

Session 1 Friday nite

Caveats & disclaimers: I am not an ordained minister. I do not attend Al-Anon. I have a great deal of respect for the Alanon Family Groups, their program & the folks who practice it. I am NOT a PP guy.

Guys come here for the fellowship. Some for the views; not a bad place. Some to get away – separation – from work, from family or seeking a solution in a new setting. ALL ARE welcome.

I'm just the Bozo on the bus who will present my experience. It's just my turn.

Any first time Matt Talbot attendees? Any MT guys new to THIS particular retreat?

Intention setting I first attended MT142 back in Maggie Valley about a dozen years ago. One our first sessions started w/ everyone seated in the library for intention setting. Guys stated what they were looking to gain from the retreat. Some mentioned what they were looking to leave behind or get rid of. With that in mind, take a look at this.

Razza (6min)

[The 'Jiro Dreams of Sushi' of Bread & Butter: Razza Pizza Artiginale – Obama Putin](#)

Dan Ritcher. What did you notice about that?

What did you like about it? Comments. Discussion.

Direct Quotes: "I want to do LESS to something. I want to put LESS on the plate. Is there an ingredient that I can take OFF of the plate to make it more simple?"

A man who loved what he was doing: PASSION. Showcasing a 'throw away' item.

Might just be the theme of the retreat.

And that brings us to this. The God box. If you have a persistent problem, that you are having trouble with, jot it down. Is there a stubborn fear, a nasty resentment, write it on a sheet of paper & jab it in a hole. No one is going to read these. These are between you & God.

Lao-tzu [Space]:

Thirty spokes unite at the wheel's hub;

It is the center hole [literally, "from their not being"] that makes it useful.

Shape clay into a vessel;

It is the space within that makes it useful.

Cut out doors & windows for a room;

It is the holes that make it useful.

Therefore profit comes from what is there;
Usefulness from what is not there.

David

Let's take a look at David. He has been called the best representation of a man in perfect proportion. He was carved, by hand, out of marble. Any stone cutters here or tile setters? What's it like to work with stone? Imagine doing so in with no power tools in the year 1501.

Michaelangelo Rejected Marble encyclopedia Britannica

Quotes:

I created a vision of David in my mind and simply carved away everything that was not David.

Sculpture is made by taking away, while painting is made by adding.

I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free.

The idea is there locked inside. All you have to do is remove the excess stone.

Your gifts lie in the place where your values, passions and strengths meet. Discovering that place is the first step toward sculpting your masterpiece, Your Life.

Trivia Q: Where did Bill W die?

Miami Heart Institute in Miami Beach.

Used to be a neat meeting in the cafeteria on the top floor on Friday nights there. The windows had a stunning view of downtown Miami across Biscayne Bay. That meeting was like a Mecca for alcoholics from around the world. There was a guy, Frank, from Chicago, who talked one night about the inventory process. He said in so many words, "You have no idea WHO U R. In the 4th Step, we're gonna knock off who ur not. After we knock off enough pieces, who U R, will show up."

The process of reduction.

Jordan Peterson

Whether the gods are inside or outside makes very little difference to whether there are gods.

Man Carving his Own Destiny

Any of you Conway Boys know where this is? I suppose I should introduce them to you, if they're here. If you want to be quiet on this retreat, stay away from these guys. A more fun loving bunch you will NEVER find. But if you came because you're lonely, or feel alone, sit with THESE guys for one meal. Ya can't all eat w/ them at once, so pick your shots.

Of course, some of you, may choose to eat & visit w/ ur sponsor or friends. And that is fine. Matt Talbots are the ONLY time I see some of these guys. So do as U & ur HP guide you.

But the Conway Boys, unbeknownst to me, gave me my own moniker.

I led one of the AM meditations. We'll do an abbreviated version of that tomorrow AM or maybe Sunday. Part of it was to relax & allow the chair or pew to 'TAKE YOUR WEIGHT. U don't need to be afraid of breaking the chair...' Anyway, the old Matt Talbot Facility had its charms. The chapel was superb w/ commanding views of the valley & was a work of art in its own way w/ glass on one side, tongue in groove ceiling & a stone wall. It was at Living Waters Retreat Center.

Anyway, the rockers were old & creaky. Again, that was part of the charm. So later in the day, during one of the sessions, I was in one of the rockers, relaxing & trying to lean back as far as I could to get the full impact of the rocker. My mind told me that this wasn't a good thing to do, but I continued. On my final lean back, for THAT chair at least, the rickety old wooden bentwood rocker collapsed & I was sprawled out on the floor. I was in the back of the room, so when I fell back, my head slammed into this cheap old bookcase. After that crash, just a few seconds later, these books slid off one of the book shelves & bounced on my head, one at a time. It was like a Wile E Coyote cartoon. It only took a few seconds, from start to finish, and honestly, it took longer to tell you about it, than the time that it actually happened. But the men at that particular retreat were howling.

So that is how I got the nickname of CHAIR-man. The Conway Boys reminded me of it last May. Nice to be remembered.

One of the nice things about AA is that sometimes you get nicknames. At the Sunset group, where I got sober, there were, Horse Jack, One-Eyed Jack, Fishin' Jim, Tall Richard, Chili-Dog, etc. I never knew the reasons for half of the names. I think there was more of that in the past than there is now. But I kinda like CHAIR-man, even if the event was humiliating.

What is the opposite of 'Love?'

IMHO, the opposite of love is neglect, or to be ignored, forgotten.

After I'm gone, I hope the Conway Boys will fondly remember the CHAIR-man.

Conway Boys! Do you know where this is? It is about ½ up the SC coast from Georgetown to Myrtle Beach.

Brookgreen Garden: Man Carving his Own Destiny

James Allen:

8th AM meditation: "Man is made or unmade by himself..."

Inventories (Introspection)

So up here we have some copies of some inventories. Up on the screen we have a Stoic quote from Epictetus. That in itself is a good inventory. E.g. 'crediting ourselves with things well done, chalking up debits when due.' 12/12 P89

The first one, 12 questions, is right out of the BB. I printed multiple copies & put it together in a binder. I don't do it every day. I was advised by Eric A from Calhoun CI in Blountstown FL, that I don't NEED to do it every day. If I start to THINK that I need to, I'm setting myself up for future failure. That is unkind & unrealistic. But I offer this as a form for STRUCTURE.

There is also another Alternate Inventory for your consideration, that only has 4 Qs.

ONE NOTE OF CAUTION!

Step 10 88-95 selected writings

Step 4 (12/12 P 45)

Michaelangelo

The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark.

To know each other is the best way to understand each other. To understand each other is the only way to love each other.

Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.

In every block of marble I see a statue as plain as though it stood before me, shaped and perfect in attitude and action. I have only to hew away the rough walls that imprison the lovely apparition to reveal it to the other eyes as mine see it.

Your greatness is measured by your horizons.

No great work of art is ever finished.

Only God creates. The rest of us just copy.

If people knew how hard I worked to get my mastery, it wouldn't seem so wonderful at all.

Do not fret, for God did not create us to abandon us.

Art is a shadow of Divine perfection.

Faith in oneself is the best and safest course.

I couldn't give you something mediocre even if that's all you asked for.

WTF does this quote mean? Art lives on constraint and dies of freedom.

Camile Paglia

A woman simply is, but a man must become.

Manhood coerced into sensitivity is no manhood at all.

Woman is the dominant sex. Men have to do all sorts of stuff to prove that they are worthy of woman's attention.

If civilization had been left in female hands we would still be living in grass huts.



II. Meditation

Wang

Doe a deer.... Doe a Waaaaang

Twinkle twinkle little staaar.... Twinkle little Waaaaang

Discussion. Who cannot sing? Creation from nothing.
Fun.

Listen for the thief in the night.

Sprinter in the blocks, swimmer on the pedestal, waiting for the starter's gun.

James Allen: 27th PM: "Mediation is the intense dwelling, in thought, ..."

Man w/ the bat story.

As a Man Thinketh

Oppressor/Slave P21

8th Morning
P46 Armory of Thought

I am a man. ...person. ...human being. ...one of God's children. ...ok.

5 affirmations that R gifts from God @ your creation. NO ONE can take them away.

As a Man Thinketh

Poem P16

Cherokee tale of two warring dogs w/in each man.

Immortal Beloved: Music, What is it?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNq_G5QxVhk&ab_channel=PatrickJoiner 3min

III. Prayer

My prayer: "Bring the Willing. Bring the Unwilling & make them willing."

Simplest:

On awakening: "Please."

When we retire at night: "Thank you."

Wolfe St LRA 11th Step Mtg: Week21 Pp 68-69 Many times we put the Co-Founders on a pedestal.

BB P13 "I was to test ... sit quietly when in doubt"

BB 3rd Step Prayer P63

BB 7th Step Prayer P76

Howie: "Prayer is a way to clear the path to get the message from God, so that I get answers to my problems... to serve others." Howie F BtB Sun AM zoom Mtg.

FFB Freedom Prayer

Angie: "Help the Sick get sicker quicker." Her Dad's prayer for her to hit bottom.

7th Step Prayer – Hardcore: "Remove from me w/ loving Force, those things I am unwilling to yield."

One-Eyed Jack Prayer (Resentment): "Pray for them to go to Heaven. Quickly."

Merton Prayer Where I am Going

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following Your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that, if I do this, You will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing

about it. Therefore I will trust You always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for You are ever with me, and You will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen.

Rohr Prayer to Know Presence

May each of us be so fortunate as to be overtaken by God in the midst of little things. May we each be so blessed as to be finished off by God, swooping down from above or welling up from beneath, to extinguish the illusion of separateness that perpetuates our fears. May we, in having our illusory, separate self slain by God, be born into a new and true awareness of who we really are: one with God forever. May we continue on in this true awareness, seeing in each and every little thing we see the fullness of God's presence in our lives. May we also be someone in whose presence others are better able to recognize God's presence in their lives, so that they, too, might know the freedom of the children of God.

■ Fr Richard Rohr

"God, grant me the space, between thought & action." ???

"God, please hang on to me, because I can't hang on to you." -- Brooke [BtB Sun 11th Step Mtg]

Session IV. Putting it All Together

PRM. Readers. Newcomers. Volunteers. [Start timer]

Feet on Floor, Bottom on Chair. Head up straight, palms upright. Inhale. Exhale.

3rd Step Prayer BB P63

7th Step Prayer BB P76

11th Step Prayer BB P88

Pp 50-51

Pp 100

“Imagine yourself as a factory. Breathe... A factory of love. Breathe... U R NOT in charge of sales. Breathe... U R NOT in charge of distribution. Just churn out love. Breathe... Make enough to fill your factory warehouse. Let the fork lifts fill up the loading dock. Just keep making more. One last deep breath. Gently open ur eyes.”

[Stop timer.] Who says he doesn't have enough time for PRM? This exercise is called a 'Few Minutes w/ God.' Elapsed time 4:04. Who doesn't have that time every day?

As a Man Thinketh

Oppressor/Slave P21

8th Morning
P46 Armory of Thought

As a Man Thinketh

Poem P16

Cherokee tale of two warring dogs w/in each man.

Offer to allow newcomers to serve on MT142 committee. New chance to serve. Offered list of Service Suggestions.

Closed w/ Lau-Tzu quote.

Alternative Inventories:

Prisoner slide

What did I do today that I respect myself for?

Obstacles overcome. New challenges met. Sights of others ignored.

Whom did I help?

Getting out of self. REAL benefits, not co-signing BS nor rewarding another's character defect. Should be for the act itself, NOT the visible affect of, 'Did you see what that guy just did?' NOT for approval or an audience. But for yourself, the other person & God!

What bothered me today that bothered me yesterday?

Fear, resentment, selfishness, dishonesty. ANY real defect. Looking for repeat patterns here. Not always a one off.

What happened today that made me feel good, that had nothing to do w/ me?

God shot. Not the top of the mountain view that you had to work for. Not a paycheck. Not an exchange. A pure gift. Could be as simple as coming out of a depression, a kid's smile or a chick checking you out. Grace.

Big Book 11th Step (10th) Inventory:

WHEN WE RETIRE AT NIGHT, WE CONSTRUCTIVELY REVIEW OUR DAY:

Selfish?

Resentful?

Dishonest?

Afraid?

Do I owe an apology?

Have I kept something to myself which should be discussed with another person at once?

Was I kind and loving towards all?

Did I gossip about anyone?

What could I have done better?

Was I thinking of myself most of the time?

Was I thinking of what I could do for others?

Was I thinking of what I could pack into the stream of life?

Be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection?

After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.

Turn page over and write plan for tomorrow. Or list 5 people who made your day better.

Alternative Inventories:

What did I do today that I respect myself for?

Whom did I help?

What bothered me today that bothered me yesterday?

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III. Prayer

Trivia Question: What were the first two (2) prayers incorporated into Alcoholics Anonymous meetings?
AA Comes of Age P196

My prayer: "Bring the Willing. Bring the Unwilling & make them willing."

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Merton Prayer

Service Suggestions

The following are suggestions that my own Service Sponsors gave me. My current is Cushing Phillips. I'll provide his number upon request. He has a ton of experience.

- 1) Read the back pp of the pamphlet "Questions & Answers on Sponsorship" re: Svc Sponsorship.
- 2) Look for ways to be useful to your group.
- 3) Look for ways to be useful to your district.
- 4) When visiting other groups, even groups outside of District 43, introduce yourself [during announcements or if they invite visitors to introduce themselves] as the GSR from your home group, & ask who the GSR for that group is.
 - a. If they have one, & he or she identifies him/herself, let them know that they serve as a vital link btwn that group & AA as a whole. [Believe it or not, they w/ appreciate it.]
 - b. If they do not have one, tell them a brief (90 second) experience of yours that makes you want to continue to be a GSR. Invite them to investigate the Service structure in their Area/District.
- 5) Make BRIEF, pertinent announcements at every meeting you attend. Especially your home group. If you pay attention @ the district meeting or area assembly, there is a LOT going on re: Grapevine, TFC, CPC/PI, Corrections, etc. Other AAs are LOOKING for opportunities to serve – not everyone, but SOME – are just WAITING to be asked. Give them the chance by letting them know how much these other committees could use them.
- 6) Regularly attend district meetings.
- 7) Regularly attend area assemblies.
- 8) Volunteer to present 5 min discussion of a Concept @ next District meeting (if you have already done so, allow others the chance).
- 9) If your group does not already have one, encourage participation by your group to provide you w/ a good altGSR, so that you can:
 - a. Share the load.
 - b. Allow them the chance to get acquainted w/ the job, so that they are less nervous, lost or inexperienced as you were. This also gives someone the opportunity for a test drive. So that if this is not for them, they can move on to another service opportunity that suits them better.
- 10) Study the Service Manual, 12 Traditions, & AA structure.
- 11) Call your Service Sponsor once each week (month?) to advise him of your current activities to fulfill these items. Also call at that time to review issues or challenges. This w/b similar to a 10th or 11th Step.
- 12) MOST IMPORTANT: Have fun! We are not a glum lot.