

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

About the Joe & Charlie Sessions

Joe McQ and Charlie P met in 1973 when Joe introduced Charlie as the AA speaker at an AIAnon convention. Joe had wondered if Charlie P might be the country singer Charlie Pride. "he wasn't even the right color," Joe laments.

They instantly discovered their mutual fascinations with AA's basic textbook, Alcoholics Anonymous commonly called "The Big Book". What interested them mostly was that The Big Book was written in a particular sequence to convey certain ideas. That interest became close friendship, which has lasted over 20 years.

They would frequently meet to discuss The Big Book, often driving 225 miles to meet in each other's homes. Soon they were planning meetings in hotel rooms at AA conventions in Oklahoma and Arkansas and, within a few years, the meetings grew in popularity.

In 1977, some AA members met in a Tulsa, Oklahoma hotel room for a discussion on The Big Book. One member asked Joe and Charlie to come to his home group to present a program on The Big Book. A taping of that presentation was made and called "The Big Book Study". Through the circulation of these audio tapes throughout the Fellowship, Joe and Charlie received invitations to present the Study at AA conventions, roundups and special events. By 1980, there were about eight studies offered each year.

At the AA International Convention in New Orleans in 1980, Wesley P, an impassioned AA "Big Booker" from Pompano Beach, Florida, organized a lunch for 1,500 AA members from all over the world and gave away 100 Joe & Charlie tape sets as door prizes. Invitations exploded, and within a couple of years Joe & Charlie were presenting about 36 seminars a year worldwide.

These seminars struck a deep chord within the AA members ... for the reaffirmation of "this message" as written April 1939 with the publication of the first edition of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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Big Book Studies presented by Joe & Charlie have been given in all 50 states as well as most Canadian provinces in addition to Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, Iceland, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and Holland.

The original Joe, Joe McQ, has had to cut back his traveling in recent years. Oddly enough, another Joe - Joe McC (who was active in the study group since the beginning) has been able to pick up the slack. "where God guides, God provides", as some members say.

Joe & Charlie are not paid for their services. In fact, the only financial compensation they receive is their travel expenses, meals, and lodging which are paid for by the independent host committee sponsoring the Big Book Studies. Further, this is in accordance with the AA Guidelines of Conferences & Conventions (MG4), published by the General Service Office.

In the past 24 years, an estimated 200,000 members of various 12 step programs have experienced the spiritual benefits of these collective seminars. One of their stops was at the Melville Marriot in Melville - Long Island NY over the weekend of June 19 - 21. 1998. I was privileged to be amongst the 400+ people who were there. They start at the chapter - The Doctors Opinion, and over the course of the next 2 days take us all the way through to the final words of the chapter - A Vision for You - "We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. May God bless you and keep you - until then." (Page 164).

In between they show us how simple and uncomplicated it can be to complete a Fourth Step Inventory, as well as allowing us to hear the experience, strength, and hope that they have been fortunate to enjoy in many, many years of spiritual sobriety. They both showed all of us that It works - It really works ! all we have to do is follow the directions given to us by the first 68 members of AA who spent time with Bill Wilson and gave the world Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book) in 1939.

Joe McQ. from Little Rock, Arkansas, of the original Joe and Charlie Big Book Studies, moved on to another life October 25, 2007.

Charlie P. followed him April 21, 2007.