

# Big Book Comes Alive Study Group

## Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

WEEK #15

### Step 4: Chapter 5 - How It Works

(Session 21 -0:15:43.)

J & C We've made our decision, we've uttered our prayers, and the book says

*Big Book p. 63, par. 4, line 1* "Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision (Step 3) was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of the things in ourselves which had been blocking us (Step 4). Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions."

J & C We always like to stop here for just a moment and look at the time element between Step 3 and Step 4. We always hear people asking the question, "How long should you wait after you do Step 3 until you start on Step 4?" And we hear all kinds of answers. Sometimes they'll say 30 days, maybe 90 days, or maybe 6 months. We heard a professional in the field one time counseling people to wait a minimum of two years. And our question back to that person was, "How many people have you killed with that statement?"

We're trying to find a way to live where we not only can be sober, but we can have a little peace of mind, serenity and happiness. And everyday that we put off and procrastinate Step 4, is the day that we're still filled with resentments, a day that we're still filled with shame and fear and guilt and remorse. Another day that we don't feel good. And we really don't know how many days we can go without our mind beginning to think about taking a drink. And the next thing you know we've convinced our self that it's okay to drink, and we end up drunk all over again.

I don't know how many days I could go under those conditions, and frankly I'm not very interested in finding out. Our book tells us when we should take Step 4

**Step 3 will have little permanent effect unless at once followed by this strenuous effort which is Step 4**

and you know that does make sense doesn't it. Far back as I can remember, 4 has always followed immediately after three.

**Now knowing that, and knowing we might get drunk if we don't get on with Step 4, why would we still tend to procrastinate?**

**I think one two or three reasons behind it. Number one is fear.**

Some of we older members tend to play King off of the Mountain with this Step. We tell the newcomer how tough it is. By God, just wait till you get to Step 4. Blah, blah, blah. We literally scare them to death. Let us be the first to say today that if we take Step 4 according to the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous there is nothing whatsoever to be afraid of. And I think we're all going to see that in just a little bit.

**Knowing there's nothing to be afraid of, why would we still tend to procrastinate?**

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**I think one of the greatest reasons is simply confusion.**

For years we could not see how to do Step 4 according to the Big Book. The reason we couldn't see it is the instructions are there but they are so simple that we alcoholics with our keen, intellectual, alcoholic minds looking for something more complicated, overlooked the simplicity of Step 4. So in our desperation, we read over in Step 5 something about sharing your entire life story, and we say that's what they want us to do in Step 4. Is write our life story so we can share it in Step 5. That's what I did in the beginning. My life story might not have been important to others but it must have been to me, there was 92 pages in it. I took it to another poor, suffering human being and asked him to read and he did. He said it's not very pretty is it? I said no it isn't. He said you'll never have to be that way again and he threw it in the waste paper basket. And I learned nothing from my life story to contribute to my alcoholism, certainly nothing new. Everything I wrote down I already knew it, so nothing new came out of it. Today I realize that 95% of my life story really doesn't have anything to do with my alcoholism anyhow. The fact that I was born in 1929, I don't think it's got a thing to do with my alcoholism. It may have had something to do with some else's alcoholism but not mine. The fact that I graduated from High School at age 17, went immediately into the service, I don't think it has a thing to do with my alcoholism. The fact that I was married at age 21. I don't think that has anything to do with it. But I'll tell you what it did do, the 95% that had nothing to do with it, very effectively covered up the 5% that did. I learned nothing from my life story to contribute to my alcoholism. So in our desperation again, somebody in Minneapolis, Minnesota wrote a 4th Step Inventory guide.

We took the Minneapolis guide and combined it with the Big Book and got more confused yet. Somebody in Dallas, Texas wrote a 4th Step Inventory guide. We took the Dallas guide, combined it with the Minneapolis guide, combined it with the Big Book and got more confused yet. Have no idea how many are floating around today. We saw one that had 20 pages in it. I guarantee if you wasn't crazy as hell as you took it, you would be when you were through with it. It was one of those. All the time the instructions have been here. We just never could see them before because we didn't understand how Bill writes.

I think today, if we can just sit back and relax, look at a few simple ideas; we're going to see how easy this thing really is. There are two things we've got to remember. First he loves to use comparisons, talking about one thing that we already know to teach us something new. Also he did not like to repeat himself using the same words over and over. So he would tell us something and then turn around and tell us again using different words the second time. And bearing those two thoughts in mind I think we can see how simple this thing really is. He starts out by saying

**Big Book p. 64, par. 2, line 1**                      *"Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory.  
This was Step 4."*

J & C                      Immediately he jumps into business

**Big Book p. 64, par. 2, line 2**                      *"A business that takes no regular inventory usually goes broke."*

J & C                      I think his first comparison is this, if you had a business, I don't care what it is, selling ladies purses, watches, bicycles or whatever. if you did an inventory once in a while. And by the way, inventory is defined as a written list of items. If you didn't go in there and make a list of the things that are in there, you wouldn't know what was stolen that you didn't get paid for. If you didn't inventory once in a while, you wouldn't know what's been sold and you need to re-order to put new stock in its place.

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If you didn't inventory once in a while you wouldn't know what's become damaged. Nobody wants to buy it, it's sitting there taking up valuable floor space day after day after day. You're probably paying interest on borrowed money to put it in there in the first place. If you didn't inventory once in a while you wouldn't know what's become out of style. You need to put it on sale so you can get it out of the store to put something new in its place. If you had a business and didn't inventory once in a while you probably would go broke, and I think we can all see that.

In our personal lives we have a business too. Greatest business in the world for us. It's the business of find a way to live where we can have a little peace of mind, serenity and happiness so we don't have to go back to drinking. If we don't inventory in our personal business, chances are we're not going to find what's damaged and unsalable in our heads that's going to cause us to go broke too. And going broke for us is simply going back to drink.

So whether we're dealing with a personal business or a business business, in either case, we would probably go broke without the inventory. Now then he's going to tell us how to take a business inventory

**Big Book p. 64, par. 2, line 10**

*"Taking a commercial"*

J & C He could have said "business again" couldn't he? But he'll use the word commercial which means the same thing.

**Big Book p. 64, par. 2, line 10**

*"Taking a commercial inventory"*

J & C Now Joe up here on the screen, and you also have it in your handout materials, we're going to have a little picture up here that's going to be called Inventory Comparison, I think it's Step 5 in your hand out sheet. On one side it says business, the other side says personal. We're going to take a few key worlds out of the Big Book and put it under business.

**Big Book p. 64, par. 2, line 10**

*"Taking a commercial inventory is a fact finding. (put under Business) and a fact facing process (put under Business). It is an effort to discover the truth (put under Business) about the stock in trade (put under Business)."*

J & C The stock in trade is what's in there to sell. The ladies purses, the men's watches, the bicycles, or whatever.

**Big Book p. 64 par. 2, line 13**

*"One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, (put under business) to get rid of them promptly and without regret. (put under Business)."*

J & C In other words, we're going to go in there and we're going to find the facts. When we find them, we're going to face the facts. We're looking for the truth about the stock in trade. We're trying to find the damaged and unsalable goods. The good items will not cause us to go broke. They resale everyday and we're making money off of them. The damaged and unsalable goods, they're the ones that's blocking the floor space and the shelf space and costing us money. When we finally find them, we're going to try to get rid of them promptly and without regret. We can't put anything new in their in their place until they're gone. We're trying to find the stock in trade that's damaged and get it out of there.

**Big Book p. 64, par. 2, line 15**

*"If the owner of the business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values."*

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J & C            He's got to be honest. Once in a while he'll try to fool himself. He'll say the reason these ladies aren't buying these purses is they just don't understand what's good for them. He made the decision to buy them; he hates to admit he made a mistake. He may keep them in there longer than he should, and if it does it's going to cost him money every day.

Is there anybody in here that would have any problems with what he's told us about the business inventory?

That we're going to try to find the facts. That when we find them we're going to try to face them. We're looking for the truth about the stock in trade. We're looking for the damaged and unsalable goods. When we find them we're going to get rid of them promptly and without regret, always looking for the stock in trade that's damage. Anybody's got any problems there? Ok now watch it. He used a series of words that tells us how to take our personal inventory; it means basically the same thing.

*Big Book p. 64, par. 3, line 1            "We did exactly the same thing with our lives.  
We took stock honestly"*

J & C            So now we go to Step 4 (Step 4 says that now we're under Personal on the right side of the sheet)

### **Step 4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves**

“Made a searching ...”

We're putting **searching across from fact-finding they mean the same thing.** To find the facts, to search out the facts.

“Made a searching and fearless ....”

We're putting **fearless across from fact-finding, they mean the same thing. To face the facts, to fearlessly look at them.**

“Made a searching and fearless moral...”

And that's where we got in trouble. We said oh damn, there's that list of dirty, filthy, nasty items. We don't want to look at them and we sure as hell don't want to show them to anyone else. Now I'm not sure what Bill Wilson knew, but I know one thing, this guy understood the English language. And I really believe that **if he wanted you and I to make a list of dirty, filth, nasty items, he would have said**

### **We made a searching and fearless amoral or immoral inventory**

He didn't say that, he said **moral.** Bugged the hell out of us, until eventually we went back to the dictionary. Do you know what the word moral is defined as

**Truth. Things as they really are. The right and wrong of any given situation. The truth about things.**

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**Truth and moral mean exactly the same thing**

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of what...”

**Of ourselves. We’re the only stock in trade that we have in the business of staying sober. Nobody else can make us sober, and nobody else can make us drink.**

Oh I’ll agree they can make us thirty as hell once in a while, but they can’t make us drink.

**We decide whether we drink or not.**

What part of us decides whether we drink or not?                      Is it our body or is it our mind?

**The real problem of the alcoholic centers in the mind.**

We’re going to look inside our selves, in our minds, and we’re going to **find those flawed thinking processes,**

which is the damaged and unsalable goods, **that block us off from God.**

We made a decision to turn our will over to God, and **as long as our mind is filled with damaged unsalable goods then God can’t direct our thinking**

We’re going to have to find them. And after we once find them, we’re going to have to get rid of them promptly and without regret.

**When those flawed thinking processes leave our minds, then our mind is opened up for God’s thinking to enter.**

**But it’s only after they are gone that God can enter**

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### **Step 4: Chapter 5 - How It Works**

(Session 22 – 0.18:34)

J & C                      Now there are three common manifestations of a life run on self-will, and we’ve already talked about them.

**The flawed thinking processes in our mind that blocks God out are our resentments fear, guilt and remorse associated with the harms done to other people. And as long as our mind is occupied with those thoughts then God’s thoughts can’t come in.**

It’s just that simple. Now I like to look at my head up here as a little bitty store, not much, a little bitty Quick Trip or Seven11, not a hell of a lot in it, never has been. Over here in this part of my store I’ve got some display cases and they are filled with resentments. Damn him, damn her, my God I’ll show them, bladdy, blah blah. Those display cases are already full. God simply can not get in there because he is blocked out by the damaged and unsalable goods called resentments.

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Over here in this part of my store I got a little file cabinet and it's filled with fear: Oh my god, what's she going to do when she finds out about this one. Oh my God what's the banker going to say when that check hits there this time; he already told me he's going to file on me next time. Oh my God, is that my car sitting there out front, front end torn up, don't know how, oh my God, and on and on and on. God can't get in there. He's very effectively blocked out by those fears. Back here in the back of my store I got a little file ready and it's filled with guilt and remorse.

**God dwells in each of us and we know the difference between right and wrong.**

We do these things that hurt other people, we're scared to death that there going to do when they find out, and the guilt and remorse begin to eat us up. God can't get in that store room, he's already blocked out of there.

**If I want God to direct my thinking then I'm going to have to do something about these resentments, fear, guilt and remorse. If I can remove them then God's thinking can enter into my mind and direct those portions of my mind where he was effectively blocked out.**

Now my book is getting ready to show me just exactly how to look at these things truthfully. It's getting ready to show me how to remove them. Then the greatest thing it's going to show me is how to keep them from coming back in the future.

**And if I do my part, then God can direct my thinking. But until I've done my part, God can't, it's just that simple.**

*Big Book p. 64, par. 3, line 17*      *"We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly."*

J & C      Truthfully, morally.

*Big Book p. 64, par. 3, line 18*      *"First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations. Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper"*

J & C      So the first thing we're going to do is look at these resentments. Now I think we need to look at that words and make sure we understand what it means. The word resentment is made from two old old words. First are the letters RE.

When you see RE in front of another words it always means "to do again", like repaint, replay, redo. It always means to do again. The last part of this word, "SENTMENT" comes from an old word called "sentire", which means to feel.

**Resentment means to re-feel.**

Let's say we're going through life which we do on a daily basis, remembering always that everybody has got self-will. That's one of the problems; it's standard equipment. Everybody's got self-will. From time to time other people get sick in self; maybe their social instinct is out of kilter. Maybe their security instinct or their sex instinct is fouled up.

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And they do something to me that **threatens one of my basic instincts of life**. Maybe they put me down in the eyes of other people, and it threatens my self-esteem. Maybe they do something to threaten one of my personal relationships. Maybe they rip me off and steal my money from me. Maybe they do something to interfere with my sex life. Maybe they do something that threatens one of my ambitions for the future.

Now when they do that, that's a wrong on their part for doing so, that's not a resentment.

**It doesn't become a resentment until I go over in the next room, or I go home that evening, and I replay that thing in my mind, and I feel the pain the second time.**

The first time they did it to me hurt me, but **when I go over it and replay it, and feel the pain the second time then I'm doing it to myself now**. They did it to me the first time, but I'm doing it to me the second time. And after a while **I'll replay it again and I'll feel the pain the third time**.

And what I've found in my life is that I'm not always completely honest with me.

Because it seems as though **when I replay this thing, each time I tend to change it just a little bit**.

**I tend to make what they did to me just a little bit worse.**

**I tend to make what I did just a little bit less.**

**I tend to make the pain just a little bit deeper.**

And if you let me play it over in my head enough times after a while I can say to myself I was just standing there doing nothing, and they came along and did it to me.

I love to watch football games, and in a football game you'll see a guy called a quarterback, and sometimes he'll throw a pass. And the guy that's supposed to receive it, many times it's thrown up high on purpose so the other guys can't catch it. And the guy that's going to receive it, so many times has to jump way up in the air to catch it. Now the members of the opposing team, they have learned that if you can hit this guy while he's still up in the air before he really gets good control of that ball, you can knock it loose from him. So they wait until he jumps up in the air, and when that ball touches his fingers they knock the hell out of him. Now he's completely defenseless now and they'll hit him and sometimes it'll just turn him upside-down. He'll fall on his head, his neck bends sideways, his legs spread apart, one arm bends completely behind his back, and it just hurts the hell out of him. You can see that he's hurt. Now the football game though, is like the game of life. It's going to go on; they're not going to stop it very long. One of two things will happen with his guy. They'll run out there and check him over and if he isn't hurt too bad they'll pump a little air in him and get him up and get him going again. If he's hurt too bad, they'll drag him off to the side, put somebody in his place, and the game starts again. The football game is going to continue, I don't care what's happened.

Now the announcer up in the booth though, he's got a resentment machine. Cause after a while he'll say let's look at that again. And this time it is in slow motion and living color. My God it looks twice as bad as it did the first time. You can see how back his neck really did bend, how far his legs spread apart and how badly that arm was bent and it looks twice as bad as it did the first time.

After a while the announcer will say, let's look at that again. The games been going on now for fifteen minutes, the announcers still bouncing this guy up and down, up and down, up and down off the ground.

**Now we alcoholics have up here in our heads a little resentment replay machine**

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And we get up in the morning, and we tune it up in living color, we clean the lens on it cause we don't want to miss nothing, and we shine it on the world on day long, and we record everything they do to us that's bad, and we go home at night and sit down and play it over in our head, make ourselves sick and blame it on them.

Now once in a while we have a bad day. Once in a while they won't do anything to us. We got our machine cleaned up, the lens is clean, tuned up we shine it on the world, and nobody will do anything to us.

We don't have anything bad to record. You know what we record those days? By God **we record what they're thinking**. That's what we do we go home at night and play it over in our head, make ourselves sick

**Now there's a bad thing about a resentment, each time you play it over in your head, each time you throw it out there, after a while it turns around and comes back at you**

**When it comes back at you it comes back as self-resentment**

and we begin to resent ourselves for being in a position to have those things happen to us. After a while **self resentment turns to self-pity**

and that's the sickest, sickest that a human being can be up in their head, is too be filled with self-pity. And we alcoholics love self-pity.

We like to get up early in the morning, put self-pity on as a cloak of dignity, and as we go out the door we say here we come mean old world, just do it to mean. I know you're going to get me cause you always do. It is a sick, sick way to build our self-esteem. Cause after all if the whole world is picking on us we must really be somebody, and my God we love that self-pity. If you want an alcoholic mad, if you want to make them mad you try to feel sorry for one of us. We'll tell you in a hurry, don't you feel sorry for me, that's my damn job.

Is there any way God can enter a mind filled with that kind of crap?

No way, our thinking is controlled and dominated by these resentments and all the things that go along with it.

**God is absolutely, completely blocked out of our mind through these resentments.**

At the very least, we're going to have to do something about them. Now the instructions on how to do them are here in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous are just so simple that we never could see them before. We've given you a sheet in your handout material called "A Review of Resentments".

And what I would ask you to do know is to take those last 2 columns, try to fold them over to where you can't even see them, where all you're looking at is column 1, 2 and 3. The example on page 65 has already been filled out, and we didn't know the procedure Bill used to fill it out.

That's where a lot of our confusion is. So what we've given to you in the first three columns is page 65 in a blank form. We want to emphasize we're not trying to bring another inventory to AA, we've already got enough of those. Page 65, the resentment sheet that you have, is 65 in a blank form.

Column 1  
*I'm resentful at:*

Column 2  
*The Cause*

Column 3  
*Affects my:*

Now let's see if we can't find the instructions on how to fill it out.

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*Big Book p. 64, par. 4, line 28*

*"In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper."*

J & C        Okay, you got the paper now, we're going to start setting them down. You know we're always taught to read from left to right, and if you read from left to right in trying to figure out the inventory on page 65 you would start with Mr. Brown. You would write down the resentment, change your mind and go to the second column and write down the cause, change your mind again and go to what part of self was affected. You have to use those basic instincts of life, and write down what part of self was affected. Then you'd go back to the first column, mentally, and write down Mrs. Jones, and then you'd change your mind again and go to the second column. You get the idea, if you do that long enough, if you have a mind like mine it says, tilt, just too much information. And I say, what the hell, all they wanted was a life story anyhow. So I just disregarded this. But we didn't know how to fill out this column. It seems to us you fill this out one column at a time from top to bottom, leaving a little space in between the names in column one. You'll fill that in column two a little bit later. Our book says,

*Big Book p. 64, par. 4, line 29*  
were angry."

*"We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we*

J & C        Period. From top to bottom in column one. We would simply write down all the people, principals and institutions with whom we were angry from top to bottom leaving a little space between each one of them all the way down.

**People**        That's self-explanatory:

**Institutions** Those things such as the Police Department, Internal Revenue Service, Federal Government, Church.

**Principals** old, old guiding "laws", natural laws that's interfered with our style of living Ten Commandments, that's a set of principals. When I was out there drinking I didn't want to here nothing about the Ten Commandments. I'm breaking all of them but one, and maybe I broke it in a black out too, I don't know. Another old principal I always hated was, "What goes up must come down". I never cared for that one. Another one said, "What you give out is what you get back". Another one said, "There are no free rides you pay for whatever you get". And my Dad used to say, "When you lay down with dogs, you'll get fleas on you every time". Those old, old principals that interfered with our style of living.

### **Now you don't need to be sober very long to do this.**

All we've got to do is take these things out of our head and put them down on paper. You don't have to have a high education to do this. If you can't write, you feed the names to somebody else and let them write them down. **And while our mind is on one thing, and one thing only, let's fill out the first column from top to bottom.** I've never seen an alcoholic yet that did not know just who and what by God we're mad at. We spend thousands of hours sitting around in bars talking about it. All we've got to do is take it out of our head and put it down on a piece of paper, and we would have completed the first instruction.

And hopefully the same thing will happen to you that happened to me when I did this. They came to me and they said, list your resentments, and I said, I don't have any. And they said, surely you have one or two, maybe you don't understand what a resentment is.

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And they explained to me that it was to **re-feel old pains and old hurts**. And I said yeah I got a couple of those. They said put them on paper, leave a little space in between each one. So I got a sheet of paper and leaving a space between like the book does, first thing I know I got about 8 names on that sheet of paper. I reached over and got another sheet of paper, and after a while I had eight more listed. I got another sheet of paper and the next thing you know I had eight more listed and I got another sheet of paper. I got up to about 152, and I said man, you're madder than hell at everything. I did not know that.

**You can only see one resentment at a time in your head.**

**I don't think any of us will ever see how many resentments we really do have, and how much they control and dominate our thinking until we get them down on a sheet on paper and see them in their entirety for the first time.**

**Now we made a decision (Step 3) to let God direct our thinking, and if we've got that many resentments then resentments direct our thinking and God can't**

And it's just by the listing of the names, we learn something very valuable about ourselves - just how resentful we really are. You just can't see this stuff in your head, it has to go on paper.

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