that field absolutely nothing wrong with it but if we can't understand the professionalism of that it's it's a real booger bear and so when I'm working with somebody who works professionally in the field part of the way that I monitor them is to listen to them in meetings don't need to ask them 20 questions I listen to them in meetings and when I hear somebody in a discussion that gets into therapeutic counseling I know we need to go to the woodshed because it's gotten out of whack or if I hear here somebody making a talk in this election and it happens so easily with somebody who's accustomed to doing lectures and they start doing a talk and that lecture format comes in and when that happens it kills the value of the avocation the value of the gift of this earning the trust in confidence so it's a it's a tremendously important thing in terms of maintaining the viability and the effectiveness if I can't distinguish that uh then I've got a lot of trouble so it's a challenge a real challenge I'm sure you run it Shelly doesn't want me to put you business this week but she does professional research in excellent research but those kind of things can really steal your mind you know and you get to think analytically about what's happening here instead of the experience feeling the experience and so it is a tricky area the other part of that and part of what we were talking about last night is about the good balance that makes the recovery that I practice attractive to somebody else and it makes it effective to other people give you a couple examples when I first got on the street and started I had the privilege it really was a privilege didn't seem like it was time but I had the privilege of helping start alcoholics anonymous restart alcoholics anonymous in a fairly large city in our state but it just it just died you know and and so it was a very very busy time and I sponsored about everybody in town just about everybody was sober wasn't many it was a gang that more than I could keep up with and back then that sponsor talked that Don was talking about was my language during that period my my basic message to folk was getting the car and if this car is full get in the next car you know and what we would do would be to chase around the meetings within reasonable access meaning within 50 miles we could usually make and run convoys and and that was really to deal and I'm sponsoring so many people can't even get to know all of them much less work with them intensively well now that was fine and I'll guarantee you if a campaign had been put out to identify the best speak a best sponsor in the

known world among those guys it would have been me I'll guarantee you Tom Ivister would have the finest thing that has ever come along the finest speaker the world's ever the only one only one it ever had but it would have been a head the heads down victory but well a troubling thing happened two years after I went into that city and and you've got a good strong group going I had to move away and all but one got drunk all but one and that mean I was a lousy sponsor well not necessarily you know I was doing the best I knew I just didn't know enough and see what I was so busy doing was I was so busy doing the stuff of getting the car or use week to floor and that I never did let them see what the solution was you know never to get into the solution but all they knew is that I was wonderful and if they followed me they were okay well they were right as long as I was available to do that but the minute I'm stepped back see what I'm talking about the effectiveness doesn't come from that kind of charismatic cheerleader stuff it's about real solutions real connection to their life and not just being a camp follower to me and so even though it's well intended you're affecting this required more and you know what it's saying on there earlier about being equipped not only with experience but with having real insight about myself real knowledge about this program who has really found a solution and is able to communicate that to somebody else yeah I didn't quite make it that far and so it can it can really interfere you know with getting that I you know I'm an extremely active member of AA and I've had an interesting history that it went away you're talking about a young people group because you got I started the first young people group in North Carolina three of us and the group still meets to this day 38 years ago we started that group and so at that time I was the youngest member of AA in North Carolina and I thought in the whole world because I never saw anybody and strange thing happens if you keep on breathing I'm now the oldest recovered man in North Carolina. I'm the relic of the past you know that's it the only thing is that I'm still one of the most active people I've ever met and that has a real it's part of what we're talking about last night that's a double edgy swerve that thing cuts both ways because it's when you get a guy that's the oldest guy in the state that says active as I am this can have a repelling effect on people it's not necessarily going to be galvanizing magnet to people it can be a repelling effect and this business of being able to demonstrate a life that is that speaks of the solution is tremendously important and you know so I have to recognize that that most people are probably not going to be able to take off like I did it's important for me to recognize that we are truly different people and we're driven by different forces you know I'm somebody in my simplistic way of looking at stuff I like keeping simple so I can understand it I like to think that my recovery has to match my drinking batter if my recovery doesn't match up with high drink I'm probably going to find it a little lacking because that's my chemistry that's the way I function that's the way I am I'm basically a kind of guy that has a lot of compulsive drive you know I'm not somebody who can sit and vegetate you know I'm somebody who's like don't say mine doesn't shut down for a long time and and I also have to keep in mind that a considerable amount of what I do in AA is a part of my immense structure it's just it's not just zeal to be a missionary it's it's about a very real and effective way of making amends and and so I have to keep that in mind when I'm working with people and and and not try to get people to emulate who I am tremendously important because I've had so many people it's what we would beat around last night who that I sponsored who who said that they had difficulty working with me because it was intimidating it's not invigorating or inspiring but intimidating to work with somebody that's got that kind of energy and and and zeal to do stuff so when I'm looking at effectiveness it's important for me to recognize what is effective what's the right agenda how do I help people achieve their potential and not conform to my model and that's an important thing like I was I was at a prison one night at central prison Raleigh and Maxie custody joint and the guy came over to the bay after me now to picture this I mean a Maxie custody joint guy comes over to the meeting he talking a little bit and he said

let me ask you a personal question if you don't mind so yeah anything going he said do you have to do this thing like you do it to stay sober I said well not necessarily like what are you talking about he said I swear to god you so busy you make me tired you know I said I said well no you really don't have to do it like I do but I say one thing y'all take a look back like that you sitting in a massive custody pair president saying you don't want to count a life I got and I'm walking the street I ain't swapping with you either buddy but it's a sneaky thing y'all in this thing or what it is that I could make to people and if I want to be effective you know it's important to me to take a look at what kind of an example what kind of expectations do I put on book and and and does my life really reflect a kind of life that looks like sobriety is a good thing to do and so it's not just a given that just because I've been there that I'm gonna be a real effective guy you won't comment about that any time why not go for it no I was I was musing and listening we only had one thing that we're supposed to do that's carry our message to the person who doesn't doesn't know and then whenever possible lead them on the journey of self discovery they'll suggest to us that any time we're approaching a new person we should get into their shoes and see how they would like to be approached rather than me coming out of my my box and land 1988 I've had the privilege of serving this fellowship from the beginning and in the mid 80s I was your trustee at large US which I thought was funny I am not trusting material but I was a good one but as a result of that we had occasion in November of 1988 to be invited by the Russians to the Soviet Union to tell them about alcoholics and almonds this is a different culture a different language a different approach to things there were rules in the books at the time that no more than five people could gather without a permit there were heavy duty restrictions we had to consider all that how are we going to approach these people now we had taken a group of them around the United States on a 10 day trip there's a whole afternoon story and they told us see we to be effective I must be a listener you need to tell me where you're at so I can help you move to the next place if I try to get you move on where I think you're at I'm gonna move you into the wrong place it won't be any good we asked these Russians should we come to your country and they said absolutely and here's how you do it instead if you come as a government mission you're gonna get a show and tell I'll give you a KGB agency it'll take you around and nothing will be accomplished I said you know us now and you know some other people and here's another list of people write us all letters and say we're gonna be in Moscow and such and such a date we'd like to stop by and visit and we will confirm that Shelley's been there that's how you do business there so four of us and an interpreter we're picked to spend 17 days just sharing the message with these folks who we really needed to be effective no one any pressure is just that if we didn't do the job we're another five years going to happen I'm putting pressure on me millions of lives are a stake but don't worry about it but we got by there because I learned a long time ago there's not many lives at stake there's one minor and then when you show up there's two and that's that's what we're all about so in the midst of all of that we got a chance to try being effective how can we approach this in a way that will first of all I kept saying we don't have any way to relate to God we don't believe in God but as we listened we found they were very very spiritual people in fact we had to laugh they said we don't have any history of God we should like to go see the big cathedral now they were museums to them at that time but they were just the very spiritual people we went over our traditions with the comment of one russian was you should have no trouble here what you have here is communism in his purest form see they weren't communists they were socialist republic on the way to communism there should be no problem with that in principle so we dealt with it one day at a time trying to find out how can we best serve them so they can get it going there were two events and then my comments were over i've got a whole day of talk this was a trip beyond belief for a country boy like me we uh it was one tiny little group in Moscow called the Moscow beginners group

that had been started by an episcopal priest who was insane now that's just the way it was somewhere he had power to move things he got us inside the Kremlin and set things up the guy was something else and what he had done in setting it up was set it up according to his principles pure and simple they operated by the traditions there were step meetings i remember the joy of setting in a in a meeting with the Moscow beginners group fellow named sausia was talking former uh radio announcer who had lost his job because at that time if you caught us as a drunk he was a crime lost your power when she lost your job you went to treatment if you slept if you went to sub-area you were a social deviant you got to know that we're not that far away from that in this country uh sausia's talking and it was really interesting because he speaks russian and i speak english so our interpreter who was a simultaneous translator sausia would say something and then the interpreter would let us know what he had said and sausia'd start talking again which gave me the opportunity since i didn't understand the language while he's talking i can listen about what he just said and really think about that then pay attention to what he said this time sounds complicated but it wasn't he said i had no history of god but i wanted what these people had meaning that small group of russians who were not drinking anymore he wanted what they had so i said he said i did what they did and i found a spiritual power deep within myself when i rose to that because that's what happened to me too he found a power here but the main thing was he wanted what these people had then we were interrogated by the ministry of health we weren't talked with we were interrogated we sat in a little room and the ministry of health was here and the guy sitting over here in the corner like this i don't know who he was but i wouldn't mess with him he was watching us and he was watching the minister of health this wasn't a friendly environment and this guy is interrogating us for a little over an hour and please know that because all of us were more interested in being affected than being right we said aside our personal agenda somehow and never defended a you never have to defend a you never have to defend who you are i just had to share my experience you can't fault that you don't have to like it but you can't fault it at the end of a little over an hour of this interrogation the minister of health said what can we do to help you get this started here now what are you going to answer okay this is outside of my realm i said give them space that's all we need is space tom and i know that the job he and i did in North Carolina in corrections was mainly about giving space on the doors here give them a little room or something let somebody in that knows what's going on that's the big job the uh the next day they had it was thanksgiving day they allowed this little group to hold a special meeting in the ministry of health the other thing i meant by giving space and this is what i must do with people i work with to be effective i've got to give them space to have their own experience not my experience you can't have mine i need to help you create the space around you where you can have your own and that takes a little bit of time and it's very hard on me i have a human ego and i have a spiritual ego and my spiritual ego is even harder to deal with than the human ego because it has the answer and every now and then it gets the same it has the answer it's not a very long trip from one to the other yes it's on oh my group is protecting me from so affecting this is about me showing up being willing to give them space showing them precisely what i did if you want what i have here's what i did that doesn't mean you have to do that you may discover a long way as most people do you really don't want what i'm like tom i'm a busy rascal life is about living and whether i'm busy with a or thursday night i got really busy with my favorite activities i took my grandchildren to see blues glue stage show i would much rather watch shakespeare but this was fun i missed steve steve wasn't there there's a new steve as you can tell i'm also busy watching blues twos on tv a lot i know exactly what poo is going to say one of the ways i effectively communicate with my four-year-old granddaughter is i can say oh boy and she in her tiny little four-year-old voice says oh she loves it that's effective the interaction of people is effectiveness i can't do that if i'm judging

you if i'm deciding what you should have if i'm deciding where you should be and what you should be doing i just i really my hardest task is to keep that arena where we can play together and you don't have to worry the pace there are now over 185 registered groups in russia they took off from there the most effective thing we did was the scariest thing we did fella had written a book about alcoholics anonymous a man named shikara doctor shikara good book sold out 50 000 copies overnight they were hungry did you ever get to me here an interesting guy following that kind of success with the book the russians hold public meetings did that where the author and the appropriate government officials everybody who's going to have anything to say about it gets to hear from the public what the second edition changes should be that's what was going on man and we were invited to this public 400 about 400 people police officers what we would call social workers regular people off the street anyone who's interested in this new activity is beginning to emerge very positive book by the way about it on the panel was a russian tank commander that i had known from when they were here who was absolutely opposed to he said it's just another imperialist ploy to get your way of thinking in our country during the letter and grad i understood what he was saying we stayed in a hotel across from that great huge six block long memorial to the seeds of letter and millions of people died and what they're saying is never again ever will any outside force come into our country and do this to us again so i understood that's the battle we're going to have to overcome to get it either so we're fighting it and he's on this panel and he and i had fun by the way at the end of our trip we got down to actually talking to each other turns out we could identify because we had similar jobs in the past he used to smuggle guns on the tank and i used to smuggle stuff too while the goods were different the job was the same and it gave us a contact and before we're through in New York we're showing each other family pictures of course he took a picture or saw a picture of my wife and he says you should go home since it's very dangerous to leave such a beautiful woman along for so long and he showed me a picture of his wife when i was kind lovely lady but you know in fur and everything it looked like a bear i know she had to be a lovely lady anyway he said to me that his concern was that he didn't want his grandchildren killing mine his we disagreed entirely on method he really believed with adequate therapy in a year or two alcoholics were cured and could go on back into life i just know better that didn't matter we were joined in brothering harmonious action he was wanting to let us try something because what they were doing wasn't working and well he didn't agree with it so there was that that tone that's being affected when i can reconcile with you instead of trying to exchange you them affecting see if i sponsor you i expect you to drink that's what alcoholics do you know what time i've ever surprised by your behaviors when you become a decent person quit drinking we were at this public forum and the the crew knows and you know i'm glib i've had to live on my mouth since i was little so i think on my feet and if i don't have an answer i can say something cute it'll keep you laughing long enough for me to figure out what i was supposed to say so i'm the spokesman for the now i've got a hostile audience of 400 people and the trick question came at me i've learned to listen for them a lady said how do you think alcoholics anonymous will work in the soviet union now there's a trick question any answer i give is the wrong one so i did what i've been taught to do here i opened up waited for it and heard myself say i would be presumptuous to even have a guess i've only been here 13 days and they applaud it and make contact the truth was i have no idea but it has worked in 144 other cultures so to be effective it has to do with taking all those kinds of risks the only risk is not taking one you can't say anything wrong to a new person they're not listening to you anyway and if they catch if they happen to be and they catch you on later you can remind them how sick they were real effectiveness as i understand it isn't me staying sober that's god's business and i participate in it nor is it me getting you sober because i don't get you sober real effectiveness is when i watch you after we work together go find you one that's when i've been affected that's the

piece bill gave us there were thousands who might cheerfully want what i've been so freely given and they in turn might help others that's when i know i've been affected is when i meet second third generation no matter how goofy they are it means that the job i did at least carried forward i'll straighten up the mess later real effectiveness means that my wife knows where i am is effective living she's not afraid for me or for her uh it means my grandchildren know where i am my four-year-old granddaughter i know she doesn't know what a map is but she thinks it's fascinating that i'm in Virginia she doesn't even know what that means but i'm there about communication i've got to listen and i've got to talk because the real work will happen after i am dead and gone if i'm truly effective after i'm dead somebody like me who shows up will get the same shot i got i won't have changed anything so that it becomes unrecognizable i love you as you are where you are that's effective shock hated everybody including me but i didn't care i loved him he was much more entertaining than most of you and there's nothing like six weeks of solid hate to make you think this guy's really gonna be good one quick story on on chuck because it affects effectiveness he's gonna tell the story is slow after we had finally after a year gotten through the step work and chuck began to emerge in his chapel and that rid of some stuff circumstances were such that his real father had died and left him five thousand dollars right at the time when he needed to make some financial demands we got that cleared out of the way got him a little little truck and he had some time on his hands he'd had 180 some jobs he was not unemployable he just couldn't hold a job well when you tell the boss go screw yourself they don't keep you and he did that a lot anyway he came to me one day and he said there's one thing i didn't tell you i've been afraid to tell you because every time i told anybody this they made fun of me he said all i really wanted to be was an actor it's gonna be a good one he kept me entertained for a year i mean this is a drama queen and i got to think and i said check listen you don't have a job right now your men's are taken care of you got a decent car the other thing you've always wanted to do is go to disney way he'd never done any kid stuff it's one of the reasons he was so pissed i said look you got a couple grand why don't you go out take two weeks and drive out there and i know some actors and we'll hook you up with somebody and they can tell you what the price you're going to have to pay is to become an actor it's a price for him so i hooked him up with one of the guys we know on the murphy brown show boys out there he was taking him around warmers just showing him a lot and the producer of the show they ran into him on the lot and introductions went on my friend said and Chuck wants to be an actor and producers as hell we can use him right now we need extras so two weeks after he hits los angeles he's on the murphy brown show what's going on what's this all about he needed to expand into his own arena and all my job is is to provide him with the necessary tools will be step work above people and admire the tools so he can explore that environment now he hated god got him into acting school they think he's great he really is good his first stage play in los angeles guess what part he got he was an evangelistic preacher and they tell me he kicked ass and took me so how do you measure your effectiveness tom wanted some interaction let's talk about that how do you know when you've been affected what what's your god yeah somebody was there trouble verbalizing how you feel and instead of being on taking about how you think yes because at the beginning all the feelings felt the same panic i don't know what i feel good or bad i do know i feel panic and how do you discuss i mean i feel panic well you come to me and you say i feel panic i'm terrified and i can share with you yes some warnings i feel the same way here's what i do discuss it you can't describe your feelings nor is it even important what you do is describe i'm feeling something what a surprise to be able to finally sort out we we reach a place where we can't tell the difference between the shoe and the falls and it comes starting to feel something and i don't know what to do with it what do i do with my feelings feeling you don't have to do anything okay process them please don't process them just just feel them and if you got a cry go cry

you want to scream go somewhere else let's scream does that help any time would you add to that no only thing that i know i had the feeling when i came in that i that i was a dumbest guy in every room i sat in because i'd hear people who sounded so brilliant and healed that that i mean i felt light years away from where they were and the guy who spoke at my fifth meeting of AA was the first person i had ever heard put words to how i felt and i really really valued that because it sort of helped me start framing a language that i could talk about the thing with because before that all i felt was awful and guilty and and deeply ashamed and all that but i didn't know how to describe those things so it was helpful to me that i started hearing people put some language to it that started to make sense you know i always sat in me you braver than me because i was sat in meetings burning with a desire to ask questions but i felt like it sounded so stupid and then i finally learned that what i wanted to ask probably the person in the next chair won't ask the same thing and so yeah but i very much have done about that whole business of total ignorance about the condition some people have been through so much treatment that they sound like a medical dictionary when they come in and got a lot of language but it may not have much to do with the condition you know it's just a whole bunch of language that clutters up the life you know and getting a full wagon realistically understand what it is ideally it's where inventory starts really putting stuff together and making it have some real purpose and real value in my life but i think it is important to me i went to my first sponsor early on i said bruce i feel so guilty he said you should look at what you've done yeah now here's what we can do to straighten that up you should yeah i'm so ashamed you should be but the world's you they're hate fun say it again do you just let the chucks of the world spew their hate for six or eight weeks or whatever it takes all okay i do yes while they're with me in a in a separate space i made it to be going to tell them you don't want to do this with all these nice people okay if that's how you feel be quiet we'll talk about it later don't disrupt these nice people if they don't get to do that pretty soon they get tired of it too yes i do because i know about that kind of hate if everybody keeps this out it just intensifies it pretty soon we start laughing at it say things like do you did you hear what you just said how do you help a new person get over intellectualizing and analyzing everything lobotomy is not a bad thing which means i've never figured that one out duct tape helps i tell you focus it's an awfully good defense yeah you know that people can talk you to death and it's a very good defense to keep from listening to anything like i i have a fairly standard rule of thumb you know not any standards for the thing but a fairly standard rule of thumb when i'm sponsoring somebody i don't i don't like to get let anybody get up in front of a group and talk to the guy about nine months you're making a talk if they if they are people who can communicate readily it's a year and the reasoning is obvious it's just that you know people who are who are who are handy with communication are not often are not handy with listening and and it's a great way to keep from getting involved with just a verbal barrage uh same with comedy you know they're comedy very often that very little dude humor is that anyway that i know that's the way in a general kind of way i deal with folks like that it is tough with people who are highly knowledgeable about conditions but don't have them connected to their life and uh tell you my my least favorite person to work with is the guy who is religiously intact but his life is screwed up like hogan's goat and trying to get through that cloud of righteousness to a real life connection with spirit is a big big battle and uh any day i'll take somebody that that that is absolutely home fire would hate for the whole business over somebody who sees themselves religiously intact and it's just i know that sounds like kind of scary ground to get into but but folk who have caught into this kind of delusional notion that they're okay there but their life's falling apart the real deal is how do you get a real power connected to a real life killer illness and uh so it's a challenge a huge huge challenge technique was oh because of the way i do it meaning you come to my house we sit down i read the book out loud and we go from there it helps with the focus because i'll let you

intellectualize from a couple meetings then i have to remind you you came here to learn something and so did i how you're going to learn anything if you talk 50 minutes out of the hour and so we have a way to get back into it and even if the information doesn't click the new way of doing things does and eventually the information clicks but it becomes a tool i'm like time i was a year for us loud and tough except in the 12 step study school couldn't share a meeting couldn't get up there to go in to help no real answer but there's some things yeah it's really a tough issue it really is that there we sometime we we really get injurious and talk you know like saying things like nobody's too dumb to get sober but some are too smart that's kind of an injurious kind of way to to treat folk who happen to be handicapped with a lot of education you know because it's kind of insulting you know folks can't help that that's what they got you know and so in in dealing with it very important to not write them off as being you know so kind of a wandering idiot just because they happen to be smart and and i think that's how you're letting the book handle it you're letting the process handle it is a is really the bottom line deal on on deal with the concept is laid out here and not what you brought to the table you know and it'll do it you know the program will take us through it i don't care what the barriers are if we'll open up and let it happen yeah but that is you hit a you hit a real sensitive area deep deep as you usually do my sponsor hit hit me with uh Alton apparently getting he says we've been talking because number three of them we don't even think the truth is going to work because you take the truth in and your ego catches it and by the time you use it it's all warped so he said what we suggest for you is that we suggest you forget everything you think you know about anything particularly spiritual matters if any of the work you wouldn't be here and i thought a little bit i said come on i must have heard some truth somewhere along the way he says it's doubtful but it is possible so i'll grant it as possible but anything that really is truth will be truth when we're all through too and the rest of it's all garbage and that really helped focus right back on if i wanted to argue with you about it it's my opinion the truth never has to be defended i still like to argue there's nothing like a good game of zorro an intellectual idiot go ahead two years ago an old timer in Denver 33 years sober at that time came to me to go through the steps because he'd never done it nobody else would talk to him 33 years and not doing anything about untreated alcohols and makes you a painted ass we went through weeks where most of the sessions we were in was me helping to unlearn him so we could get down to this got to the third step had a wonderful third step that springs together just prior to christmas two years ago sent him home to make a list and i haven't seen him since called me once and said i got busy and haven't got to list down and i said one name counts as a list you know i haven't seen him since sometimes you just give it your shot i'm still here let me tell you a quick one i just had that i'll tell you about the good or we'll tell you about all the bad things i was in California a week or so ago and there was a fellow came up to me that he introduced himself like he was showing his merit badges by how many chips he picked up you know that that he was he said i'm a professional newcomer and uh so i just decided to just sort of take him on just a little bit and he was trying to get me to respond to that and add to his merit badges or something and i said well let me let me just suggest one thing to you why don't you quit being a professional newcomer and become a real newcomer and uh and it took a while but this guy had a cliché for everything you know he'd been a he'd been around the program so much that his mind was just filled with meaningless platitudes and clichés for every situation is what what i did with him was was head everyone you know every time he came i said no no don't put that on and it took it took a long time to get through that riddle of stuff that was in his mind and get down to a real contact with who he was and what he was about because his mind was filled with all that stuff and uh i know he didn't like the conversation but he engaged in the conversation if he had not equipped but he engaged in the conversation and he came to a point where i knew that he had heard it and connected with him the next morning the guy came to not that day but the

next morning the guy came to me and said man you'll never know how much i appreciate that because it says what it took was to get past that litany of stuff to where he was a real human being connecting with a real program of recovery and so he was called up in that kind of massive stuff that he couldn't even hear what was going on around him now he may be like a guy who knows what'll happen but he left that day and he went out and did some stuff and he came back to the next morning really pleased with what he was doing and i think that's part of our effectiveness is how do you cut through that stuff and get down to real issues and it does it takes some some hard-nose confrontation sometime but whatever it takes you know it's let me mention just a couple of real anecdotes he reminded me of that he may be set to stage for what we'll come back to that plus i was wondering to share this thing about effectiveness really does have to do with where you are and how you engage it i had some i never did go to russian but i had some russians over here one time and i was visiting someplace and they had a contingent of russian folks that were going around the country trying to learn stuff i get and they said would you go over and meet them and i said yeah sure i'd love to meet them and so i went over there and they introduced me to the russians and gave me a lot of names i couldn't pronounce and then they said would you just speak to them a little bit and i said well sure so i proceeded to lay a real heavy sermon on them for about five minutes and so you know in a conversation you kind of pause and look for a response and so i got to the appropriate point i paused and there was two two women in the front row one of them pointed at the other one and said psychologist well okay they didn't speak english they had stood and nodded and grinned in the whole time i just assumed that everybody in the world spoke english but they didn't know that you know so that was probably not affected they knew i was a very charming friendly fella well a lot of food but and the other thing i was thinking about this business about about accepting people where they are you and having meaningful kind of relationship like your russian buddy you're talking about with exchange about family i was a guy he's a researcher fella not he's not an alcoholic but he's a world-class eminent researcher and some people kind of engineered us to get together because they knew we were polar offices on some beliefs about stuff and we had a wonderful time in in a good debate i'm a really good debate and this guy really and truly his name's wexler and he's an imminent researcher and he he done some studies about alcoholism and and he was just profoundly unimpressed with AA and he said he said i will never understand that i'll go into those meetings and i listen to him and none of it makes sense it's disorder and chaos and jump and and so we were participating in a program and he was lecturing about substance abuse jesus i mean just the thought of that term just makes me want to gag and so i listened to him patiently and about midweek we were going to be there a week about midweek i said man i had nothing to step and they had planned a big dinner and i found a few other drunks and i said let's go to a meeting man i got to get out of here and so we went next morning i ran into the fella and he said where were you last night i was counting on continuing our discussion over there and i said well let me tell you where i was i said i got a few other drunks and we loaded up in the car we rode over to this next city we went to the worst part of town drove up to an old frame house that had probably been condemned and urban renewal had a sofa sitting on the front porch springs hanging out of it walked in got a cup of coffee and the stuff was old it was green and i walked into a room with a bunch of people in their fat mouth and then talking and cussing and we sat out around a table the room was blue with smoke and i sat in the middle of that and i said man i am in the solution he said i'll never understand two people i said that's fine but we respected each other you know it was a healthy respect i respect what he was doing he didn't have to agree with me but we were both people who were committed to our endeavors and we had respect for each other and i think some of that is is about this whole business of how am i going to be infected and if i've got to write everybody off who doesn't agree with me i'm not going to be very effective um

very briefly because i've got one incident now that's a direct answer to your question briefly don't discount the intuitive start to rely on it and clear away the stuff you can do that you're in half a go equipment job got me a new guy the next morning three weeks over treatment center counselor knew way too much just kept drinking and he was telling me all the stuff he knew in those first early sessions and i said to him you're right you probably know more about alcoholism than i even want to know but everything you know still allows you to drink three weeks ago and he got it that was a fact i didn't want to say your stuff is crap because it isn't but everything he knew still let him drink and that worked and that was intuitive i'm not smart enough to think of that and i don't use that as a rule now to tell everybody what that one did when we come back i think what we're going to do is nudge a little bit out i am i know donald i'd like to go there is a nudge a little bit into the sponsorship function itself you know and then talk about that a little bit in relation to effectiveness and uh and this business about about how the example needs to incorporate how we live and that's the next section in this thing you will get into so uh have a good lunch church all time we come back