

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group

Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

WEEK #21

Chapter Six-Into Action

(Session 32 - 15:22.)

J & C I remember back to when I was drinking how my mind used to race uncontrollably every night. And that's the main reason I drank was to stop it. And after I did this 5th Step and I was on my way home that afternoon.... I used to lay awake nights thinking if I could just get it all even one time, just get it back to zero, back to even, all those situations just one time I'd be okay. And by this time I could see that I could do that, I was looking forward to the next step because I wanted to get things squared away one time ... and I thanked God all the way home for this process up to this point.

Now if you've done (Step) 4 and 5 according to the Big Book you've done a lot of work you're probably tired and need a little rest, the book's going to give us a little rest stop

Big Book, p. 75, par. 3 *Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour,*

J & C Now he didn't say seventy-two days.

You see they mean for us to get on with this thing, between (Steps) 3 and 4 - **at once***, now we get an hours rest here but that's all.

***Big Book pg. 64 line 1**

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).

Big Book, p. 75, par. 3

We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better.

J & C We don't know him yet, but we know him better.

Big Book, p. 75, par. 3

Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page (59) which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand?

J & C And once again we are referring to the wonderfully effective spiritual structure, the personality change we're building.

Step 1 - Willingness was the foundation (pg. 23, par. 5)

Step 2 - Believing was the cornerstone (pg. 47, par. 2)

Step 3 - Arch that we pass through to freedom - 3 is the keystone (pg. 62, last line)

Now we've put two more stones in place

Big Book, p. 76, par. 1

If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at Step Six. We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all, everyone? If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.

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J & C And that's all for Step 6. And if you notice he didn't say a thing about defects of character did he? He did say those things that we admitted were objectionable. Now surely, surely in Step 4 and 5 when we looked out into that fifth column.

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
<i>I'm resentful at</i>	<i>The Cause</i>	<i>Affects my</i>		

Where had I been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened or inconsiderate?

and we saw that old selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened, inconsiderate character that we have become, when we saw that those were what cause us to do the things that hurt people. They in turn retaliate, we in turn resent, we're afraid, we're filled with guilt and remorse causes us to drink then surely those things in the fifth column have now become objectionable to us. Are we ready to turn them lose, if we are we're thru with Step 6. The book recognizes though that self cannot always overcome self. cause it says if we're not ready we ask God to help us be willing to turn these things loose.

Now you would think when we see what they do to us we'd be more than willing, but sometimes we're not. You know we human beings are funny people; sometimes we would rather sit in today's pain and suffering cause we've come to learn how to take care of that.

Sometimes we'd rather sit in today's pain and suffering than take a chance on changing in the future cause we don't know what change will bring.

If I have to get rid of my selfishness and become unselfish, then how am I going to get what I want in the future?

If I'm going to have to get rid of my dishonesty and start operating honestly, then how the heck am I going to make a living? I don't know nothing about honesty when I get here.

If I'm going to have to start getting rid of my self-seeking and frightened character and start operating on courage that scares the hell out of me. I don't know nothing about that.

If I'm going to have to start considering other people and their needs and their wants, then who's going to take care of me?

Sometimes we would rather sit in today's pain than take a chance on changing in the future.

And the Book recognized that and said if you're not ready,

Big Book, pg. 76, par. 1 *we ask God to help me be willing.*

J & C And with God's help we become willing with (Steps) 3 through 6. When ready we say something like this, (Step 7 Prayer)

Big Book, pg. 76, par. 2

My Creator, I am now willing you that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character

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J & C Whoop, whoop. We're at Step 7 now and it said shortcomings², but here he calls.... see what he's done to us. He confused the heck out of us didn't he?

2 Step 7 - Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Big Book, pg. 76, par. 2

I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.

J & C We've then completed Step 7.

Are you ready to have God remove them? (defects of character). If you are you're through with (Step) 6.

Have you humbly asked him to take them away? If you have you've done Step 7.

But I hope you don't make the mistake I did. I assumed that now that I'm ready, and God being all powerful, that all I've got to do is turn to God and say okay God here I am, warts and all, does that mean give me the \$29.95 special and I'll never have to worry about this stuff again. I found out it don't work that way.

God will do for me, what I can't do for myself. I simply do not have the power to remove a character defect - only God has the power.

**God will not do for me, what I can do for myself.
And what I can do for myself is find out the opposite of that character defect,
and then with God's help and all the willpower I can muster,
in every situation it comes up, try to practice the opposite.**

Cause you see God can't take away my selfishness and leave another whole in my head. It's going to have to be replaced with the opposite, which is unselfishness. And when I first got here my mind was a set of mental habits ingrained in 38, 39, 40 years of living. The habitual thing for me was to react selfishly.

The only way to break a habit is to work against yourself.

If I ask God to take away selfishness and I start trying to practice unselfishness. Then slowly the old habit dies and a new habit takes its place.

And over a period of years I have become an unselfish human being. I am not what I was when I first got here.

If I want God to take away dishonesty, then I must do my part, which is to practice honesty

in every situation that comes up and that's hard for me to do. That is so alien to my nature that I can't practice honesty without God's help. But with God's power and all the willpower I can muster I can force myself to be honest and slowly the old idea dies and a new one takes its place. The habitual thing for me today is to react to any situation with honesty.

If I want God to take away fear then I've got to kick myself in the butt and practice courage.

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If I want Him to take away inconsideration, then I must start considering other people and their needs and their wants and slowly the old idea dies and a new idea takes its place.

Big Book, pg. par. 1 *We were reborn.*

J & C I am not what I used to be. Now I'm not completely unselfish, never will be. I'm not always completely honest. Sometimes I'm afraid and other times I'm inconsiderate but the majority of the time I'm an unselfish, honest human being with courage, considering other people first. You know I think you and I are the luckiest people in the world. We have the opportunity through these two little steps right here (6 & 7) two live two lifetimes in one lifetime. Most people out there are sick; most of them are going to their grave sick not even knowing they're sick. We not only know we're sick we know what's wrong with us we found it in Steps 4 & 5.

And in 6 & 7 we can do something about it and we can change it and we become entirely different human beings.

Most people don't get that opportunity. Now be careful, for God's sake be careful, cause if you really accept this as the correct thing and the right thing then that means from this day on **you are responsible for what you are**. I can't blame it on Barbara any longer, I can't blame it on Mother and Dad, I can't blame it on God and I can't blame it on society.

**If I stay selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened and inconsiderate
it's got to be because that's the way I want to be.**

I no longer have the luxury of blaming it on others cause I don't have to be that way. You know what I found out? I found out that when you become unselfish people start kinda liking you a little better than they did before. I found out when you start becoming honest well you feel better about yourself.

That's the way you build self-esteem is to do the right thing for a change

I found out when I practice with courage and I operate on courage instead of fear I do things that makes me feel better and I quit doing things that made me feel so bad.

I found out there's real pleasure in considering other people first and giving to others before you take for yourself.

I didn't know that. How in the hell could I know that, I've never been that way before. This thing really amazes me in what happens to us and the simplicity of this thing if we'll just do what the book says. Joe?

You know there's always a paradox in AA. To give you an idea what a paradox is how many of you have ever called you're sponsor so you could listen. We always call him so we can talk, right? That's the paradox. And the paradox here in these two steps is that they use the Doctors Opinion (p. xxiii) and the first four chapters to do Steps 1 & 2, 3.5 pages for Step 3. 8 pages for Step 4, 4 pages for Step 5, and a whole chapter devoted with "Working with Others". The paradox is that

two of the biggest steps in all of Alcoholics Anonymous is on two little paragraphs, (Steps) 6 & 7.
These are the tools of change.
These are the tools of acceptance.

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A lot of people talk about just running around accepting things - I accept this, I accept that. Well I can't do that.

Acceptance comes after some actions, (Steps) 6 & 7 Acceptance comes after the actions of 6 & 7.

You know there's a story in that other book (Bible) about this guy named Judas. Judas could not accept what he had done. (Betrayal) So what did he do? He killed himself. That's the importance of acceptance. You can't accept anything unless you take some action. He didn't do Steps 6 & 7 - didn't have them.

And the other story is, there's a story in this other book about this guy, his name was Saul. Saul was riding his ass on the way to Damascus. A big bolt of lightning came down and knocked him off his ass, on his ass. That's the way I read it. He gets up and he dusted himself off and this big voice came out of the sky and said, "Saul, can we talk?"
"Yeah, we can talk, what you want to talk about?"

Had to get his attention didn't he. Maybe alcoholism has to get our attention.
"Saul you've been a very selfish individual and you've harmed a lot of people and you're very resentful and angry. And you've harmed a lot of people by those attitudes and I want you to quit doing that?"

And he said, "How do you quit doing that?" He said, "Do these things and if you'll do that then you'll make a change, and when you change then we'll call you Paul. Well he did those things and became Paul.

Now we know that Paul was one of the greatest writers the world's ever known. And the Corinthians, the town of Corinthians, they asked Paul one day, "Paul, what is this secret to living?"

And he said, "The secret to living is daily dying." The old Saul had to die so the new Paul came alive.

(Steps) 6 & 7. By the time I got to 6 & 7 I could see what I had become as a result of the previous steps and I didn't like what I had become and a little doubt crept in my mind. Can God really change me from what I had become to what he intends for me be? And then I had to reaffirm and rethink about this idea on page 53. It said,

Big Book, pg. 53, par 3 *God either is, or He isn't?*

J & C He either can or he can't

Big Book, pg. 53, par 3. *What was our choice to be?*

J & C And I chose to believe that he could. The tools of change.

To change from what I had become to what God had intended me to be.

(Steps) 6 & 7 - Two of the biggest Steps in all of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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Just before the break I want Joe to tell you one little story about buying some salad to show you practicing this thing. A few years ago I went into a grocery store to buy some salad and some stuff to fix for a salad - that night was having steak. I went in there and bought this stuff and came back up to the register and I was going to pay up and I gave this lady ten dollars and she took the ten dollars and stood right there and counted me out change for a twenty, and I watched her do it. And I picked up that money and I put it in my pocket and I got out to my car and I sat there and I said well you big dummy you sold out for ten bucks. I thought it was worth more than that, I'm glad it wasn't less than that. So I took the money back in there and I told the lady I said you know I'm a member of a fellowship that requires me to be honest and you gave me too much money and I want to give you this ten dollars back.

And she said, you know I never heard of a fellowship like that and I said I well I hadn't either till a few years ago, so here's your ten bucks back. The whole point of this story, when I walked out with that ten dollars, and believe I don't need ten dollars; I mean I do not need ten dollars. And I'm walking out I felt about that big, sneaking out the door. You see then I went back in there and gave her that ten bucks back and I walked out and I feel good again. I did the right thing. If you practice that enough times the next time she gives change for a twenty you do it right there you don't even go out the door with it. That's what we're talking about when we change and only we can do it.

Only we can slay ourselves with God's help and become different human beings

**So if you stay dishonest, self-seeking, frightened and inconsiderate
it must be because you want to.**

Chapter 6 - Into Action Step 8

(Session 33 - 00:11:43.00)

J & C We've completed our first seven steps knowing full well we're going to be working on (Steps) 6 & 7 for the rest of our lives really, trying to change as the opportunity comes up. Now we've read in the book where we are

- (a) spiritually sick,
- (b) mentally sick and
- (c) physically sick,

when the spiritual malady is overcome we straighten our mentally and physically (p. 64, par. 4)

and we begin to look at those things and begin to realize that all human beings really are born to live in three dimensions of life.

If God dwells within each of us

we're going to have to live with God,
whether we like it or not is beside the point. (spiritual dimension)
The only question is do we live with him in harmony or disharmony.

I don't know of anybody that ever got in more disharmony with God than we alcoholics have. We also have what we call the mental dimension.

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We've all got a mind, sometimes we act like we don't but we do,
and we have to live with our mind whether we like it or not, is beside the point, we don't have any choice.
And again do we live there in harmony or disharmony?

I don't know of any group of people that ever got more fouled up in their heads than we alcoholics have. For years I thought the physical dimension was my body only. Today I realize

the physical dimension is the world and everything in it

Now we alcoholics don't have any place else to live except here on earth we don't have any choice in the matter whether we like it or not is beside the point. The only question is, do we live on earth with our fellow man in harmony or disharmony?

And I don't know of any group of people that ever got more fouled up in a relationship with the world and everybody in it than we alcoholics have. So we were sick spiritually, mentally and physically. The book talks about a design for living, and it looks to us that

these steps are designed in such a manner to put us back together and make us well in all three dimensions of life as God intended for us to be in the first place.

Steps 1, 2 & 3 We got right with the Spirit. Because we were powerless, we saw the need for the power.

Step 3 We decided to go after that power, and we made a decision that God was going to be the Director. He's the Father, we're the children. He's the Employer, we're the employee (we work for him)

For most of us that's the first time we've had that relationship with God for a long, long, long time. We got the right relationship in (Steps) 1, 2 & 3. That removes self-will, to let us begin to look into our own minds.

Step 4 & 5 We found out those things that block us off from God, that block us off from our fellow man, that creates the resentments and the fears and the guilt's etc.

Steps 6 and 7 we begin to work on those in

We begin to get right in our minds through 4, 5, 6 & 7. That removes just enough self-will, to begin to look at our relationship with the world and everybody in it. Now through 4, 5, 6 & 7 we got rid of these resentments, we got rid of these fears to the level that God intended for them to be. But we haven't really done anything about the storeroom back here that's filled with guilt and remorse associated with the harms we've done in the past.

And if we want to get right in the physical dimension,
our relationship with the world and everybody in it,
it's long been known that the way you do that, is to make restitution for the things done in the past.

Then the guilt and the remorse begins to disappear. I've never yet seen a newcomer come into a meeting and read the steps off the wall and say that I can hardly wait till we get to Steps 8 & 9, that looks like a lot of fun. Nobody likes to do Steps 8 & 9. Nobody that I've ever met, some people might but not that I know. The only question is can we afford not to do that?

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It looks like if we don't do that (Steps 8 & 9)
that guilt and remorse in here kind of keeps chewing at us.
After a while it begins to bother our relationship with the world and everybody in it
- we start getting sick in our head.
And after a while that backs up and blocks us off from God
and we end up drunk again

You know when we read the Foreword to the Second Edition it sounds as though Dr. Bob never took another drink after Bill visited with him the first time. That isn't true. Dr. Bob had one more drunk left in him. Not to long after Bill called on him and they began to try to work with people Bob found it necessary to go to a medical convention and his wife Anne begged Bill not to let him go. She said Bill if he goes over there he'll get drunk, he does it every year. And Bill said, let him go. He's got to learn to live in society where there's always going be plenty of alcohol. Bob went to the medical convention, got drunk, came back to Akron, showed up at his nurses home. She called Anne, said come and get him, he's drunk and said get him sobered up he's got surgery in the morning and he's the only doctor on staff right now that can do this particular surgery. Dr. Bob was a proctologist. Whatever your procto is, I'm glad he wasn't working on mine the next morning I know that. They went over and got him and brought him back to Dr. Bobs house and they coffeed him and they walked him and they sobered him to the best of their ability. The next morning Bill took him to the hospital to do the surgery. In the parking lot of the hospital Dr. Bob said, Bill I can't do this surgery. He said I'm sick and I'm shaking and I'm trembling and I'm going to hurt somebody bad. Bill reached in the back seat of the car, brought out a bottle of beer, popped the top on it, said drink this and you'll be okay. Dr. Bob drank the beer, went upstairs, did the surgery and sure enough it came out okay and the only problem is he disappears. Bills waiting on him down in the parking lot. He waits 2, 3, 4 hours. He assumes that the beer's trigger **the allergy** and Bob is off and running. He goes back to Dr. Bob's house and Bill and Anne wait all afternoon. Late, late, late evening Dr. Bob shows up and he's sober.

Bill said where in the hell have you been? He said I've been going up and down both sides of the street making my amends to those I've harmed in the past. That bottle of beer was the last drink Dr. Bob took, January 10, 1935 which is AA's birthday. He never would make amends before because he was afraid people would find out that he was alcoholic and he would lose what little practice he had left. He didn't know that everybody already knew he was alcoholic. The day he screwed up the courage, mustered up enough courage to make his amends was the day he took his last drink. Now I would assume if it's good enough for Bob it's probably good enough for me too.

Let's look at 8 & 9 for just a few minutes. We are not going to go through them in great detail, just a few minutes

Big Book p. 76, par. 3 *"Now we need more action, which we find that "Faith without works is dead." Let's look at Steps Eight and Nine."*

J & C You generally when people go to a Step Study meeting and they begin to talk about Step 8, generally the conversation will get over to how they made amends in Step 9. **But Step 8 is a definite step and it's a step that needs to be done.**

Big Book p. 76, par. 3 *"We have a list of all persons we had harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory."*

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J & C We simply take all those names off of Column 1 off of those **4 sheets** of anyone that we've harmed and we put them on one long sheet. We haven't made any amends yet, we've just made the list. And then the book says,

<u>Resentment Inventory</u>	<u>Fear Inventory</u>	<u>Sex Inventory</u>	<u>Harms Done to Others</u>
Column 1	Column 1	Column 1	Column 1
I'm Resentful at:	I'm Angry at:	Who have I hurt?	Who have I hurt?

Big Book p. 76, par. 3

"We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal."

J & C We did that in Steps 4 & 5, a drastic self-appraisal.

Big Book p. 76, par. 3

"Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes."

J & C More prayer, Step 8. And again it's real simple. We make the list, then we become willing to the list, and if we're not willing we ask God to help us to become willing. We haven't made any amends yet. That is Step 8.

When we do that, then we've completed Step 8. Everyone one of these action steps recognizes that self cannot overcome self and we have prayer in most of them and here we got it again in Step 8 that if we're not willing, we ask God to help us be willing. I had a lot of difficulty in Step 8 and Step 9 because there's some people that had harmed me just as bad as I'd ever harmed them. And I didn't think it was going to be necessary for me to make any amends to them, I didn't feel like I could and I didn't want to.

I told my sponsor about this, he said okay, what I'd like to see you do is take that list that you have and divide it into four lists (columns). He said I'd like to see you put on one list (column)

RIGHT NOW LATER MAYBE NEVER.

- He said those that you love and you want to make amends to them **RIGHT NOW** put them on that list
- those that you know you're going to do it sooner or later or you're not too keen about, put them on the **LATER**
- list those that you aren't sure about, you may or may not, put them on the **MAYBE** list
- those that you're never going to make amends to, put them on the **NEVER** list

And then he said I want you to start making your amends to the **RIGHT NOW's**.

By the time you're through with that you'll probably be ready to do some **LATER's**.

By the time you're through with the later's list, you'll probably be ready to do some **MAYBE's**.

And he reached in his billfold and pulled out a twenty-dollar bill and said I'm going to bet you twenty dollars

by the time you're through with the Maybes you be ready to start on the **NEVER's**.

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And the old fool was exactly right. I was trying to block myself off entirely from Step 8 & 9 by using three or four names (resentments, etc.) and he didn't let me do that. He gave me a process by which I could become willing to make amends to them all, eventually. And it really did work for me.

So if you've got that problem, or you're working with some whose got that problem, try the Four List. Right Now, Later, Maybe and Never.
And it really works.
