

Big Book Weekend, location undetermined

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Transcript

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Blame Well, for not taking a stand, I should either step in or let it go. Remember, I opted out. I didn't take a stand early on. I have no business taking a stand now. I should have taken it before. Where am I at fault? That's the question that's asking here. And some people think they're the same. Blame and fault, for me they're not the same. Blame is a way of thinking and fault is what I did because of that way of thinking. Or the other way around. It doesn't matter, but they're two separate things.

What am I at fault? And this is where I got a revelation. I didn't know this about me. This is the key to the whole thing. I'm at fault for judging him based on hearsay. I have never seen him mistreat my daughter. I've just heard her talk about his mouthiness. I watched the grandchildren. They don't show any signs of abuse of any kind. And I'm making a judgment of him based on hearsay. And it really opened up a whole door for me. I do that to other people too. And that's what I got to get rid of.

Gossip is a killer. And if I make judgments based on hearsay, I'm participating in the worst thing you can do to anybody. And it really simplifies my life because I do it with almost everybody unless I'm careful. Even the judgment that you're spiritually fit is based on hearsay. You either is or you is not mine to say. You're so What's my mistake? For getting emotionally involved with or without enough information. I don't need to be emotionally involved. I need to be involved.

I don't need to take anybody on. It's a mistake for me to get emotionally involved because my wife is. Of course she is. This is her daughter and granddaughter. That's not a good reason for me to get emotionally involved. I can get emotionally involved based on the same reason she is, but not because she is. Okay? That's fake. And people know when you're faking. It's a mistake for me because I can support both she and my daughter without being angry.

So I got this done and I got the freedom that comes from it. Now I got a real problem. I've got to make amends to him. I called him a son of a bitch. That's wrong. And my real problem wasn't that I wasn't wanting to do that. I was. But my problem was should I call him on the phone? Should I go where he works? Should I wait till he comes by next time? I'm tossing this around in my head and go out to get the mail and here he comes up the driveway.

Now remember the last word he had out of me was you son of a bitch. I've called him out, which is dumb. I'm 69 years old and he's early 30s, 200 pounds of solid muscle. He could eat me and not even take a deep breath. And I've challenged him. And the spirit went to work. And I walked right toward him because that's what you do. And I did this. Put both hands in the air, palms forward. It's an ancient symbol that says, I ain't messing with you man.

Got no weapons, got no beef. And I said, Mike, I just need to talk to you for just a minute. I said, I was wrong. I call you a son of a bitch. I had no right to do that. I was completely wrong and I apologized for that. And I don't think with God's help I'll ever do it again. Would you please forgive me? And then I said, I still don't

like what's going on here. But that's up to you and Kelly. And it was over. He forgave me on the spot.

Took four months before he really forgave me. But it was done. I talked to the girls and straightened them out, particularly my daughter who was saying, go dad, go. That we were all basing things on here today. And then we needed to find some way to make Mike feel that he was part of our family. Because we'd been excluding him. His attitude and his nose rings. I mean it was very subtle, but he knew. And we started including him and he started playing with us now.

It's taken a while, but he's part of the family now. So that's how this thing works out. All the way to the end. Was that what you're looking at? It's pretty simple. This is available if anybody wants to look at it. I keep it real simple. I'm not one of those heavy duty technicians. Because I'll die being technical. But I do see seven questions to answer here. And I can make a case for eight, but that's being redundant.

I don't believe that this is what gets me free. This is what gets me willing. I got freer. I couldn't have written this. I was already willing to change. And then I became willing to straighten it out. And that's what this does for me. And there's other stuff in there too. Whether it's the first inventory or this one, doesn't make any difference. I do it all the same way. You want anything to that before we go on to fear inventory?

No, I think if I were to try to add anything to that, I'd be guilty of one-upmanship. So I'd be guilty of. And I don't know. I knew this. I know Mike and I know the girls and I know the grandkids. It is a beautiful thing to watch. It's a beautiful thing to be in Don's home. And for those of us who are lucky enough to hang around with one another, you're really, really in for a treat. And for those of you who have already been doing this, you know what I mean.

You know what I mean. Yeah, this is a truly beautiful thing. So no, I want to get on into the fear inventory unless Bo has something he wants to add to it. What time is dinner? We've got a man who understands what this is really all about. You want to move into fear? Yes. Should we move on into fear? Anybody got any questions about this? I know you're all a technical expert. Yes, please. Okay. Go over here. Go over to page 67.

Yes. Huh? Okay. Well, first of all, what are my mistakes? Now I usually answer that last because for me that's a mistake in thinking. That's a whole picture. So what's my mistake? Where have I been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened. There's five of them. Where am I to blame? That's six. That even has a question mark after it. Where am I at fault? Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? And it's usually petty.

Have you noticed that? This is a petty. And it gets more petty the longer I've been around here because it really is petty. We have a dear friend in Denver. Talks about inventory. He said, I went into the inventory looking for a tiller of the hunt. And what I found was a little boy who wet his pants. And that's just about the way it is. But the devastating effects that can have to everybody around me. I really need to be clear with that.

Yes. Well, for me, one is a thought process. One of my, I'm to blame for the way I think, like I have rights. Where I'm at fault is any action I take based on that. And both of them need to change. Remember, the most important part of this part of the inventory is to help me locate where I've been wrong and to help me get willing to start making amends and to setting it straight. It's the identifier for amends. It isn't isolated by itself.

If this is about learning who I am, we can stop right here because now I know. This is about changing all of

that. It also helps me now that I know what a doofus I am to recognize it in the people I'm working with. You think you're a big badass. I know you're a little boy wetting his pants. And I'll guide you through that and not tell you that, but I'll guide you to that. I don't want to tell you that you'll hurt me.

I've been given a very specific way of riding fear inventory. Bill talks about it as being permeates our whole existence, the evil and corroding thread. It's there in everything. And this isn't about the fears that I need to be afraid of standing in front of a truck. I need to have a fear response if there's a bear in the path in front of me. These are survival things. These are about the fears that keep me from going into the woods because there's bears out there.

The little mnemonic that I was given as the pattern is this. Let's say I have this obsessive fear about elevators. So I never get on an elevator. I'm terrified. That would be the basic fear. I'm afraid of getting on an elevator. Why? It says I'm to ask myself why. Because I'm afraid the cable's going to snap. And then I'm afraid the thing will fall and I'll be killed. Or the cable's going to snap and I'm afraid it's going to fall and I'll be maimed.

I won't get killed. That's even worse. And I'm afraid that after it falls and I get maimed, nobody's going to care. And I'm going to die alone. Okay. Well, where is self-reliance failing me? It says there. I'm selfishly trying to preserve my life on my terms. It doesn't sound selfish, but it is. My terms. Whatever the fear may be, it's keeping me from the activity from God's world. Now, I got a couple pieces here if you want to look at them later that I just carry around.

One is that I was afraid of losing my mind. And the other is afraid of being without money. I'm going to do the money piece first because it's so funny. These both occurred. I was afraid of losing, being without money at a time when I was without money. You know. And I was afraid of losing my mind at a time when I was losing my mind. Oh yeah. So using that pattern, that's kind of what it looks like. This is the basic fear.

And then I write down all the things I think are going to happen if this happens. They are also fears, but they'll go away when the main one does. And then where self-reliance has failed me, I simply ask the question, what am I self-sleeve trying to either get, keep, protect myself from, either selfishly or self-seekingly trying to do. And then I list that out. So it reads like this. I'm afraid of being without money because I'm afraid my wife will leave me.

Well right away, I know how stupid this one is because I know her pretty good. She wouldn't leave me for any reason whatsoever. We made a deal and she'll keep it. But that's what I'm afraid of. And by the way, when I wrote this, I was sitting in the basement of my house with my car in a garage. And I'm sitting right in the middle of everything I need. I'm afraid of being without money because I'm afraid my creditors will dislike me and then they'll yell at me.

Does that sound a little bit childish? Yeah, they'll yell at me. And I'm afraid of being without money because I'm afraid of losing everything. Like I owned anything anyway. It's all a gift. I'm afraid of being without money because I'm afraid of being thought of as a failure. And I know now I'm getting really out of wet because I've known for years success has nothing to do with money. But here I am getting caught up on all the ideas again.

I'm afraid of being without money because it will prove my life is a sham. Now, get into my mind with that

and I'll take you where it went for a fraction of a second. And all of the people I sponsored will die because they'll know I lied to them and they'll all get drunk. No ego problem here. God, I have to laugh at it too. This is one of my deepest fears and you're laughing at me. Then the corker came. I'm afraid of being without money because my wife will stay.

But then she'll be making all the money and she'll be on my head all the time. And there was nothing more to write. That was done. But the big piece comes later. I'm selflessly trying to and I'll walk you through that if you indulge me. I'm afraid of being without money because I'm afraid Jackie will leave me. I'm selflessly trying to make sure she stays because I need her. I'm okay if she's with me. There's the deal.

I've got to be okay even if she isn't. So I need to get free of that. I will taint our marriage if I'm afraid she'll leave me. I know that from past experience. I'm afraid of being without money because my creditors will yell at me and dislike me. I'm selflessly trying to keep everybody liking me. Even people that don't know me. Oh that's surgically clean isn't it? They're trained to yell at you. If you pay your bills they don't do that.

I'm afraid of being without money because I'm afraid of losing everything. I'm selflessly trying to keep everything I have because it proves I'm a success. I'm beginning to really see the lies here. This is garbage. I'm afraid of being without money because I'm afraid of being thought of as a failure. I'm selflessly trying to maintain an image as a success because nobody liked me if I'm a failure. That's a lie. I learned early on as a kid people like you a lot better when you fail than you do when you succeed.

But here we are. I'm afraid it will prove my life as a sham. I'm selflessly trying to preserve the image that I'm okay and living in truth. Oh my god how arrogant. I'm 25 years sober at this time folks. This is killing me to write this stuff. But there it is it's real. I'm afraid that my wife will stay with me but then she'll support me and be down on me all the time. I'm selflessly trying to keep her respect and love on my terms.

And that isn't what it's about. And it always finishes with the same thing I'm not trusting and relying on God to care for me and protect me. And in doing that I get free. That's how I was taught to do it. And then we enter into one of the most important parts of our spiritual, I hate to say growth, the turn to becoming a spiritual person. There's a better way we think so. We are now on a different basis, the basis of trusting and relying upon God.

We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves. We are in the world to play the role he assigns. And there it is. Do you see me assigning everybody a role? Me, my wife, my creditors, all the people looking at, I'm signing everybody a role. I'm back into God playing. No wonder I'm afraid. I know from the very beginning I don't have what it takes to pull any of this off. Just to the extent that we do is we think he would have us and humbly rely on him to enable us to match calamity with serenity.

Two great words. I love calamity. Your calamity is generally my entertainment by the way. Oh yeah. Yeah. A whole lot of human comedies based on somebody falling on their ass. And as long as it isn't me it's funny. And serenity was a word that I really had to look up early on. I have been serene. It was a time we took some of Elsie's double cap acid and mixed it with 100 milligrams of speed and shot it up when I got serene.

Made it to the first day before the first day of creation where it's really quiet. And I knew that is not what we were talking about here. And I need to find out what serenity was, what are we talking about here. So my sponsor

encouraged me to use the big three volume Webster's dictionary whenever I ran into this problem. And I found it in there. One of the definitions of serenity is clarity of thought. Bruce followed that up by coming by my cell one time and saying, Don do you know that it's possible for me to have one thought at a time?

And of course he hooked me right there. That's the epitome of life. One thought at a time brings on serenity. Clarity of thought. And so I get rid of this muddle thinking and become aware. I'm sitting in the basement of my home with my family and my car and my dog upstairs. And nobody's calling yelled at me yet today. How silly can you be, you ssssss. Well, dummy. Got off my ass and went back to work. Quit playing gun.

But then it goes on. We never apologized to anyone for depending on our creator. Remember, I used to be ashamed of that. No more. The greatest joy in my life from the time I was little, what I really wanted to be able to do was stand on a street corner and tell everyone who walked by how much I loved my God. From a little kid on, that's what I wanted to do. Now you pay my expenses to let me come and do that. Isn't that funny?

Because that's all I'm telling you this whole weekend, how much I love my God. What a revelation that was. I knew for a long time that God loved me and I woke up in the morning and realized how much I loved God. And that changed my life. All men of faith have courage. Consider this. If you were not frightened or afraid, you wouldn't need courage. So in the midst of this, we are given the power to rise above it and move forward anyway.

I talked to heroes. My father-in-law was a hero. Most heroes are very reluctant to talk about their medals. He had two distinguished flying crosses. I think it was six gold stars or something. It was incredible. He was a hero. His family didn't even know that. He was reluctant to talk about it. Because they don't think they've done anything special. They just did their job. And they were scared to death the whole time.

I talked to a couple of Congressional Medal of Honor people. The same thing. They don't understand why they got it. It's an embarrassment to them. They just did what had to be done. And they were scared to death the whole time. All men of faith have courage. One of my favorite men of faith stories is old Joshua. My grandson is named Joshua because I love Joshua. I can identify with him. He's got this little band of Jews out there in the desert and the bad guys are chasing him.

Hounding him to death. Okay. And they're on the run and they're defending themselves all the time. And life's getting tough. The bad guys hold up in a place called Jericho. Big walls around it and everything. And Joshua takes a walk on the desert and comes back to the group and says, guys, I just had a conversation with God. I'm sure you did, Josh. Oh yeah, he talked to me directly. Tell me what we're supposed to do next.

Is that right, Josh? Now, most of us would say, now I was just sunstroke and stopped. Joshua had courage. He said, no, God talked to me. He said, here's what we're going to do. We're going to melt down all of our swords and weapons and turn them into trumpets. And then we're going to go over to Jericho and have a parade. Really, Josh? We're going to go with you, huh? Oh yeah. Do you hear what Joshua said? Sunstroke, baby. No, God really said that.

Instead, if we'll do that, they'll quit chasing us. And he had such courage of conviction that they actually did that. And there they were marching around this arm town blowing horns, and it must have confused the hell out

of Jerichoians or whoever they were. And of course, science tells me why the walls fell down. They blew them long enough and hard enough that the vibration just knocked that cheap dirt down. But the fact is Joshua had the courage of conviction.

And you're going to need that in Alcoholics Anonymous. And if you ever get into service, you're really going to need it. Really? We love one another, and it's really hard when you're among the loving family to take an opposing view. It takes courage to stand up among your peers and say, wait a minute, this doesn't seem right to me, particularly when it looks pretty good. It takes courage, real courage, to raise a family, to be a neighbor.

It takes immense courage. One of my great heroes is my next door neighbor. Nobody special goes to work every day, supported his family, kept his grass cut, one day, you know, in Colorado, we have a funny thing that happens in the winter. We'll get a heavy snowstorm, and then the next day it'll start to melt, and then it freezes up at night so you have ice in the gutters. It makes it kind of dangerous. And I'm in the house bitching about when's the city going to come by and clean the ice out of the gutters.

I heard a noise outside going, chonk, chonk, chonk. I looked out and there's my neighbor with an ice thing, chomping at the deal. So I went out with him with my little shovel, and we chonked ice, and I listened to him. He knows how to do things, I don't know how to do it. He does them automatically. It takes great courage. I've talked with him. He's made some sacrifices, I don't know if I'd be willing to make. So, courage and conviction.

All men of faith have courage. What was that thing the Mormons used to say? God said it, I believe it, that settles that. It takes courage to get up and do that. Do you have the courage of your conviction? Okay? They trust their God. We never apologize for God. Instead, we let him demonstrate through us what he can do. We ask him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what he would have us be. And I'll never forget the day that leaped out at me and what that really says.

Direct my attention to what you would have me be. Not what you would have me do. There's a lot of have me do's in here. This isn't one of them. I am not what I do. If I am what I do, any time I'm not doing it, I don't have an identity. And I start power-seeking. I'm not what I do. What would he have me be? That's easy. It's written out here for us tummies. Loving, kind, tolerant, of genuine use to other people. Unafraid.

Not angry. Not consumed with fear. He'd have me be all kinds of things that I can identify with right here because they tell me what they are. I can't do that if I'm afraid. So remove my fear. I don't have to walk through the fear. I don't walk through fear with a damn. I run through fear. And when you're running, you miss some of the stuff. I either run through it or I'm totally paralyzed by it and do nothing. And I usually pick the wrong thing.

There's times to do nothing and there's times to do something. And I pick the wrong one. Take away my fear and direct my attention to what you would have me be. And it gives me something. What would he have me be? It's not my personality. What would he have me be? Happy, joyous, and free. Oh, free of what? The bondage of self. It's so simple in here. I don't know why we get so confused. It's just really simple. One of my favorite books is by Richard Buck, the one who wrote John from Livingston Seagull.

He also wrote a little book called Illusions. And I've not read the whole thing because most of the books that come into my life now have a message for me and the rest of it's dressing. In Illusions, it was at a time when I

was becoming public in AA. And I don't like that. You need to know that. I accept it. That's one of the crosses you carry. And people were treating me like I really knew something. That there was wisdom and all that.

I mean it bothered me. And so God sent me Richard Buck's Illusions. It's a story of a young Messiah. Got little groups of folks all over the country that he's messing to. And identified with that, there's little groups of people around the country that I show up and do a weekend with. And he gets tired of the Messiah business. So he goes to God and he said, I don't want to cause any trouble here, boss. But I'd like to get out of the Messiah business.

And God says, okay. He said, when I wait a minute, I don't cause any trouble. I want to do your will. I just like to get out of the Messiah business. And God said, fine. Go ahead. He said, well, I want to do your will. What is your will for me? He says, I want you to be happy. Go do whatever makes you happy. So he becomes a barnstorming pilot selling rides for five bucks and dispensing wisdom as he went. Little tidbits.

It was a fun story. I am not all of those things that whatever people make of me. I am who I am. And if you're lucky, you'll see that. And if you see that, I'll see that in you too. Okay. But I'm out of the Messiah business, but I'm not out of the talking business. I almost quit that too. I'm telling you these things because you folks, most of you, I'm fully aware are at the place where you're about to enter into the world where lives will depend on your being there.

And what you say and do will mean life and death for people. And I know that's a little scary. So, in clearing this away, I meet one of the major conditions. Nelson Mandela in his inauguration speech said it. Essentially, he said, none of us are afraid of failure. What we're really afraid of is our, I just read it the other day, our magnificence, our fullness. It serves no man for you to think that you're less than magnificent.

And you're about to enter into that. And the ego can't be there when that happens. I've seen it destroy people. The ego's got to be out of the way to recognize it. And so that's going to happen for you. One little story and we'll go eat dinner. 1992, Hepatitis took me clear to the ground. I've had it for probably 40 or 50 years, but it took me down. And I was on interferon and dying and literally dying. It just beat the hell out of me.

I can't even describe it to you except simply I tied my right shoe one day and didn't have the energy to tie the left shoe. I fell down. And right in the middle of that, one of my messengers came by. We're messengers for each other, but each of us has some specifics. And Tom Ivester is one of mine. And he asked me if I'd move to North Carolina and help him with putting alcohol and drug treatment behind the walls in penitentiary units.

And I'm too sick to get out of bed. And I called Jackie and said, what do you think? She said, well, you know you can't not go. So right in the middle of all this, I have to leave home, support my group, everything. I moved into a little town in North Carolina where they don't even speak English. They speak Southern. They offered to carry me somewhere. And I thought, I can walk. They don't live anywhere. They stay there.

And one of the first things that old Wallace Bryant did to make me feel at home was give me some country ham and red eye gravy. And I got hepatitis. That's pig fat, cooked in pig fat, and covered with pig fat gravy, and then salted. I took one bite of that and my liver says, you do that again, I'm going to strike you blind. But it began to work out. I really do rely upon God and things began to happen. The group wasn't good enough in what they

weren't doing it right.

I had to go through a hell of a time. They don't really have time for that whole story, but their group wasn't doing it right. One of the worst things was that at my very first meeting, they called the chipmunk up. I had no idea what that is. This guy went to the front and they had this big round thing full of poker chips. And he stood up and he took a silver one and he said, this is how you join AA. If you join AA, come on down and get it.

And I thought, oh shit, I'm at a Baptist revival. Freak me out. They had four different meetings, none of them were doing it right. Anyway, I stayed cool because I was 25 years sober and Tom's friend, I'm cool. But I'm seething inside and I'm sick. I wouldn't know a big book if they saw it, some of them. I needed a fellowship deeper than what I was finding. When I was lost and alone out there, in an effort to make me feel at home, the chairperson and her boyfriend one night asked me if I'd be the chipmunk the following week.

And I lost my cool. I said, there's two things I'll never do in this group. I will never be the chipmunk and I will never participate in that book raffle you have after the meeting. I don't do raffles, we're self-supporting. And if you ever want to know why, I'll tell you. And he said, I want to know why. And I told him. And I went home ashamed of myself. Truly ashamed of myself. They had done their very best to make me welcome when I behaved like an ass.

So I did what had to be done and got clear of that and went back and to make amends there was only one thing I could do. I requested the privilege of being the chipmunk the following week. Now I did not stand up and say, this is how you join A. I said, this will not keep you sober. But it's a good memento of the nights you decided that's what you'd like to do. That night we went through the whole thing. Not one person took a chip.

Nobody. I was never asked to do it again. Which is fine with me. I made my piece. I began to become part of the group. They had a 12 and 12 study. Now I think the 12 and 12 is good. There's not much in the way of directions in it. But it's some good stuff. I know it's history. I don't even think it gets to it, but I don't use it. And they would do what we do with the big book. They'd read something and then they'd share their experience with it.

I didn't have any experience with that. So let's say we were on the 10th step and they were reading it. I would share my experience and it was a little different. And pretty soon someone would come up to me and say, where'd you get that? I've never heard that before. And I said, well, would you like me to show you? And I would show them. And then I would ask them, would you like me to show you more? The next thing you know, I've got five people coming over at six in the morning.

And I'm getting okay here. I once again realized that whether I feel accepted has nothing to do with whether you accept me or not and has to do with whether I accept you or not. I got a piece and my wife visited and I started going home. I got off the interferon because it was killing me. I've been alive ever since. It makes the doctor crazy. They sent me home to die. And he isn't looking too good and I'm doing fine.

I was finally allowed to get a big book workshop started. That's where you sit down for 36 to 40 weeks and go through the big book word for word as a group and just do everything it says as a group. As long as we did it an hour and a half before the meeting. So the regular members wouldn't be bothered. So all of a sudden, there I

am. Even though I'm away from home, I'm sponsoring people. I've got a big book workshop going.

I'm truly a member of the group. The job I discovered I can do. We were having great success getting these programs started. Even though one warden told me I don't want you here. So the governor says I got to let you in but I don't want you here so don't expect any cooperation. And that's fine with me. I knew right where I stood. That's clear. We got more of our counselors out of his unit than any other unit. We got two AA meetings going because he saw something.

The people who came to AA behaved better. They were no longer disciplined problems and he liked that. Anyway, all this is going on and I'm dying spiritually and I know it. And I was baffled. I'm sponsoring. I'm doing a workshop. I'm a member of the group. Everything's going fine and I'm dying spiritually. And I can feel that. And I talk to the new people because they're closer to God generally than I am. They don't have all the knowledge that gets in the way.

And I was talking to Jim and I said, Jim, I'm baffled. I become a good demonstration for God. And I'm dying. What's happening? And I heard what I said. Bruce gave me this early on. I want you to remember what you hear at meetings but more importantly, remember what you say because that'll tell you where you're at. I've become a good demonstration for God. That was the problem. This isn't about me demonstrating for God what I can do.

It's about letting God demonstrate through me what he can do. And that tiny little shift will hit you along the way. Watch for it. It'll throw you clear off. I am now a demonstration of the power of God. I do not make a demonstration. I'll let him demonstrate through me what he can do. And he can be really, really funny sometimes. Really, really funny. We have one more inventory but we also have dinner to go to. Any questions on that piece?

Good. You've done your job well. I know old Bo is a marvel. Now here's the question. We can take tonight off. We can have a regular AM meeting. We can rejoin here and go through what we're going to do. It's entirely up to you. We are at your disposal. What would you like to do? Keep on going. My dinner's at six. What time you want to gather here? It gives you time to clean up and fluff up and whatever you're going to do.

Okay. And then we'll go through this other inventory and then keep moving. Sorry there's got to be a fluff.