

Big Book Weekend, location undetermined

2003 | Steps 2-3 | Reading edition

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Transcript

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I'm at the mercy of electronics. There are six or seven hundred people I've watched it. I'm going to just take us quickly to lunch. We've got some decisions to make about after lunch. The online's going to get together with Bo, and I think that's a great idea. We may need to take a break. We're about to start getting technical, which is why some of you came. Hang on. You're going to hate it when we're through. So I had come to believe that there wasn't power, because I could see it. Little stuff. This was a maximum security single cell penitentiary, which meant if I wasn't working or engaged in some regular activity, I was on lockdown.

And while Bruce wouldn't let us talk at the school, he'd come by in the evenings and visit. And one of those evenings as he was visiting, it hit me. He's getting out of his cell when he wants to. I want what he has. He's just carrying the message. And eventually that came to pass. But there were two things going on. And I hope folks don't get locked in on just the big book. The big book activity we were doing was one of the important activities.

But of more importance was the one to one that occurred outside of that meeting on those visits and in the yard. And as we made real what it says here, I was encouraged to bring my own memories to it. And to make this an experience, not an intellectual thing. I was not afraid of the penitentiary. This is number three. I know how to live there. In fact, for people like me, that's rest camp. You learn who to play with and who not to play with. And you do your time and it's over. And then you go back.

I was terrified of going back. I don't know how to live. And I know that sometime in the next year and a half to seven years they're going to put me back on the streets. And I don't know how to live. And I can't stand living the way I've been living. I can't do it anymore. So I'm looking for a way to live. And this is a way to live. It's a spiritual way to live in the human condition. And nothing less than that will do for people like me.

So we had this and I was also afraid that I was going to have to spend the rest of my life on a psychiatrist's couch because they had me certified on paper. It's a sociopath type two. I'm not sure what that is. I know it's not good. And I'm manic depressive drug addict. And I'm afraid I'm going to have to, I've been trying for 34 years to sort this thing out. And I'm going to have to spend the rest of my life with that. Well, my sponsor Bruce was very direct and very loving.

He said we've decided we don't think you're a manic depressive, drug addict, sociopath, psychopath. We think you're a good actor. Got me. There are real manic depressive. My son is one. When he's on taking his lithium, he's fine. When he doesn't, his body kicks up and his mind goes wild. For me though, it was a ploy. A manic depressive is a ploy. It's busy in here and I'm trying to figure out what's going on and you want to visit.

And I need to find a way to back you off a little bit. Well, mood swings will do that. I became a surprise. They're supposed to come in boxes with ribbons on them. I became one. When I showed up, you didn't know for sure who was there. I didn't either. But I could do this. The graduate course of that is called victim. I could do that pretty well too. If I can't get you to back off of the mood swing, I'll throw a victim at you.

And you want to know what the hell to do with me so you'll go away. And that's another game I played.

Some are good actor. And when we got into the big book and Bill uses that actor image, it's just, there I am. That's me. He said we also don't believe that even the truth is going to work for you. Oh my. And he told me why. He said you take the truth into your head and your ego catches it. It says something like, I can use that later because I'm into building scripts and responses.

And then the one I use is not truth anymore. And then I was helped to understand that everything that I had ever learned was a lie. Everything. And it wasn't that people were lying to me, but it wasn't my experience. I was a thief. A spiritual thief, a mental thief, an emotional thief. So it was all a lie. So he says what we suggest for you is that you forget everything you think you know about anything. Because if that ever worked, you wouldn't be here.

And I balked a little bit. I said come on, I've learned some truth. He says it's doubtful, but it is possible. I'll grant that. But I'll tell you what, if you know anything, any truth at all, it'll still be the truth when we're through. And the rest of it is all garbage anyway. So just lay it all down. And that's consistent with what this talks about. As we go through the book, Bill tells us one of our problems is fixed ideas.

Fixed in place. Let them all go. What the hell do I have to lose? I'm nobody anyway. I'm 38, 984. And I'm right where I'm supposed to be. So whatever, by some form of grace, I was able to come to let it go. And practically that means I'm fully aware if I'm willing to argue with you about something, it's my opinion. I never have to defend the truth. So I'm willing to let that go. So it has a practical implication. I don't have to fight with you. Whatever you believe is true, wherever you live.

And I'm willing to listen to most of it. You fascinate me. Forget everything you think you know about anything. I knew and accepted fully that this would be spiritual. And that's scared the hell out of me. There were two things going on. Even though I was already spiritually awake consciously in my mind, I had tried church. And I ran into a problem when I was about nine or ten. I got my white Bible for attendance because I loved Sunday school.

Because in Sunday school, Jesus loved me. And then I went upstairs. They got a different Jesus up there. At least that's what it sounded like to me. And I got confused and did what I'd do best. I just quit. I am by nature lazy. That's my big problem. I am emotionally, mentally and spiritually and physically lazy. It's much easier for me to hear what you have to say and then steal that and pass it on to her as long as you're not around.

Because it sounds good. And I think in today's AA we are walking a dangerous path because quite often we are teaching people our lingo before we teach them. Okay, we are being recorded. And so they're feeling like they're going to jump out of a thirty second story window, but they're fine. And they can sound good. And so one to one is very important because on a daily basis I can't get away with that. Good sponsorship is more about asking questions than giving answers. I want to get from you where you're at.

Because we're going to be doing this activity and I want to make sure you're there. And the big book gives me all kinds of checklists as to where we're at so we can move forward and if we're not there then we need to review something. Anyway, I wanted what they had so badly that without following any directions I went back to my cell one time and said the third step prayer and had a terrible experience. At that time I really believed if I said that prayer with earnestness tonight it was everything I had in me that there would be.

Okay, we are being recorded and my clothes would change from green to white and my cell door would spring open. And the guard at the end of the tear would say, okay, Prince, you can go home now. We don't need you anymore. Or something equally as foolish. I said the third step prayer with everything in me and absolutely nothing happened. Okay, we are being terrified. Pissed me off. I can handle any crisis you want to come down with.

They had a fire here if it was going on now. We wouldn't break yet. That's easy stuff. Nothing happened and not terrified me and angered me. And I went back to Bruce because I have been taught if your sponsor tells you to do something and you do it and you don't get the exact results you think you ought to get, go bitch at him. I said, I went back to Bruce with the alcoholic war cry coming out of my mouth. Where's mine? Bill had one. How come I don't get one? Where's mine?

And that's a guide from my current life, by the way. Anytime I feel or hear me. Okay, we are being recorded. Where's mine? I know I'm slipping off. I'm in the middle of it, always. Because mine is always right here. Anyway, where's mine? And he says, well, dummy. And that was a step up. In the morning I was 38-984 and I've got a name. And today there are two voices that come into my mind as spiritual prompts. When I'm getting a little off base, my mind will, because God uses whatever's at hand, I will hear Bruce say, well, dummy. And it'll slow me.

And the other is my grandfather's voice. I have absolutely no bad memory ever concerning my grandfather. And when the boss himself wants to talk to me, I will hear my grandfather say, Don, and I'll get quiet instantly. See, it has to be understandable for me. The spiritual life is not esoteric. It's very practical. It has to have images I can use. So while I like to read the big book to you, I will also use other images that say the same thing.

I was doing a big book thing in the Colorado State Reformatory one time. And Bill wrote in American Eastern Midwest, this kid in the back of the room said, I didn't understand a word of what you just read. He spoke a different language than Bill did. So I have to sometimes shift the images a little bit. Well, Bruce and I talked a little bit, and he destroyed all my conceptions of God, or actually my concepts of God. The book does not use the word conception, or a concept that uses conception.

A concept is already finished and boxed up and settled, and that's the way it is. A conception that has plenty of room to go. But anyway, he asked me what I thought about God to describe him, and he said something he destroyed. I was talking mostly about Santa Claus anyway. What's he going to do for me? The spiritual life isn't what he's going to do for me. It's what can I do for him. So we got all that down, and I was pissed again, and I screamed at him.

You were asking me to turn my life and will over the care of nothing. He said, why not? Nothing can run it better than you've been doing it. We all have one final, last deep reservation. Mine was very similar to Jerry's. And Bruce knew this, and he had the courage of his convictions, and he loved me. Now, truth will set you free, but truth without love is cruelty. And confrontation without a real answer is brutality, so I don't participate in that.

But he had a real answer, and he loved me. And he knew I had one final reservation, and he asked me to tell him what I was afraid of. Now, I've never been afraid of the unknown. I love the unknown. That's where all the

action is. What I'm afraid of, I always have a reference point for it, and I make up some disaster out of that. And my conception to God was that. If I had truly turned my own life over the care of God, he had worked for me to do.

I didn't want to job, because I knew what it was. Just enough time to get through this. If I surrendered totally and gave my life to God, as you were asking me to do, he'd put me on the corner of Colfax and Broadway in Denver, handing out watchtower magazines and asking strangers, have you been saved, brother? And I've got this fine apartment in Cell B49 right in the corner of State for an attention, and I can't see me doing that.

Because I had a reference for that. When I was in high school, there was a fellow we called the Brown Man, standing on the corner of Colfax and Broadway handing out watchtowers and asking strangers if you've been saved. You wore brown clothes and brown suit and shirt and tie and hat and shoes, brown attitude, lovely man, but brown attitude. Have you been saved, brother? At least I'd drive by and make fun of you. And that was my hang-up.

See, I'm not a big bad ass. My hang-ups are petty. They're so petty they make me ashamed sometimes. I didn't want you driving by and making fun of me. I would rather die. So he said with a smile than a rascal. Oh, well, let's talk about that. Now, for you new people, that does not mean let us talk about anything. It means be quiet for a minute. We'll see we'll get past the concrete you call your head. And he began to teach me the way to the human heart. It's through questions. He said, Don, do you suppose that that guy that's hanging on watchtowers this afternoon had breakfast where he wanted to?

And I said, yeah, probably. He said, well, you didn't. Oh, my goodness. Do you suppose that that man that's standing down there humiliating himself by asking strangers if they've been saved, is wearing the clothes that he picked out to do it in. I said, yeah, probably. He says, well, you're not. Oh, do you suppose when he's all through making a fool himself today that he gets to go home and nail me because I didn't? And in doing that, he literally hand carried me into my new mind and laid the foundation for my entire life.

Anything at all that God has in mind for me is better than anything at all that I will ever have in mind for me, period. And I really do have like that. And I get willful from time to time. He doesn't mind that. I get cranky and childish and willful. But whatever he has in mind for me is better than what I have in mind for me. And one of the practical ways that I apply that, in the home I live in, because I go home now, I can find it even.

My bathroom is larger than the cell I used to live in. And from time to time, I sit there. And I ask myself this, could I spend the next 10 years in this room? I close the door. And then I design in my mind how I could do that. And once I've got to where I could be in just that bathroom for the next 10 years, I open the door to the rest of the house. Well, it's time we get serious here pretty quick after lunch. The journey begins at that point, the rest of it is elite in. The first and second steps are vitally important.

We're going to this afternoon sometime start getting into detail. I want to suggest to you that we'll probably, we're going to take the third step together. And we would like you to join us if you wish. But think about that. The suggestion is think well about that. Because if you do it alone, that's good. If you do it with other people, that's good. It can change your life. And we'll probably do that and then go into some detail on the fourth and fifth step.

You know, we'll go as much as we can. We want to talk about amends, about how you live this way of life. I presume that's why you all came. We'll use this book for some references and we'll use our experiences with a book for references. But I need to know since it's time for lunch and the alanons want to get together with the Baptist. I'm going to make a suggestion. Lunch is at noon. I'm going to suggest that the alanons get together with the Baptist about one o'clock.

And what do you want an hour or two? We could use a break to visit with one another and do whatever we're going to do. So what I'm going to suggest is that you guys decide when you want to meet. And then around two or two thirty, we all come back here together. Does that suit everyone? Is that a long enough break? That's two, two and a half hours. Okay? Two thirty? Yeah, two thirty makes sense to me. All right, we'll all gather here at two thirty. Y'all are on your own.

Let's get your nap. So Bruce having led me into my new way of being whatever God has in mind for me is better than I have in mind for me. I mold that over for a day or two. I don't know how long, what he had said. And what I was feeling. Am I echoing a little bit? There we go. Thank you. It's weird to hear your own voice come back a fraction of a second later, you wonder who said that. I became willing to go to the corner of Colfax and Broadway and hand that watch to our magazines if that's what he wanted.

And I went back to Bruce and said that. And he laughed at me again. He said, oh, that's noble. But listen, God's already got a guy down there doing that. Probably has something else in mind for you. And my automatic response is always what? He says, I don't know. And you'll never know. Just get out there on the line and do it. And the adventure began with that. And life is truly an adventure. Not always a pleasant adventure.

There are lions and tigers along the path. But most of the time it's just a plain adventure man. My kids are not only afraid of me today, they love being with me because they were brought up with me telling them every time we headed into something that looked like a crisis. Another adventure coming up. And they love it. They probably have something else in mind for me. And I can't wait to find out what it is for today.

Things don't change that much. The old way of thinking is, oh, God, something's about to happen. And now it's, oh, God, something's about to happen. Let me be part of this thing. What's falling apart. I'm not giving it up. This one falls open where I need it. I don't have to look for it or memorize it. It's just there. Some things that are important if we've gotten this far. I'm going to get a little bit technical. Because I was asked to by some people. Not too technical.

What do I do now that I am truly willing to surrender? Because I don't know what that means. I've heard from the Baptists and the Baptists. And the Catholics and the Jews and the Mormons. And I've heard them all. And everybody's got a little different view of what I'm supposed to do. And now I've awakened to the fact that I'm willing to do whatever God has in mind. And I don't know what that's going to be. But I'm willing.

I have concluded in my life today that the most important, most observable, most recognizable sign of the presence of God is willingness. It's all power. Consider. The very instant that I've become willing to change, I've already been changed. It's that powerful. And all through the big book, willingness is said to be the key. It's the essential ingredient. Because I don't do much except come willing. And that's all I brought to this deal is my willingness.

And that's all I bring today is my willingness. Then I'm showing how. That applies with writing inventory. It applies to making amends. It applies to raising family. Jerry mentioned it, there's things. Times, I don't want to do this. But I'm willing. And the power comes. And I have a little prayer I'll give you for those days when I really don't want to do it. I say to God, I really don't want to do this today. Okay. There we are.

But because of what you have done for me, I will go do this one for you. And somehow it changes the deal. Let me give you a viewpoint before we get too technical. I've been greatly interested in all spiritual activities since I became a spiritual person. I really want to be able to pray with anyone. I don't care what your ritual may be. I want to be in spiritual communion with you and with God as we both understand them.

I don't care. I'll go to business pens, fundamentalist prayer breakfast. I'm a pipe carrier in the Lakota tradition. I don't care what it is. I'll go for it because I want to participate. So I've made a study of spiritual things and found something very interesting. They're almost all the same. There are certain ritualistic things, and for whatever reason, all people seem to come up with. Now let's take a look at it.

Ceremony. Whether it be religious ceremonies, spiritual ceremonies, church, whatever. Generally, someone sets fire or something, makes smoke. Whether it's incense or sage or someone lights a fire to help symbolize and bring the five senses into the arena with us. Sometimes it smells good. Sometimes it doesn't. It doesn't matter. Somebody sets fire or something. Somebody else makes hits a gong, a bell, or someone makes a noise, which brings that in, helps the focus.

Once we've got everyone's attention, we make a preliminary prayer. To do that, we need an invocation. Someone invokes the name of God. Whatever their name for God is, the name God is offered, which says, I'm now ready for communication. If I want to communicate with Jerry, I say Jerry. It isn't a demand for his attention. It's my notifying him. I'm ready to communicate. Now if you're ready. So they all use the word God to invoke the consciousness of the presence of God.

In today's world, sometimes we see, let's invite God in. That freaks me out. God's right here. I just need to acknowledge that. Then, most always, there is a prayer that states the purpose of why we're here. What's this ceremony going to be about? Someone, either an individual or a group, or a choir, but someone makes a statement of purpose. Then the ceremony starts, and we act out the statement of purpose. And when we're all through, someone makes another statement that tells us what we just did.

It's like a writer. I'm a writer. You tell people what you're going to tell them, then you tell them, then you tell them what you told them. That's how you do it. That's the formula. And then it closes with amen, amen, so be it. It closes with some sort of closing. And for us, it's usually amen. So I look at our book. Because if it's truly spiritual, those elements will be there. I'm going to presume. And sure enough, beginning at the third step, God, first word, the invocation is made, then the statement of purpose, all for myself to be able to do with me and build with me as I will.

It talks about the difficulties I'm going to have. It states what's going to go on here. And then the fourth and fifth step are the ritualistic acting out in my participation in that prayer. At the sixth step, I review the whole thing. And at the seventh step, I say the third step prayer over again, only now it's got teeth in it. And then we say amen. There's no amen between God and amen at the end of the seventh step.

So my viewpoint in working with this is that this is one prayer. It begins at the third step and ends at the seventh step. We just happen to put numbers on them. Which causes two things to happen. We're about to enter into the house cleaning process, the active participation in getting rid of, then you're safe and protected. See, I was terrified of going into my mind. Last time I'd gone into my mind, I killed it. And now you and I go back again.

Well, God gave me an image a while back of that that I think is poetic. This is from the Master, not from me. The first time that I looked into the darkness, I was looking from the darkness. Now I can look into the darkness from the light. We come to the light before we get into the house cleaning, you know. You're spiritually awakened before you say the third step prayer, or why would you bother to say it? Who the hell are you talking to you?

Fred, one guy in our group, he called him Bruce. And he quit one day and says, I keep running into Bruce's and they're all crazy. So whoever you want to show up. Anyway, this fits that. From the world's greatest religions to the most primitive spiritual ceremonies, it's the same thing. So I'm spiritually protected. I'm also now standing on the railroad track. And if you don't keep moving, the train will run right over you.

And we are cautioned at this point, do not go here unless you mean to finish the trip. All the way through the early part of the big book you can get off. Have you noticed that? You can get off any time you want. Not after this one you can't. It says so. We think well before taking this step, making sure we were ready to abandon ourselves utterly. No more reservations. So it's a pretty powerful stuff when I think about that.

And the way I play that out when I sponsor people sounds cruel, but it isn't. My warden, I love the whole blue of the warden. I had the opportunity to go to North Carolina a few years back and work for the Department of Corrections. You should have been in my head when they handed me the keys to the place. The warden of the facility where my office was was an AA member. He was about a year sober. I've been working with Tom.

And called me down to his office one day and he said, would you sponsor me in a devil got me? I said a whole wailing. Of course I would. I've been waiting for years to get my hands on one of you guys. Especially if I better check with Tom. I said, I already have. He thinks it's a good idea. We got up to this point and he was ready. And this is customary when they're ready and chopping up the bed. I send them home. We're not going to do it today.

It says you think well before taking this step. Go home and think well. And then call me tomorrow. We'll get together and do it together. And sure enough he called me the next morning. He said, you know you're right. I'm not sure I can do this. I'm not sure I can surrender completely to God. I have a prison to run. And if I don't tell Pete to pull the stumps they don't get pulled. If I don't stay on the cooks all the time.

Blah, blah, blah. And we got to take a good close look at all the things we're distracting him. And busy running this prison. The upshot was we both concluded that God runs a pretty good universe. Maybe he can help you run this tiny little prison out here too. And then we got to his real problem. He said, what I'm really afraid of is that I'll become a snowflake. I got a prison to run. I can't be a snowflake. He calls me now and he says this snowflake talking.

He talks like Bo does only worse. They call him Old Blue and I love Old Blue. So if you're ready to take the third step, I'm not. I want you to think about it. Then we can do it. And I found over the years that is a very, very powerful result comes out of that. Taking inventory of the way I read the book Alcoholics Anonymous is not to find out who I am. It's to help me discover who I'm not. So we can get rid of that and then who I am will just show up.

That's what it says. In other words, it's a strenuous attempt to face and to be rid of the things in myself which are blocking me from consciousness of the presence of God. I assume that because it said the most important fact of my life is consciousness of the presence of God. I'm standing in the way of me being aware of God, of the presence of God. And if it weren't for that, I couldn't have looked at some of the stuff I had to look at.

I told you one of the incidents that caused me great pain about my children, in the way I had put them on top of that marijuana so I could get it through and scared them and all that. So they weren't any physical danger. And we've been caught, they'd have been better off than they were with me that had gone to a foster home and eventually back to my parents. What I did to them emotionally has crippled them. Trust got broken that day.

It could never ever, as far as I know, still hasn't been completely restored. We get along okay, there's a piece missing. That number set numerous other things. How can I live with them? Well, the promise is that if I will face them, we can get rid of them. And that's why I came here was to be changed so profoundly that I could never do that again. Anything less than that is not good enough for me. It isn't that I want to have a better attitude, I need to be a new person.

And Dr. Silkworth says without an entire psychic change, there's very little hope and recovery. That means a whole new mind. And I've got one today. I still carry my old alcoholic mind with me. I just don't use it for me. It's of no use to me whatsoever. But I can drag it out and it'll be of use to you. If I drag my alcoholic mind out, you start saying, oh, yeah. And it sounds like me. And then we can move on with it.

There are times, however, because it's such an amusing mind, that if there's nothing good on television, I'll just let them strap me in a chair and let it go. Make sure you're strapped down tight, though. And once in a while, it flexes its muscle. And it's a funny little thing. It's all about me, me, me, me, me, me, right now. So I'm going to face and be rid of the things myself that are blocking me. Difficult thing to do to get rid of the things.

This is what I've been surviving on. My character defects are essentially my defenses against what I think is a hostile world. And even though they caused me difficulty, they're mine. They work for a while. They finally stopped working. One of the things that helped me along the way is that I was reminded that I signed up for a hospital and got prison. I can't even get locked up in the right place. So I have such a loving sponsor because he was completely right on the money here.

I said to him one day, Bruce, I feel so guilty. He said, well, you should. Look what you've done. Oh, okay. That takes care of the victim. Bruce, I'm terrified of my own mind. You have good reason to be, he said. Oh, yeah. Now I got excited. And my first inventory was a lie. And I learned more from it than I have from any other inventory I've ever done. I didn't follow any directions. We hadn't gotten into the school yet.

I'm hot to trot. Did you ever do that? At five I knew I could drive the car. Just give me the keys. So I went

back to myself and I spent two hours writing down some of the worst things I'd ever done. I thought that's what inventory was. Because there were people hanging out in the A group that said that's what it is. Life story. And I went back to Bruce who up to now had been, I mean he gave me his time and his wisdom and his energy.

When I took this to him he looked at it and said that's garbage. He wrote that to impress me. Get away from me. And he met it. Just get away from me. This is garbage. I'm alcoholic and somewhat self-willed. I found somebody who would listen to it by God. I'd spent two hours and somebody's going to hear this. That's the longest I'd ever spent being really honest. So I went to old Leroy. Because I knew Leroy. I knew Leroy would have to listen to it because he was tied up with the prestige of being an A member.

And he couldn't turn me down. Leroy was Leroy. And I'd tell him one of these things and Leroy would say well that wasn't that bad. Because in the criminal world I'm kind of lightweight really. And I'd tell him something else, oh that wasn't that bad. And pretty soon I woke up to something. Because some of it really was that bad. I was never a violent man. Only twice did I try to kill anybody. Well you know, for a nice guy like me that didn't too bad.

What I recognized was that I was in grave jeopardy at the moment. This is why I think the spirit works when I can't. I knew that I had once again picked someone who would tell me what I wanted to hear. So I didn't have to do anything about changing it. And I knew if I didn't stop that instantly. But I was going to die a very ugly death. And I'm not afraid of death. I've done that three times and it's nothing. But to die an ugly death means that for some period of time just before that I'm going to have to live an ugly life.

And I can't stand the thought of that ever again. Never. So I knew I had to do something and it had to be immediate. And that's another word I find in here frequently from this point on. I mean we can doodle up to here. From this point on everything is immediate. At once it says immediately. It's the tenth step. You don't wait till tomorrow you get it done now. It's all immediate. There's no delays here. The world of the spirit is right here right now.

It's the only time it can happen. So don't delay. So I went back and I did what this book said. And I've got to tell you my second little inventory. My first real inventory was a shabby little effort. There wasn't enough of my mind left to even remember some of this stuff. I made some discoveries in reading what this says in here. It says that resentment is a spiritual disease. Not an emotional and mental problem. I'm not making that up.

That's why I got this thing out. I know you know all this already. It says on page 64 says resentment is the number one offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it's to all forms of spiritual disease. It must be the granddaddy of them. It's a spiritual disease. So we've not only been mentally and physically ill, we've been spiritually sick. And there it is. I suffer from a spiritual illness. Now why would that be?

Earlier on in here Bill suggested to us that we set aside prejudice we have toward spiritual terms and ask ourselves what they mean to us. And that's one of the things I still use in my daily life. What does that mean to me? See I know what it means to you. I hear you say it at meetings. What does that mean to me? If resentment is a spiritual disease then resentment is a spiritual term. What does that mean? Why would that be a spiritual disease?

What does it do? Well first of all it separates me from you. And anything that separates me from the children of God separates me from God. And I can't work on his God thing so in his mercy he lets me work on the one thing I can. You and I, the children of God. So anything that separates me from you is going to separate me from God and resentment is one of them. How does that play? Well later on it also gives me if I resent you you own me.

Oh yeah. We see the world as people really dominate us. If I resent you you can be dead or in another town and you're still running my life because you're what's on it. I'm going through one scene after another. I'm usually pissed at you because you interfered with something I wanted to do and so I lost. And I'm replaying it so that I win. Now if I'd have just said, and he just said, then I just said, got him, bang. That's a good one.

Let's try another one. And pretty soon I start making allies. I said, now Jerry understands that I got Jerry pissed at you too and you don't even know him. But I don't know how to work him and now there's two of us. I'd have said, you know, get bam, got him, get good. That works. What a waste of time. I touched on my mind works. Got to get rid of that stuff. Two of them that I'll put on here because they've already told you the one story was the federal agent that came to my house on my boy's birthday in 1966.

Well, there were three of them. The big fellas. One came through the front door and one came through the back door and one came through the side window yelling and screaming and waving their guns and knocked me down and stepped on my neck and called me really ugly names. Remember that? I've been around the world several times. I never heard names like what I was that day. Scared to hell out of everybody including my kids and my young four-year-old out of freaking this cup swung around with his gun almost shot him.

Just an automatic reflex. See, people who do what I do usually shoot back so they come prepared. Believe me, he was on my list. I nursed my hate for him all the way through the federal penitentiary. All the way back out. I found out where he lived. I was going to get him. Oh, my, this guy who used to live here was pretty dumb. Anyway, he made my list. And the result that I came out with by using this process set me free.

I still don't like what he did. It talks about that. I don't have to like it. But I brought him there with a hand engraved invitation. I became his job. Since I quit smuggling dope, there hasn't been a federal narcotics occasion in my house. It's amazing. And if I ever do encounter him, I owe him men's. I owe him two things. I owe him an apology for putting him in a position where he almost shot a four-year-old. Shame on me.

And I owe him thanks for not shooting my son. The key word is almost. This is a highly trained professional. I don't have to like what he did. But because he was so good at his job, my boy is still alive. I could not face that unless I believed in the promise here that I can get rid of that. I can become a kind of person who does not bring that kind of jeopardy to the home. There's only been one other federal agent in my house in 35 years.

I'm on a lot of non-profit boards and we forgot to do our IRS form the correct way. This federal tax agent came by one day to explain to me what I had to do. And the more he talked, the dumber I got. He finally said, oh, just sign it. I'll fill it out. So I learned another thing. It isn't about being smart, survival is about being gee. Then the other fellow that had to go on the inventory was Albert, the guy who hired me to do the job.

He also turned us all in. He made the list. Yeah, he got busted on some penny ante thing and they scared him.

He rolled five of us over. The truth of it was, and it came out in my inventory, is that I knew he would do that. That's the kind of person he was. I can't blame Albert for behaving according to his natural way of being. It kind of says that in here. We realized that the people who armed us were perhaps spiritually sick.

Albert was weak. One of the ways that helped me identify my alcoholism came through that. When I came out of Texas, I was sent to the federal prison in La Tuna, Texas. The deal we finally worked out with the government was that we got a four-year sentence for conspiracy. We broke it up into six months in the penitentiary in five years probation or parole. Now, my son's birthday is December 12th, the little one. During that six months, I got back into my right mind.

I detoxed. I was saying again, and the most important thing in my life was to get home for that kid's birthday. They were going to release me December 15th and his birthday is December 12th. So I became a lawyer. I went to the law librarian, began reading law, and began throwing writs. I'm not stupid. It says, do this, this way, and we'll do this, this way. I got out December 10th. Got on the bus for Denver, but I needed to stop and see Albert not to kill him.

I knew even then, we told the guys, just leave him alone. But I didn't want him on my back trail. I needed to see him and let him know I'm not looking for you, Albert, because I don't want that kind of snake crawling up the trail behind me. And of course we had a drink and smoked a joint and I got home December 15th. It gets really, really clear if you just open your mind. So Albert was on there and I owe Albert something too.

I'm to stay away from Albert forever. That's what I owe him. I am not to be a problem for Albert ever. And somehow I knew that at the beginning and it got reaffirmed here. I got to stay away from all of the Albert's of the world. My troubles are truly of my own making. And I'm not stupid. I know who is and who isn't. We all do. I know the difference between right and wrong. What used to plague me is that I knew the difference between right and wrong.

I can't kid myself about that anymore. I just don't have the strength to do the right thing or the strength to not do the wrong thing. So I'm not the spirit guide me there. But I know. I don't have any blonde jokes. One of the simplest of all the logic functions is if this group of things is not right, then the opposite will be right. Okay? So if I'm spiritually sick because I'm separated from you, then my activity should bring me closer to you, not separated from you.

And the principles I will look for then were those that help me become, I'm you and you're me. And it will help me make that contact. And it's that simple. With that in my mind is a way of thinking, then I can see the principles that will produce that and the ones that won't. And we go on into what those are. The only time I ever get upset is when somebody threatens, interferes with or hurts me. It's the only reason to get upset.

If you're not threatening me or hurting me or interfering with my personal desires, you're cool. All right, problem with you. So I'm to look for the things that threaten me and what are those, well, self-esteem, pocketbook, ambition. That's a big one. I'm a really poor example of the American way because I have very little ambition. Don't care if I ever get rich. I'm married to rich woman. She cares. It's much easier.

Okay, prestige is a pain in the butt. I've had it. And you have to just keep having it. You have to do

prestigious things all the damn time. I've had a little fame. That's a real pain in the butt. You have to be famous all the damn time. So the opposite of that would be anonymous. And that doesn't mean secret. A life-changing thing, about the time I needed it, I talk about Chuck Chamberlain a lot because I identified so much with Chuck.

My whole attitude about Chuck was if I'd have been there first, that's exactly how I would have said it too. Okay, we're just talking about it, the same experience. Okay. And he said a profound thing in Midland, Texas in the early 70s. I don't know how many caught it, but I did. If God had made any two of us the same, one of us would have been unnecessary. That means that I have a contribution to make to life, and I am the only one that can make it.

If I don't make it, it will never be made. And you have a contribution to make to life. And if you don't make it, it'll never be made, because I can't make yours and you can't make mine. There has never been, to my knowledge, another model just like this one on this planet. Even out of the same gene pool, my brother and sister are different than I am. I'm the only one like me that's ever going to be. What an incredible thing.

So my job partly is to make sure that you get to make your contribution. Because it takes all of us to make up that what's called the Christ Spirit. We all have to make the contribution. I can't be complete until you are. I don't know if that makes any sense, but I can't. I'm whole, but I won't be complete until you are. So it becomes enlightened self-interest for me to help you be all you can be. And in doing so, I become all I can be.

It's the devil's thing I ever saw. I will not interfere with you. And you can't interfere with me. People sometimes who are late, because I have a thing about being on time that we'll talk about later. I think apologized to me for wasting my time. You can't waste my time. I'm the only one who can waste my time. If you're not there, I'm doing something else. So how can you waste my time? When you show up, I quit doing that and we start doing what we're going to do together.

But when I have an appointment with you, let's take the people I work with. Jerry knows this. Six o'clock is our point of time. We live in a city, so there has to be some leeway. So you've got ten minutes before and ten minutes after is the leeway. In my world, because I've tested it. I can get from one part of town to the other within twenty minutes. So don't give me no shit. At ten minutes till I sit in my chair and begin a meditation to prepare myself for you.

I want to really be prepared for you so you get the best that there is. Get me out of the way. And I'll stay that way until ten minutes after. And eleven minutes after I begin whatever is next. And it's too late for us to get together. And if you get there ten minutes too soon, I'm not ready for you yet. Very important activity. It's just the way I do it. I'm not seeing you have to do it that way. But it's very rude to be late.

Very rude. Call me. Tell me you're not going to make it. I really don't care. I have enough things to do if you don't show up. I'll do something else anyway. If you do show up, I want to be all yours for that period of time. Unless I become all the way with you, you will not become all the way with me. And I really need to know who you are and what you're doing. And anyway, I've got off the track a little bit. I'll let these guys go ahead a little bit.

The first three columns of the resentment inventory, and there are three inventories. I hope we go over with

you. Three completely different formats. This resentment inventory is done in four columns, but I will tell you now and explain later the most important thing in the inventory is not the writing. It's the attitude changes that take place between the writings. And I do have a lot to say about that. And I've used up kind of my time.

So I'm going to leave it at that. And then we'll go from there so you can see how I use the big book. Because if you don't get out of the big book once in a while, it says a business that takes no regular inventory will soon go broke. A business that stays in inventory all the time is also going to go broke. You've got to be open for business every now and then. So we'll get back to that.