

DON P ARCHIVE

Big Book Weekend

2003 | Part 7 | Reading edition

FORMAT	DURATION	RECORDING ID
Transcript PDF	01:19:50	DP-2003-CAMDEN_07

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Transcript

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We say he knew one of them would. There's always somebody around. Well, my first day out was one of those remarkable days. I've been back into federal court. I'm the same parole officer that put me in, said to the judge, he's been going to AA. Let's put him on the street and watch him. We'll know within six days whether he's going to make it or not. Let's just put him on the street and watch him. So, to everyone's surprise, my parole is reinstated. Now, what that meant is that every night I had to report to the state parole officer and once a week to start out with the federal parole officer. Okay. He and I had a talk and this was on a Memorial Day weekend, which was a long weekend. I had \$17 left with a \$25 kick out money on a size 80 suit that had a flashing knee.

I sat down and signed on the back that said, just out, convict, beware. That's what it felt like. And we decided to leave me in jail. He and I concluded, just stay in jail over the weekend. Because a long weekend in that shape is not a very wise thing to do. So, I spent the weekend redoing what we're doing here. I had re-looked at my life. I worked the steps again, if you will. I got spiritually fit. Because I had no job and no place to live with \$17. And that's all I knew. And as I went out the tear, when the federal guy picked me up on, I think it was a Tuesday because we had a Monday, picked me up to take me in for processing. As I walked by the cells, one of the guys I had known said, you're going to need a job and handed me a slip of paper. He said, if it gets real bad, go see this guy.

And I put that paper in my pocket. Went down and the feds process me. This was fairly early, 9, 9, 30. They finished processing me and took me over to the state parole office. And he was real clear. He said, either have a job by tomorrow or back you go. That's clear. I don't have to interpret that. What does that mean? It means have a job by tomorrow or back you go. Since I started listening to the voice of God, it's always been very clear. So I left his office and went to get on the bus because I knew I could get a job at Burger King out in Aurora. I knew the guy. We had history. He'd put me to work. But there was a new sign on the bus. It said, have exact fare. Drivers couldn't no change. I could not get on the bus. Couldn't do it. And I'm in fit spirits of conditions. And I'm ready and willing. And I can't get on that bus. I couldn't risk the possibility of not having the right fare and being asked in front of all those people to get off that bus. God uses whatever's at hand. Okay. As a result of that, I got this piece of paper out. And it's just down the street, three blocks. Minuteman employment agency. Jack. See Jack. It's it. So I walked in and I did what you all taught me to do. The cards play like they're dealt. I'll be open. If you can't take me as I am, I don't be here anyway. So I walked in and said, Jack, my name's Don and I'm an alcoholic. I've had some drug problems. And I just got a state penitentiary and I'm on parole and I'm on the federal parole for smuggling marijuana. And I need a job. What do you got? He got excited.

I said, you're just what I've been looking for. Okay. So he took me over to Dixon Paper Company with my size 80 suit and all that. And Dixon told us that they don't hire ex-cons. That did not bother me because I'm not an ex-con. I'm a man and I've been to prison. And there really is a difference. Ex-cons get hassled and hustled and end up going back. I don't want to do that. But Dixon did say we can use unloading boxcars as long as he stays on your payroll. It suits me. I don't care who pays me. I just need a job so I don't go back. And this is about 11, 11, 30. We're coming close to lunchtime. And Jack said, you want to work the rest of the day. And I could

tell he was hesitant. And I said, yeah, I really do. I'll just soon stay busy. And I don't believe God ever tests me. But he does use whatever's in it.

He does use his hand to help me become aware of who and where I am. Well, he got me a hotel room, got me a pair of Levi's and a T-shirt and some different shoes. Those prison shoes are just the worst things. They're just not good shoes. What the Navy makes for Navy guys that are rejected by the Navy sent to us. He took me out to Abbott Laboratories for the afternoon to unload a truckload of dope. Abbott Laboratories makes the stuff I liked the very best.

This oxen, methamphetamine hydrochloride. If I had a drug of choice, that would be the one. And I'm working alongside a kid that's got a bandage on his arm. And he turns out that he gave himself a bad shot the night before he's a speed freak. And here I am. And I became aware of that day unloading that stuff. All of my obsessions had been removed. I didn't want it. I worked hard that day. I had no desire whatsoever. I became aware that God had done what was promised for me.

My head was clear. I worked so hard that day that Doc Manager offered me a full-time job. And the spirit intervened again. And I heard my mouth say, no, I don't think this is a good place for me to work. Okay. What a day this was. I went back to work for Dix & Paper, unloading boxcars. I'm just going to shoot the shit with you for a while because I love this run. You'll enjoy this too. After I got through that day, I went to York Street to the meeting.

I did exactly what I was told. Long set of stairs up to the top. I walked up and I'm scared. I don't know anybody. And at the top of the stairs is Reed. I'd only seen him a week before and I'd been dealing with him for over a year. And I walked up and said, Reed, you probably don't remember me. And so I fell. And he laughed and said, welcome. I talked with his wife on time and she said that was really an unusual day. He came home from work early.

He said, I don't know why, but we need to get to the club. She said, we never went to the club that time of day. He said, we need to get over the club. And several other times in my life, Reed and Dottie were there at crisis points when I needed family. So start looking for your reeds and your Dotties. Okay. So anyway, I ended up unloading boxcars down here for Dixon. And I was able to get jobs through Jack for some of the other bombs at York Street.

Come in off the street trying to get sober. Need a few bucks. Well, Jack's running that kind of agency. So I helped get little jobs for him. And now needed a job. That was about, oh, maybe four weeks sober. And it's a hot day in July and we're unloading stuff out of a boxcar. I'm inside and he's putting it on pallets. And he hollered in and he says, come here for a minute, please. He said, look down the tracks and tell me what you see.

I looked down the tracks and waddling toward us with this big ugly green parrot. I said, well, I may have some stroke, but I see a big ugly green parrot. He said, thank God, aside from that, oh, seven DTS. He says, now, you know, we got to catch that bird because we're both going to tell this story at the club. And if we don't have the bird to show them, they're going to say, we're crazy. And I'll kept that parrot till I lost track of L. It was an ugly thing.

And that's what I did for a while. And then one day they called me in and apparently there'd been a change. They may not hire ex-cons, but they turns out they do hire men who've been to prison. They decided they want to put me on their payroll, working on the dock, loading trucks. And what this meant is that I had to fill out a job application. You know how those are. They want your last 10 years' work history, OK? Dishroom, Colorado State Penitentiary.

1966, drug smuggler, and so on. And I did. I just put it down there. That's what you told me to do. That's what I did for a living. Dispatch, you're going into his office the next day. I need not become friends. He's got my application and a really funny look on his face. He said, did you really do that? And I said, yeah, yeah, I did. He said, did you get it across? I said, yeah, I did. I got turned in later, but I got it across.

He says, well, I've been thinking. We've got this little delivery truck that delivers paper to the print shops in downtown Denver and then goes out east in Denver to deliver sacks to some of the stores. And that's a tough little route. But it seems to me that you have the skills to get stuff from here to there under difficult circumstances. Do you want the job? Well, of course I wanted the job. On my route every two weeks out east, two things occurred.

I was the one driver that didn't know when he was going to get off work. Part of my job at the end of the day was to take the packages over to the Greyhound and the Trailways bus station. And there's a line of trucks out there you never knew for sure. And this was just a little pissy inside. Just a little agitated. Everybody else gets off, I don't. And one day I was sitting on a line waiting to drop the packages. And remember my friend Jim who had killed some people in a blackout?

He's the one I do the first step with also. Two prison guards come in with him. They're shipping him back to Florida. Now the chance that he and I ever meeting again is infinitesimal. But here we are just crossroads in time. We were on time, both of us, to spend five minutes where we each knew because we got pretty close. He's okay and I'm okay. We had our little chat and I've not heard from him or seen him since. But God lets everything come full circle.

I don't have anything lingering in the back of my mind about Jim. He's okay. We talked. The place that gave me the cowboy boots in the shirt was on my route. Every two weeks I'd drop sacks off. I've been taught to pray prior to making any amount. I stand ready at any time anywhere to get it done. But I'm to pray ahead of time because while I'm trying to set up my life in order, this is not an end in itself. My real purpose is to fit myself to be a maximum service to God knows about me.

So pray ahead of time. And I've got a job. I've got to money in my pocket, \$10.95, easy money. And I pull up out front before I take the sacks in and I pray. If this is the day, somehow let me know. I'm ready. For a couple months nothing happened. And one day I'm standing here. He's really busy this particular day. He signed the invoice and it just came all over me. This is the day. Do it. I asked him for a couple minutes of his time.

He said, I'm really busy. I said, this is really important. My life is at stake here. He didn't know who I was. He'd seen me as 130 pounds of walking death. I'm a chubby little truck driver now with muscles. And a different kind of glint in my eye. So I laid it all out to him who I was, what I was, why it was so important that I get straight with him and that I really did need to get straight with him. And I can see as I was talking to him, he

didn't want to help us talk about him.

But this is a kind man. He got down on his knees, hands of knees, under a counter and went through some old shoe boxes of receipts pretending to look for mine. That's pretty kind. Finally stood up and he said, well kid, it looks to me like we wrote that off. So can you. I stopped by that store just before Christmas every year to update him. Because he was interested in how the boys and I were doing. And it's been ten years ago now I went by and he had died.

And if some was running the store. So I took the boy aside, boy hell. Took him aside and told him the story and watched his face. He said, yep, that was my dad. It goes so far beyond, I'm sorry. Those kind of events touch me deeply in my soul and in my heart. They are the kind of stuff that's the meat of this way of life. How can you have a flat spot when you make kindness at that depth? So I really think I'm more and more on beginning to understand that this is about kindness.

Came home to me in real depth a year and a half ago October. I had to go in for some surgery and the surgery was very successful. They took out what they needed to take out and was so successful they sent me home the next morning. And at 2.30 in the morning Jackie's rushing me back to the hospital because I'm in serious trouble. Now, please hear this. Before I went in I know that in a hospital setting somebody along the way is going to give me morphine.

And I won't even know about it, it's just the way it's going to be. I'm not a drug addict but I also know morphine is not a good thing for me to have. I think I'd probably like it. Don't know but I've got a clue. Now early in sobriety I would have simply asked God to protect me during that. Because one of the girls in our little group when we were early sobriety had the same experience went in and she said they'd give her a shot and she would simply say well God they've hooked me again.

Would you please relieve this addiction like you did in the last minute? She walked out free. So there's a time that's what I would have done. Had my present state of consciousness if you will, my sense of God's presence. I started to make that prayer before I went in and hit me. I don't need to ask for that. I need to acknowledge that. I know I will be protected. I need not concern myself with it. I will be protected.

So we're back in the ER and they're doing some things that hurt. Even there's funny stuff that goes on there. You can laugh at anything. This one hurts. What she's doing is causing me to scream terribly. Jackie says she didn't hear a word. She should have been in here. Oh my God, this hurt. All of a sudden my head went and I said what did you do? I just gave you a shot of morphine. So I threw up. I guess that's what you're supposed to do, your first shot of opiates?

I did anyway. And then I go ahead and finally this nurse said to me, sweetie, I'm so sorry I'm torturing you. I'm all I can think of is you're not my sweetie. Don't call me sweetie. That's what waitresses call customers. Morphine didn't touch the pain. I don't know, it was 10 minutes or 20 minutes short period after that. My head goes, I said did you just give me some morphine? She says yeah. I said well you can stop because it won't do any good.

Didn't touch the pain. Nothing they did touch the pain. But I tell you what got me through it, Jackie rubbed

him ahead. That touched it. That's about kindness. And this staff was so kind to me. They really were kind. We got through the crisis. I'll need to go into the bloody details. I just, I don't want to do that again. So what do you do when you get somebody like that? When you can't touch the pain? Well nothing you can do can touch the pain.

And you want so badly to help them. And you know you can't? You just comfort them along the way. We forget sometimes that comfort is more important than solution. We kind of sometimes lose track of that. Solution is okay. Bill warned us about it. Sometimes we start them off too soon. They made me nurse for a while. I learned that with Chuck. You love Chuck. About five foot two mean as a snake. He did everybody. Chuck had been sober eight years and then went to work at Hazleton and then somehow or another was taken drunk.

And then he'd gone to work for a couple other places and he'd have a couple years here and he'd get drunk. And this had happened off enough. By the time he got to Denver, nobody could stand him so they sent him to me. Literally sent him to my group, looked me up, and he gets right up in my face and just dared me to say anything meaningful. And he said don't give me that big book crap I tried out and it didn't work. Okay.

All I could think of to say well Chuck what do you think of God? Oh I hate the son of a bitch. I understand that someday down the road we all get a couple minutes with him. And I can't wait for my turn. Tell him what I think of this shitty deal and I'm going to hell with my friends. And I said well this is good. He believes. He's got a really bad attitude but he believes. We can work with that. Would not call me a sponsor.

He hated everybody. There's no way I could do anything for Chuck. He was in pain. This was a desperately wounded animal. Came from a bad home to start with and his own attitudes made it even worse later. Chuck was not unemployable. He'd had 300 and some odd jobs by this point. Chuck was easily employable. He just couldn't keep a job because somebody would say something they didn't like. That's the noise he makes by the way.

So I prayed what do I do with this one Lord. So I had him come over every day and my work was such that I drove around town a lot. I was in the roughing business. So I just throw him in the van with me and we drove around. And he spewed hate. I don't care. Right on out the window. I don't care. I'm home for lunch and we'd go out and eat some more hate. And we'd begin to go to some meetings. And he was hateful. He's the kind when he walked in the room.

People literally backed up. He didn't have to say a word. The energy just came off of him. I've got to tell you the truth. I like that kind. If that gets turned, you've got a new missionary ready to send into the field among the wild animals. It took nearly a year. I've just nursed him along. Going to some meetings. I wasn't a sponsor but I was his friend. The only one he had. We established that somewhere along the way.

And he would listen to me a little bit. And he liked coming over the house. And one of the things to get him involved, we had to set up a job at our group. We set up the chairs and make the coffee. And eventually Chuck was trustworthy enough. I knew he wouldn't put arsenic in the coffee. We started letting him make it. And then we'd clean up and drive him home. This one particular night, a lady who was about ten years sober came in and she was not in good shape.

Her son had just had an overdose of drugs and she was angry. She was angry at A and she made the mistake

and started to pick on me personally. It didn't have anything to do with me, but she had to lean on somebody. And I'm the only friend in the world he had. And the only resource he had was to defend and protect me. And he started sputtering up. He was trying real hard. And he finally said, oh, F you lady. Stumped out the door.

And I know he's going to drink because we made a deal to the beginning. Our deal was this. If he was going to work with me, he reserved the right to one more drunk. He said, if it doesn't work this time, I am going to go drink myself to death. And I won't show up unless you agree to that. And he tested me in that three times. Call me from a barns and I'm sitting here with an old bear in front of me. And all I could see was Chuck wouldn't stop you for the world.

I think it's stupid, but I won't stop you. And he'd always end up at the house. A couple of members of the group went following him because right down the streets of Bar, I didn't chase him. We had a deal. After the meeting, he comes back in. Goes out to the kitchen and cleans up the coffee, damn near breaking the cups. And on the ride home, I'm quiet. I'll wait for it. You don't stir a rattlesnake when it's shaking its tail.

Just leave it alone. And he said, you know, I was going to go drink, don't you? I said, I know. I remember a deal. I promised to never stop you. Yeah, well, I was headed down there to the set there. I was going to get drunk. And then I thought, well, wait a minute. I made that coffee. It's part of my job. I ought to go clean it up. And then I'll go drink. I came back in and cleaned it up. And he said, well, he was cleaning it up.

He thought, it's my job. It's my group. I'm not letting that bitch run me out of here. That's a spiritual awakening. A while later, we came by the house, and Jackie had baked some chocolate chip cookies. She loves to bake. This was the top pediatric hat administrative head nurse in the CRC unit at the University of Colorado Hospital and Children's Hospital. But can she make cookies? She can't program the VCR. But she could make some cookies.

Anyway, we came in and she gave us each a cookie. The little chucks says, that was good. Now to a cookie maker, that means, oh, have a sack. And she gave them a sack of cookies. And we got out to the car, and he just broke my heart. About a year now, sober. It just began to come around. He said, why would she give me a sack of cookies? Good question. I was able to say, well, it's just because she thinks you remember the family, John.

And I swear to you, that's the day he changed. Not through intensive step work. Somebody thought he was a member of the family. So we got cooking. I love to talk about Chuck. He called me before we came out here and asked me if I was going to talk about him again this weekend. We're getting there. We finished the step work. He started becoming a damn near a decent person. People didn't run from him anymore, and he dropped a few.

He was still colorful, but he dropped that one. Came over one day. This is a little short guy. His dad had died, and he inherited a little bit of money, and we used that to pay off what a man's he had. And he said, there's one last thing I didn't tell you, and I think I need to tell you. But every time I've ever told anybody this, they've laughed at me. And because we had taken the time to form a relationship, I was able to say, Chuck, you know I will not laugh at you for anything.

And he knew that was true. He had tested me. He said, you know what, all I have ever wanted to be was an actor. And the spirit went to work. I know some actors. I am one. But I know some people who get paid to do

that. And he'd also talked about never having any fun. Part of what I did with Chuck along the way was I gave him a little VCR and started feeding my Abbot and Costello movies at him one at a time. So he could laugh at least once a week.

To this day, he got in trouble about a month ago in his head. He said, I'm just going to go home and put on an Abbot and Costello movie and go to bed. Beats the hell out of whatever he else he had in mind. So I said, look, let's do this. Right now you've been fired again so you don't have a job. You've got a brand new little truck that's in good order. And you've got a couple grand left over. And you told me that one of your harsh desires was to go to Disneyland.

Once you go to Disneyland and while you're out there, I'll make a couple calls and we'll introduce you to some actors. And they will be able to tell you what the price you'll have to pay to become a professional actor. So he did. And I hooked him up with one of the folks on the Murphy Brown Show. And they take him out to Universal to show him around. This is a good AA member. And while they're looking at the lot, the producer of Murphy Brown shows up.

And this guy introduced a chuck and just mentioned a chuck would like to be an actor. And the producer said, well, we can use him right now as an extra if he wants to go to work. He's out there less than two weeks and he's already on the Murphy Brown Show. And he said, what the hell's going on here? This is the kind of thing I've come to expect. They got hit by a truck on the freeway without a commission for a couple of years.

And had a terrible, terrible experience. At the end of the depression that he had, he fell in love with a cocaine act. Got a \$94,000 insurance settlement. Yeah. Married herd of saver and in three months, both the girl and the money was gone. And so he decided to keep his promise and drank until he was dead and discovered he couldn't. Terrible condition. Did his best. He took some pills and drank some stuff and nothing happened.

He tried. He just tried. He called me up. He was so pissed. He couldn't even drink himself to death now. Because he'd made a commitment to God for help and service and that's the way it works. And he's been sober for a while now. He's one of my giants. That's how I learned. What a joyous thing to watch somebody come from my hate to son of a bitch. Maybe God isn't doing this to me after all. Maybe I'm doing it. Got a new job.

They're going to let him back in acting school. One of the funniest things that happened to him is that he got a job in a couple of plays. He's really very good. He has a natural talent. We got him into the right acting school and they began to develop it. And he picked up a couple plays there in Hollywood. And the first part he got, and they tell me he played it like nobody's ever played it, was a fundamentalist preacher.

Once you know what, he had to talk those lines and they tell me he just played his heart out. Anyway, just shucking a gentleman. It's about time he shut this down. I don't want you to miss these kinds of things. This is what's here. This is the fun of it. I'm getting a film by the time I get home I'll have a film from another young fellow. That came to me, what was it, six years ago? We shall be about it. A couple years over, a professional college student from the Birmingham ham language, a young rich kid out of Birmingham, Alabama.

Never had to work a day in his life, spoiled rotten. He'd gotten into a sponsorship line where you had to call every day with 10th step where you were out. And if you didn't have any, you were crazy and blah, he was just

going nuts. And he stopped me after a meeting and told me what was going on. He said, I'm praying regularly. I'm calling my sponsor every day with a 10th step. And after we talked for a while, I said, well, do you want me to tell you what I would do?

And he said, yeah. I said, well, first of all, if I were you, I'd stop praying. Because I'd ask him to describe God to me also. It was pretty scary. He said, hold on. I said, well, no, wait a minute. Let me ask you this. Is that who you want showing up? He said, no. I said, well, I'm quitting, biting him in. Quit calling his name. Well, what do I do then? I said, do you have anything else to pray to? He said, no. I said, well, I'm quit praying.

And for God's sake, quit writing inventory. Oh, but I'm told I'll die if I do this. I said, well, you're dying anyway. You owe my advice. Stop writing inventory. I said, what do you like to do, Shelby? And he said, well, I like good food. I like movies, and I like girls. I said, well, Shelby, you go back to Boulder and ask a girl out for dinner, get laid, and then call me later. Now, he didn't do that part of it because he has some principles, but I thought, we've got to crack him somewhere.

But he did go out for dinner and to a movie. And he spent a couple weeks lightening up. My message to Shelby has always been, lighten up. He's intellectual, he's intense. Lighten up, Shelby. And he called me back in about two weeks and he said, you know, I really need to have God in my life. I said, good. Here's what we'll do. Don't ask me about God. If you want to know about God, ask God. And we began some stuff that has led him to New York where he has already produced a couple movies.

He's studying with Tom Noonan. I don't know if you know who Tom Noonan is. Incredible actor. Tommy likes his work. Next week, we're getting a film that has been entered in the film festival and will probably win some awards from this kid. Because he got free and decided he's going to be who he is. And he is so funny. He's one of those calls, and when he calls, I just start playing freestyle on my computer. Because we've got about 20 minutes of stuff that I don't have the slightest idea of what he's bailing about.

Intellectual in and out of Mars and Venus and dance, dance, dance, dance, dance, dance, dance. And then we get down to business and I stop playing freestyle. We'll talk for a couple minutes and let's say that's enough Shelby. Okay. Tomorrow morning, if you wish, we will go through the rest of this recovery process. As I see it, it won't take that long. You all have big books. You all know what to do technically anyway.

But I have some views that have helped me along the way to lighten up. I've been a big book Nazi. I've done all of that. How to lighten up. And still do this precisely the way it says here because it will reveal some stuff. And then we'll talk a little about a man's I hope because the making of a man's is an incredible walk. And then whatever else you want to talk about. I don't know what time you want to get together.

I know we have to leave here by what, one o'clock or whatever. When you're tired of me, we'll leave. But if that meets with your approval, that's what we'll do in the morning. Because I really do have some things to show you here that over the years I have learned to make this an easy walk. An easy, easy walk. So I don't want to stop. You touched my heart and I just want to, it was in the heart of heart mom's in Germany.

What time do we get together tomorrow? What's happening? Just fine, fine, upstanding fellow here is going to tell us what's going on. First time I've seen the baby away. That's the first time I've seen you all the way away.

That's nice. I've been asked this morning to cover a little of the inventory process, which I'm more than happy to do. Though our decision was vital on crucial stuff, it could have little permanent effect unless it once followed by a strenuous effort to face them to be rid of the things in ourselves which have been blocking us.

There are good information there. The only thing ever blocking me from God is me. It's the stuff within me. And I would like this to be permanent. Not the bang, but the sense of spiritual being. That's where I am God is. I like that to be on all time thing. One of them, I've watched a lot of spiritual people do their thing. And one of the things I always admired about Billy Graham, that we didn't get to see much on those big TV things, but after the altar call, immediately the folks that came down were taken around back and began a house cleaning process.

They were assigned mentors because it's fully aware that the emotional experience is nice, but it will fade. It's like being in love. A marriage that's based on just being in love is probably going to run into trouble someday because that feeling, that sense of just the emotional thing will fade away or just won't be there on some days. There has to be more than that. But this is a good start for us because we go back to being sick real quick.

It's comfortable there, familiar territory. So everything from here on based on spiritual principle is at once. For the rest of my life, everything is at once. Spiritual life is based on being here now. So everything is immediate. And this is where it starts. The great promise here that led me, or let me actually, made it possible for me to look at the things that devastated me was face and be rid of. If you will face it, honestly and truthfully, you can be rid of it and not ever have to do that again.

Or be that way again, ever. That's the great promise here. Our liquor was but a symptom. Our liquor was but a symptom. We had to get down to causes and conditions. Quite a departure. All of a sudden alcohol itself is no longer the problem. It's only a symptom of the problem. So we start on a personal inventory, which is a fact facing and fact finding process. I will learn some things I didn't know. And I will face them clearly.

One purpose of any inventory is to disclose unsalable goods to get rid of and promptly without regret. The goods may be perfectly fine. Jesus loves me. I had to get rid of that because of what I do with it. It becomes unusable, unsalable, promptly without regret. Letting go of attitudes. I'm a Carl Jung talked about ideas, emotions and attitudes which once for the government of the lives of the men are cast aside. Attitudes have to change.

Now I'm a word mechanic. I love to play with words. The English language is wonderful because one word can mean twenty different things. Our granddaughter is learning Spanish. Her dad spent years in the barrios in Los Angeles and speaks Spanish. So they're learning Spanish. When she was about four, her dad said to her one day, Te amo, which means I love you. And she said, Te amo dose, Daddy. She too. I love you too, Daddy.

She hadn't gotten to also yet, but she had a word for two. Now that's cute, but think about that. I'll hear you say something and you mean one thing and I've got another meaning for it. So we have communication problems. Okay. It's the same thing with my relationship with God. If it's going to be a relationship, we will have communication. And I have to get rid of my pre-judgments and my attitudes about what these words mean.

My attitude about reward and punishment for me had to go. It still exists. The universe is so structured that if you screw up, you're instant. It's all built right in. I don't have to wait for some sort of having sent a special angel

to whack me in the head. If I dive too deep in the ocean, I will get cramps. If I dive too deep in your head, I'll get hit. So anyway, we're going to look for some of those things. What are the things that are blocking us?

My attitudes, my motivations. These are what are blocking me from the relationship with God. And I presume that's what it means what's been blocking us. Because it says the most important effect of my life today is the consciousness of the presence of God. That must be what I'm locked from. Not from an understanding of, but from a consciousness of. It's all about being conscious, about waking up. Now, when I do this with people, I'll just walk you through for about the next hour on just what I do with folks.

We are now into a spiritual activity where there are very precise, specific instructions on what to do and when to do it. This now is a text book. So I use what I call a checklist method when I'm working with people. As we read now, we come to a place where it says something and the question is, have we done that yet? It's very simple. If we haven't done that, we probably not go any further until we get that done. Except to look, maybe they give us some instructions.

So let's see how that works. If the owner of the business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values. We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly. First, we searched off the flaws in our makeup which caused our failure. Have we done that yet? No. Because we don't know how. So maybe they'll tell us how. We're now in a learning stage here. My mind is open. Being convinced that self manifested in various ways is what is defeated.

We consider it as common manifestations. Are we convinced that self manifested in various ways is what has defeated me? So there's no need to go any further. If we haven't come to that conclusion, why bother with the rest? It isn't going to come out right. And so if we are not convinced, let's talk some more then. What other convincing do you need after what we've already been through? And we're stubborn. It takes some time.

Are we convinced itself is what is defeated? Yeah, I think so. Sunday morning and a fly ridden 4-H camp. They send you to a careless old man. I'd say you're pretty well convinced there must be something better than what I've been doing on Sunday morning. Okay? You're convinced. Oh, you've been watching. That's a very dangerous man now. He decided he'll do anything to keep from drinking again. Look out. I'm glad I'm getting out of town.

Resentment is the number one offender. He kills or destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From its to all forms of spiritual disease. You hear that? This is the granddaddy of all spiritual diseases. It must itself then be a spiritual disease. Now, we've been asked to ask ourselves what these spiritual terms mean to us. What does that mean to me? Well, let's look at what resentment does. First of all, if I resent you, you own me.

You don't only have to be alive or in the same place with me. You are running my mind. I'm truly a slave to you because of my resentment. And I'm frankly tired of being owned by people that piss me off. Resentment separates me from you. Anything that separates me from the children of God separates me from God. And so, while I can't deal with the whole God concept, now I can deal with something. I suffer from a spiritual disease that causes separation.

And I can deal with you. I can put down why I'm angry with you. And it'll be the same thing that will be

blocking me from God. Do we grab that? We've got a spiritual disease. I didn't know you could be sick spiritually. Of course you can. Well, did I tell you about Gert and what she told us about sickness? When she was really sick, she used to look down on people. She said, now that I'm spiritual, I look down on people who look down on people.

It doesn't change much. From the stem, all forms of spiritual disease. For we have not only been mentally and physically, oh, we've been spiritually sick. When the spirituality has overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. What a wondrous thing. That just turns me completely away from any other kind of method that I might have been trying. I need to solve, first of all, my spirituality, my separation from God and His children.

Just that easy. And I'm living proof of that. Certified sociopath. I love that. I have a number of terminal illnesses that I've walked through sober. Still carry one of them. In fact, I carry two of them. One is hepatitis, the other is growing old. Both are terminal. I just hope the one gets me before the other. But I've straightened out mentally and physically, despite those little things. I've had to learn that isn't what we mean by straightening out physically.

And I've straightened out mentally because I'm no longer a sociopath. I don't think like that anymore. Those things are gone. Now you'll notice if alcohol is but a symptom, then alcoholism itself. While that's the condition I have, I can't start blaming all my bad behavior on alcoholism. I can't start blaming all my bad thinking on alcoholism. It doesn't have anything to do with it. But we'll get off into that. So you want to straighten out mentally and physically?

I've got a real investment in being sick. It's been a lot of years perfecting that. I've put in many, many hours working on it. It works. One of the first things I learned as a small child is people really don't like people who are successful. They're very kind to people who fall in their ass, who fail. Now that's a misperception, but it's a perception based on an observable truth. So I've got an investment in not being successful.

It started real early. If I do something correctly, you're going to expect me to repeat it again tomorrow. For whatever the reason I want. I don't know what I did the first time. No, I did it. It looks normal. Or I really don't want to step out from the pack. God's looking for leaders. For people who step out from the pack. Make some discoveries and then come back to the pack and say, we don't have to grove them on the dirt guys.

There's some really good food over here. What do you think a sponsor is? It's a spiritual leader. It's a person who's wanting to take on the burden of helping you overcome a spiritual melody. That's a leader. Can't give it to you, but it's wanting to take on that burden. And it is a burden. Y'all sponsor people, right? What a pain in your ass. That's wonderful. There's absolutely nothing better. What a pain in your ass.

I buy them books and I buy them books. And all I do is eat the covers off of them. We come to a simple little truth. Yeah, but. I'm telling you the truth week after week after week and you don't get it. And some doofus comes through town and couldn't find his ass with both hands. It says the same thing in the same words and you come run into my office and, well, I got today. You just hobbled it? I absolutely adore them.

The worse they are, the better I'll like them. So in dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. What is this? I'm a high action, high drama guy. There must be at least some primal screaming involved here. Somebody

get out to Tom, Tom and build up. We got to do something. No. In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. How wimpy can you get? Have we done that yet? No. Because we don't know how. It would be very cautious about setting it on paper when you don't know how.

Putting things on paper makes you real. And if you're just describing a condition, you will make it even more real by describing it. You'll identify with it. Be careful. So let's see if they can tell us then how are we to set this on paper since we haven't done it? Well, let's see. We listed people, institutions and principals with whom we were angry. If I'm sponsoring you at this point, you get to go home. You no longer have an appointment with me.

We have a test to complete. Have we done that yet? No. You go home and make your list, and I'll make my list, and as soon as your list is done, we'll get back together again. Call me. I will be instantly available with larger groups of people who don't do that, but that's where it starts. And we've done all three columns first. We've done all the ways. This is the one I find most useful, because it instantly breaks any dependency you may have on me.

You are now involved in your own life with me as just a guide. And I'm doing it with you. And I promise you, my list is going to be a lot shorter than yours, so don't do it all. Because I don't have any tolerance left for psychic pain. And I'm not going to fool around with this. I can't. Don't do it all. Three years ago, I finally got to hooks into one of our old timers. He was 33 silver, here's silver. Had never worked the steps.

Was a power in A and going struck raving mad. He had gotten past the grace period. But we all get a grace period when we first get here. And you get to stay in that for about the same length of time you were sick. And he finally left it. It took a couple months to get this far, because about half of each session was me having to chop down everything he'd learned in 33 years of AA. The child-like view that I'll just do it.

Show me what to do and I'll do it. Had a wonderful third step experience. I think even my wife downstairs felt that one. It was a goodie. Sent him home to make a list. Didn't hear from him. For several weeks. Right after Christmas he called for apologize to me. But he'd gotten kind of busy at Christmas. Hadn't gotten a list done yet. And I said to him the truth. One name counts as a list. One name counts as a list. You may have to do more later.

But that counts. Haven't heard from him since. Not three years. Swears? I am not going to call him. That's not our deal. One name. Come on. Just give me one name. Anyway, go home. People, institutions and principles. Well, what's the principle? I wouldn't know if you hit you in the face. Don't worry about it. Do the best you can. One of the principles will be my name on the list. Because I'm asking you to live by principles and you don't know what the hell they are even.

What's the principle? I'm pretty well defined as what's wrong with my life, don't I? I don't even recognize principles. Anyway, when that's done, then come on back. What does it say to do next? We ask ourselves why we were angry. In most cases, we found that it was self-esteem, our pocket books, our ambitions, our personal relationships, including sex, were threatened. So we were sore. We were burned up. All of a sudden this gets easy.

I can take a drinking drunk this far. If all we're going to do is inventory. Whom am I mad at? Why am I mad at them and what's that doing to me? It's all I'm thinking about anyway. God uses his hand. That's so simple. On

our grudge list, which is what this is, we set opposite each name or injuries. There's a nice little format here. If you look at it, I use it. I've discovered that even though it's laid out in print here and hasn't changed, most people don't quite get this.

So I bring this along so that they can see what this looks like. Oh Lord, that's bad inventory. I'm going to share a piece of it with you. Some people, when there's four steps, it tends to be up. Truly doesn't matter to me. There's no numbers on it. It's inventory. And I do this the same way I did it at the beginning. But I'll share this little piece with you so you can see how this actually works in real life. So there we are, what we call the three columns.

And it's real simple. What is the same I'm looking for? What aspect of self is being hurt, threatened, or interfered with? That's the only time I get upset. It's when my life is being hurt, threatened or interfered with. And that of course extends to my family because they're part of my life and my friends are part of my life. Depending on how broad your circle is, we'll determine how angry you get by world events. If a house next door gets burglarized, that's a by God shame.

We ought to tighten things up around here. When mine gets burglarized, call out the National Guard. We're going to get that some bitch and I get first crack at him before they put the change on it. Now a lot of people add a lot of different things to it. I really don't do whatever works for you. I don't analyze at this point. All I'm supposed to do according to this is label. Discover. This is the discovery portion. And I'm one of those people who, while I use the big book and inventory regularly, I believe the most important part is not in the writing.

It's in the attitude changes that are described in between the writings. Okay. We have this down. Who I'm angry with, why I'm angry, and what's being interfered with. That's what that looks like. It's all there is to that. My son-in-law, why I'm angry with him and what is being interfered with in my life because of his behavior. That's where the question in the back of the mind goes to work. Why would your behavior upset me?

If it does, we're separated. You're going to love this when we get to it. Then the directions say we go back through our lives. That's good. Because I've got an alcoholic mind. Should I start when I was two or three? Or should I start? Well, we go back through our lives. Start here now. Generally, I really do expect them to start on me. Because if I haven't pissed you off by the time I got this far, I'm not doing my job.

I don't mean to do that, but I've laid some truth on you. You're going to be upset with me. And here's the main reason. And this is all deliberate. It says we're to grow and affect you with an understanding. And I've learned some effective things. Up to this point, we have an appointment at six o'clock on Tuesday morning, and there's no slack in that. I will be there, and you have ten minutes on either side to be there, or don't come.

And if you don't come twice without a really good reason, you don't get to come anymore. That's Nazism. And then all of a sudden, you're going to make a list. You don't have an appointment with me anymore. That'll shake your tree. It's meant to. Because if you don't get responsible for your own life somewhere along the way, you're going to die. You'll die spiritually. You'll become dependent again on things that will let you down.

And when they do, you will get angry and frightened, and you will drink again, and you will die. And I know that. That's right. My name really should be close to the top of the list. I mean, I don't have an appointment

anymore. I mean, you don't have an appointment anymore. As soon as you finish this, call me, and I will be instantly available. That's a rash promise to be making. But I've never not been instantly available when they're ready.

Because I trust them to cover the whole deal, including me. Anyway, nothing counted, but thrown us in honesty. When we were finished, we considered it carefully. Now is when the important part of resentment inventory shows up for me. The first thing apparent is that this world and its people often were quite wrong. There's an attitude adjustment I have to make here. They're still wrong. I'm going to go up for where I was wrong.

But the world and its people are often quite wrong. And my concern, my ego's concern, is that if I admit that I was wrong, that will make them right. No, it doesn't. We were both probably wrong. The world and its people really are often quite wrong. But that's the real consequence. First of all, I picked them. To conclude others were wrong as far as most of us ever got. The usual outcome is that people continued to wrong us.

And we stayed short. You know why they continued to wrong us? Because we keep going back to the same one, trying to get them to not do it. And it's their nature to wrong us. And every time I go back, whack, we get it again. I see a lot of heads going, yeah, that's the end of it. Not a bitch. I can never make it right. So one of the things I do with it that this covers is after a while, I quit going back to you to get whacked.

I stay away from you and replay it up here, trying to make it right. Now, when this happened, if I'd have said this, he just said that. And then I said this, and he just said that. That one looks pretty good. Let's try this one. And so now you owe me. And the sad part of that is each time I do that, I'm further and further away from what really happened. Until a time comes when I'm devastated and dying for an incident that never, ever even occurred.

I'm too far away from what happened. Sometimes it was remorse. And then we were sword ourselves. That kind of sets a precedent for putting my own name on the list. My sponsors wouldn't let me do that. If you need to do that, fine, but I don't do that. If you're going to put your own name on the resentment list, put it way down at the bottom. Because one of the things presenting myself for is the assumption that I had power to do better than I did and I don't.

I wouldn't be here. But sometimes it is remorse and we're sword ourselves. And it's fine to put that down there. The main reason for doing this inventory is not for me to find it who I am anyway. It's to find it who I'm not so we can get rid of it. And the second main reason for inventory is to help me find out what wrongs I have done and to who and come up with a plan for making that straight. Now, we're reviewing what we just did.

It's plain that a life that includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. Does that an acceptable statement? Yeah. To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours that might have been worthwhile? And I love Bill's choice of words. That's the perfect word. Squander means conscious, deliberate, knowledgeable waste. You gave me, I've got the winning lotto ticket. And I show it to all of you and then I tear it up.

That's squandering. I've been given these life resources and I squander them. Just wonderful thing.

Resentment squanders my spirit, deliberately consciously wastes it. Did you ever get tested somebody else and decided I'll show them? I'll starve to death. I'll run out in front of a car. They'll be sorry. But with the alcoholic who's hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely gray.

We found it's fatal. For while harboring such feelings, we shut ourselves off in the sunlight of the spirit. You all are very lucky up here. You don't have to interpret that word. You know what a harbor is. You've got some great ones out here. Yeah. That's the place where everything gathers and that's what we do with these hates and resentments. We gather them. We harbor them. We make sure we've got plenty on hand. Don't want to run out.

When a great storm comes, somebody finally facing me with the truth of what's going on. I've got to have a harbor full of stuff that says, oh, no, we should get in past me. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. Well, that's to drink us today. That's part of the review that I get to go over here. If we live, we have to be free of the anger. Anger is a natural and normal human response to certain events. I don't think Bill is talking about that.

Except in this form, even if I correctly respond to a situation with anger, I cannot harbor it. I must be free of it. I'm going to do something right away to get done with it because it will fester in me. It's like that punching bag. Normal psychotics can punch the bag and get free of their anger. Not me. I punch the bag and I really like it. Let's do that again tomorrow. Get a bigger bag. The grouch in the brainstorm were not for us.

Man, you're taking well. My toy's here. Anybody here brainstorm? Hurricanes and tornadoes all at the same time. Don Quixote. Build the windmills and then go tilt them. They may be the dubious luxury of more normal men, but for the alcoholics, these things are poison. Anger causes me to be self-centered. Fear causes me to be self-centered. Pain causes me to be self-centered. They make me aware of self. In the minute I'm aware of self, I become self-centered.

Then I begin to build these things and make them larger than they really were. So, I have to accept the proposition that I need to be free of anger. You may not be able to do it yet, but are you willing? Either not become angry or be willing to become unangry when it just isn't fair. Remember, just because I'm wrong doesn't make them right. So, we turn back to the list for it. Hell, the key to the future. I'm in the second edition big book and it says here we were prepared to look for it from an entirely different angle.

If you have a third edition, it says we're prepared to look at it. This was a typo. I had to tell you, we spent hours in our little young people's group figuring out what was the difference between four and eight. And the best we'd come to was, it's all about the same, but we had wonderful hours for dissecting four and eight. We're prepared to look at this list from a different angle. This is my list, one name, one person.

I'll give you the story in just a minute so you'll see how it fits. We began to see the world most people really dominated us, but resent you, you owe me. And in that state, the wrongdoing of others fancy to real had the power to actually kill. Like a dummy, I asked Bruce, well, how do I know the difference between whether it's fancy to real? Instead, if you're involved in it, it's fancy. That's true? Yeah. If I get involved in it, it isn't what's really happening, it's what I'm responding to.

And I'm making it all up. Oh, man, no wonder I feel weird most of the time. I am. How could we escape? We

saw these adjustments must be mastered, but how? We couldn't wish them away anymore, we could opt all. This is our course. I do not get over resentment writing inventory. I must write the inventory to get clear enough to take this new attitude. My home mind changes. You want a revolutionary change and you're thinking?

Here it is. This is wonderful stuff. We realize that people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. I may not know the reason they're behaving the way they are, but suddenly there is one. They're not after me. This is, they're behaving according to their own nature. They're spiritually sick. And what does that mean to me? When I'm spiritually sick, I am without power. And I feel separated and angry. And I don't behave well.

Maybe that's why they're doing this. Maybe they're feeling separated and angry and lost. And they're not behaving well, perhaps. I get to say that's a sixth son of a bitch. I get to say perhaps, like myself, this person is spiritually sick. Though we do not like their symptoms and the way these disturb us, they like ourselves. We're sick too. My solution, we ask God to help us show them the same tolerance, patience, and pity we would cheerfully grab a sick friend.

The answer to all of my problems is prayer. And here's where it begins. Isn't that something? What an awakening I had with that when I realized that I am so petty and so small that I do not grant sick people patience, tolerance, pity, they frightened me. There's only one possible interaction with someone who is sick. I say to them, is there anything I can do for you? And I can't do that because they might ask me to do something and I am busy.

They might ask me to empty a bedpan or more seriously, would you read to me for an hour? Then I have people to do and things to see. You got it? Yeah. I can see it in your eyes. I'm that petty. I have to ask God to show me how to take sympathy for someone who is sick. That's how sick I am. Good. Great awareness. It doesn't feel good, but that's a great awareness. Left them on devices. I remember visiting a friend who was in the psych ward because they had taken too much speed and they whacked him out.

And I went and visited him and took him a present. That's more speed. Why not? Got a hell of a reputation around Denver for that. I'm the guy who got dope into the psych ward. That's easy. They think it's hard. You put it in your pocket and you walk into the psych ward. You don't search in a psych ward. You search in prisons. Terrible stuff. Can you imagine that? That's how I took pity on people. You're jacked up so you're locked up.

Let me jack you up so you can bear being locked up. It doesn't work. When a person offended, we said to ourselves, not to them, okay, to ourselves. This is a sick man. How can I be helpful for them? God save me from being angry. They will be done. What are you laughing at? Do you have it backwards?