

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

WEEK #12

Big Book p. 51, par 1 *"Some of the contemporaries of Columbus thought a round earth preposterous."*

J & C Now I think Columbus is one of the greatest examples of what you can do based upon belief, if you're willing to change your belief. Some 500 years ago most of what they call the civilized world was situated around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, the western shores of Europe. They had found a place called the East Indies. And in the East Indies you could get gold, silk, and spices. Lots of goody goodies. But it took literally years to get to the East Indies so they were trying to find a new trade route to the East Indies. And somebody said, "Is there any possibility that we can sail a ship there?" And they said, "Well, no dummy, don't you know you can only sail to the northeast end of the Mediterranean Sea, and then you have to go by land". Camelback, horseback, footback, however they traveled, and that trip took literally years to do. And they said, "Well what would happen if we sailed in the other direction?" And they said, "Well idiot, don't you know if you sail out there you're going to sail off the edge of this sucker."

You see everybody in those days thought the world was flat and they assumed if you sailed out there you would sail off the edge of it. Well I don't know why they believed that. I assume some people sailed out there, didn't come back, and they thought they had sailed off the edge of it. And Joe said the other day wouldn't it be great if the world was flat. We could take all this environmental junk, just take it out there and go pff, push er overboard and be done with it.

Now here comes Columbus, and we believe that Columbus had to be an alcoholic.

Cause if you're going to believe differently than the world and everybody in it, and you're going to stand there and express that belief, you're going to have to be tougher than hell to do it. Because many times if you express a belief different than what everybody else believes they would burn you at the stake or hang you from a tree, or cut your head off or something. And Columbus was tough enough and bullheaded enough to be able to stand there and he said, "I believe that the world is round, I do not believe it's flat". Then he made one of the most drunk statements the world has ever heard. He said, "I believe we can get east by sailing west".

Now if that isn't drunk thinking I don't know what is. Many of his mannerisms indicated he was alcoholic.

- When he left he didn't know where he was going.
- When he got there he didn't know where he was.
- When he got back he didn't even know where he had been.

But what really made him an alcoholic was a woman financed the whole trip for him. She did that twice.

Columbus followed a little formula. You'll want to write down these key words in the formula. He followed a little formula that the world has always known. **That if you want to change anything at all there are certain things that have to take place.**

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And the first thing you have to do in order to change anything is to be willing to do so. Circumstances are what make us willing. Trying to find the new trade route to the East Indies is what made him willing to change.

The second thing you have to do to change anything is to believe you can do so. When he said, "I believe that the world is round it is not flat, I believe you can get East by sailing West." But his belief didn't do him any good either, cause he's still standing on the shore of the ocean the day he expressed that belief.

Some days, weeks, months, years later he did **the third thing, he made a decision.** He said by golly I'm going to go find out whether this thing is round or flat, can you really get east by sailing west. But his decision didn't do him any good either, cause he's still standing on the shore of the ocean the day he expressed that decision.

Some days, weeks, months, years later he did **the next thing you have to do, he started taking action.** And the first thing he did he went to the King of Portugal to get the money. But the King of Portugal being a very astute businessman said, "There's no way I'm going to let you have this money cause you'll sail out there and sail right off the edge of this sucker and I'll lose it all". That's why he ended up with the Queen of Spain. Sweet-talked her out of the money on the promise that he would bring back gold, silk, spices and the goody goodies of life. She gave him the money. He bought three ships. He put provisions in those three ships, he put crewmembers in those three ships, and they began to go east by sailing west. Sailing west, day, after day, after day.

Now we don't know for sure, but we have a suspicion that on that first trip he hired a special sailor, put him on the bow of the lead ship at night with a lantern. Whispered in his ear, "I believe this thing is round, but if you see the edge of this damn thing you holler so we can get turned around in time."

Now after having sailed straight west for several days they got results. They found land on the other side, which was the result of the action that they had taken. Now we know that he thought it was the East Indies, it wasn't, it was the West Indies. But he had proven himself the world is not flat, it is round, you will not sail off the edge of it. Turned right around came right back to Europe, went right back to the Queen of Spain. And she said "Columbus, where's the gold, silk and spices you promised you would bring me?" And he said, "Sweetheart I'm sorry but I didn't find any". But he said, "Tell you what I'll do; if you'll refinance me I'll go back. Trust me honey please. And this time I'll find it". And she re-financed him and he got some more ships, more provisions, more crew members and began to go east by sailing west with one big difference. The second trip he didn't hire the special sailor, put him on the bow of the lead ship at night. **This time he went back on faith; he went back on knowledge. The first time he went back on belief.**

You can't start with faith

The only thing you can do is

start with belief (Step 2)

make the decision (Step 3)

take the action (Steps 4-11)

get the results and then you'll have faith

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I would love to sit here and tell you today that the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous are brand new; the world has never seen anything like them before. But if I did I'd tell you a lie. Because they are based on the same identical formula that Columbus and any other human being has ever used to change anything.

The first thing you and I have to do in order to recover from alcoholism is to be willing to change.

And that's what **Step 1** gives us is the willingness.

Whenever we can see that what we're doing is no longer going to work, then we become willing to change.

The second thing we have to do is to **belief we can do so**, and that's **Step 2**.

But that belief will do us no good unless we **make a decision about it**. And that's **Step 3**.

And the decision will do us no good unless we **take the action**.

And that's **(Steps) 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11**.

As the result of the action **then we will get results** too.

(1st part of Step 12)

Having had a spiritual awakening **as the result of these steps...**

We now have faith. We now have knowledge. We no longer believe.

You see I don't believe today that God will restore me to sanity, I know that he will, because he has done so.

(2nd part of Step 12)

Now those of us who have been restored to sanity and we have the faith, then we can go back and help

the next newcomer come to **believe**. (Step 2)

they can make a **decision**, (Step 3)

and we can take them by the hand and walk with them through the **action steps**, (Steps 4-11)

then they will get **results**, they will have a spiritual awakening, and then they will know,

(1st part Step 12)

and then they can go help the next newcomer come to believe (2nd part Step 12)

Now there's only one thing you and I can't do for the newcomer, **we cannot make them willing**. (Step 1)

That's a job they have to work on themselves.

How does an alcoholic become willing to change?

Very simple, drinking lots of whiskey. I hear people come to AA and they say I've been working on Step 1 for three years in AA and I say no you haven't

You don't work on Step 1 (willingness) in AA.

You work on Step 1 out there.

And when you drunk enough of that whiskey, you just can't stand it any longer, then you become willing to change.

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Then we can begin to help you by helping you come to believe, decide, act and have a spiritual awakening;

same formula that the world has always used to change the status of anything. Now if

I know I need the power, and if

I know the beginning of the finding of the power is just to believe, if

I know the procedure (formula) to follow to find the power, then

I only need to know one more thing,

where am I going to find that power?

And I think we get here just as confused about where God is, as we were ever confused about anything else. As a kid growing up, somewhere I got a picture in my mind. Now I don't know whether I dreamed it or saw it, but in my mind when I was thinking about God, he was a tall elderly gentleman. Stood on a cloud up in the sky. Long flowing white robes on, long white hair, golden halo around his head, and sunrays shooting out of that halo, and a big stick in his right hand. And I don't know whether I saw that or whether I dreamed it, but one of the reasons I thought God was there is because every time the minister talked about God he always pointed up there so I knew he had to be up there somewhere. But then what really confused me, I noticed every time the minister wanted to talk to God, he always looked down here. He points up, hell no wonder we get confused as kids about where God is.

And I looked and I looked and I looked and I looked, and I never could find God because I never did know where he was.

And it took the Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous to tell me just exactly where I'm going to find him.

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Many years ago I was working, not working but involved in a half way house in Tulsa and I was heavily involved and there was this young man there who asked me to be his sponsor and he said well what do you think I ought to do? And I said well it would probably be a good idea if you had a job you know, start somewhere here, and he said easy for you to say I don't have any car and I can't get back and forth with no money, can't even ride the bus. And I said well I'll take you around and help you find a job, and if you find a job I'll take you back and forth till you can get a couple of pay checks and then you can buy a car or do whatever you need to do. He said fine, so I'm taking him back and forth to work, and one morning he told me a story that really helped me a lot. And this is the way the story goes.

He said there was the three Wiseman of the east, he said and they took from man the crown of life, the thing that would make us the happiest and took it away from them. And they said, "Now we took it away from them, what are we going to do with it?" One of them guys said I'll tell you what we'll do, we'll take it to the highest, highest crevice on the face of the earth in the highest, highest mountain and we'll hide it up there, and they'll never be able to find it. And the other two said yeah, but you know how they are, they'll hunt and they'll search and they'll eventually find it. The third one said I'll tell you what, we'll take it to the deepest, deepest crevice of the deepest ocean and hide it there and they'll never think about looking for it there. He said yeah, but you know how they are, they'll hunt and they'll search and they'll eventually find it. The third one said, I'll tell you what we'll do, we'll hide it within himself, and he'll never think about looking for it there.

Page 55, first paragraph

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Big Book, p.55, par. 2 *"Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself.*

We finally saw that faith in some kind of a God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but He was there. He was as much a fact as we were. We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found. It was so with us.

We can only clear the ground a bit. If our testimony helps sweep away prejudice (closed mind, old ideas), enables you to think honestly, encourages you to search diligently within yourself, then if you wish, you can join us on the Broad Highway.

With this attitude you cannot fail. The consciousness of your belief is sure to come to you."

J & C A God of your own understanding is sure to come to you with an open mind

It seems as though all human beings are born with some basic knowledge, deep down inside themselves, probably lying at a subconscious level. And that basic knowledge seems to be able to tell us what we should do and what we shouldn't do. It seems to be able to tell us how we should live and how we shouldn't live. And I'm sure a lot of people would like to refer to that as just plain old common sense. I think others might want to call it innate intelligence. Some might want to call it the conscious. And others might want to call it the soul. I don't think it makes any difference what we call it, as long as we **recognize the fact that it's there.**

If you're anything like I am, as far back as I can remember, I've always been aware of that knowledge. There used to be times that I would be getting ready to do something, and some voice somewhere from within side me would say Charlie, "I don't believe you ought to be doing this. And I wouldn't pay a bit of attention to it, and I'd go right ahead and do it and I'd get in one hell of a mess. And that same little voice would say see, "I told you not to do it in the first place". Now if that's true, and if that's God, then what that means to me today is

if God dwells within me, then I've got my own personal God.

I don't worry anymore about whether he's the God of the Baptist Church or not, I don't worry whether he's the God of the Catholic Church, the Hebrew religion or anybody else's God.

**If he dwells within me, then he's my own personal God and
He and I can come together in very simple, in very understandable terms.**

This is one of the greatest pieces of information that I have ever learned is

**I can have my own God, and he dwells within me, and
my knowledge comes from him and through him I'll be able to find that power.**