

DON P ARCHIVE

Big Book Weekend

2003 | Part 8 | Reading edition

FORMAT	DURATION	RECORDING ID
Transcript PDF	01:19:50	DP-2003-CAMDEN_08

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Transcript

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How can I be helpful to them? God saved me from being angry. Thy will be done. What are you laughing at? Did you have it backwards? I did. You six out of a bitch. We avoid retaliation and argument, and I have to really think on that. I don't do much of that out here, but I do it in here. I must avoid that. When I start thinking in terms of retaliation, or start having arguments in my head, I must avoid it. Did you have one of those this morning? I was, yeah. Oh God. We don't want to hear about it. Happy birthday.

What are your voice, retaliation army? We wouldn't treat sick people that way. Well, I get pictures of my head. How would that play out? You walk into the hospital room and your friend's sick and on tubes and oxygen. And get out of bed you lazy son of a bitch. Or the worst one of all, how are you? You feeling okay? I would think we're being compassionate. Okay? Now the only thing is, is there anything I can do for you? Anything.

Mostly, and I run this through numerous tragedies, in those circumstances, to sit there and hold her hand. That's all you can do. I'll rub the head. No extraordinary measures are needed. The hospital is doing all of those for you. Okay? Be kind. Don't ask me to engage in a conversation with you when I don't feel good. When I'm in pain and I'm trying to find some reason to continue to live, I don't want to talk philosophy. Just hold my hand and shut up.

Okay? Don't give me any more morphine either. It won't help. My head will just go bleep bleep bleep. And that's a distraction. And don't call me sweetie. Unless you're my wife. And you ain't. See where I'm going? Eventually, we have to begin to participate in our own life and think about the consequences of what we're doing. And this helps me to discover where I'm being selfish, so that what sometimes seem like nice things are not nice things.

Why would I automatically give flowers to someone in a hospital before finding out whether they're allergic to flowers or not? They got enough problems without me bringing in something new. I might take the time to just find that out first. The flowers are a nice thing. But I'm weird. I've often wondered, why in the hell do we give dead people flowers? Okay? That's always struck me as a little strange. It's too late. Why don't you give them flowers while they were alive?

And the kind of people I hang out with following the funeral where flowers come. And it's a custom. It's a nice thing for the people that feel they're giving something. We usually take them later and take them down to the hospital, or some of our favorite places, nursing homes. There aren't any flowers out there. And sometimes it's all a person in a wheelchair who can't talk needs is to be able to smell a flower. I don't know.

We think about things like that. We begin less and less to be interested in our little plans and designs. We begin to think of these kinds of things. Isn't this a lovely review? I've got a whole new thinking process going on here. We cannot be helpful to all people, but at least God will show us how to take a continent tolerant view of each one. That becomes a prayer. And my prayer, frankly, of this is, dear God, please, because I am so small-minded and petty.

Please show me how to take a continent tolerant view toward these people. This saved my sanity September 12th. Have I told you about this yet? Remember, this is the third time I've done this, and it's the same damn story. It was in the heart of Heart Mountains in Germany. I was truly devastated by that event. I tend to identify truly. I'm you and you are me. And I couldn't comprehend the immensity of that kind of evil. I've been evil, but my God, I can't grasp this.

And I'm going through emotional stuff, and I'm a fairly compassionate man, but I have some meanness in me. I didn't want these people caught and punished. I wanted them caught, covered with pig fat, and made to eat ham sandwiches. Because that means they can't get into heaven now. Let's see how they like that. That's pretty mean spirited. And I know it, and I can't get past it. And I'm making prayer, but it's not the right prayer.

And my friend Jack called a kid, a sponsor, and he was devastated. Because in addition to this, which he couldn't understand, he's only about six years sober. He's also Jewish. And there's some stuff going on there. He's trying to sort all this out. He says, what are we going to do? I said, Jack, I don't know. I know our only answer is prayer. So I'll tell you, let's do this. And the Spirit began to move in me. So there's a great promise, a spiritual promise, that if two of us have gathered in his name, which means if we are gathered in the Spirit of forgiveness and love, he too will be there.

So let's you and I do this. Let's do the prayer that we were taught. God show me, because I can't find it. Show me how to take a count and a ton of view toward these people. And we went through the rest of our day and did our evening review, and we asked at night what corrected measures should be taken. And Jack called me early the next morning. He said, I'm not sure this is right. But I woke up with this thought on my mind that had I been born in that country and raised by those people with that set of standards, I'd have probably been flying on those planes.

True. Still can't comprehend that except I know this once I got the other side of it. They thought they were doing God's will. And yeah, I'm capable of that. And that's how I got free. And that's how we get free here. These people like myself are perhaps spiritually sick. And that's why they're behaving that way. There's the freedom. That's how we solve our problem. Putting on our minds the wrongs others have done. We reasonably look for our own mistakes. We're back to our little list again.

That's what that looks like. I'll go over that just because it's fun to go over it. Putting out of our minds the wrongs others have done. I do not look for my part. At this point I already am engaged on the only path to freedom. They never did anything to me. It's the only way I can get free. Or my mind will be what they did. They did. But I'm to set that aside. We look for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened.

Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person entirely. If I think you still have a part in this, if I'm not looking for my part that will be the presumption that you still have a part. If I want freedom, no you don't. No you don't. Hard to do. Where are we to blame? The inventory is ours, not the other man's. I'm going to give you something. This is an awareness. Just take it for what it's worth. This is a truth for me.

As I sit here now this morning in this chair, in this room, here and now no one has ever done anything to me.

Things were done to the person who used to live here, but no one has ever done anything to me. That comes as a result of this change of thought over a period of time. Play with it. That's one that's good for a lot of sleepless nights. When we saw our faults, we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white.

We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight. So the end result of a resentment inventory is for me to admit my wrongs honestly and begin to prepare to set these matters straight. The federal narcotics agents had almost shot my son. Can I tell you about him? He was on my list. To finish up our little transportation deal, Albert got arrested on some petty charge and was too afraid to go to prison, so he turned five of us in.

Just rolled over on us and the coke and spiritual witness. No heat for Albert as long as he told. Anyway, he rolled over on us. And when I got out, one of my first stops was to see Albert to let him know we're not looking for you, Albert, because I didn't want to snake running up my back. As a result of that, on my June 13th, 1966 on my oldest boy's birthday, federal agents came to my house, one through the front door, one through the back door, one through the side window, knocked me down, stepped on my neck.

It's all part of their training. It really is. Y'all scream, intimidate, get everybody flat on the floor, handcuff them, take control of the room, because they're used to guys like me shooting back. They don't have time to be nice and knock on the door. I understand that today. That day I was a little distressed. My four-year-old lied out of shriek and this cop swum around almost shot him. And I developed some real hate.

I nursed it a long time through the federal penitentiary, getting out and then up to this point. Well, he went on my list, and there were good reasons. I had some really good reasons. When I got through all this, I came to a truth that, first of all, I had brought him to my house with a hand-in-graded invitation. I became his job. I interfered in his life. I made myself available to him. I picked him. So everything that happened that day was my fault.

There's no way I could have lived with that if it weren't this promise that I get to get rid of it. I almost got my kid shot. How do you live with that unless you know you can't do that again? But when I came out, I owe this officer two things. If I ever encounter him, I've tried to find him. They're really reluctant to let me know where he lives. I gave up that chase years ago. But I am truly wanting to set that letter straight, and I owe him two things if I ever see him.

First of all, I owe him thanks for not shooting my son. See, I had it warped. He almost shot the boy. This guy was so well-trained and so completely in control of things. I'd have probably shot him on a reflex. He didn't. Thank you very much. And then I owe him an apology for putting him in a position where he almost shot a four-year-old. Shame on me. And the only answer to that is that I must become the kind of person that does not invite people like that into my house anymore.

And there's only been one federal agent in my house for, what, 37 years now? IRS agent came one day. I was on a nonprofit board. And, you know, we're goofy. We didn't get our paperwork done right. He was assigned the task of, because I was on the paper of getting the paperwork done right. And he started explaining things to me, and I just got dumber and dumber and more confused. The more he talked, the worse it was. And he finally said, oh hell, just sign it. I'll fill it out.

Left my house. That's not a ploy. I didn't understand a word he was saying. You know, I'm in this position to arrest me. Whatever you want to do, just quit talking to me. Now, to this day, I do not like the way this guy did business. But I fully understand that as a result of people like me, it's the only way they can do business safely. Send more people than you need to make sure everybody is contained instantly, that nobody has time to do anything, but fall down on the floor and lay still.

They're right in what they do. So if I don't want that to happen, don't interfere in their lives. It's clear. Let me talk about this one. This is fairly fresh inventory. And I want to share it with you, because as we run out of time, this is very practical stuff on how to live life. What, three years ago, honey? About three years ago. I got a call at work that our baby grandson, who was in not quite a year, is that right?

Somewhere around a year. I don't have a concept that Tom had to check with her. I said, get to the hospital quickly. He's been badly burned. So I dashed off to Porter Hospital, where they told me to go, and they weren't there. My secretary had sent me to the wrong hospital. Now I'm starting to get a little bit agitated. And I'm pausing, because I don't want to do that, but I am agitated. I don't know where the hell they are.

In my family, it's custom. This is how we operate. In any crisis, go home. That's the gathering place. We'll all find each other by going home. So running around town, you know, go home. So I went home. And sure enough, they're there now. My wife was there, my older daughter was there, the baby's mother, my younger daughter was there, my granddaughter was there, and the baby was there. And everybody but the baby is kind of frantic, like I am.

The baby's got this big bandage on his hand, and honest with God, he's just grinning. It seems that all, there's a fine line here, and all the skin from here on, had been burned off like a glove. Somebody stuck this kid's hand in blowing water, and I'm agitated. As young people do, my youngest daughter and a friend of hers both had a little part-time job, because the guys can't make a whole living anymore, not in this country.

And when Kelly had worked, the other girl babysit, and when the other girl worked, Kelly babysit. They swapped kids. And this particular day, for whatever the reason, they both had to work. So the baby was left with this other girl's husband. And he had dipped that kid's hand in blowing water. We found out later, because he was crying. And this is supposed to stop. Well, you know, it also turns out it isn't the first time he's done something like this, but there's the background, and I'm home.

And Kelly's on the phone with her husband. Now, I've come to kind of like Mike, but he's not my favorite son-in-law. He's verbally abusive. He's macho out of the barrios of Los Angeles. There's a number of things that I don't care much about, Mike, and the way he treats the family. And she's talking to him on the phone, and it's clear to me that he's blaming her for this happening. From her responses, I can tell. He's laying this off on her.

Well, there is within me a grizzly bear, and when my family is threatened, he comes out. And he came out. I grabbed the phone from Kelly and said, listen, you son of a bitch. My older daughter said, go, Dad, go. And he said back to me, who do you think you're talking to? And the bear processed that and said quietly, I'm talking to you, you son of a bitch. I am sick of the way you're treating my daughter and frightening my grandchildren, and the spirit moved in me.

And I became instantly aware the only person mistreating my daughter and scaring my grandchildren is me. At that moment, my daughter loves this guy, whatever else. My granddaughters never seen me upset, and I'm calling her Dad a son of a bitch. My older daughters engaged. Go, Dad, go. My wife knows better than to mess with the grizzly, but she's distressed too. I am out of control. I should be present to help them, not going crazy.

Thank God for the spirit. It's the same one that kept me from drinking. When it moved in me, I immediately knew, get out of here. Now, I had to have the last word. It was the silent word that you use when you're really pissed. I slammed the phone on the floor just so he'd get that and he'd know how I felt. Then I'm out the front door to do what I've been taught to do here. When agitated or doubtful, we pause. I need to get outside and pause and get inside, and ask for the right sort of action.

Jackie tells me the girls will concern when I ran out the door, but she assured him because she's lived with me long enough to know he's fine. He's taken care of it. And I'm going through this thing and I understand I'm wrong now. And I ask, please show me how to take a county intolerant view here, somehow. And the only thing I could think of is this guy is probably one of the hardest workers I have ever seen. He's a really hard worker. He tries so hard to provide for this little family he has.

He handles money very poorly, but he works hard. And that's all I needed was that one thought to settle. He's a hard worker. Now I got this inventory to write. I've already gotten free through prayer, but I need to find out what caused this, so this doesn't happen again, either with him or anybody else. I don't want this going on. Well, here we are. By the formula we just read, I'm angry at Mike because of the way he treats my daughter.

He's a macho, self-centered, and more helper. And what does that affect? Well, this incident affected my security, my self-esteem, and a lot of fear there, and my ambitions. Where was I selfish? Well, I don't want to get involved in their drama. First of all, she picked him. And I don't want to get involved. That's pretty selfish. Self-seeking, because if I don't take sides, then I'm going to look bad to she and my wife.

That's pretty self-seeking to get involved in this crisis, because they won't like me if I don't do it. I'm beginning to see my pettiness and my anger. Good Lord. I'm dishonest to think that I shouldn't stand up for, because I'm going through the turmoil. I shouldn't get involved, but it's dishonest for me to think that I should not stand up for my daughter. I just did it wrong. It's dishonest to think that this is any of my business at all.

Wow, that was a revelation. It really isn't my business. Have you noticed that no time up to this point has the baby been part of my thinking at all? Oh my God, how cock-eyed can you get? The only thing I need to be involved in is the baby. Not the little battle going on between my daughter and her husband. Years ago, we got a restraining order on him. Not that he's not going to hurt her, but he's mouthy. And he did slap her once, so we got a restraining order.

She wouldn't have it served. That's classical too. We let them move in with us until things settle. And that will still happen. Other than that, it's none of my business. But she went to therapy and he didn't. I've actually got some, I kind of feel sorry for the poor rascal. She learned how to push his buttons. And she likes doing that. And he doesn't have a chance. I mean, she's an activist and a bright girl anyway.

And every now and then, she just flicks him out of here with... Poor bastard, don't know what to do. That's

just a little sidebar. I'm getting to like him. Not much, but I'm getting to like him. It's dishonest for me to think any of this is my business, other than helping out with a place for them if it gets really bad. Otherwise, it is really their problem to work out. And that's the truth. And I interfered in that. They were working it out.

And I snatched the phone out of my hands before they got it worked out. That's not too good. Where am I frightened? Well, this forces me to take a stand. And I'm afraid that if I take the wrong one, then Jackie's going to be mad at me. See, I don't know. That's the wrong reason to take a stand. I mean, I love her dearly, but her opinion to me is not the reason I should take a stand for my daughter and his baby. I'm afraid that their problem could affect my marriage.

So I'm reacting out of fear, not out of a need to protect my daughter or the baby or anybody else. I'm reacting instead of responding. It begins to get cleared. Where am I to blame? For not taking a stand. A long time ago, after she wouldn't serve the restraining order, I opted out. I either need to get in this or get out of it. I need to take a stand one way or the other. I'm either in or I'm out. Bein' wishy-washy doesn't play.

Where am I at fault? And this was a real revelation. I'm truly at fault because I am blaming him based on hearsay. I've not seen him do any of this. I've only heard about him doing this. I have no doubt that he's verbally abusive, but I haven't seen it. Everything I'm reacting to is hearsay. That's the one I needed to find because that affects my whole life, not just this incident. What I'm trying to get here is the button that can be pushed in me by anybody.

And if I make judgments about you based on hearsay, I have separated myself from you, and that separates me from God, and that's not good for me. The more better I find out from you. Big revelation. What's my mistake? Well, for getting emotionally involved with or without enough information, I'm emotionally involved in their stuff based on the emotion that was generated because my grandson got hurt. I'm riding away. That's really dishonest. I'm agitated righteously, rightfully, because they don't know what's going on with this baby.

I've got a motion over into this arena. That's not right. That's dishonest as hell. And one of my other mistakes was to get emotionally involved in this because Jackie was. Of course she was. But that's the wrong reason for me to get involved in it. I need to come at it because of my response, not hers, and it's a mistake to think that I can't support both of them without being angry. Okay. Sewer brought me. I'm ready to clear it out.

And what I'm clear on is that I owe this guy an apology. I had no right to call him a son of a bitch and to interfere in this activity, none whatsoever. I owe the family an apology. I'm sorry for behaving that way, but I did need to explain some things. Now I've got a real dilemma. Once I discover I owe you, there's no slack. It has to be done now. So do I go to his workplace? Do I call him on the phone? Do I wait till he comes by?

I'm in this dilemma and I go out to get to mail. Here he is walking up the driveway. Now you have to understand, Mike is a little intimidating. He's pierced in tattooed top to bottom. He weighs about 200 pounds and every ounce of it is solid muscle. And he's got Mexican macho in his attitude. He can kick my ass and not even breathe hard. Okay. Even the bear. The bear isn't out anymore. He's a little cub in the dandelion. And remember now, the last interaction he and I had, I'm threatening him.

I don't feel ladies understand it or not, but you son of a bitch means bring it off. This is to get you charged up

in a that you'll come at me so I can take you apart. That's how little boys are. And that's his last contact with me. We're walking toward each other in the spirit mode. It's automatic. I literally said that's an ancient, ancient, ancient from the caveman that I'm looking for trouble here. No clubs, no sticks.

Okay. You're safe from me. I surrender. There's nothing to react to here but literally. And I said, Mike, I need to talk to you for just a minute. I was wrong to call you a son of a bitch. Completely wrong. And to interfere, I was wrong. And I sincerely apologize and I hope you forgive me for that. I still don't like what's going on here but I was wrong here. And he said, okay, I'll forgive you. Took him six months to do it. But I'm clean. It's done.

Because the other option is he can't come to my house anymore. My daughter and grandchildren come all the time. And if I take the stand that he can't come anymore, what's that gonna do? It's not good. It will tank the kids' feelings. It'll just taint everybody. If I continue to take this attitude, it'll frighten them. It's not right. I'm actually getting to like him. Out of whatever his motive is, he mows my lawn and he trims my trees and hedges. He's just as nice as can be to me.

I think it's because he loves my wife. But he's nice to me too. And I watch the children. And I see no signs of abuse whatsoever. He's all fluffin' stuff. You can tell by the children. Anyway, that's just, that's how this works. Whether it's the first time or 35 years later, it doesn't matter. This gets you into the truth which is, I was wrong here. I don't want to be separated from him. I want my kids to think I don't like their dad.

So, whoever asked, can we see the inventory process? Now you've seen this piece of it. Do it as you will. It's far more than just saying, I was bad. Now, my thinking is skewed and needs to be straightened out. Any questions? Good. Because it's all right here. And it isn't as intellectual as it may have sounded. I'm describing to you reactions and awarenesses I came to along the way over a period of a day or two. They moved finally. Been a little nervous.

He's a classic abuser. I've been trained in that. And they moved to a farm 45 minutes away and we thought, oh my goodness. We had to overcome that here too. He's gotten nicer and nicer. I think he belongs on five acres away from everybody. Because he's responding beautifully. And our granddaughter is on our heads all the time. You need to move to the country grandma. It's quiet out here. When are you going to move to the country grandma?

Yeah. Okay. The fair inventory is a separate inventory. The way I read it. We've completed this one. And I've become willing to make amends. When the time comes, now we get into fear. It's an evil and corroding thread. It seems to shoot through our whole lives. And this is not the fear that gets me out of the way of a truck that's coming down the highway. This is the fear that if I get on the highway, truck's going to hit me so I never go on the highway. I don't want to lose the fear that gets me out. Yes, please.

Yes. Because you just mentioned fear, I guess I want to ask a question. I'm going to be talking about resentments in the fourth step. In the fourth step, you want to put it back on page 65. It says that that talks about our self-esteem and our personal relations. And the next to every one of those examples it uses, so does not fear about every time our inventory. Well, the way I've come to understand it, fear is so intense and so much a part of things, I've got to get the resentment aside before I can even look at the fear.

And so I get to examine it in a separate way. But self-esteem is always associated with fear, because I'm afraid of how I'm going to look. And the way I was shown for simplicity's sake, I just mark it here, I'll examine it later. Because if I get caught up in fear, I'm going to do it because I'm afraid and it'll confuse me. I don't know if that makes sense, but that's just how I was shown. Once we get this anger off, all that energy I've been storing up and all we can use to take an honest look at fear, fear is too serious. The method of looking at fear is so simple and so surgical the way I was showing how to do it and the way I still do it. Let me share that and see if that makes sense to you when they fit together.

One was a fear of me without money and one was a fear of losing my mind. And I bring them along because everybody in this room has had both of those. So what do we do with it? It says we think fear ought to be class with stealing. It seems to cause more trouble. In today's world that sometimes gets confusing to people. Remember this was written at a time that the country was just barely coming out of a serious depression. Nobody had anything.

And when you don't have a little bag of stuff and somebody steals that formula, they steal your soul and they steal your hope it's more than stealing stuff. In today's world stealing seems to be the thing that's acceptable to everybody. So some of the new people get confused by that. Stealing is wrong. And stealing the way he's talking about it was so serious that it took people's hope away in the soul. So they really thought it ought to be classified with that.

Fear is that dangerous. It robs you of your spirit and of your hope and of your very being. It's really serious stuff. It stops you from ever being who you are. So we review our fear survey. We put them on paper even though we had no resentment and connection with them. Have we done that yet? Nope. So we put them on paper. Now because I don't have much mind left you'll notice I put the resentment each one of them separately on one page so I have room for all of it and I don't have to go looking through my notebook. Same things with fear. I put down what I'm afraid of and that's what that looks like. I'm afraid of losing my mind.

Nothing analyzed there. Of course the reason I was afraid of losing my mind is that I was losing my mind. I could feel it going We ask ourselves why we had them. That's what that looks like. The way I was taught to do it. I'm afraid of losing my mind because A, because I'll become custodial and someone else will decide my life for me. Big fear. See when I was brought up one of the fears that I had was that I knew I'd go insane periodically and then I'd say it again. Didn't know why. That's alcoholism. I'm saying I drank him insane. I stopped drinking him insane.

But I was told that if they get you on a mental institution they can keep you forever until they think you're sane. At any time you tell them that you are they know you're insane. It's a catch 22. And I was really afraid of that because I know they'd get me some time when I was insane and then they'd put me down there somewhere and then I'd get sane again and I'd never get out because they'd never believe me. It's convoluted but that's where I reacted from. So to become custodial and have someone else running my life for me. This was written when I was 13 years sober and I was 14 years sober.

Secondly, I'm afraid of losing my mind because I'm afraid and I'm afraid I will be afraid and anxious all the time. I don't like that feeling of fear. The constant anxiety that makes you crazy. Of course when it happens

you're already crazy and so you get self involved. I'm afraid of losing my mind because I will lose touch with God if I do. What this method does is say, here's my fear. What will happen if this happens?

That's kind of how I look at it. What will happen if this... I'm afraid of losing my mind because I'll lose touch with people. And most of them go on to the final land. Most fears and with I will die alone. It's a great fear. I won't die alone. Guess what? Everybody does. I don't care if the whole room is full. When you die you die alone. Now by writing this I get pretty clear because I'm not afraid of death and that's the truth.

I'm afraid of losing touch with God because I'm not connected to God. Where I am God is. But these fears begin to play out. Now it says then, it wasn't because self-reliance failed us. I was taught in order to get to that there's a simple question that I was taught to use. I ask, I am selfishly trying to, and then right I'll put that in. I'm either selfish trying to get something, keep something, avoid something. This is just how I was taught to look at where self-reliance is failing me.

So let me quickly, I'm afraid of losing my mind because I'm afraid I'll become custodial and someone else will decide my life for me. I'm selfishly trying to control my life and make my own decisions. That's clean and clear. That I'll be afraid and anxious all the time. Well, I'm selfishly wanting to feel good and okay all the time. To not admit that my mind doesn't always remember a function properly. I was going on, I had so much going on in my life I couldn't remember most of it.

And that braids its own kind of fear. Could I lose touch with God? I'm selfishly wanting to keep and control my contact in relationship with God. By the time I'm through with this, it's clear this is childish and this is silly, but it's real. And I need to be done with it. Perhaps there's a better way. We think so. We are now on a different basis. The basis is trusting and relying upon God. The fear inventory clearly identifies for me that I'm trusting and relying on my own resources.

No wonder I'm frightened because I don't have any. I'm sitting in the basement terrified because I don't have enough resources not to be sitting in the basement terrified. I must trust and rely upon God. We're in the world to play the role he assigns. Did you hear all the roles I was assigning everybody? Me and everybody else. Just to the extent that we do is he would have us and humbly law on him does he enable us to match calamity with serenity.

Without him demonstrate through us what he can do. And here's a prayer. The answer to everything is a prayer. And here's the one that gets me out of this one. We ask him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what he would have us be. And I still remember the day that I saw what that really said. Wrap my attention to what you'd have me be. Not what you'd have me do. It just opened my mind up. I am not what I do.

My whole life I was what I do. Jack does really great carving. That isn't who he is. He does that because of who he is. If I am my car when I'm not in it I'm nobody. If I'm the best insurance salesman in the world top honors spotlight. If I'm not busy selling insurance I'm nobody. And it just opened me up. Removed my fear and direct my attention to what you would have me be. Now in later years I've come to understand something.

It tells me all through here who he wants me to be. First of all I thought it was what personality would you have me be? And God's answer to that is whatever fits you. There's even places for assholes on this planet. Your personality doesn't make any difference whatsoever. But what would he have me be? All through here there are

some things that tell me. He would have me be kind. He would have me be honest. He would have me be of service to others. He would have me patient, tolerant, and loving. Let's see what he would have me be.

However my personality does that, that's what he would have me be. And these are the things, if I'm resenting you I can't be that. If I'm afraid of you I can't be that. I love my wife, my daughter, my granddaughter. And I even love Mike. But on the day I got angry with him I didn't love any of them. I was only interested in me. Isn't that awful? Separate myself from the very source of my well-being. From God and the people that I love. Ridiculous.

And if I'm afraid it's the same way. Are there people that come to your meetings that you're intimidated by and afraid of and if they're at the meeting you won't talk? Find out why. And then go take them to coffee. I have a really high quality enemy in Denver. A real high quality. He'll tell you I'm not even an alcoholic. I couldn't be. I got sober in prison. I don't know what that has to do with anything. But he hadn't liked me. He spreads rumors about me.

It's wonderful. Came to me one time many years ago to make amends. He said I've been talking about you badly for a long time and realized I don't even know who you are. Why don't you, what can I do to make this right? He said why don't you come lunch with me? And we'll find out who each of us is. And we had a nice lunch. When we left he said I just don't understand as you and I seem to agree on all the basics. But what we discovered at lunch is we don't like each other. Don't like each other.

So the best thing for us to do we decided is not hang out together. In fact, let's avoid each other. That's how we can stay friendly. If we happen to bump each into each other the deal is kind of high. It does not go to how are you? I don't want any, I don't want to know. Don't give a shit. Because whatever you tell me my automatic response is going to be good and you deserve it. Same with me. Well I know that. We don't even need to say it.

Both of us are. Used to be afraid of it. Just don't like him. What would he have me be? What he'd really have me be is here now. That's what he'd have me be. Here now. It is only in the here and now that I can love you. That I can interact with you. That we can have anything at all going. Only in the here and now. Same thing with God. It's only in the here and now that that can be experienced. Otherwise it's just memory or planning. He would also I believe have me have fun. Go play he says.

I have given you an amusement park planet. Go play on it. Take fear and make a toy of it. Go to the top of a mountain and put sticks on your feet. Slide down. We'll call it skiing. How's that? I have this little volcano over here that's spitting lava. Climb up there and have a look. One of the most amazing events of my entire life was last year when Jackie and I were in the Pacific Northwest. We drove up to the top of Mount St. Helens.

Man oh man oh man. Talk about immense. And then when I was looking there not only did I see the immensity of this explosion. I realized in terms of the universe this was but it was really impressive. I found out that Spirit Lake I finally got it located. The explosion came out here. Spirit Lake's just right down here. It was lifted what? 600 feet. What? It was lifted that high the whole lake and then dropped back down.

That's pretty good stuff. No wonder Harry Truman didn't make it out. And I loved his spirit. We mean I'm not afraid to die. This is my home and this is where I'm going from. Good for him. Anyway don't be afraid go have

fun. Enjoy each other. Learn to play nice with the other children. Some of them won't play nice so stay away from them. Don't fight them. Just stay away from them. Time for a break. Does that kind of give you an idea? There's another inventory it's a conduct inventory.

There's one more inventory we'll get after the break very quickly. There are three and I use three different formats for them and the next one gives me the answer to all of life's problems. Wait what 15 minutes? 20 minutes? An hour? And I hope you don't stop listening before I finish talking. One other inventory. It's listed in this book as a sex inventory because that does need to be looked at particularly by new people.

It is the second most powerful power source available to the human being. And as such it is a dominant factor. And it's badly misunderstood most of the time. Most of us think that sex is the picnic called intercourse. That's just the picnic on an otherwise long journey. But it's such a nice picnic we all get hung up there. Sex feels good. It's like pizza. When it's good it's really really good. And when it's bad it's still pretty good. It's also God-given.

Part of our makeup is God-given. And selfish people misuse it. Use it to manipulate all kinds of things. We don't need to get clinical about it. It just gets badly abused. And those who think we don't have enough of it. Those who think we have too much of it. We get busy defining it and classifying it and throwing guilt trips on it. Some people want to be totally free and some people think it's one of God's few mistakes.

There's a whole range there. And we don't want to be the arbiter of your sex conduct. It's up to you. Whatever you can live with, have at it. But when it comes down to the truth there's very little we can live with that isn't correct. So we reviewed our conduct over the years past. This is not a pornographic inventory. This is a conduct inventory. There are two approaches both of which are okay. One is to have the people you work with make a list of their sex partners. That will come out.

That's good but I find that insufficient for me. Nor is that what the directions say to do. Let me say make a list and then ask these questions. And there's nothing wrong with doing it that way please. But there will be more if you do it that way. What this says is I ask the question where have I been selfish and the list makes itself. It also covers those areas where I did not have sexual activity. Sometimes the harm I do is in the withholding of sex or the manipulation of it. And that won't get covered if I just put down sex partners. All of my sex partners will come out in this. Where was I selfish? I get a list.

And then I can look at the other questions in relation to that too. Was I inconsiderate? Yeah. Where was I dishonest? And the list will make itself. And then I ask the rest of the questions in relation to that. Didn't we unjustifiably our V-Rows jealousy as fishing their bidders? Of course. It's one of the manipulations. You're not treating me right. One of my employees is to cause you to feel a little jealous. Then you'll pay more attention to me. We do some really vicious things with this. And the question has to be answered.

You'll notice it comes into a place where we finally learn how to be rigorously honest. Unafraid of looking at the fact that you are really misbehaving here. Where were we at fault? And what should we have done instead? What a great question. For the first time I'm being asked to quit fooling around saying I didn't know it was wrong. What should I have done instead? Almost anything of what I did. Would be an adequate answer.

But this formula is meant to help me develop a new ideal for my future conduct. If I did this wrong, what should I have done instead? That becomes part of the ideals to how I will do from here on. And I begin to develop a genuine ideal for my conduct. Not my ideal person. I've seen people get confused by that. Or my ideal relationship. That's closer to the truth. But this is about my conduct. How will I behave in a relationship? Any relationship.

Starting with sex, but this goes on to business, home, my group. The same questions apply. It's a marvelous little tool to guide my conduct. And it gives me the prayer for the problem in my life. Period. Bar none. At least that's what this says. We subject each relationship to this test. Was it selfish or not? Well you got me. In some fashion, in some measure, the answer is always yes. What's the measure? Was it totally selfish?

Or was it just the acknowledgement that I know you're going to enjoy it, but I know I'm going to enjoy it too. I like that. There's a little bit of selfishness in that. Whatever the activity is going to be. I have come to believe for me anyway, at the present time the best I can use as a measure of spirituality is enlightened self-interest. I have finally learned I still would like to get mine. But the best way to do that is to make sure you get yours. Then mine will be automatic.

And I can't escape the fact that that is part of the motivation. Does 12 step work make you feel better? Do you ever do it so you'll feel better? Of course. Of course. So begin to accept the fact that we have varied traits here. I'm not some saintly ethereal creature that's floating around dispensing good in all ways. I'm earthly indeed. I love these kind of weekends because what really does happen for me is I get completely out of myself and almost read your minds. I begin to be responsive to your unspoken needs.

That's a pretty lofty deal until I get an introspective. I like that. It feels good. Okay. So I can finally accept that. My conduct then will be based on a little bit better motivation. Whatever ideal turns out to be, we must be willing to go toward it. My ideal early on boys go through a funny thing and sort of girls. But I know about boys. The only thing I know about women early on I learned from boys they didn't know anything about women.

What I know about women now I learned from my wife who was one hell of a woman. And I adore women. But boys go through a funny thing. It comes in time when the very nature of being male produces hormones that send out a message we have finally discovered our life work. My job on this planet is to repopulate it. So many women, so little time. And it's genetic and it's confusing as hell because I have other things that interest me but my ginger saying there's one.

How are you doing? And it's all we go through that. And we eventually grow into other things. One of the things my first sex inventory showed me and it was two and a half years before I could get to it. Because initially it was about making lists and I couldn't remember. Which kind of defines inconsiderate. Who? What was her name? Did I really do that or not? I don't remember. Well it took a while and then when it came out it fit on a three by five card because there were only a couple names.

I was only super stood here. I was the guy that in my desperation to be accepted became everybody's big brother. It was much easier than the challenge of having to be super stood. I was the safe one. You could talk to me ladies. I'm safe. I'm terribly frustrated because my ginger saying you got three of them. Go boy go. And my sick nature was saying don't move. You'll make a mistake. We get really confused. And I know y'all do too. I've

raised daughters.

Well I got out of the way when they hit the hormonal stage. Don't ever, guys don't ever try to raise a daughter from thirteen until whenever. The best thing I can do from my daughter, my older girl, she brought any Haskell home one night. You do Mr. Prince and Mrs. Prince. I'm so pleased to be in your lovely home. I quietly took her aside and said honey all he wants to do is get in your pants. Be careful. And then I get out of the way. And she discovered that herself and she brought the next one over and took me inside and said tell me what you think of this one.

So I can't tell her about her changes. I felt left out at one point. We have good communication in our house and all of a sudden the girls aren't talking to me. They're going to Jackie all the time. All the time. I don't have any time left. They're monopolizing and she helped me get straight with that. They have just begun menstruating. They don't want me to even know that's happening. Much less talk to me about what we do about that. What the hell do I know?

I haven't gotten her yet. You never know. This is a weird planet. And my conduct around all that confusion, this is very confusing area for everybody, becomes mixed. And so this settles me in. Is it selfish or not? Am I inconsiderate? Do I use it to arouse jealousy, suspicion, and bitterness? What is my ideal going to be? My conduct. Well, I discovered a wonderful thing that I can't say in that inventory, but as a result of the spiritual activity, I discovered I'm a family man.

I really am a family man. One at a time is enough. It's wonderful. Everything I know about it, I've learned from Jackie. She laughs and says, I'm foolish, but I'm not. Everything I know about that, I've learned by being that. I had to admit to myself, despite the possible laughter of my compatriots, sometimes I have a headache. I don't want it. There are other things in my life that interest me almost as much. And that's just the truth of it.

But I want to be a family man. So my conduct, my ideal conduct, will lead to being able to create an environment around me, or people who are family oriented, would like to congregate. Chuck Chamberlain helped me immensely with that and the guilt with my children and what I dragged them through. He said, there's nothing we can do about what we did to our children. Done. What we can do is create an arena where they also have the opportunity to heal from that.

And we call that home. Since I don't know how to do that, she did. I got smart and married her. The boys and I had a good life when Jackie and I met. We lived at Buena Vista Colorado, high country. We lived at the base of a 14,000 foot mountain. That was our backyard. In a double wide trailer with an old white cat and a black dog on an acre of ground, I worked six hours a day at the Reformatory. And the rest of the time was ours.

The Arkansas River was just a little over a half mile away. We fished and we climbed and we cussed and we spit and we chewed and we just life was really, really good. And for bachelor's for civilized barbarians but it wasn't a full and complete home. Now it is. Anyway, that's what I discovered about me. This is a journey of discovery. Whatever that home means to you, whatever your sexual preference is, whatever you're made of, be that. And don't try to be anything else.

I have a lot of women friends since I finally understood it is not my job to populate this planet. It's his job.

His pants are on fire, not mine. It just had to be said. She must be wanting to grow toward it. Frankly, that's where the fun is. This isn't about being into picnic. It's about the journey. Life is about the journey. Not about being there. It's about becoming and stopping to see the two headed calves along the way.

We must be willing to make amends where we have done harm provided that we do not bring about still more harm in so doing. This in particular is an area where you need to consult with someone who is sane before you go do it. You got to clean it up somehow. Sometimes the only way you can make amends for harm done in this area is to never again contact that person. Stay the hell away from them. Your very presence will hurt them.

In other cases you need to go to them and say, you weren't wrong. I was. My behavior toward you was because of my selfishness. It had nothing to do with you. And you need to carefully weigh these things before you go about stepping out. In fact, all amends should be treated that way. What is it that I need to do? See, I got free at the eight step locked up in penitentiary so one night. The sponsor said, we know what you did to these people, but you're so insensitive you have no idea what it did to them. So, I want you to do this. He said, you take this list of the people that you harm.

See, we have it right here in your inventory. Add anybody you can think of because you met me and messed with them. Now I want you to picture each one separately in your mind. Close your eyes and picture them and see if you can feel a willingness deep in your heart to look each one right in the eye and say to them, I've been wrong and I've harmed you. Would you please tell me what I have to do to get these books to balance?

Now, I'm to go into this process knowing what I did to you, knowing what I think I can do to rectify that and with a willingness to let you tell me if I miss something what I have to do. And I got free that night because I realized I'm going to look any human being right in the eye and if I've harmed you you tell me how to square it. I'll square it. I will not only eat myself for your revenge, but if it'll square it, I'll do it.

I was lifted from my seat and set free. It's been free ever since. Pretty hard to blindside somebody on that. You want to get rid of fear? The fear of getting caught? Go get caught. Make yourself available to whatever it may be. Anyway, in other words, we treat sex as we would any other problem. There it is. Any problem should be treated this way. In prayer, I say, in meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The rule book just goes out the window. We're now going to live principled lives.

And one of the basic principles is that here and now is a separate deal altogether and the way we interacted last week may not be appropriate this time. What should I do about each specific matter? Told you about my son-in-law. A couple years before that, my proper response was to go with my daughter to court and get a restraining order. That was the proper response. The second one was, I was to have nothing really to do with it. Just stay the hell out of it.

It's a specific matter. Brings at home, don't it? There are so many things in this area that I've experienced and I wish I had time to share with you. There's so profound that we'll have to take time along the journey and share these things at work. I worked in corrections. Which means I worked in chaos. There's little paper thing goes on in any institution setting, particularly in corrections. Your probation I'm provider and here's administrator and here's overseer.

Probation sends me a paperwork that I duplicate and pass on. Sounds like General Motors did. Pass on to administrator whose job it is to pass it on to his boss who then sends it back to the same channels and so it goes back to you and you put it in your file drawer. There are timelines on every one of these. It has to be done by X. Now if that all worked that way I'm forcing there's people involved here and there's massive amounts of paperwork. I actually got a thing from the federal government one time. As part of the Paper Work Reduction Act they sent me a new form that was supposed to go in with my other form to tell them that I had sent the first form just the way it is. So I'm in a supervisor position here as a provider and my staff is overwhelmed.

The one consistent thing in all corrections activities everybody is always overwhelmed. Probation is bitching at me. Her name was Stephanie. Because she needed some paperwork she had sent to me that needed to get to my staff so we could get on to this person and back and things weren't being met. And I'm doing my best I'm spending 45 minutes at the fax waiting for her end to clear so I can fax it down to her week after week and it doesn't happen.

One day I heard myself call Stephanie. I wish that bitch I did get off my back. It's a signal to me. I'm out of whack here. So I backed off and did what we do here. I looked at why I was being threatened. I was being threatened because she was telling my boss I wasn't getting my job done. I'm telling my boss I can't get the staff to do it which tells my boss I'm not a very good supervisor and I'm blaming it on this one out here it won't work. I got Claire stood back and looked at the situation.

It says here what can I do about each specific matter and what can I bring to this situation. So I looked at the situation and I found the culprit. It was the fax machine. I spent 45 minutes at the fax waiting for her end to open up and the same goes for her and the whole staff is doing it. Sometimes there's two hours of fax out there. Her office was 20 minutes away so I started picking up the paperwork and I took it down to her office and gave it to her and she's a little cranky because she hasn't heard me call her a bitch but she can hear that in my voice. And I said by the way do you have anything for me while I'm here. It'll save time because we can't get through on the fax. She says you're right and she gathered up. Within a week I regularly show up at her office. She has my stuff ready and she's Stephanie and I'm done and our system is beginning to work again. And I have spent 20 minutes instead of 45 or 50 and nobody's bitching and now when my boss asks about me he's wonderful. Which I am of course right Ryan.

Don't start. There's nothing noble in that. That's enlightened self-interest. The best way for me to take care of any problem I'm having is to help you solve yours. Then mine will be solved because my problem isn't anything except you're not doing your thing right to please me. One of my teachers is an old Jesuit from India named Anthony DeMello. Tony DeMello. If you get a chance, he wrote a book called Awake. It's a great book. It's more better to hear him.

He says very simply it is not selfish for me to want to live my life so it pleases me. What is selfish is for me to want you to live your life so it pleases me. You can write that down. I stole it. It is not selfish for me to want to live my life so that it pleases me. What is selfish is for me to expect you to live your life so that it pleases me. In meditation we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. Since I came to A. I've heard about practicing the principles. The most important thing here isn't the answers that I get. It's the practice that I'm doing. I'm getting my spiritual muscle in shape.

Every time I pray, it's exercising it. Until it becomes a habit. Very important habit to build by the way. When I went down to North Carolina to work for the Department of Corrections down there, I was in the midst of, I was in my second month of inner fear on treatment for hepatitis and I really didn't feel good. God picked some funny times to get to you. I had to leave home, my group, everything that I knew, everything I counted on and move into the north woods of North Carolina where they don't even speak English. They speak Southern.

Sorry David. They sat in front of you. I understand that. They offered to carry me somewhere and I thought I'm not that sick. It just meant we'll drive you over there. Why didn't I say so? Anyway, what had sustained me through that and it sustained me my whole life is the sense that more I am God is. I am conscious of the presence of God. Someone asked me to describe it. I can't describe it. I just know it. And I've just come to rely on that.

My morning routine is very simple. Before I move my eyes open, I begin my conversation. Just what you do. No. I don't even want to hold my eyes until we're communicating. Then if you ask for the right thought or action, it's usually getting up and peeing. This isn't lofty stuff we're talking about here. When you're through, come on in and sit with me for another half hour. Okay? But anyway, I have awakened with a sense of the presence of God for all those years. I was about 26 years sober then down there in this little shack in North Carolina trying to do a job.

I didn't know whether I could do or not. Working for one of my heroes. The whole thing was there. I woke up one morning and it wasn't there. I did not have that sense of the presence of God.