

DON P ARCHIVE

Big Book Weekend

2003 | Part 1 | Reading edition

FORMAT	DURATION	RECORDING ID
Transcript PDF	00:57:12	DP-2003-CAMDEN_01

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and get some idea of what you would like to have come out of this weekend. So I live with a constant frustration. Since I awoke spiritually 35 years ago, I've been living with the sense that where I am God is every day. And that means that I have 35 years with the stories to tell you of the extraordinary that occurs in the human condition when your spiritually awake. And we've got about six, eight hours of actual time on the ground here. So I'd like to make it effective. And my plan is always we'll just start walking through here and I'll share my experience with this with you. But please feel free to chip in. This group is too large to do what I normally do. If we go around and introduce each other, if that's all we do, and it never happens that way, somebody has to say something.

There all night, just making introduction. But I would like to go around if you would and get this basic information from each of you, please, for all of us. Your name, whether you're alcoholic, alumni, friend, lost in the woods or whatever it may be. If you have a sobriety date, you might mention it. Part of that, I've already told you, the other part is that I'm conditioned to that where I come from. If you don't mention your sobriety date, you may not have one.

I just kind of like to know what's going on. And then if you have something specific, you would like to see it occur this weekend. Why did you come here instead of being where other people are on Friday and Saturday night? Then I can get an idea of who we're going to go. Can we do that and get it done in maybe an hour? I'm taking a book. I'll give six to five odds on that. But if we start here, would you start that? We've got to know that. Okay, good. I'm in the right place. Welcome, David. You know, I have problems sometimes at home when somebody won't drive 20 minutes to a meeting.

David just came out from Texas. You've been, what, 28 hours on the road? Yeah. Got stuck in Cleveland, for God's sake. So he obviously is here to teach me something. Welcome, David. Get something to eat, take a nap. So who are we? Well, we are more than a hundred men and women have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. That's who we are. Why are we here? There's two other alcoholics precisely how we recover. That's our purpose. That's the purpose of this book and that's my purpose in life.

So from the very beginning of the forward of the first edition, I have really good information to go with if I'll listen to it. What I got here, if you'd have offered me a way to learn the cope of life, I would have left you. My cope were broke a long time ago. Man, coping with life killed me. It's just too tough. Anything less than a full new life would not have attracted me at all. Christmas night of 1967 as a result of the most thorough self investigation I have ever subjected myself to.

I discovered I had become completely useless and took a two month supply of amphetamines and shot them up my arm and drank everything in the house and laid down died. Because I couldn't stand being me one more second. When I woke up the next morning I didn't feel good, but I believe that's when it started for me. An old way of life died, I knew it started at that moment. I didn't know it for a long time, but from that moment to this I've not had a thought.

I had a thought of a drink or a pill or a fix. It's over. But now I'm stuck in a very interesting place. I'm now a failure at living and a failure at dying. I'm in a body that won't quit and it's got a mind that won't work and I'm still breathing in and out. I didn't feel very good. The one thing my body was telling me is you son of a bitch. Do that again, I'll hurt you. You all new folks. I've been listening closely.

I'm delighted we have some new folks here. Did you hear it? There's a whole new way of life here and there's the power to do it and we in the system having fun. And the life will not always be easy. That's sometimes it's a bitch. I'm really glad you're here. I need you. Yeah, I'm just glad you're here. They won't hurt anybody. If somebody back there will go, he'll go back there and out the door. They eat bugs. Yeah. This particular group has always impressed me and I get the same sense I had six years ago. We hit the ground running.

I do a lot of these over the years. I've been doing this for 27 years. And usually Friday night and part of Saturday is just trying to get gathered up into a common purpose beyond thinking. And I sense already we know why we're here. We want to be here. So I've got to set aside about four hours of stuff that I usually have in my head. Let me tell you something else. Let me plug you into the whole business here. This weekend, I know of at least six of these kind of things that are going on.

You are spiritual kin to hundreds and hundreds of other people. It's going on in Seattle. It's going on in... Where the hell did Janis go this weekend? Somewhere in the Midwest. It's going on in New York. It's going on all over the place. By this thing, I mean people are gathered together for real genuine recovery. Now one thing I will not offer you. I think it's the worst thing that we can offer any alcoholic is sobriety.

If that's all there is to offer, why would I stay here? The main reason I drink is because I can't stand being sober. Meaningful sobriety, however, is a different deal. And the thing has to start with sobriety. That's where it begins. But that is a really painful time. Have you noticed that? Being in recovery is awful. If you're in recovery from any illness, that's a tough time. You're up moving around and you look pretty good, but everything inside hurts.

And there's new stuff. You go October, I went through some serious surgery. It wasn't supposed to be serious, but it turned out that way. And the recovery period for that, there's things I had to do very carefully for a while that I was used to just doing. And so you become self-aware when you're in recovery. Necessarily so. And self-awareness is the major cause of psychic pain. It causes more pain than anything I know. It does for me anyway.

Because when I'm fully self-aware, I'm also aware that I ain't getting enough of whatever it is I'm supposed to be getting. He's got more than I do, where's mine? That can't be mine. It's not big enough. It's the wrong color, the wrong shape. I mean, after all, I am a prince. Are you a prince? Yeah, I can tell. One of my early sponsors said to me, we will assume you went insane about two seconds after birth. Then we won't have to track all this stuff down.

Good advice. He said, we don't even think the truth is going to work for you. You take the truth into your head and your ego catches it and says something like, aha, I can use that later. I can catch an edge without somewhere down the way. Because my life from very early on was about catching an edge. I always needed an edge. So I said, we suggest that you forget everything you think you know about anything. Particularly by

spiritual matters. Because if any of it would have been of any use, you wouldn't be here.

I was in my third penitentiary. I only say that because that's where I was. I was never a big time gangster. They don't ever go to the penitentiary. They get good lawyers. This is my third. It was getting to be a bad habit. Never did get to like it. But I battled that. I love people who will battle with me. I said, come on, surely I know some truth. He said, it's really doubtful, but it is possible. But I'll tell you this. If it was true before we started, it'll be true when we're through.

And all of the rest of its garbage anyway, so set it aside. Lay it down. And by some form of grace, I was able to do that. And to this day, I am acutely aware that if I'm willing to argue with you about something, it's my opinion. Because I never have to defend the truth. The truth just is. It doesn't need to defend it. It just is. And simple little stuff. I told you that I've been doing this for thirty-some years. That doesn't mean that's because I know anything in particular that you don't.

In fact, I know that I don't know anything you don't already know. You just don't know that. People write that down. That was good. Well, one of the fun things of doing this is you hear stuff you've never heard before. Since I gave my life to the care of God, I have been on a mission. It's a real mission. My life work is to find people who are dying and going insane and can't find any way to stop that process. And in some way, touch them in such a way that they gain enough hope that they want to submit to certain simple things.

And as a result of that surrender, they don't die. And they don't go insane. And their children don't go insane. And their wives don't go insane. I like that. See, I've never been able to just go to work eight to five. Good Lord. I'm not the only one in my. Can you imagine that? Get up. Go someplace you don't like. Spend all day with people that you don't care much for either. Doing things that really you don't care much about anyway.

And come home tired and cranky and go to bed. I did try once. My mother came out of the depression and it was her genuine belief that a secure life would be General Motors. Eight to five, number of years, work your way up, get a pension, and retire. And she really believed that. And I tried to honor her once. In the middle of my alcoholism, which ran about 14 active years, there were periods when I tried to break the cycle. I didn't know I was alcoholic, but I tried to break out of my behavior. I thought the behavior was what's wrong.

By the way, we're going to talk a lot about drama. Drama does not define alcoholism. Alcohol defines alcoholism. Drama comes as a result sometimes of alcoholism, but it doesn't define it. So anyhow, the kids and I, we had gone through a bad time. I had two little boys whose mother had abandoned ship a couple years before, and we'd been on the road now for about the last four and a half years we were on the road. At this time, we'd been on the road about two years, because I quit trying to be super straight.

I just got into the subculture and ran. I was restless, irritable, discontent. We'll get into some. I love these weekends because I get to get into the details later. We had the privilege of sharing the Easter ceremony with the Peyote people, the Washoe and Nevada, and I had a genuine vision. To this day, I'll tell you, it was genuine. I saw a great bird flying high, and understood clearly that's me and my life, flying high, going nowhere.

It kept me sober for months. So you knew people, if you're thinking maybe visions might help. They're good for about four months of sobriety for my experience. Well, that's the way that was. But it did wake me up, and

we ended up in San Jose, California, and I'm really trying. My heart's desire for evermore has been, I want to be a good father and a good son and a good husband and a good member of my community. That's really all I want to be. I am Joe Straight in my heart, and I just can't pull it off.

So I want to work for General Motors. They gave me a really important job. Because I am stubborn, which by the way God can use, he calls it persistent. When it's in his hands, it's persistent, and my hand is stubborn. I lost his finger in a little racing accident when I was 13, and they told me, oh, you'll never be able to type. Well, I can type between 60 and 90 words, and then it just depends on, because I'm stubborn.

Because I could type, they gave me this really important job at General Motors. As the line came by, the line being a bunch of cars going by, I had a little wooden cubicle with a typewriter, some paper, and as the car went by, I took the paper off the windshield, ran into my little office, put a piece of paper in the typewriter, and copied this paper onto this one, and put it back on the windshield. And, boy, there's a mission for you.

And by the end of the week, I'm thinking, I wonder how I could do this job if I was a little bit stoned. Let's slow the world down a little and see how it goes. And at that time, I had access to some really nice marijuana. Now, understand, I'm not a drug addict. I've used a lot of drugs that does not necessarily make you a drug addict. I liked marijuana and seldom ever used it, but this time I did. Now, I was bored on that Friday, but when I got a little bit stoned, Monday to try to do the job, I found a new dimension of bored.

I mean, I was fully aware this is the most ridiculous thing I have ever done in my entire life. I wonder how it would be if I smoke a joint and had a drink. And, of course, by the end of the second week, I don't work for General Motors anymore. And we're off and running because the nature of my disease is when I start drinking. I lose control when it's over. God bless my mother. She's still alive. She's 94 now. Find one of them.

My sister warned me the other day, be careful. She's got a new cane. She has hearing aids now. And I love her attitude. I'm going to practice it myself. If she's tired of listening to you, she just shuts them off. Huh? She hears better than I do. Don't kid me. But she hears only what she wants to hear. In fact, I want to tell you a little about my family. We're going to talk a lot about alcoholism. I'm the only alcoholic in my family, as far as we know.

My family drinks, but they're disgusting when they do. They leave stuff behind. I'm the bartender because I'm the only one in the family that knows how to make a decent drink. So those few occasions when we have a party, I remember a family gathering. There were 73 people there because we were prolific. Cut that about a half. That means there were 30 or 40 adults. We have five bottles of booze and vodka and some whiskey and some wine and some other stuff.

And after five hours at that party, none of them was more than half empty. And a good part of the half that wasn't in the bottles anymore was still sitting on tables and half empty glasses. It's just disgusting. Now my uncle walked. We thought for a while he was alcoholic. He and my aunt Ruth really drank well. As I look back on it to one thing I do recall is that Uncle Walt drunk was just Uncle Walt drunk. There was no personality change.

And he and Aunt Ruth, they were really drunk. They belonged to the most or something like that where drinking was part of it. They were just fun people. And then one day, I guess Walter must have been in his 40 or

50. Anyways, Dr. Sid Walter, if you don't stop drinking, you're going to die and he quit. He didn't have what it took to be an alcoholic. Well, you've got to be tough to be an alcoholic. This isn't the game for sissies.

You've got to be so tough you can sleep in gutters or on the street. You have to be tough enough to tell lies to the people you love and mean them. You've got to be tough enough to steal from your children's piggy banks or do whatever is necessary to continue drinking. It's not an easy life. You've got to betray your own dreams. Everybody else's dreams and live a life of terror. I mean, I never fears a sissy game. You pay 50 cents and ride your roller coaster to get scared.

I like terror. Living in terror makes you feel really alive. So Uncle Walt quit and in his, my family lives a long time. I'm stuck here for a while. You know, barring some strange accident and the planet's been trying to get rid of me for years and haven't made it yet. My uncle Walter finally died and he's, I think he 86 or 87, which is pretty normal. In fact, when we bury him, I come from a kind of family that's intact.

So we have three different grave plots, grave yards, if you will. Family plots where the family goes, depending on which branch of the family. And I was looking at the grave stones when we put Uncle Walt away. 85, 87, 92, and Anna was 102, and I was known 101. My dad was 86 when he left. Mom's 94 and she hasn't shown any signs going anywhere. I'm stuck here. During his last year, Uncle Walt liked his whiskey and so did my mom's dad, Grandpa.

And during their last year, both of them asked the only one thing. They'd get a little, out west we'd take those little jelly jars and make glasses out of when you threw. And he fell it up in the morning and sipped all day long. No consequences, no madness, no nothing. Just sipped the whiskey all day long. That's the family I've come from. We thought my youngest son was alcoholic for a while. He had this propensity for drinking a great deal and smoking a lot of marijuana.

He tried very hard to be a dealer. He was really awful at it. He'd come home all beat up. He was able to talk to me. He'd gone down into the points to sell some dope and they'd beat him up and stole his wallet and his dope. Took him two or three times for real life. He's not really good at that. But he got a job one time that called for random UAs as a truck driver. And he quit. What I think of alcohol was my think of my mother.

My mother loves peppermint schnapps. I mean, she really loves peppermint schnapps. And on the day, when it's time, I watch her. She's cute. She gets that bottle down. Now, I like altoids, but can you imagine drinking that crap? She's got a tall, slim little glass that wouldn't hold enough to help anybody. And she pours it in. I watch her little eyes dance. She's pouring it in. She's really there. And I'm with her. I like people who express passion in any way whatsoever.

And then she'll go like, isn't that disgusting? She'll do that a couple times. And then I've heard her say publicly to my embarrassment. That's enough. I'm beginning to feel it. My mother's not alcoholic. There's a sound that goes along with my drinking also. Wow. And that's the sound of relief from unbearable psychic pain. And that's what I suffer from. Incredible psychic pain. A sense of separation. I heard some of you talk about wanting to get connected.

Please don't do that. If you get connected, you can be unconnected too. This is about coming to the awareness

that where I am, God is. And if it isn't about connection, it's about consciousness. About my being aware that that is the truth, where I am God is. I'm no longer a human being running around trying to have a spiritual experience. I'm a spiritual being. Having a human experience. And what's that's done for me has made me fully available to the human experience because it cancels out the big fear.

I'm not going to get out of this alive anyway. Okay. But this will have some fun. Okay. We are a group of people who finally, we have alcoholics and all of us, have history with each other. Apache Roadman asked me one time, have you ever had a relationship with anyone where you just didn't burn your bridges behind you? And he was right. One of the reasons I felt alone is because it was just me and who I needed you to be.

And I'd burn you up and run off. Well, today part of the measure of my piece is that I have history with people. Well, right there, how long have we known each other? 20 years? Something like that? 94. Well, we've known each other forever, but we have history since 94, and we still talk to each other. I've been married to Jackie for 26 years now. Good grief. I didn't even do that much time. Okay. We haven't had a fight yet, by the way.

Totally unnecessary to fight with the people you love. We do not always agree. Understand that, but we don't have to escalate it to a fight. She's right most of the time anyway. Date, how long have we known each other six years? That's a long time, you know. To actually know and be friendly with people. That was important to me. I'm a family man. In my heart, I'm a family man. I think most of us are. That's the human condition.

And AA is like a big family. But as in any family, there's an immediate family, and there's kissing cousins. And I like my kissing cousins for 15, 20 minutes at a time. But I need to spend most of my time with my immediate family. And that applies to Alcoholics Anonymous. That's why we have so many different kinds of meetings and different meetings. And every one of them is completely valid. And I have to find a whole I belong.

Where do I fit in? Where am I comfortable? Where am I of most service? It's kind of like cheers. I want to go where everybody knows my name. Sometimes. Because the spiritual awakening means you become a missionary and you're out there in the wilderness a whole lot. Don't tell us this. God doesn't want us to be the spearhead of his ever advancing creation. Isn't that a trip? Hey, that's where I want to be anyway. I've always wanted to be right out there on the edge.

Put me on the point. She'd come with me, but put me on the point. Anyway, I like to make a few inflammatory statements early on so we have something to talk about through the weekend. I have recovered from Alcoholism. I have one of we now of Alcoholics Anonymous. I no longer suffer from any of the symptoms of Alcoholism. There's only a couple of them. We live in an Alcoholics Anonymous world where we blame everything on Alcoholism.

Well, the symptoms are simple. I have a body that doesn't process alcohol like my mother. When she starts to feel it, she quits. I'm drinking for the sensation. I never know for sure what it's going to be, but mainly I'm drinking because I don't have any choice after the first drink. Dr. Silkworth makes it very clear. In fact, it's because of Dr. Silkworth's stuff in the big book that I discovered while I went to the penitentiary when I was 19 years old.

I was in a federal penitentiary in Tokyo, Japan when I was 19 wondering, what the hell happened? This is not what I had in mind when I left home and joined the Navy. But it seems in a simpler term, when I start drinking, I get lost and I can't find my way home. That happened to any of you. And when you're in the Navy, that's a felony. They... I get a 24-hour liberty and I'd be back in 28 hours or 30. And this one time I was given a 24-hour liberty.

And 23 days later when I woke up in the Persian Square in Los Angeles for 22 days I could not have gone back to that ship. I did things and was willing to do things, anything, so I could keep drinking. I had to keep drinking. There's a lot of emotional turmoil too, but the main thing is I needed to drink. And my ship was going to leave. There wouldn't be any drinking. On day 23 the madness was gone. I woke up and turned myself in.

When I got back to Long Beach, the ship was gone. I had messed a ship movement to a war zone. And that's a pretty serious crime. Now I ran with another alcoholic. We're not done. We are resourceful of anything. This kid from Appleton, Wisconsin, another drunk I ran with, within a week had us on what they called prisoner-at-large status, which meant I was in charge of me and he was in charge of he. They were both prisoner and guard at the same time with orders to report to the ship's docking station in Yakuza, Japan, as soon as they arrived.

So we got on a Pan Am Clipper, flew over the ship on its way, and we got to Japan three weeks before they showed up. So he got away from that war zone stuff. And we thought we were slick. Ah, man. I had no idea how upset the captain was when he left Long Beach and we weren't there. But I know from the look on his face when they pulled in the Yakuza and saw us standing on the dock how pissed he was. And so we ended up doing some time.

We got a bad kind of discharge and I'm out on the street at 19. Now, that's where I find my definition of bottom from that experience. That was bottom. Bottom is any morning that I wake up and understand clearly whatever I have in mind for my life isn't going to happen. It's not going to happen. So I get a new job, a new town, a new car, a new girl, a new whatever, and start over, new dreams, and then they fall apart.

And I start that whole cycle again. I don't understand why that's going on until I got to you people and you taught me about alcoholism. Doc Silkworth says he had been working with me. Well, let me read it to you. Because sure as hell, you're all experts and some big book for now is going to say I'm this quartered it. Have you ever run into a big book fanatic? I love him. I created several of them. David knows a couple of them.

I have had many men who had, for example, worked a period of months. On some problem or business deal, it would be several favorite of them on a certain date. A drink, a day or so prior to the date, and then the phenomena of craving became paramount to all their other interests. So the important appointment was not met. These men were not drinking to escape. They were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control.

And I got my first step further when we got to this. I come from a sponsorship line where they sat down, read this book to us, and then shared their experience with it and gave us assignments out of here. There I am. I was given a 24-hour liberty, and 23 days later got back. What was it that caused that? I had a drink in Long Beach. And as I look over my life, every one of those high drama deals I can point back to I had a drink in Denver.

I had a drink in San Diego. I had a drink. And that's set in this cycle in motion. The craving then develops in me. It's beyond my mental control. I sponsor a kid who helps me get it even easier. We were talking about this and he said, well, that isn't me. I'm going to have a couple beers, and I just change my mind. Okay, so we go back over it again. He said, no, I just wanted to have a couple beers and it changed my mind.

And then I let him wait until he heard what he was saying. I had a couple beers and my mind changed. I have a change. My body develops a craving and my mind changes. And now I'm an active alcoholic. And what active alcoholics do? They drink. There's no choice in the matter. It's just that simple. So you all helped me discover that I am one of those kind. And it took a little bit of time. And I didn't come to alcoholics and alcoholics.

I would never have come to alcoholics and alcoholics because nobody knew I was alcoholic. I was certified by one government agency as a sociopath type two. And I'm not clear yet what it is, but it's not good. My federal parole officer said, you know, everybody has to have one of those. He said I was a psychopath. And the doctor said I was a manic depressive drug addict. I was hiding my alcoholism behind some real high drama.

You got four things to get past to get to my drinking, okay? Because as my mind cleared, one of the things that went on is that no matter what state I was in, super freak, super citizen, whatever I was doing, drinking was part of it. Very brief periods where there was no drinking. I hated being drunk. Drunk is a subjective term. And for me, drunk was knee walk and puking in the gutter. Do we have any other knee walkers here?

If you're going to drink, you might as well. That's where you're on your hands and knees crawling down the street. And it's a good place to be because when you finally fall, you only have to fall about that. You know, discovered as we went through this book, it says that these are men who should have slept the day around. They're describing a phenomenon. My sponsors insisted on this, and I hope you'll do this. Bring your own memories to whatever this is.

This is a report of people and their memories. I need to bring my own to it. So how did that fit me? Well, I find that I'm using today or I've been using that. It was a period of my life where I also wore a badge. I don't like to talk about it much. It's kind of a sordid time in my life. I actually had to make one arrest and it was just scary. I found in the middle of the night there was a window broken out in the service station.

I went over and me and my gun went up and he and his no gun came up and I'm looking right. He's looking into my pistol and just scared him out of me. I didn't like that. But during this period of time I lived in a chicken coop. I was playing about that. I mean once you clean the chicken shit out it's just a room. We moved it off the pile, moved it down 100 yards and cleaned it out. It was not a bad place. Just a little room with a slant roof and I had curtains on the walls.

Did you live in one too? I'm spending about 80 hours a week in a patrol car. I had discovered along the way one of the best ways to drink longer when you don't get enough sleep is to take a little unfit of me. Make drinking easier, keep you up. In fact you can drink faster, you can do everything faster. You can even clean the house three or four times in an hour. Anyhow, on my day off I decided to see what it was like to be a burger.

I don't. Well I'd started drinking. My mind changed. And I knew which house was empty. I've been watching it all week. So I went in and I spent two hours in that house and left and forgot to take anything and concluded

this is not going to be my career either. I honestly believe as I look back over that prayerfully I wasn't looking for stuff in that house. I wasn't even in a chicken coop. And they lived in a house and I think I was looking for whatever kind of magic might be there that would tell me how I could have a house too.

Because in my heart of hearts I don't want to be living in a chicken coop. I want to live in a house like other people. But this business they should have slept the night around and got clear to me as the memories come back. I remember a terrible, terrible night in my drinking. I was not much of a bar drinker. For whatever the reason my personality was such that when a bar fight starts, it starts on me. And I don't do anything.

I'm just sitting there in my own business and some guy says, it looks like a good one, let's hit him. So I didn't like the bar as much and besides they charge too much. I want to drink. I don't want soda pop in it. I don't want to pay a dollar and a half. When for three dollars I get a whole quarter. I drink the good stuff. And the good stuff is whatever goes. Anyway, we did use the lighthouse bar in Denver as kind of a message center, the group I ran with.

If there's going to be a party at your house and then you leave the message with him and he gets it to the lighthouse, then we, you know how it is. We're sitting at the lighthouse around two. And I've been looking for it all night. You ever spent a lot of time looking for it? It seemed to me that while I was in Denver it was in San Francisco. And I'd get to San Francisco and it had moved on to Salt Lake. This night I've been looking for it.

It came two o'clock and then Colorado that the bar shut down. And I can remember the horror of that night knowing I'm not going to find it. So I went home. Now I always had three stashes. It was one at home because I got to have that. And this is subjective. I don't think this. I know this. I got to have this bottle there. And then there's the one I carry in my car. Just in case. And then there's the one that I share with you so you understand what a fine fellow I am.

And I got to go home and now I'm so drunk. I'm also aware of another thing. I'm at that stage of being drunk. Where I knew this is about 2.30 or so. If I lay down on this bed, the bed's going to spin. And it's going to throw me out on the floor and I'm going to puke on my own floor. And I'd rather not do that. I also know from experience that if I drink some more, then I will pass out. And then it won't happen. Pass out means I can drink myself into a coma, which is just this side of death.

And I don't have to wonder about sound being in the sanity. Okay, I just want to sleep. So I'll risk that. What's a coma between your friends? Okay. Should have slept the night around. And I'm up at 6 needing a drink. So I've got a memory that fits that too. I began to put the pieces together that I'm alcoholic. My sponsor said we don't think you're an associate path or a psychopath or a manic depression drug addict.

We think you're just a good actor. Yeah. True. I would be whoever you needed me to be. So I could get from you, whatever I needed from you. Good actor. We are all good actors. Bill doesn't use that piece in the book describing actor by mistake. That one describes me. A mixture of traits I can be kind and loving or mean and pushy doesn't mean. It just depends on what I need to get here and how bad I need to get it. I'm a manipulator.

When we were in our mid teens, 15 or 16, somewhere in there was that first real drunk. We didn't belong anywhere. We being the, I ran with six other guys who didn't fit in anywhere either. We were neither front hall or

back hall. We were ostracized and we were glad of it. We weren't jocks. We weren't banned. We weren't anybody. We just, we were trouble. And we got together one night and this guy, you got a guy from our Air Force based to buy us a bottle of whiskey.

A bonded bourbon. We had this arrogant idea that bonded bourbon was better than regular whiskey. We didn't know all that means that some insurance company says yes. Seagram's really did make this. And if you can prove otherwise, we'll pay you for it. But we went out to get drunk and have some fun. And what happened to me is described in the book by Carl Jung as a spiritual experience. We read that too so I don't mess quotes before you.

This is my bullshit sifter by the way. It was given to me early on in my sponsor said, use this as a bullshit sifter. Whatever you hear, check it with this. If you can't reconcile it here, you're either too dumb or it isn't true. Just ignore it. This is what happened to me. Carl Jung calls the vital spiritual experience. It's on page 27 of the book. To meet these occurrences in a phenomenon he says, they appear to be in the nature of huge emotional displacements and rearrangements.

Ideas and emotions and attitudes which you watch the guiding forces in the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side. And a completely new set of conceptions and motives begins to dominate. That's precisely what happened to me. I didn't feel better. I was transformed. I went into the evening stupid, short, ugly, inarticulate, frightened, angry, very angry. The only honest response to feeling set apart is anger.

All these things are running with me cowardly. I thought I was a coward because I didn't like pain. I've discovered since I got sane the pain is one of the best things to avoid that you can avoid. Stay away from it as much as possible. There's enough going around. You don't need to go looking for any. You know, just show up. Went in with all that going on. I had a psychiatrist once try to help me get in touch with my feelings and I couldn't get it across to you and that's not the problem.

I am so in touch with my feelings. I can't stand it. I can't sort them out. All this is going on at once. Baffled. I had a couple drinks of bonded bourbon and I'm a different human being. I now have plans. I'm no longer a reactor in the game of life. I have some plans. And these were good plans for a kid at that age. There was a guy who hadn't been treating me very well. A class bully. And as soon as we got back into Bonsiev's drive-in restaurant in front of the whole school or whoever was there, I'm all whipping.

But I could have done it, but not even breathed hard. Absolutely certain. And there was a little girl in our class who hadn't treated me at all. And she and I were going to have a visit as soon as I finished with him in front of everybody. And I could have done that, too. And that's not a bad thing for a kid at that age. If that's all Whiskey did, I'd buy you all a drink. I did not know, but it began to experience, that I lose control once I had the drinking alcohol.

By the time I got back to the drive-in, what they saw instead of me whipping the bullying, talking to the cheerleader, my partner is carrying me by the elbows while I puked in the driveway. I nearly died of acute alcohol poisoning that first night because they drank too much. I don't have a shut off switch. That's what defines alcoholism. If this book says, if when drinking you find you have little control over the amount you drink, or if when you want to stop, you find you cannot stop entirely, you're probably alcoholic.

It's a very simple definition. It's all about alcohol. Loss of control. If that's ever happened to you now, and I work with a lot of people who say, well, that happened never now and then, but not every time. You know, we got great denial systems. According to what I read here, according to the experience of the alcoholics who recovered, if that has ever happened to you, you're probably alcoholic because it never happens to the average tempered drinker.

Never, it says. So if it happened once, don't give up your seat. Be very, very careful. If you're not convinced, go try a little control drink. You can see if you can do it. It won't take long for you to get an idea that I went to have to. I just changed my mind. I don't want to go a whole lot longer because it's been a long day for you all. But I want to kind of set the stage because what we're going to do, I can feel already, is gently go through my experience of these steps so that you will also have somewhat of an experience so you come to trust this so you go home and do it.

That's really about all it's going to be. I almost stopped doing these a few years back. I get sometimes kind of tired. This is the third time I've had to talk since Thursday. And that doesn't count the people that I work with at home. I have people come over at six in the morning, by the way. If I sponsor you, you have to show up at six at my house. You got to surrender to something. I know you can't surrender to God yet, so.

And I want you, okay? If you want what I have, that's when I do it. And I also want you to see our recovered alcoholic and his family get ready for the day. That's one of the hardest times alcoholics have. So come to my house and watch how we do it. We had two teenage girls for a while. And, you know, it made the bachelor's life look pretty easy. Yeah, we got a lot of friends. I almost quit this. I truly do know this.

I don't know anything. You don't know. I just know that. I've been over the road enough and God has given me an ability to paint some word pictures. And I really do try to open up so that the love of God flows through me and you know. I really care about you. It matters to me whether you live or die. It really does. But I get tired of this sometimes. And I was in New York about ten years ago with a group of my youngsters, if you will, my spiritual family.

And I said to Ruthie, Ruthie, honey, I think I'm going to quit. She said, oh, don't do that, please. She says, here's what happens. When you come, we all get together. And you tell us stories. It's like having our grandpa, our uncle, come around and tell us stories. And I got that sense of purpose in my life again. If my being here will get you all together, and I heard a lot of you say that. That's why you're here. That's cool.

If that'll get you together, that's fine. As long as you understand that all you're going to get out of me are stories. And most of them you've already heard before. But you know what? I'm going to give you my favorite story and then we'll go to bed and then we'll start again tomorrow. This is my favorite story because this is one my granddad told us. Never got tired of it. Still I'm not tired of it. It was in the heart of Heart Mountains of Germany where a band of robbers had gathered together for the purpose of robbing a trade.

Their leader arose and said, Pierre, tell us a story. So Pierre began. It was in the heart of Heart Mountains in Germany where a band of robbers had gathered together for the purpose of robbing a trade. Their leader arose and said, Pierre, tell us a story. So Pierre began. It was in the heart of Heart Mountains in Germany where a band of robbers had gathered together for the purpose of robbing. Yeah, you got it. Never got tired of that.

Because what the story says is you matter. I don't know what else to say so I'll just say this. I love you. It was in the heart of Heart Mountains of Germany. Okay, and that's kind of what we'll do here. We are a storytelling society. Our message is carried not by lectures or intellectual or any of that. It's carried through the heart, through the stories that we tell. To be effective 12-steppers, we must tell our story in such a way that the guy who really believes nobody understands me says, that sounds like me.

I thought I was the only one that felt like that. So we get to expose not our best side. We get to expose our goofiness. That's what it works. So understand I'm goofy. And if you expect much more autonomy than that, you're goofy too. Okay. What time do we regather in the morning? Who's running this show? That's obscene. Six o'clock, fam. Well, breakfast is six-thirty. What time do you all want to get back together to pursue this?

Eight o'clock? Eight o'clock. All right, here's the deal I'll make with you. I'll be in this chair at eight o'clock ready to start. And we'll start as soon as you hold a quiet. Now I do need to find out one thing. We formed a group. Do you want to start when everybody gets here, or do you want to start on time? On time. So if you want to be here when we start, just be on time. Fair enough. See you all in the morning.