

Salt River Intergroup Summer Roundup

2004 | Practicing These Principles | Reading edition

FORMAT	DURATION	RECORDING ID
Transcript PDF	00:45:24	DP-2004-SCOTTSDALE_01

Automated draft. Timestamps have been removed for readability. Names, specialized terms, and unclear passages require human review.

[Listen to the original audio source](#)

Transcript

Timestamp-free reading edition | Automated draft; human review required

Did you get that? Well, I'm only allowed to lie once a day, so it's too late. My name is Don and I am an alcoholic. And I'm a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. My home group is simply known as an AA group. In naming it, we were looking through the traditions and saw the long form of the third tradition so that any two or more alcoholics gather for sobriety may call them. So we meet at six o'clock in the morning at the example of St. Joseph Hospital in Denver, generally 20-25 people. We have no ritual. At six o'clock, we all get quiet. And our format is very simple. We discuss a step, a tradition, and a concept back-to-back. It may take one meeting. It may take six meetings. We don't care. The principles of the programming of the program are very simple.

The principles of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous are far more than just the twelve. This morning, I have been continuously sober, by the way, by the grace of God, because everything I was told was the truth since December 26th of 1967. And I think we need to start talking about that. It doesn't mean that I'm a big deal, but people in AA coming in today are being met with a new lie. Relapse is not a necessary part of recovery. You don't have to drink again, ever. If you get here, it does happen, but it's not necessary.

And the best way to tell people that is to tell them about long-term, continuous sobriety. So we just mentioned, in my area, we mentioned our sobriety date. Our Texans say, if you don't mention it, you probably don't have one. Here they come. The other 2000. Good morning. I'm supposed to share a little this morning about practicing the principles in all of our affairs, and that delights me. If you look at our big book, there's about a third of it devoted to how to recover.

Nearly two-thirds on how to live, now that you've recovered. Bill mentions to us that a far more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations, and affairs. And that means that I'm going to have some affairs. What I have to do is be careful not to have more affairs than I have principles. Isn't that cute? I stole that. I don't even give them credit anymore. I came to Alcoholics Anonymous five and a half months sober.

So I have to tell you that A did not get me sober. Nor do I think A. gets anybody sober. If A. got people sober, everybody who came to A would stay sober. And they don't. But God brought me two A.A. so that this sobriety could have some real depth and meaning and purpose. The main reason I drank is because I can't stand being sober. I'm getting all the other things, but that's the fundamental reason. Sobriety for an alcoholic, if that's all it is, is just sobriety. It's intolerable. Absolutely intolerable. The pain gets too much.

I just watched it happen again. We had a fellow Wednesday night, 27 years sober, blows brains out. Because all he's been doing for a number of years is just going to meetings and doing the deal. But he never changed his life. He never really got down to the fundamentals, which is I can't, he can't, I let him. And so he died. Because for some people drinking is no longer an option. More better here, he just got drunk. We could have worked with him again.

Anyway, I came into a group that before I could go to the regular A meeting, we were required to go through

a five-week, 12-step study school. Where we were hand carried through the steps as they were laid out on the book Alcoholics Anonymous. And in the sixth week, I was given a new group out of the fish tank. This was in a penitentiary. And it was my job now for the rest of my life to give back what I'd been given.

And I just keep doing that. I don't know anything else to do. So, one of the main principles that I live like, and I'm not going to give you a list of the principles that each step, and it's already been done over and over and over and over again. The main principle that I have to live by is that on my own, I'm a complete utter toll failure, and I will hurt you. And I will hate myself for doing it, but I will hurt you.

And when I try to run my life according to what I think it should be, I will hurt you, because I'll be totally self-centered. My life didn't make any sense, and one of the first things that I heard from the first A speaker I ever heard, it was wonderful. We were in our third week in orientation in my third penitentiary. I almost hate to talk about penitentiaries, but that's where I've been. It's the only outfit I know where you gain status, the better you are, showing that awful.

But they had called us down to listen to these three AA people when they demonstrated the first principle that I saw. They came to us and shared with us in case we wanted it. And the first guy I got up was an ugly little convict, just ugly. It looked like a convict. I said, my name is Doc, and I'm an alcoholic, and that means that I'm powerless over alcohol and drugs and drugs and all the other circumstances of my life.

My life has become unmanageable, and if any of you smart bastards think you can still manage your lives, look at the reward the state just gave you for the nifty job you've been doing. So the principle that got demonstrated was cold, clear, clean truths. I believe and live by the principle, if you will. But each time we meet, my job is to pierce you in the heart with the sword of truth. And my job is to keep that sword so sharp that he goes in and comes out without leaving any wounds.

And so that's what I do. I'd have to temper that with love because that's what they did because the love came right after that. He said, your very best drinking got you to the penitentiary, you're just not doing too good, are you? Your best thinking. And that was true. But then love showed up and he said, but we can show you a new way of thinking. We can show you a new way of living. We can show you how to learn to live a way of life that makes sense to you.

And that was a whole new idea. I've been trying to live my life so it made sense to you. It never made sense to anybody. Well, my life today makes a lot of sense to me. And happily, it doesn't make sense to a lot of people. I just don't care. And when you put bread on my table, you can tell me how to live. In the meantime, come on over and share my bread, if you wish. We were then taken through the steps and I had a series of spiritual awakenings.

I am convinced that I arrived here spiritually awake, or I probably wouldn't have heard you. But I had no idea what to do with that. So one of the other things that occurs, and this delves into the area we call sponsorship, which is a whole nother thing, we become teachers in a sense. The message that I carry is not just the words that I speak. Anybody can learn the lingo. In fact, one of the things we're doing that scares me with new people, is we're teaching them the lingo before they're learning the principles.

So we'll ask them how they are, and they give us a little wrap, and they sound pretty good, and they go die. I did not know I needed to be sober, first of all. I was certified as a sociopath type II, a psychopath, and a manic depressive drug addict by the different government agencies who'd been running my life for me. My life was not a manageable one I got here, it was being thoroughly managed. And they helped me understand that the basic problem with me is what's unmanageable as my thought life, because this is reflected out here.

I can't put things together up here in such a way that I won't screw something up. I was not afraid of the penitentiary. This was number three, and you can learn everything you need to know about any penitentiary in about three days if you're a slow learner, and the rest of us just doing time. What had me concerned is that I knew sometime in the next seven years they were going to put me back on the streets of Denver, and I didn't know how to live out there, I'd proven that.

I need to learn how to live among people. The sad thing is I've come from a fine home. My parents were married six to six years when dad died. My brother is a professor of music at the University of Colorado and one of the foremost musicians in the world. My sister was an IBM executive. When my brother was 19, he was writing music with Stan Kenton. When I was 19, I was my first federal penitentiary in Japan, and the contrast does not escape me.

Okay. My great pain is that I am a family man, and I was brought up that way, and I just couldn't pull that off. I just wanted to be a good father and a good son and a good member of the community. I couldn't pull that off. Well, you said you could teach me how to do that. The fundamental is that this is no longer about me. If you're concerned about your ambitions, don't have any. I know that's un-American, but it works for me.

I don't have any personal ambition. Whatever comes by comes by, and boy have I had fun with that. Well, I'll tell you a couple cute little stories because they illustrate what I'm trying to say. I'm not a lecturer. One of the things you taught me was forthrightness. I am to be completely honest and open and let the chips fall where they may because my life is founded on trusting and relying upon God. Whatever that may be.

I'm to trust and rely on that and not myself. That was an easy decision to make because my best thinking gets me locked up in a cage. I've gotten some freedom and began to do this. If I can't be honest with you, I cannot work with you as a new person. If I feed into your lies, then I'm liable to kill you, or at least prolong your agony. I need to tell you the truth. If you keep drinking, you probably won't die. What will happen is you'll get to live this way for a long time.

And that's the truth. Anyway, you taught me to do the truth. So I was not supposed to hit the street. I was supposed to, I still owe the federal government four or five years on parole violation. And it's the last minute they decided to put me on the street. So I hit the streets of Denver with two parole officers, \$17, a size 80 suit with a flashing neon sign that said just out of prison. No resources, no place to live, nothing.

My first parole officer said have a job by tomorrow or back you go. That's clear direction. I didn't need to check that with anybody. So I went to a daily labor pool and got a job at Dixon paper company. Now, Dixon didn't hire ex-convex. But another thing you've taught me is that I'm not an ex-convex. I'm a man when I've been to prison. And there is a difference. So I want to work on the daily labor pools payroll because they could do that, just unloading boxcars.

And about four months later, apparently, they hired men who have been to prison because they asked me to come to work on the dock, which meant I had to fill out a job application. You know, they want you to go back 10 years for your work history. Well, dishroom, state penitentiary, 1966, drug smuggler, that was my job at the time. I just put those down there. That's what I've been taught to do. This is a principle of trust in God.

So they put me to work loading trucks off a dock. Four or five months later, the dispatcher called me into his office and he had my application in a really funny look on his face. He said, did you really do that? I said, yeah, that I did. I said, did you get it across? I said, yes, I did. He says, well, I've been thinking. We have this little downtown delivery truck that delivers paper to the print shops in downtown Denver, and it's a tough little route.

But it seems to me you have the skill necessary to get things from here to there under a tough search. So I got a truck driving joke. I've come to believe that God uses whatever is at hand. And so I need not concern myself with those things. He uses whatever is at hand. And where I get in trouble is where I'm the head of the timetable because sometimes he's not going to interrupt your life to make me feel better. Early prayer is kind of stupid because we go into that area a whole lot.

Morning. More front view setters. Two thousand six hundred and twelve now. I had some amends to make the order to a store that was on that route. And I'll probably talk about that tonight because it touches me. It's important. I'd use whatever is at hand. That's one of the principles I know. I hear today do the next right thing and I get confused because I wouldn't know the right thing from the wrong thing. I did here last night what I do understand do the next indicated thing.

If it's right there do it. That's an easy guy. For major decisions the principle I use is to check it with somebody. And I check with three different people. I always check with three. I will pick someone who will tell me what I want to hear. I just know that. Okay. So. It's just the truth. Major decisions I also check with my wife because anything any major decision I make will affect her. In fact most of the minor decisions I make.

She considers major decisions. So I just check everything with her it's easier. And then I find someone who I know will tell me the truth. If I have a financial problem I don't go to somebody who can't balance their checkbook. I go to my banker. One of the fellows that I work with is a certified financial planner. Before I move any big money which to me is a thousand dollars or more. I check with him and he usually laughs at me and he said it won't matter.

Which is the truth it really won't matter. I've had to learn to carry these principles into all of my affairs. Bruce said to me one time would you like to have some money? And I said well yeah I said well I didn't get a job. Novel idea. And he said once you get it you might even consider showing up for it regularly. There's a principle. Regular. The greatest harm we do to people is to be irregular. I heard a lot of people about becoming a surprise.

And surprises are supposed to come in packages with ribbons on them. I was a surprise. You just never knew what was showing up when I showed up. The harm I did to a lot of people who loved me was that they never knew what was going on. So I regularly show up. When I made a mess with my mother she said honey all I've ever wanted for you is that you'd be happy. So on a regular basis I went by mom's house. Happy. And I drug my happiness with me.

Life children, grandchildren, stories about you. Oh she loved you. She didn't understand you. She thought we're weird. But then shows the rest of my family so it didn't really matter. And while you're there he said you might even consider doing some work on your job. And if you'll do that at the end of a prescribed period they'll give you money. It'll never be enough but it will always be enough. The workplace has been interesting for me because it wasn't that I was unemployable.

I was just a danger to my employers. Since I started living by these principles which is if you're paying me for 40 hours you get 42. Something about living the spiritual life says you give more than you got. So you get 42. I have been in all kinds of, I've had five or six actual careers since I've been sober. And not just jobs, careers. And it's always been weird because there are things that I would never think to do.

I've begun to believe that that's one of the principles here. We're supposed to be spearheads of God's ever advancing creation. That means I can't stay in my tidy little comfort zone. The next thing down the line is going to be beyond me. And this morning is one of those. This is beyond me. Are you kidding? I'm supposed to talk to people about living by spiritual principles at 9 o'clock in the morning. That could be scary.

It isn't. It just really isn't. It used to be. So I get stretched all the time. Old West parish used to tell us you're either growing or you're going. So I need to be stretched all the time. That makes the people around me a little nervous sometimes. Because I'm quite willing to be stretched. Whatever you have in mind for me is better than whatever I have in mind for me. That has taken me on some real interesting journeys.

In 1989 I was part of a team that went to the Soviet Union to talk about AA. And it wasn't because I'm special. I was just at the right place at the right time. One of the basic principles of living the spiritual life for me is to be on time. If you're on time it happens. There's only one time I can experience the presence of God here now. I can remember it from yesterday or I can hope for it for tomorrow, but this is the only thing.

So I have to learn to be on time. And that's nothing you can learn. I have some fun with that. I'll just tell you that story too. I ended up working for the Department of Corrections in North Carolina for two years. When God has worked for you to do nothing gets in the way. That's a basic principle too. If he's got work for you and you're supposed to do it, nothing can stand in the way. So anyway, I went to North Carolina for two years.

All I said had saved my life because at the time I had just come down with hepatitis C and it was dying and was on interfere on and had to leave home and leave family and leave support and leave everything and go to a place where they don't even speak English. They speak southern. I haven't learned to do it but I sure did learn to listen to it. All I said that saved my life because the essence of the human condition is to be useful.

As long as I can be useful I can stay on this planet. When I become useless I must die. That's what uselessness does. And in AA the first thing we get is to become useful. And that's before I even have some good stuff to tell you. It's my wretchedness that makes me useful. Old Jack Brennan at one time. Jack was an old wheelman for the mob. Got fired. It seems that he'd be driving him around to different stick-ups at night and in column the next morning we'll know where they've been.

And just made the boys really nervous. And he took on the New York Police Department. Anyway, by the time Jack got to AA he only had one eye left and his tongue went all chewed up me top bunny. Couldn't tie his

shoes, couldn't use utensils. He was in bad shape. Strong Irish Catholic. God sent a little Jewish fellow to 12 step him. Wonderful stuff. But he said he was sitting in the meeting hall in Shenerock, New York, tying his shoes about six months over when he realized I'm tying my own shoes.

And it irritated him because his sponsor had told him how important he was to the group. And he said, how can I be important? I couldn't even tell my shoes. So he wasn't braced him. That's another principle I live by. If your sponsor tells you to do something and you do it and don't get the exact results you think you ought to get, go bitch at him. Why not? Anyway, he went to his little Jewish sponsor and said, you lied to me.

You said I was important. His sponsor said, oh Jack, you have no idea how important you've been to this group. When new people come here, we sit him next to you. And we tell him, if you keep drinking, that's what you're going to be like. How can I be useful at home? See, I want a home. I'm a home person. I'm a family man. Well, first of all, it's not my home. I've learned that. It's our home. If I am not treating the children with the same way I would treat the person I'm working with, I'm not doing this thing.

Meaning I have to give them time and attention and I have to listen to them, not preach at them. It's led me to believe that most of us should never raise children because the way we do is a criminal activity. We try to impose our views upon them and impose what we think they ought to be on them. And that's a sponsorship thing. I don't do that to the people I work with. I try to let them find out who they are. Well, I do the same thing with the children and grandchildren.

And it works. I wish I don't know what I was raising my boys. We wouldn't have had any more nears much trouble. My daughter says I must tell this story. I married a lady with two little girls and I became their dad. And I don't know if you've been around little girls or not, but when they get feisty, they really get feisty. I mean, I've been in the Navy and in prison and around the world and climbed some of the world's tallest mountains.

And one morning they were in a kitchen talking to each other and they were using words I'd never heard before. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Bitch. And my meditations had gone well that day. I was kind of floating around the house a half inch off the floor. And I did a really stupid thing. As soon as my feet hit the floor, I said stop that. Which in little girl talk and I didn't know it at the time means, oh, Dad wants in the game too.

So the volume went up. Double-bitch, bigger-bitch, bigger-bitch, bigger-bitch. And I lost it. Made another dumb error. I said, knock it off out there. Which means we got him. And they went berserk. And I went berserk. Then the only thing I could think of, get to your rooms. So they laughing ran up to their rooms. In our house, it's critical that everyone has their own room. Spiritual life requires some solitude and some privacy.

And so in our home, you have your own room. If the door is shut, you're going to have to smell the smoke itself with the house on fire because we're not going to bother you. They slammed the doors. Well, oh my. In a single bound, I was at the top of the stairs. Flung the door open and said, if we're going to slam them, we're not going to have them and start taking doors off the hinges. They're laughing, which gave me real strength.

Then they went on to school. And I'm carrying these heavy doors down the stairs. They're going to the basement. And up on top, they were pretty light. By the time I got to the basement, these damn things were heavy. I was losing my juice. And there are a couple of things, a couple of voices come into my mind while I'm

to pay attention. God's very merciful. He uses voices I hear. When I'm about to get a direct message, it sounds like my grandfather saying, down.

But I also have a sponsor who's voice catches me when I'm off base. Well, dummy. And there it was. I got to take these doors right now. All the way back upstairs. Let me hang them. And then when those little girls get home, I got to apologize for acting like such a jerk. I had to find out why their behavior threatened me so much, because it was indicative of something, and I don't want that happening in my house again.

And that was the root of the problem. The attitude, this is my house. How dare you bring this into my house. It's our house. And then I pursued it even further, and discovered why it bothered me so much. And about three weeks later, I sat the girls down, and we had a quiet talk, and I pointed out that part of my problem is that I love you so much, Kelly, that if anyone ever treated you like that, I'd stand like in front of a tank. I'd probably break their arm.

I would protect you with my life. And the same with you, Lisa. She goes so much you got me in a bind. I can't do it. And that's so please lighten up on me. Well, that didn't quit calling each other bitches, but they quit doing it around me, okay, which is satisfactory. The greatest lesson I learned is that from that point on, I send myself to my room. It's just a whole lot easier. Which is consistent with what we're trying to say.

When agitated or doubtful, pause. Get off the tracks. The train's coming. Go sit down until you're reasonable. If it takes two minutes great, if it takes the rest of the night, stay out of everybody's way when you're agitated and doubtful. I say things that are hurtful, and I don't want to do that. In the workplace, I was working in corrections in Colorado. My last nine years in the workforce was in corrections, which I think is really funny.

Now, understanding corrections, this department needs from this department a signature that has to come from this department, and then it goes through me to them, back to me, and back to them. And that's just the way the system works. And nobody ever reads the paper, but you got to have it. And I was having trouble with a probation officer who was needing stuff for me that I was supposed to get from my staff and then from my boss and back.

And the paper flow is just horrible. And she was complaining to my boss who was shaking his finger at me, and I was agitated. And I heard myself say, I wish that bitch had lightened up. Now, one of the principles that I live by is when I talk like that, I'm wrong. It just catches me. I'm wrong. So I backed off to take a look at what's really going on here. What's the real problem? I'm in the business of solving me as a problem.

It turned out to be the facts. Her facts was always busy, and our facts was always busy. It'd take 45, 50 minutes to get there, and it was the facts. So I sat down and thought, well, wait a minute now, I'm in the business of meeting people face-to-face eye-to-eye. And her office is only 20 minutes away, and it takes me 45 minutes for an hour to get to my facts, and then hers is busy no wonder. So how about I go meet her face-to-face?

That's what we do. So I picked up her stuff and drove it down and gave it to her. And after about a week, she started having my stuff ready for me when I got there. And pretty soon that problem got solved because we worked on me. Let's go face-to-face. Last time I saw her, she gave me a big hug. It was a dinner party for somebody. So the principle is, if I'm agitated or doubtful, it's me, not you. I don't care what you're doing, my

problem is me.

And I need to deal with me. And you may be completely wrong. That's none of my business. We got to deal with me. I can't deal with wrong or right until I'm okay with me. What's my role here? What role has God assigned me to play? He may have assigned you the asshole role today. I don't know. Okay. I mean, that was my job yesterday. The most important demonstration of these principles in my affairs is in my affairs. New people don't hear what we say.

How many of you sponsor people? How many times do you have to say the same thing over and over because they just don't get it? Okay. So don't listen so much to my words. They're just to keep you busy so you can watch how I live. If you don't see how I live, why would you want what I have? That's what kept me here. I saw three men who had been completely changed, and that's why I stayed. I didn't come to get sober. I came to be changed and found out later I needed to be sober to have that happen.

Bruce was doing a natural life sentence for a double murder. He'd committed one morning in an alcoholic rage in a stick-up. He shot some people on the street in a shootout with the cops. I've never done anything like that. I couldn't have identified with the story. He told me what he felt like that day and I identified with that, but the fact is the man telling me the story could not commit that act, and I knew that.

Ron Nichols was a stick-up man. Not a good one, obviously. But a stick-up man. The drugs I smuggled, I didn't do it for money, I did it for prestige. I'll tell you about that later too. Roy's big kick out of, he likes stick-up supermarkets and go from cash register to cash register, because he liked the adrenaline jolt. He got knowing that every minute he's in that story is in greater danger. But what he really liked was look on your face when he put a gun to your head and took you stuff away from you.

The man telling me that story could not commit that act. I watched him. Phil Gutierrez came to us from Guam when he was 17, because he couldn't handle him. He was too violent. Several years later, he threw some people out of a three-story window on a drunk and they put him in our penitentiary, because Guam didn't want him back. Phil was the kindest, softest, most loving human being I've ever met. He taught me how to touch physically in a penitentiary where that can be risky.

But Phil's touch, no one ever questioned it. It was the healing touch. It was the master's touch. I watched them. Sure I heard them, sure I went through the book and did this test, but I watched these three. They had integrity. It means they were together. I learned about spiritual people. See, one of the things that you must know is that one of the big mistakes I made in my life is that I thought I was a human being trying to have a spiritual experience, and I had tons of them.

The truth is I'm a spiritual being having a human experience. That leaves me open to the entire human experience. I'm so human it hurts sometimes, because I'm not afraid of it anymore, bring it on. Some of the things I wish I hadn't said that, but you know, how do I live? That will attract you more than what I say. You may not want to live in the same kind of house I do, but I'll bet you would like to have a home however you define that.

You may not want to follow the same work path I have followed, but I bet you'd like to have something that

you'd like to spend eight hours a day doing that paid you enough money that you could feel useful. Watch how I live, because I watch how you live. As a sponsor, now I don't meddle with people's lives unless I'm asked to. I think that's rude, and my worst character defect has always been rudeness. Oh yeah, impose myself in your life whether you ask me or not.

My experience of God was that God is not rude. It comes by invitation only. So I come by invitation only. I also know something else about God. When invited, it always comes. So if you invite me, I'll come. So I won't mess with you, even if I see you about to die. That's not up to me to tell you that, unless you've asked me to do so. So you not only watch my life, I'm watching your life too. And if I see you headed down some dangerous paths, and the only way I know that is because I've been there, I will tell you so.

Then if you want to go anyway, I'll just wait. I'll keep the bandages handy and you'll come back. Or you'll die. It's truly not up to me. Some people have to die so they don't have to ever die again. And I don't know. I'm not smart enough to know. I know I will love you wherever you are and whoever you are. I may not like you, and I'll tell you that. But I'll also tell you I love you. You can't be disruptive in my home.

It's a funny thing. My kids love the AA people. They all since think they're a little weird. One Jackie and I got married. I was nine years sober and she had these little girls, and I had these two barbarians that had been living with me, teenagers. And we put together a home, and we believe in group conscious. Not as a formal thing, but the family makes decisions. Well, I work with a lot of people. And if I'm your sponsor and you're going to go through this test with me, you have to show up at my house at six o'clock in the morning.

For a number of reasons. That's when I'm available. But more importantly, you've got to surrender to something and I know that. And I don't want you to surrender to me. And I know you can't surrender to God, so let's surrender to the time. We'll start off at six o'clock in the morning. And you have to come to my house. I don't come to yours. I'll take you home, but you have to show up at my house. That's just a principle.

And what we will do is go through the big book, word for word, and together you and I will work those steps together. Because my only job is to introduce you to God. Then you're on your own shirt shirt and get out of my house, go do something else. And I have a room where we do that, but the family likes to get to know you first. Because I've told them the truth. Some of the people that are coming here are not very nice.

God seems to send a lot of psychopaths my way. Well, I know who they are. They're frightened little children. So we have killers and robbers and other kinds of narrative wills. Well, in my front door, there's a couch in the chair. And that's where you and I will start. So the family can see who this is and get kind of used to you. And you can see who they are so you don't have to be afraid. So when you come in the house, you're fine.

Another principle that's critical to me is being on time. I live in a city, so if we have a six o'clock appointment, you have ten minutes on either side. You have to understand if you come fifteen minutes early, I'm not ready for you yet. You're being rude. If you come fifteen minutes after, I'm already doing what I was going to do next and it's too late. But more importantly, when you show up, I sit in that chair. That's where I do some of my early morning meditation, to get ready for you.

And when I hear you pull up out front, I go to the door and open it and hold the screen open. So you'll see,

not here, you'll see that the door is already open. I'm just waiting for you. God's demonstrating through me how God works. He's already waiting. Come on in. You are not only more than welcome, we've been waiting for you. That has more effect than all the words that I can speak. Then eventually you get to go up into my room.

And it's a cool place. My way of life has made me a caretaker. I'm a caretaker of my own life, to be a caretaker of all kinds of other things. So people send me stuff. My room is just, everything's up on the wall. Some of it's mine, some of it's yours. I don't know which is which, so I just put it on the wall. And every now and then somebody comes by and says, wow, I like that. Okay, well that's yours. I've been keeping it for you.

Thank you for letting me use it. And one of the things that that does is frees up a space on the wall for the next thing that comes in. Had an inmate do, you loved it. It was a marvelous, on black velvet, a Zulu warrior in full dress with color. It just gorgeous. It didn't fit in my room. It was about three feet by three feet, but it fit. And I put it up there until clam came by. Glam was a young black fan of mine. We worked together and one day he saw it.

Can you imagine? Here's this three feet, three feet, black full of color. It took him weeks to even see it. And then he said, wow. He said, oh, well that's yours, clam. Now what that did was open up a three feet by three feet spot on the wall where some more stuff could go up. Same thing with my life. That's the application of the 10th, 11th, and 12th step in essence. I'm to keep clearing the house to keep making room.

And I get to enjoy that for as long as it's there, as long as I'm willing to give it away freely. When you show up, it's yours. Okay. Thank you very much for letting me enjoy it. And if we become friends, I can come over to your house and look at it if I need to. But I usually don't. I've moved on or something else taking its place. Right now, where that one was is about a four foot scroll in Chinese that has the ultimate boot of saying on it.

From nothing comes form. From form comes nothing. And I love it because I've been through about a thousand different understandings of that and understand I don't understand what that said. But it was a gift of love. Friends learned calligraphy and did that. And that's what's important about it. If you happen to, if it's yours, come get it. But until you show up, it's mine. Prayer and meditation become a very important thing to live by.

I must take time. And prayer changes constantly. From the gimme gimme prayers to the thank you prayers to just the wow prayer. The prayer for strength is when I was taught. I don't pray for relief. I pray for strength to get through whatever I need to get through. Because if I don't, I'm going to have to repeat it someday. The stuff I go through, I don't want to ever repeat again. So give me the strength to get through it.

During that, I become a demonstration of the power of God. Because if you see me with the strength to get through it, I can tell you, it isn't me. And you can pick up a little more strength. Because this is a tough planet to live on. It's God's amusement park planet, and we take it too seriously. But it's a dangerous place. I mean, there's volcanoes and earthquakes. And one of the things I've learned about me, if you're going to live at the basic little volcano, every now and then, you're going to have to build a new house.

If you live on an earthquake fault line, every now and then, it's going to shake you. So pick where you live. I think I'm about done. I have about six more hours that I'd really like to tell you about. Practicing the principles in all of my affairs means if I think about them, I'm probably not doing them. They become living parts. The

principle is, trust in God. Clean house and help others. And everything else is just dressing.

And necessary dressing, but it's just dressing. Trust God. Clean house and help others. So thank you very much. We've got a history lesson coming up here right soon. Thank you very much. And if you want to hear the rest of the story, I'll see you tonight.