

# Big Book Comes Alive Study Group

## Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

**WEEK #17**

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

(Session 25 - 00:18:39.0)

J & C            I think the reason this works so well is prayer for another human being, prayer for their welfare and their happiness is probably one of the greatest expressions of love that one human being can have for another. And love and hate can't exist on the same plane. And as we pray for that human being, asking that God give them in their lives the same things we want in ours, peace of mind, serenity, happiness, etc, over a period of time that resentment will begin to disappear. Sometimes it just takes 2 or 3 prayers. Sometimes it takes everyday for 2 weeks. Sometimes it might take everyday for 2 months. But if we will consistently do it, we will find sooner or later that that resentment is replaced with love and the resentment disappears.

Now if you've got a resentment that you don't want to get rid of, for God's sake don't pray about them. Cause if you do, you're going to lose it. I know I speak from experience.

You know I had a guy that I really, really, really resented. And again I think I would gladly have put him away if I could have gotten by with it without getting caught. And when I got to this part of the inventory I went to my sponsor. Now this is going to be one of those "take it to the grave" resentments. I had no desire to remove it at all. And I had worked on all of the others but this one just stuck in there. And I went to my sponsor and I told him about it. And he said "Charlie, you've got to get rid of that resentment." And I said, "I don't want to get rid of this resentment." And he said, "Well that's beside the point." He said, "If you don't get rid of it sooner or later it's going to get you drunk". And in my smart mouth way I said, "Well how in the hell do I do it?"

And he said, "Let me show you". And he took me to this prayer too. And he said "Now read that and go home and do what it says and you'll get rid of that resentment". And I went home and got down on my knees, which again I very seldom did in those days, and I said "God, I want you to give that son of a bitch everything he deserves" and that's the only prayer I had for him that day. And I prayed again and again and again and 3 or 4 or 5 days later, I don't know when, I found myself saying something I didn't really mean to say. I found myself saying "God give him in his life what I want in mine. The same peace of mind, serenity and happiness that I seek for myself." And 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 days later, I don't know when, I woke up one morning and that resentment was gone, completely gone. And it's never returned since that date. And I think the irony in the whole situation is that it wasn't 30 days later this guy moved in as my next door neighbor. This thing really does work.

See what I learned from this experience is that

### **Love is forgiving and love is for giving**

Now just think, this old head up here, these display case over here were filled with resentments has now been emptied out. The resentments, the damaged and unsalable goods called resentment has now been removed from my mind. Now when that happens to me there's another natural law that applies. That says nature abhors a vacuum. No such thing as a vacuum or void. There is always something trying to rush in and fill it up. If those resentments disappear God's not going to leave another hole in my head. I've got enough of those already.

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They will have to be replaced with something else. And the only thing that can replace them will be the opposite of them. Where my mind used to be filled with resentments, that portion of it is now filled with love, patience, tolerance, compassion, and goodwill toward my fellow man.

**That's God's thinking. My thinking was the resentment.  
God's thinking is love, patience, tolerance, compassion, and goodwill  
and that part of my mind is now filled with God's thinking.**

You see there's nothing negative here at all. This is a positive happening. In part of my mind I've now got peace of mind, serenity and happiness. Much less chance of my drinking no than when I started the inventory process. And what really blew my mind is this. I didn't have to go to any other fellowships, and I didn't have to read any other books to find love, patience, tolerance, compassion, and goodwill.

**If God dwells within me and my book says he does and that's always been a part of my makeup I  
just never could use it before.**

**In my chase for money, power, prestige, sex and what I thought were the good things of life those  
thoughts had to be repressed to let me to operate on the level that I wanted to operate on. But now  
that resentments are gone they automatically come to the surface.**

I've never seen anything like this before. I don't really understand how this works. I simply know that if I do the simple things the book tells me to do this happens automatically and resentments are replaced with love, patience, tolerance, compassion, and goodwill toward my fellow man.

But it will do me no good to get rid of resentments if I didn't know how to keep them from coming back. Cause the world is full of sick people and their going to do it to me again tomorrow. And if I'm not careful I'll resent. And it seems as though I don't get just one. When I get one, let me play with it just a little bit and then I've got two. And let me play with those two and then I've got ten. And the next thing you know I'm a basket case and I'm sick all over again. I've got to do one more thing. Let's unfold those last two columns on your inventory sheet, and let's go to page 67, and well see if we can't find the information to fill out the last two columns. In the second paragraph on page 67 it says

**Big Book p. 67, par. 2**            *"Referring to our list again."*

J & C            You see you've got to have written inventory. This is the second time we've had to go back to it now.

**Big Book p. 67, par. 2**            *"Referring to our list again. Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. "*

J & C            Uh-oh. We've never done this have we? We've always looked to see what they did. We've never looked to see what we did.

**Big Book p. 67, par. 2**            *"Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely. Where were we to blame? The inventory was ours, not the other man's. When we saw our faults we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight."*

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J & C            So we go to the fourth column. And if you'll notice the heading on the fourth column says, "What did I do?" Putting out of mind the wrongs others had done, I resolutely looked for my own mistakes. What did I do, if anything, to set in motion trains and circumstances which in turn caused people or institutions to hurt me and eventually led to my resentment of them for doing so?

So I went to column 4, and I looked at this lady named Barbara and I said "Now Charlie you forget what she did. You forget her filing for 3 divorces. What did you do, if anything, to set that in motion?" And it took me just about 5 seconds to realize that if I hadn't been out there screwing around she probably wouldn't have caught me. And she probably wouldn't have filed for divorce in the first place. Took me another 2 or 3 seconds to say to myself well if I hadn't been sneaking around behind her back lying to her all the time, completely dishonest with her, she probably wouldn't have filed for divorce in the first place. Another 3 or 4 seconds and I was able to say to myself well if I hadn't been blowing all of her money on booze and what I think was important she probably wouldn't have filed for divorce in the first place. And I begin to realize why I love that resentment. Cause you see when I could concentrate on her filing for divorce and play that over and over and over and over in my head, gradually distorting the picture every time I played it over making what she did a little bit worse and what I did a little bit less. And let me play it long enough I could gradually transfer all blame to her and make myself as pure as the driven snow. And it was all her damn fault in the first place. I thought my God Charlie, have you done that with any other resentments here?

I looked at the IRS. I said "Now forget what they're doing to you, trying to put you in jail. What did you do, if anything, to set in motion the fact that they are trying to put you in jail?" Well that didn't take 2 seconds to be able to say that if I hadn't been cheating on my income tax they wouldn't have been trying to put me in jail anyhow. And rather than look at what I had done to them. I had played it over and over and over and over, distorted the picture and transferred all blame to them. Made myself as pure as the driven snow.

That way I could continue through life doing what I wanted to do and never have to look at me. Because after all it's all their fault in the first place

Joe in this resentment against Rose, what did you do, if anything, to set that in motion?

Charlie was out there screwing around but I was committing adultery.

OK. Sneaking around behind her back and lying to her all the time. And Rose finally got enough of it. She said, "I'll show him". And she went out and had her own affair. And Joe had, over a period of time, played that resentment over and over, gradually transferred all blame to her, made himself as pure as the driven snow. I went down through my list of resentments. I never found a name on there that I hadn't done something to them to set this thing in motion and I had resented it and played it over and over and distorted the picture. Transferred all blame to them and made myself as pure as the driven snow. If you're a practicing alcoholic you've got to develop these kinds of skills. You know we have a conscience. We're not drunken bums. We know the difference between right and wrong. And I don't think we could live with ourselves if we had to honestly see what was going on whenever we're out there doing our thing. But you see, we never have to see it because we've got this convenient thing called resentments, that we play them over and over, distort the picture and transfer all blame to others. And we men go from woman to woman to woman, and you ladies go from man to man to man and we go from job to job to job and we go from city to city to city and we go from country to country to country and it's always their damn fault.

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That's the only way we could live the kind of life we were living. By being able to transfer blame to others. And none of us realize how much we've been doing that until we take an honest look at these resentments and see the part that we played.

Now in the fifth column you see the major character defects talked about in the big book.

**Where had I been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened or inconsiderate?  
All other character defects stem from these.**

In the fifth column I asked myself this question. Which of the above character defects caused me to do what I did. Or caused me to want to hold on to the old resentment even though I may have done nothing to cause it. Now going back to Barbara again, if I hadn't have been so selfish I wouldn't have been out there doing those things that hurt my wife and children. If I hadn't have been so dishonest I wouldn't have been sneaking around behind her back lying to her all the time. If I hadn't have been so self-seeking and frightened, saying to myself "Man you're getting close to 40 years old if you're ever going to do some of that you'd better go do it before it's too late".

**Fear drives us to things like that.**

If I hadn't have been so inconsiderate of my wife and children I wouldn't have been taking the chance of hurting them in the first place. I begin to see in the fifth column the type of character I had become through my years of living my life based on self will. And when I saw it I didn't like it. It made me sick. You see I always fancied myself as a reasonably good person until I saw how I had become so selfish and so dishonest and so inconsiderate of other people. That I was continually doing things that hurt others. And they retaliated and I resented for it. I begin to see that if I don't change those things in the fifth column, if I stay selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened and inconsiderate that I'm going to keep right on doing the same old things I've always done. Drunk or sober.

I'm going to keep right on hurting people and they're going to retaliate and I'm going to resent and eventually it's going to block me off from God and I'm going to get drunk over it. But just think, if I could become a little less selfish, oh I don't have to get perfect I never will. But if I could become a little less selfish, if I could become a little less dishonest, if I could become less frightened and self-seeking, if I could become a little more considerate of other people, and their needs and their wants maybe I wouldn't have to do some of that kind of stuff. Maybe I wouldn't hurt people and maybe they wouldn't retaliate and I wouldn't have to resent. And just maybe I wouldn't have to get drunk over it. You see what we're really doing here is step 4. This is the resentment part of it. And out in the fifth column I now see the exact nature of the wrongs that I'm going to talk to another human being about when I take step 5. The resentment is the wrong that's what blocks me off from God but what's the exact nature of it. That means what's the truth of it. What's at the core of it, what's the inherent characteristic of it. That's what we'll talk about in step 5.

You know when a guy comes to me and he's committed adultery 44 times, I don't care about that. All I want to know is what is within him that caused him to do it in the first place. If he's stolen 364 times, I don't care about that. What I want to know is what is within him that caused him to do that. That's what we'll talk about in step 5. In that fifth column I now see the character defects that I am going to become willing to turn loose of in step 6. Out there in that fifth column I see the shortcomings now I'm going to ask God to take away in step 7.

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And in my case all the names from column 1 came off of this sheet to be added to the sheet later to be used for steps 8 and 9. Cause you see when I get to step 8 it says I've got the list. I made it when I took step 4. In my case every one of those. In your case probably some of them. In my case, all of them. Now what I have really done if I have done this the way the big book says is I have prepared myself with all the information I need for steps 4,5,6,7,8 and 9 resentment-wise. Not only have I gathered all the information I need for 4,5,6,7,8 and 9. Well I've had a positive result here. Resentments have disappeared. And they've been replaced with love, patience, tolerance, compassion and goodwill.

- **Did we do anything to be afraid of?** **No.**
- **Did we make a list of dirty filthy nasty items?** **No.**
- **Did we do anything that was too complicated?** **No.**

I've never seen anything like this inventory according to the big book.

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

(Session 26a - 01:26:49.0)

J & C Now I hear some of you saying, and I hear awful good, I've got good hearing. Charlie hears good. I hear some of you saying "Well Charlie that's probably right on those that we did something to them. But how about those that did it to us? And we didn't have anything to do with that. How about those that hurt us as kids growing up? How about those that hurt us in our marriages that we didn't do anything to cause it? Aren't we justified in having that kind of resentment?" Well I guess we are if we want to get drunk over it.

**But you see a justified resentment blocks you off from God just like an unjustified resentment does.**

When you've got a justified resentment churning around in your head, then whoever or whatever you're resenting is controlling your thinking. If they're controlling your thinking, they're controlling your decisions. They're controlling your life for you. And you have given them power to actually kill you. Cause you've given them power to cause you to get drunk again. Now if you've got one of those resentments and I don't care what it is, I don't care whether it's physical abuse, mental abuse, sexual abuse or whatever. And I keep hearing in AA all the time this sexual abuse thing. It usually centers on young women. Now let me tell you something, men know about that too. I don't know how many 5th steps I've taken with men, and nearly every one of them, somewhere in the background we've had that kind of stuff too, it's not just women it's men. If you've got one of those kind of resentments and you don't want to get rid of it knowing full well it might get you drunk then we'd better get it on this sheet of paper and take a look at it. And see what we're doing with it. We're probably using it for rationalization and justification. To rationalize not doing things we ought to go do or just as importantly to rationalize and justify things doing things we shouldn't be doing in the first place. Oh the greatest excuse in the world is

**"If they hadn't have done that to me then I wouldn't have to be the way I am today".  
They call that victimization.**

I don't really think we have any place for that in AA. We're all adults. It's time for us to realize that whatever **has happened to us in the past does not have to control what we do today.** Now the only reason for that is to justify, rationalize and etc.

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The woman in the book...

She used her resentment against her mother to justify her lack of education. Bull. She could have gotten an education if she wanted to bad enough.

She used it to justify her marital failure. Bull. Mama didn't have anything to do with her marital failure.

She even used it to justify her alcoholism. Mama had nothing to do with her alcoholism. She became alcoholic because she drank whiskey. And she drank enough of it she became alcoholic.

Now I think it's time for us to realize we are responsible for what we think and how we feel. We are responsible for what we do today.

Mother and daddy and other people are no longer responsible for that. Maybe they were when we were little kids but we're not little kids any longer. And if really doesn't make any sense to let somebody hurt me 5, 10, 15, 20 years ago and then let them hurt everyday for the rest of my life. If I'm resenting them they've got me. And they're going to kill me. I need to put them on this sheet. Put down their name. What did they do to me? What part of self is affected? What did I do, if anything, to set it in motion, in this case nothing? But then let's look in the fourth column. Are we so dishonest with ourselves we refuse to see the truth?

**If you've got a resentment in your head today it's not true. I'm going to say that again. If you've got a resentment in your head today it's not true.**

Oh it was based on truth and it's partially true. But if you've played it over and over and over you've distorted it and it's no longer true. Can we honestly look at it and see the truth behind it?

Let's look in the fifth column and see if maybe are so frightened of facing life without it we've refused to turn it loose. Cause you know after all if we turn it loose then we've got to take responsibility for our own behavior. It's a hell of a lot easier to blame it on others. Are we so afraid of facing life without it we won't turn it loose? Are we so inconsiderate of another human being? Have we failed to recognize that people that do those things to us, they're not necessarily bad people. They're sick people. They didn't necessarily do it to us. They would have done it to anybody in that position. If we could even begin to consider that, maybe we can start a forgiving process. Maybe we could straighten up a relationship with another human being before it's too late. After they're dead it's too late I'll guarantee you it is. Maybe we can do it while we're all still alive.

If we will do those things I think we can get rid of that resentment too when we really see the truth behind it and what we're doing with it. If we can't get rid of it that way then we can use the ultimate tool. By golly we can pray for them. And if we pray for one of those people we resent that doesn't mean that we approve of what they did. That doesn't mean we're going to take them by the hand and walk hand in hand with them for the rest of our life. What it means is that we are tired of letting them control us, dominate us and rule us everyday for the rest of our life. We can get rid of those kind of resentments too. And if we don't want to do that then chances are we are using it for some reason and we need to take a look at it very, very carefully. Joe?

Takes 2 people to make a prison...the prisoner and the jailer. Have to turn them loose and let them out and turn them loose. All those people that I hated I had to turn them loose. Charlie said "I don't want to be a victim anymore" and I don't think...Alcoholics Anonymous may be the only association left on the face of the earth that won't allow us to be victims. There's victims going on all out there. Everybody wants to be a victim of something. You know.

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But we in AA won't let each other do that cause we have a way out. When everything else fails we can pray for them. They need the prayers and we need the practice.

You know I see in many AA meetings where we've gone into this group therapy stuff and we sit around the table and we discuss what those people did to us. And we try to figure out why they did it. We'll never understand why they did it. The thing is they did it. Then we start trying to discuss and figure out why it made us the way we are? We'll never understand that. The fact is that's the way we are. The real question is "What are we going to do about it?" Are we going to continue to let them kill us? Or are we going to get rid of that jazz? That's what AA is about. It's not to sit around and talk about problems. It's to sit around and talk about how do you solve the problems. And resentment is the number one problem for every alcoholic. And if we can get rid of them then we're peaceful, happy and free. Until we do we'll never be free of it.

Now the next part of our inventory is fear and sex and Joe leaned over to me a while ago before when he walked behind and he said "Charlie, I've got a headache and I don't feel like sex today." He said "Let's get a good nights rest and have sex on Sunday morning." Is that OK with you guys?

Wherever you're going tonight you're going to work on your resentments. When we see you tomorrow morning you're going to be the most beautiful people in the world. You're going to be 100% resentment free. It's going to be great. Thank you all for being here today. We'll see you in the morning.