

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group

Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

WEEK #16

Step 4: Chapter 5 - How It Works

(Session 23 - 00:17:55.)

So we filled out the first column. Now Bill said, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Jones, My employer and My wife. He probably had more than that. I think he just didn't want to use anymore space in the Big Book. Mine was that long, long list of about 152 names. Joe.

Big Book p. 64, par. 4, line 31 "We asked ourselves why we were angry."

J & C Period. Stop right there and go to the second column *The Cause*

In the illustration he uses here **very short and sweet, just four or five little words, not too many words to describe the cause. Simplicity is the key here in the second column.**

I'm resentful at: The Cause

- Mr. Brown His attentions to my wife.
- Told my wife of my mistress.
- Brown may get my job at the office.
- Mrs. Jones She's a nut - she snubbed me.
- She committed her husband for drinking. He's my friend.
- She's a gossip.
- My Employer Unreasonable - Unjust - Overbearing.
(Refers to p. 36)
- Threatens to fire me for drinking and padding my expense account.
- My Wife Misunderstands and nags.
- Likes Brown.
- Wants house put in her name.

So simply in the second column we just write down, we ask ourselves why we were angry. Beside each name one at a time, using four or five little words to describe the cause. There may be one cause, or there may be two or three causes, but we simply write them down in the second column.

We're not going to write any long essays, just a few simple words by each name. It may be one cause, or it may be multiple causes as we have here. Whatever it is we put it down.

I filled out the second column and I began to realize something that's become very valuable to me.

**I began to realize that it's not the People and the Institutions that I'm upset with.
It's what they've done to me that's got me upset.**

I can take Mr. Brown out of here and put Mr. Green in. I'll be just as upset with Green as I am with Brown if he does the same thing to me. I could take Mrs. Jones out of here and put Mrs. Smith in. If Smith does the same thing I'm going to be just as upset with her as I am with Jones. I can take my wife out of here and put my mistress in, and if she does the same thing I'll be just as upset with her. I begin to realize it's not them that's got me upset, it's what they've done to me that's got me upset.

Now the reason that's valuable is because of this. I'm getting ready to start out on a lifetime changing process to develop the best possible relationship I can with the world and everybody in it so I can have maximum peace of mind and serenity. A part of that relationship is a little later on in my program I'm going to have to go to a bunch of people and ask them to forgive me for what I've done to them. By the same token, I'm going to have to forgive others for what they've done to me.

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

And a part of that forgiving process can start right here when I begin to realize it's not them, it's what they've done that's got me upset.

That starts getting names out of the way. And it's going to make it a lot easier to handle this in the future. So I've filled out two columns now.

1. I learned how resentful I really am, how much that blocks me from God.
 2. I learned it's not them I resent; it's what they've done to me that I actually resent.
- Two valuable things. Now let's look at the third column.

Big Book p. 64, par. 4, line 33 *"In most cases it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships (including sex) were hurt or threatened. So we were sore. We were burned up. On our grudge list we set opposite each name our injuries. Was it our self-esteem, our security, our ambitions, our personal, or sex relations, which had been interfered with? We were usually as definite as this example:"*

J & C And again using that information that we got from **the basic instincts of life**, we set to fill out the third column, what part of self was affected by that, what basic instinct was threatened by the action those people did.

I can't be upset with you unless you've done something to threaten one of these basic instincts of life.

If you threaten my social instinct in any way, my self-esteem, my personal relations, you're going to upset me, make me angry. If you threaten my security, either material or emotional, you're going to upset me and make me angry. If you threaten my sex life in anyway, you're going to upset me and make me angry. And as I begin to fill out the third column and put down the part of self that is affected, in most cases I begin to see a pattern develop.

- Maybe beside each name I'm putting down self-esteem.
- Maybe I begin to see my main problem is self-esteem.
- Maybe I'm putting down security. Maybe I begin to see my main problem deals with security.
- Maybe I'm putting something under sex each time and I begin to realize the sex thing is my main problem.

I begin to see what part of self really does stand out.

Probably going to be a combination of all three, but I can certainly see what part of self really does predominate and stand out when I keep seeing it appear over and over and over and over again.

When I filled out the third column here's where I learned something that I think is the most valuable thing I ever learned about me. As I filled out the third column, for the first time in my life I could see where anger comes from. I've always had a problem with anger; I've always acted and re-acted with anger. I would do something to hurt other people I'd be ashamed of it, I'd say I'd never to it again, I'd turn right around and get angry and do it all over again.

You can't do anything about a problem until you understand the problem. I never did understand where anger comes from. I always thought it was just one of those feelings that flitted into your mind, you could do nothing about it. Today I realize that **anger comes from a threat to one of these basic instincts of life.**

If my basic instincts are under control at the level that God intended, if my relationship with God is okay, you can do anything you want to me and I'm not going to experience anger over it.

I'll guarantee you if my instincts are out of control, if my relationship with God is not right, about anything you do to me that threatens a basic instinct, creates anger.

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group

Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

And I romp and stomp and raise hell with you and everybody around you. Now this lady that I'm married to today, hopefully I can introduce you to her tomorrow, she's her with us this weekend, a beautiful lady name Barbara. If there's any such thing as a black belt Al-Anon, she's one of them.

She's got now about 31 or 32 years in the Al-Anon fellowship, great, great program. But Barbara is like all human beings. She has self-will too. Now once in a while, she'll get sick in self. Al-Anons do that once in a while, not too often but once in a while. She'll do something that threatens one of my basic instincts of life. And when she does it, it hurts. I've found that if my relationship with God is right, my instincts are at the level God intended, I'm able to say, the poor old thing. They're sick just like we are and they can't help it anymore than we can, and that thing will just slide off of my back and just won't bother me at all and I'll just go on about my business. Now thirty days later though, the same lady does the same thing, only this time my instincts are not under control and my relationship with God is not right today. And I react to what she did with anger, and I romp and I stomp and I raise hell with Barbara and everybody around me all day long. The same lady did the same thing but I choose to react to it in an entirely different manner based upon my relationship with God and where my instincts are that day. Thank God I've learned that, cause you see I can't do anything about Barbara, and

**I can't do anything about any other human being on earth,
but I can do something about my relationship with God
and keeping my instincts under control where I don't have to get angry.
And if I don't have to get angry, I'm in much less chance of drinking
than I am if I just continue that anger over and over and over.**

Thank God I learned that. One of the best pieces of information I ever found. Now we have filled out three columns.

Column 1

We listed the people we're angry with, resentful at.

And we realize how resentful we really are, and how much that blocks us off from the sunlight of the spirit.

Column 2

We learned it's not them we're resentful at; it's what they've done to us.

Column 3

We learned it's not even what they've done to us. It's how we choose to react to it based on our relationship with God and whether our instincts are under control or not.

Now we're going to fill out a couple names here from our inventory. We're not going to do the whole thing, but just two or three names as an example. The first name on my sheet was this lady named Barbara. Thirty some odd years ago I hated this lady with a purple passion. If I could have done away with her and not got caught I believe I would have done it. I used to lay awake at night fantasizing about this thing. Tomorrow morning while she's on the way to work and by the way she always worked. I believed in her being self supporting through her own contributions. Always thinking of others. Tomorrow morning while she's on the way to work she's going to get run over by a big semi truck. And it's not just going to be any trucking company, it's going to be a very affluent trucking company. And they're going to run over her and kill her and I'm going to sue them.

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group

Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

And I'm going to come out of this deal getting rid of her with two or three million dollars in hand. You Al-Anon's are not the only ones that fantasize, we alkie's did it too, believe me we did. The second name on my sheet was the Internal Revenue Service. God, I hated those people with a purple passion. Just mention their name and I began to froth at the mouth immediately. Joe, what was the first name on your inventory sheet? Rose, wife number one, Rose. Now it's just that simple, that's how you fill out the first column.

We go to the second column. Why am I so upset with Barbara? The last year before she went to Al-Anon she had the audacity to file for divorce three times. She's spending more money on lawyers and divorces than I'm spending on booze and everything that goes with it. And my God I hated her for that. Why am I so upset with the Internal Revenue Service? Well they're trying to put me in jail, that's why. Joe, how come you're so upset with Rose? Had an affair with another man, after all I done to her, I mean after all I done for her. Had an affair with another man, really upset with her.

Now we go to the third column.

- Barbara filing for divorce three times, is that a threat to my self-esteem?

You betcha. What are other people going to think about me now, taking this lady back after she's filed for divorce three times?

- Barbara filing for divorce three times, is that a threat to my personal relationships?

Sure it is. She's going to take the kids and she's going to leave or they're going to kick me out, one of the two. No personal relationships.

- Her filing for divorce three times, is that a threat to my security?

By the time she's through, she'll have it all don't worry about that.

- Is it a threat to my sex life?

She probably won't let me have any sex if we get a divorce.

- The Internal Revenue Service trying to put me in jail, is that a threat to my self-esteem?

What are people going to think about me after this deals over with?

- Is it a threat to my personal relationships?

They're not going to let me have any relationship with my wife and children if I'm in jail

- Is it a threat to my security?

They're going to take every penny I've got by the time it's over with.

- Is it a threat to my sex life?

The kind I'd like to have, you betcha it's a threat to it.

- Rose had an affair with another man, is that a threat to Joe's self-esteem?

- Is it a threat to his personal relationships?

- Is it a threat to his security?

Yeah he'll have to go to work now, she's been supporting him for the last ten years.

- A threat to his sex life?

All these things are a threat to those things. OK. When we have finished up these three sheets/columns, and we've been able to see

column 1 - how many resentments we have

column 2 - the cause of the resentment

column 3 - the part of self that was affected

and we've learned valuable information about ourselves, just by filling out those three sheets.

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

Step 4: Chapter 5 - How It Works

(Session 24 - 00:15:41.0)

J & C Now then let's see what we do with those three sheets after they're filled out. Joe.

Big Book p.65, par. 4 *"We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully. The first thing apparent was that this world and its people were often quite wrong. To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got. The usual outcome was that people continued to wrong us and we stayed sore. Sometimes it was remorse and then we were sore at ourselves. But the more we fought and tried to have our own way, the worse matters got. As in war, the victor only seemed to win. Our moments of triumph were short-lived. It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours that might have been worth while. "*

J & C And I read that last statement and I stopped. And I tried to look back in my life and see how much time I've squandered in resentments. Now I don't know about you guys, but I know about me. When I've got a good resentment churning around here in my head I'm pretty well paralyzed from doing anything worthwhile. And one of my favorite things that I was doing back when I was drinking was to get up early in the morning, have a drink of whiskey and a cup of coffee and turn on my resentment reply machine. And replay what she did to me yesterday and replay what that guy did to me a month ago and replay what the person said to me six months ago and replay what that damn boss did to me about a year ago. And replay what that damn policeman did to me about 5 years ago. And replay what my uncle did to me 10 years ago. And replay what my mother did to me 15 years ago. And replay what my father did to me 20 years ago. And it took me just about an hour to run through that tape. And I loved every moment of it. When that tape would run out I'd have another drink of whiskey and another cup of coffee and I would turn on my get even machine. Now by God the next time she does that I'll do this and she'll do that and socko I'll put it on here. They're not going to treat me that way.

And it took me just about an hour to run through that tape. And I loved every moment of it. When I came into AA I found out the only difference was I wasn't taking the drink of whiskey. I was having the cup of coffee turned on the resentment reply machine run it for an hour another cup of coffee turn on the get even machine run it for an hour. I have spent literally thousands and thousands and thousands of hours in resentments. And as far as I can tell they've never done me any good whatsoever. They certainly never made me any money. They never made me feel better. They only made me feel worse. They never straightened up a relationship with another human being, they only made them worse and worse and worse.

And as far as I can tell that was absolute complete wasted time. Now as a human being, I really believe today that I'm allotted just so much time to be here on earth. And I'm beginning to approach the end of mine. And for the first time in my life not only am I sober but I am peaceful, happy and free. For the first time in my life I'm sober and I feel great. I didn't know that you could be sober and feel as good as I feel today. What little time that I have left I want to enjoy every moment of it. I don't want to waste any more time in resentment or anything else that blocks me off from God. I want to enjoy every moment of every day that I've got left. I simply do not intend to waste any more time in resentments. They block you off from God they block you off from your fellow man. They just make you sicker and sicker and sicker. And what time we spend in them is an absolute waste of time. That's one of the worst things about a resentment wasting what time we have left in resentments. But that's not the worst thing. Here's the worst thing about a resentment.

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group

Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

Big Book p.66, par. 1, line 4 *"But with the alcoholic, whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feeling we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die."*

J & C That's the worst thing about resentment. When we've got a good resentment churning around in our head we don't feel good. We're blocked off from God. And after awhile the mind wanting to feel better begins to think about the sense of ease and comfort that comes at once with taking a couple of drinks. Next thing you know we become insane. We convince ourselves it's OK to drink. And we end up taking a drink and we trigger the allergy and we end up drunk all over again. That's the worst part about a resentment. The book says

Big Book p. 66, par. 2 *"If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us. They may be the dubious luxury of normal men, but for alcoholics these things are poison. We turned back to the list,*

J & C And you see this is why you've got to have a written inventory. If you had it in your head you would have lost it already.

Big Book p. 66, par. 3 *"We turned back to the list, for it held the key to the future. We were prepared to look for it from an entirely different angle. "*

J & C Always before I looked at it to see what those suckers had done to me. Today I would look at it to see what that resentment is doing to me. And if it's blocking me off from God and maybe causing me to get drunk then I'm looking at it from an entirely different angle.

Big Book p. 66, par. 3, line 3 *"We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us. In that state, the wrong-doing of others, fancied or real, had power to actually kill. "*

J & C And I stopped and I said Charlie how dumb can you be? All my life I've been proud of the fact that I stand on my own two feet, nobody tells me what to do. I don't need your advice thank you. And I suddenly realized that other people through my resentment toward them have controlled and dominated my thinking as far back as I can remember. And if they've controlled and dominated my thinking, they've controlled and dominated my actions they have absolutely completely controlled and dominated my entire life for me. I always thought I was in charge, but I suddenly realized other people had been in charge as far back as I can remember through my resentment towards them. And then I said Man you really are stupid aren't you. Cause some of these people have been dead and buried in the graveyard for years. And they've been reaching out from the grave and they've had me by the yang yang for as far back as I can remember. And when I saw that I said to hell with them. I'm not going to let those people alive or dead, live in my head rent-free any longer. I've made a decision to let God direct my thinking and if others direct it, alive or dead justified or unjustified, then God can't. And it's just that simple. And an amazing thing happened to me right here. We alcoholics fancy ourselves as reasonable intelligent people. And I don't know that we're smarter than anybody else but I think we're reasonably intelligent people. And we don't like to look stupid. And when I saw the stupidity of letting those people control me and dominate me it looked so dumb that about 95% of these resentments begin to disappear automatically. When I saw how stupid that really was.

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group

Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

But I found that I had 4 or 5 or 6 that were so deeply embedded in my mind for so long that they didn't automatically disappear when I saw the stupidity behind them. And for those I had to have some additional help. We now come to the first prayer in the Big Book in step 4. We always here about the step 3 prayer , the step 7 prayer but we never here about the step 4 prayer. Let's see how we can use prayer to remove those deep, deep seeded resentments.

Big Book p. 66, par. 3, line 6 *"How could we escape? We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than alcohol."*

J & C You see you can't heal a sick mind with a sick mind. You can't wish your way out of it.

Big Book p. 66, par. 4 *"This was our course: We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. Though we did not like their symptoms and the way these disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too. We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended we said to ourselves, "This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done."*

J & C And I'm like Charlie. I spent many, many years in my life, many hours of life thinking and my mind was racing uncontrollably, and figuring out some way I could get even with those people. And I finally figured out a way to get even with them.

Well the way you get even with people is you pray for them. And when you pray for them then you're even. You see I didn't know that. And after I got sober, id been sober about 3 or 4 months, I went to a little conference in Apache, Oklahoma. And I met a lady there, some of you know, her name was Alabam Carruthers. Some of you all knew Alabam. See become a big influence on my life. And she said a couple of things that night that really struck me. She said she had a soul sickness. And I could identify with that. Cause my last night of drinking I was sitting on a barstool and I had a real sick feeling in my stomach and it wasn't the throwing up type sick it was sick feeling. And she said it was a soul sickness and that's what I had. A soul sickness. And then she said another thing that night. She said I have peace of mind today. And boy I mean that really struck me. Cause that's all I've ever wanted was peace of mind.

And I loved Alabam. She was always excited about life and what was going to happen next. And after that meeting was over with we were sitting around the lobby of this hotel and it was about 3:00 in the morning and I was sitting there watching Alabam operate and I wasn't saying anything. Finally it was just Alabam and myself and my little sponsor George, a little black guy laying in her lap. And I began to talk to Alabam. And I said Alabam you said you had peace of mind tonight how did you get peace of mind? I want peace of mind. And she said well Joe tell me what's going on in your mind. And I told her how I was going to meetings and going to meetings and going to meetings. But then at night I'd go home and lay down and my mind would fly open and I'd begin to think about all those situations that we talked about. And she said well Joe you're just full of resentments. And I said what is resentment? See I didn't know. She said resentment was old angers and old hurts that were refelt over and over and over again. And all that anger that you intended to use up on them you're turning it in on yourself and making yourself sick and blaming it on them. She explained that to me and it took a while for me to understand. Finally I did. And I said well is there any solutions for these? And she said well yes there is. There just happens to be. And she referred to page 67 and she showed me this information here. And she said some of those deep seeded resentments like you have you'll need some additional help. And she said on page 551 of this book is the story of a lady who had those deep seeded resentments.

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

And if you would turn to that page in the book she said we will see what it had to say. Well Alabam had purse that was about hit big and it was about that deep and she began to look in that purse. You know how they are, digging around. And she finally found one of these books. I didn't think she was ever going to ding it. She pulled it out of there and she said well let's look at page 551 and see what this says. So I turned over to page 551 in her book and in the third paragraph this book says

Big Book, p. 551, par. 3 *"I've had many spiritual experiences since I've been in the program, many that I didn't recognize tight away, for I'm slow to learn and they take many guises. But one was so outstanding that I like to pass it on whenever I can in hope that it will help someone else as it has me. As I said earlier, self-pity and resentment were my constant companions and my inventory began to look like a thirty-three year diary, for I seemed to have resentment against everybody I had ever known. All but one "responded to the treatment" suggested in the Steps immediately"*

J & C All but one automatically began to disappear when she saw how dumb they really were.

Big Book, p. 551, par. 3, line 11 *"but this on posed a problem. It was against my mother and it was twenty-five years old. I had fed it, fanned it and nurtured it as one might a delicate child, and it had become as much a part of me as my breathing. It had provided me with excuses for my lack of education, my marital failures, personal failures, inadequacy, and of course my alcoholism and, though I really thought I had been willing to part with it, now I knew I was reluctant to let it go.*

One morning, however, I realized I had to get rid of it, for my reprieve was running out, and if I didn't get rid of it I was going to get dunk -- and I didn't want to get drunk any more. In my prayers that morning I asked God to point out to me some way to be free of this resentment. During the day a friend of mine brought me some magazines to take to a hospital group I was interested in , and I looked through them and a :banner" across the front of one featured an article by a prominent clergyman in which I caught the word "resentment".

He said, in effect: "If you have a resentment you wasn't to be free of, if you will pray for the person or the thing that you resent, you will be free. If you will ask in prayer for everything you want for yourself to be given to them, you will be free. Ask for their health, their prosperity, their happiness, and you will be free. even when you don't really want it for them, and your prayers are only words and you don't mean it, go ahead and do it anyway. Do it every day for two weeks and you will find you have come to man it and to want it for them, and you will realize that where you used to fell bitterness and resentment and hatred, you now feel compassionate understanding and love"

J & C Well I went home after that meeting and I got in my bed that Sunday night, laid down and my old mind flipped over again and started racing, uncontrollably. And I said now I think I'll pray for those people. So I started praying for those people that night. And my list got longer. The next day I prayed for those people again. And that afternoon I prayed for those people. And that night I prayed for those people. I don't know how long it went on it was 2 or 3 weeks or more I don't know. But it seems like I was in constant prayer for them, day and night, praying for those people. I don't know exactly what happened but I do know that one morning it was one of the beautiful spring mornings we have in Oklahoma and I got stuck at this stop light. Just the length of a stoplight is what happened. I looked over at that beautiful house sitting over there and the grass was so green just beautiful. Greenest green I'd ever seen. The tulips were in full bloom, red and yellow. The little squirrels were in the trees and the birds were in the trees whistling and I got...it was just a beautiful morning. And I thought to myself, my God how long has it been since I've seen that. You know I could not remember, I could not remember.

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group
Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

And when this book talks about being cut off from the sunlight of the spirit I really do know what that means. I really do. Cause that morning it was so vivid. Now what happened was that those people did not change. But my thoughts and feeling towards them did change. You see. And has never returned again.

Thank God for this program called alcoholics anonymous. I've been there and I don't want ever to return again.
