

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group

Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

WEEK #22

Step 9

(Session 34 - 15:29.)

J& C Ok. After we've got the list, we're willing, over on page 77 we begin to look at Step 9. Now Step 9 is a definite three-part step. The first part tells us the kind of amends to make.

We made direct amends wherever possible

Direct amends is probably eyeball to eyeball, face to face, one on one. So he tells us the kind of amends to make. **direct amends**

Then he tells us when to make them **wherever possible**

Then he tells us when not to make them

except when to do so would injure them or others.

Now for the next three or four pages he handles each one of these things paragraph by paragraph. Page 77, that paragraph down in the middle of the page

Big Book p. 77, par. 2 *"We don't use this as an excuse for shying away from the subject of God. When it will serve any good purpose, we are willing to announce our convictions with tact and common sense. "*

J& C The direct amends starts right here with the words

Big Book p. 77, par. 2, cont. *"The question of how to approach the man we hated will arise. "*

J& C Let's look at this one. I think in the are of the 9th step, especially since were going to go out and make amends for the harms done. I think especially we need to talk to our sponsors and listen to our sponsors in this area to get some information about how we are going to go about making these amends. Cause we can go out in our zeal to make amends and can cause a whole lot more harms than we ever intended or had ever done prior to that just trying to make amends. So check with your sponsor in this area. Lay out how you are going to it and what you propose to do and see what he says. Very, very important.

Big Book p. 77, par. 2, cont. *"The question of how to approach the man we hated will arise. It may be he has done us more harm than we have done him and, though we may have acquired a better attitude toward him, we are still not too keen about admitting our faults. Nevertheless, with a person we dislike, we take the bit in our teeth. It is harder to go to an enemy than to a friend, but we find it much more beneficial to us. We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.*

Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue. Simply we tell him that we will never get over drinking until we have done our utmost to straighten out the past. We are there to sweep off our side of the street, realizing that nothing worth while can be accomplished until we do so, never trying to tell him what he should do. His faults are not discussed. We stick to our own. If our manner is calm, frank, and open, we will be gratified with the result. In nine cases out of ten the unexpected happens. Sometimes the man we are calling upon admits his own fault, so feuds of years' standing melt away in an hour. Rarely do we fail to make satisfactory progress. Our former enemies sometimes praise what we are doing and wish us well. Occasionally, they will offer assistance. It should not matter, however, if someone does throw us out of his office. We have made our demonstration, done our part. It's water over the dam."

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J& C And ever time I read that I think about my cousin Gary. And I was in the area of making amends at this time and I was in this restaurant one day. I had never been in that restaurant before or since and I looked up and Gary was at the door waiting to be seated and I motioned him over. Now he came over very reluctantly. Cause Gary and I had been fighting and fussing, physically and verbally abusing each other all our lives. So he came over very reluctantly. He wasn't quite sure what I might do. And I asked him to sit down and he did reluctantly. And I looked at him and I said "Gary I've found out I'm an alcoholic and I'm a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and I'm trying to straighten out my life and I'm trying to make amends for the harms I've done people. And I've harmed you a whole lot over these years and I want to ask you if you will forgive me for that." And he kind of relaxed like that and he said, "Well you know Joe I want to know if you will forgive me the things I've done to you?" That whole deal went away just like that.

And that's a wonderful thing. But the best part about it is that Gary comes to Alcoholics Anonymous from time to time even now. Well he's making progress. He used to be a daily drinker and now he's a periodic drinker. So he's making progress. But he comes to the group that I attend and we'll sit down and we'll visit back and forth a little bit as much as he will allow me to. But had that not happened that many years ago Gary would never have come to Alcoholics Anonymous. Maybe someday he'll get sober. I hope so.

**Eyeball to eyeball.
Face to face.
One on one.**

I think we've got to remember now the purpose of making the amends is not to get you to like me. I hope you will when I'm through. But the purpose is to get rid of my fear, my guilt and my remorse. If I write you a letter I'm not quite sure how you accepted it. I'm still a little concerned about what you are going to say and do the next time I run into you. I'm not sure I've done my utmost. If I call you on the telephone I've got the same situation. But if I go to you wherever you are, your office, your home or wherever it might be, and we sit down, eyeball to eyeball, face to face, one on one, when I've made my amends I'm through with it. I'll never have to worry about it again. You've done the worst you're going to do to me, right there, and I in turn have done my utmost. No doubt that's the best way to do it.

Another kind of amend is an equal restitution or equal amounts. You know we tended to hurt a lot of people in the material area also. Some of them we stole from them and never did give them their money back. Some of them we ran up bills that we never did pay. We wrote hot cheques that we never did pick up. We tore up automobiles that we never did fix. We've hurt a lot of people in a lot of ways in the material world. What are we going to do about that. It really wouldn't do much good for me to come to you and say "Look, you and I both know that I stole \$1200 from you when I was drinking. And I'm sorry about it. Would you forgive me?" You're probably going to say, "I'm sorry about it too. Where's my \$1200?" Equal restitution. Bill handles that in the next paragraph.

Big Book p. 78, par. 2 *"Most alcoholics owe money. "*

J& C Now that's probably the understatement of the year right there.

Big Book p. 78, par. 2 cont. *"We do not dodge our creditors. Telling them what we are trying to do, we make no bones about our drinking; they usually know it anyway, whether we think so or not. Nor are we afraid of disclosing our alcoholism on the theory it may cause financial harm.*

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Approached in this way, the most ruthless creditor will sometimes surprise us. Arranging the best deal we can we let these people know we are sorry.

Our drinking has made us slow to pay. We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink if we are afraid to face them."

J&C I think what he's saying to me is this. That if I owe you money for any reason I need to come to you and say, "Look, I know I owe you the \$1200 and you know it too. And I'm trying to get my life straightened out. I'm sorry I can't pay you that amount of money today. But what I'd like to do is start paying you \$5/week or \$10/week." Whatever I can live with. And I start paying you that \$5 or \$10/week or 20 or whatever we've decided on. And as the weeks go by, some morning I wake up and I say "Hey that suckers paid off." I don't have to worry about that one anymore. The fear and guilt and remorse is gone. I go to the next one. And I say ,

"Now you and I both know that I owe you a couple thousand dollars. Can't pay you today. But I'd like to start paying you about \$20/week." And I start paying you \$20/week and some morning I wake up and that sucker's paid off too. And then I go to the next one. And then the next and then the next one and someday I'll wake up and by golly they're all paid off. And the fear and the guilt and remorse is gone. I feel good back here in the back of my head now after that guilt and remorse and fear is gone.

Now a guy came to me one time and we were discussing this. And he said "Charlie if I try to pay them so much a week, do you know how old I would be before I got them paid off?" You'd be the same age that you would be if you didn't pay them off. It don't make any difference. I've lived long enough to know that time is going to pass. I wish I could stop it but I can't. And as time passes I can use it for a worthwhile purpose, do something about these things, or I can keep putting it off and putting it off and putting it off and 5 years or 10 years or 15 years from now still be in the same situation and maybe drunk in the meantime.

We had a good friend that used to live in Tulsa but moved out here to California, he's gone now, he's dead. Name was Dan. When Dan was 29 years sober he said, "Charlie, I paid the last one of them last week." I said "Dan how do you feel". He said, "I feel about 8 foot tall". Now Dan was little bitty fellow about 5'1". He said "This is the first time in my life that I can ever remember that I don't owe somebody something for what I've stolen in the past". He said "I feel pretty good about old Dan". Dan owed a lot of money. When he was drinking he was in the oil business down in Texas. And he hooked them and he hooked them big. Took him 29 years to pay them. But by golly he got it done. I'll tell you what a good con artist Dan was. When he was still drinking in Texas his wife Sara, who later became a beautiful member of Al-Anon, she took him to the state insane asylum in Big Spring, Texas to have him committed for alcoholic insanity. The head psychiatrist interviewed Sara, then he interviewed Dan and after a while Dan left and Sara was locked up. Truth. She stayed there for a year. She learned how to live better electrically and all that goody, goody stuff in there. Dan was a real con artist. Joe.

You know Dan did pay back a lot of money. It's not alot of money out here in California but in Oklahoma it's a lot of money. Hell of a lot of money. You guys have got plenty of money out here. We all know that. But Dan paid them all back and I spent many, many days playing bridge with Dan and Sara and he and my wife and they were teaching us the program alot and sharing with us and they paid a lot of money back. Now you'd of that that the kind of money he paid back would have kept him broke but it didn't. He prospered in other ways. He wasn't rich when he died but he had a very comfortable living throughout all those years and he prospered as a result of doing the right thing with his debts.

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And again I hear some of you saying, I can hear awful good. Well Charlie that stuffs probably all right for \$1200 or \$2000 or maybe \$10,000 but what if it's a half a million? What if it's a million? What if it's 2 million? Can we pay that back? I don't know why not, we're smart enough to steal it we're probably smart enough to pay it back if we are willing to do so. You know I think we forget from step 3 on that God is with us. And if we are willing to do these things Gods going to make it possible to do so just like he did for Dan. Dan didn't die a rich man but Dan died a very comfortable man. God saw that Dan had the means to be able to pay these people back. The willingness is what it takes to do this. And it really works for people like us.

On page 79 about the middle of the page it talks about where other people are involved. And we need to really, really consider this now. Sometimes in our zeal to be forgiven for the things we've done in the past we make amends where we end up hurting the one we owe amends to even more. Or possibly hurt somebody else. And if we do that then sooner or later we're going to have to go back and make amends for that too. So we have to be very, very careful where other people are involved. Over on page 80

There we have an example on page 80 where he went to the people involved and got their permission to make the amend before he made it in order to be sure that everything was going to be OK.

Bottom of page 80 he starts talking about domestic troubles.

Page 81 he talks about sex outside of marriage. What are we going to do about those kinds of things? Very carefully he handles just about every conceivable situation that could come up. With the people I work with usually we can find that answer to their amends as to whether they should make them or they shouldn't and how to make it here in the big book. Covers just about all situations. The key thing I think and Joe said it a while ago is get somebody else's advice. I've seen too many people jump into these amends too fast. And not only hurt other people but end up destroying a family, destroying a relationship with another human being completely. You know I think that we should go to our sponsors, get their help, get their advice before we even start making these amends. Especially where it involves maybe hurting other people.

Big Book p. 83, par. 3 *"There may be some wrongs we can never fully right."*

J&C You know some of these people are already dead and buried. Some of them to make the amends would hurt them or others. We can't do that.

Big Book p. 83, par. 3 cont. *"We don't worry about them if we can honestly say to ourselves that we would right them if we could. Some people cannot be seen - we sent them an honest letter. And there may be a valid reason for postponement in some cases."*

But we don't delay if it can be avoided. We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping. As God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone."

J&C The one mistake I see us making is we got somebody and try to make our amends and they don't accept it. They didn't always accept mine. Some of them said "Charlie we didn't like you when you were drinking, not too damn crazy about you now, we'd just as soon you get out of here and leave us alone." And when that happens to us it just crushes us. And we tend to want to go back and go back and go back and literally beg those people to forgive us. We don't need to do that. If they don't accept it there's nothing we can do about that. About all we can do is stand in readiness to make it at a later date if the opportunity comes up. But we certainly do not have to crawl before anyone. We are Gods people too.

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Chapter 6 - Into Action Step 9 & The Promises

(Session 35 - 10:19.0)

J & C As I said here this morning and I became painfully aware, shore fully aware this year, all those situations that I used to have that I thought needed to make amends are all taken care of, I mean every one of them and I'll tell you about two here this morning if you will.

When I was drinking I had a mobile home up north and west of Tulsa, the lake called Lake Keystone, didn't think my wife knew anything about it, nice place. One morning in the middle of the night there's a knock on the door and I finally came to the door and I opened it up and what she did she just broke in Phyllis did. And I really wasn't having a good time, embarrassed me in front of my girlfriend, yeah and our daughter she brought the daughter with her. I was not having a good time. Now Gail, she was affected by my drinking of course. When she was seventeen years old, just a few days after she was seventeen she got married to get away from Phyllis and I cause Phyllis was in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous some twenty-three years she's been sober thank God, but Gail was affected by this. And the book says

Big Book, pg. 83, par. 1 *"A remorseful mumbling [that we are sorry] won't fill the bill at all."*

J & C Of course I tried to make a few amends verbally to Gail and you know I, she said it's okay but it wasn't until six years ago, I was sober 19 years and talking to Gail on the phone and she was living up in Columbus, Ohio and she said Daddy a thing happened here recently. Her sister in law had died and her husband had died unexpectedly and left two kids for someone else to raise. And she said if something should happen like that to Jim and I would you and Mom take the kids? That's when I knew she really had forgiven me, but it took nineteen years.

Big Book, pg. 83, par. 1 *"A remorseful mumbling [that we are sorry] won't fill the bill at all."*

J & C Now I'm sober in Alcoholics Anonymous for two and a half years and Phyllis and I get back together and nine years later I'm standing at the back of the room greeting people as they come in to the meeting place that night and I look around and here's the lady of the mobile home incident. Phyllis is at the coffee pot getting coffee and she looked over her shoulder, it all happen just about that quick. I believe you'll get an opportunity to handle all these situations. God makes the wherever possible. And some of the guys were aware of the situation and they asked what did she say and I said she didn't say anything... for about a week. And we were at another meeting and here's this lady and she was trying to get sober and coming to A.A. and again at another meeting there was this lady and Phyllis began to talk ugly to me. They'll do that you know. And I began to pay the price again, began to feel bad about it again. Well after about two or three weeks of this and one night she was settled down, she'd come back down through the ceiling and we were able to talk about this. I said Phyllis you know I've already paid one hell of a price for this I mean I have already paid one hell of a price, physically, morally, spiritually, financially and every way you can pay. And what I'm trying to tell you is I'm not paying anymore. I said it's just like last months gas bill. I paid that one, and I'm not paying that one no more.

They'll let you pay forever if you'll pay. There comes a time when you quit paying.

We don't have to crawl before anyone.

We make our amends to the best of our ability and go on about our business.

If you're right with God in (Steps) 1, 2, and 3 and (Spiritual Dimension)

If you're right with self in (Steps) 4, 5, 6 and 7 (Mental Dimension)

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If you're right with your fellow man in (Steps) 8 & 9 (Physical Dimension - the world and everything in it)

For the first time as far back as we can remember we're well in all three dimensions of life. We're then put back together as God intended for us to be in the first place. If you're well in all three dimensions of life you're going to feel pretty good. I don't think it's by accident the very next thing are **the promises**.

They come immediately after this program of action.

Big Book, pg. 83, par. 4 *"If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through."*

J & C Which phase of our development? Well the (Step) 8 & 9 phase.

Big Book, pg. 83, par. 4

We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.

We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us, sometimes quickly (spiritual experience), sometimes slowly (spiritual awakening). They will always materialize if we work for them."

J & C You know I've had some very horrendous hangovers in my time and I know that you guys have too. I have thrown up sometimes something horrendously, blood and all in my drinking career. But you know those kind of experiences never caused me to want to quit drinking. **What caused me to want to quit drinking was the guilt, shame and remorse that I had as a result of the harm that I did other people.** And these promises began to come about in my life; they came about not in my body but in my mind. I began to experience these things in my mind and I knew of course that the program was working for me and I'm free of those things today thank God. I'm going to read them again, going to add a few words to them and the words that I'm going to add to them refer to the time when I was young, when alcohol was my friend, when I could drink it and be Fred Astaire on the dance floor and the world's greatest lover in the backseat of a '36 Chevrolet. This is the way alcohol used to make me feel before it turned against me

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol I knew... a new freedom and a new happiness.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol I did... not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol I would... comprehend the word serenity and we would know peace.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol... no matter how far down the scale I had gone, I could will see how my experience would benefit others.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol... that feeling of uselessness and self-pity would disappear.

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Whenever I took a drink of alcohol I would... lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in my fellows.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol... self-seeking would slip away.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol my... whole attitude and outlook upon life would change.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol... fear of people and of economic insecurity would leave us.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol I would... intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle me.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol I would... suddenly realize that alcohol was doing for me what I could not do for myself

Think about that a moment. No wonder I loved to drink. When you find anything that will do that much for you immediately become mentally addicted to the use of it, whatever it is. If it had been chocolate ice cream I would have been addicted to chocolate ice cream. If it had been Hostess Twinkies it would have been Hostess Twinkies. If it had been gambling, it would have been gambling. Mine was alcohol. Alcohol did for me what I could not do for myself. It was my friend and it worked for me like magic for years.

But one day alcohol turned against me and **all the things I was afraid would happen to me now began to happen because of the alcohol itself.** I became a very, very confused individual not knowing I was alcoholic, not knowing I would never be able to recapture these feelings from alcohol. I spent the last four, five, six years of my drinking desperately trying to get these things back from alcohol. Almost destroyed me in the process.

I came to A.A. You gave me a book. I found a little program of action in this book. I began to apply it in my life. And one day I woke up and found these promises in my head and I suddenly realized that **the first nine steps of Alcoholics Anonymous are doing just exactly for me (promises) what alcohol used to do for me when alcohol was my friend.**

See that's why I don't drink today. If I hadn't found this somewhere I would still be searching for it. I would probably have gone back to alcohol until it eventually completely consumed me and destroyed me.

**But I don't need to drink because I found everything good that alcohol gave me
through the first nine steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. (promises)
That's the miracle of Alcoholics Anonymous.**

At the same time I realize it's given me the good I also realize

the first nine steps have never turned against me, alcohol did.

I've never been placed in jail because of the first nine steps

No lady has ever dragged me through the divorce courts because of the first nine steps.

I've never vomited, damn near did a time or two, I've never really vomited because of the first nine steps. See that's a miracle.

If you read those promises you'll see they all deal with the mind. None of them deal with the body.

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**We came here restless, irritable, discontented,
filled with shame, fear, guilt, remorse, worry, anger, depression, etc.**

**We work the steps,
we receive the promises.**

Certainly we have undergone a change in our personality. We have undergone a spiritual awakening already.

Step 10

(Session 36 - 16.42.)

J & C Now if that's true then what is the purpose of the last three steps? And many people will tell us that the last three steps are to maintain our sobriety. I will agree that they will help us stay sober. But the word maintenance itself is a misnomer. To maintain something means to keep it "as is". And another natural law applies.

Nothing in our universe ever stays "as is".
Everything in our universe is in a constant state of change.
It's either growing or it's dying.
It's progressing or it's regressing.
It's going forward or it's going back.

Now we've made a tremendous amount of spiritual growth through the first nine steps is we've got the promises. But if we tried to maintain this eventually we start slipping back. And we start having trouble with people. Then with ourselves. Then with God. And we end up drunk all over again. Now how do I know that? I see it happen in AA over and over and over and over again. That's what happens when people like us had a good program go back and get drunk again it's because we stopped growing. And we can't stop growing. If you do you start dying. Let's look at the last three steps. Not as just maintenance steps. Not just to keep us sober, but to see if we don't actually continue to grow in our relationship with God, with ourselves and with other human beings.

Twice in the book Bill has mentioned a fourth dimension of existence.

Once in his story. Once in Chapter 2. A dimension of living far beyond the normal three. You can't explain it. You can't describe it. You can only feel it. And that's what the last three steps do. Move us into another dimension of living. Let's look at them for just a few minutes.

You know one of the things that we did, as a fellowship is we took the steps out of the book and we put them on these little cards and put them on the wall. And if you look at step 10 on this card or on the wall and by the way we left the instructions on how to work the steps in the book. People come into AA and look at the wall and try to work the steps off the wall without instructions. No wonder they get in trouble. Step 10, off the wall or off the cards says

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

And it looked like if we just continued to take a little inventory and if we were wrong promptly admitted it we would be doing the intended step 10. And somehow or other we got the idea that we do that at night.

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Well the nighttime portion is over in step 11 it's not in step 10. And Charlie and I have discussed this at great detail. We don't get in trouble at night in bed any more. We need a daytime walking around step. So let's look at step 10 in a different light.

Big Book, p. 84, par. 2 *"This thought brings us to step ten, which suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along. We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. We have entered the world of Spirit. "*

J & C We've had a spiritual awakening.

Big Book, p. 84, par. 2 cont. *"Our next function is to grow "*

J & C To grow, not maintain, not stay where we are, but to grow.

Big Book, p. 84, par. 2 cont. *"in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime. Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. "*

J & C What step did we use to look at that in the first place. Anybody remember? Step 4? OK.

Big Book, p. 84, par. 2 cont. *"When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. "*

J & C What steps did we use there? Six and Seven, Alright.

Big Book, p. 84, par. 2 cont. *"We discuss them with someone immediately "*

J & C And what step was that? Five, OK.

Big Book, p. 84, par. 2 cont. *"and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. "*

J & C What steps did we use there? Eight and Nine

Big Book, p. 84, par. 2 cont. *"Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance of others is our code."*

J & C It looks to me like it we follow the directions in the book then we will be doing steps 4,5,6,7,8 and 9 every day, on a daily basis, for the rest of our lives. I would defy anybody in this room to do 4,5,6,7,8 and 9 on a daily basis and stay the way you are. You absolutely can not do that. I've got that little inventory sheet right up here in my head. Just as plain as day and you do to. And what I've trained myself to do if I get screwed up at 9:00 in the morning, used to be that I'd wait till I went to bed at night to do something about it. But when I do that I've wasted another day in anger and worry and depression and etc. I finally trained myself that when I get screwed up about 9:00 I get off in the corner by myself. I say OK Charlie

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“Who are you mad at?”

“What did they do to you?”

“What part of self is affected?”

“What did you do, if anything, to set it in motion?”

“Which character defect has come back to the surface?”

I can't get upset unless one of those old character defects has come back.

Selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened, or inconsiderate.

I can spot it just like that. I say “OK God you know I don't want to be this way. Please take this away from me.”

This selfishness or this dishonesty or whatever it is. I try to discuss it with someone immediately, preferably my sponsor. Sometimes I can sometimes I can't but I try to. Then I make amends quickly if I hurt anybody in this process. 10-15-20 minutes it's all gone. The rest of the day is OK. I have wasted all the time that I want to waste in resentments and fear and anger and worry and depression and etc. I don't have to do that anymore. My God I love to feel good. I just don't want to waste any more time, what little I've got left in that other kind of jazz.

I've got a tool here that works every time. And as you continue to take personal inventory as you continue to look and see who you are mad at and etc and etc and etc you're going to learn more about yourself. As you ask God to take these things away they become less and less. As you discuss them with another human being, preferably our sponsor, we know more about ourselves. As we make amends quickly our relationship with the world and everybody in it becomes better and better. You can't do step 10 the way the book says and stay the way you are.

You just can't. Your relationship with God, with yourself, and with your fellow man will become better and better and better and better. A new dimension of living that we never dreamed existed.

Now be careful. This is just like 6 and 7. This is the other changing step. And if you stay fowled up you can't blame it on anybody else any longer. Cause if you're fowled up and you use step 10 you can get rid of that stuff. But if you stay fowled up and you stay angry and worried and depressed and selfish and dishonest it's got to be because that's the way you want to be. I can't blame it on anybody or God or anything else any longer. And once in a great while I like to be screwed up. There's times I like to be mad. Cause when I'm mad I can romp and stomp and raise hell with everybody around me all day long. And that gives me a comfortable feeling of superiority. And once in a while I just love it. There's times I like to be afraid. Cause I can use that to rationalize and justify not doing what I should do or just as importantly doing something I shouldn't do. But when I do that anymore I don't enjoy it like I used to. Somewhere about the middle of it I catch myself. And I say “OK idiot. You're doing it to yourself again”. This thing really does work. And you'll continue to grow.

Now after step 10 you've got another set of promises. Let's look at them for just a moment.

Big Book, p. 84, par. 3. *“And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned.”*

J & C Remember it said, we came to believe that a power greater than ourselves would restore us to sanity?

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Well we get our sanity back on page 84 by the way.

Big Book, p. 84, par. 3 cont. *"For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and will find that this has happened automatically. We see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality--safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky, nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition."*

J & C And again remember way back on page 45 it said that the main object of this book was to enable me to find a power greater than myself which would solve my problem. And somewhere between there and here we have the first 9 steps or 10 steps of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. And one day into 6 or 7 or 8 months of sobriety and working these steps I looked up one day and I said what happened to that desire of drink that I used to have. It's just gone. I mean it was just gone, seemingly without any effort on my part. I found the power and the power solved the problem. It was just gone. That's the miracle of it.

Now, the next to the last paragraph on page 85.

Big Book, p. 85, par. 2 *Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. But we must go further and that means more action.*

J & C In other words what's happened to us in these steps of 3 through 10 we've removed enough self-will that we are now becoming God conscious. And by now we are beginning to receive some directions from God. Now if the book says that God has all power and all direction and I believe he does the book says so. God dwells within each of us and I believe he does because the book says so. Then it really stands to reason that you and I have within ourselves all the knowledge and all the power that we could ever need to handle any situation which comes up in the future. It's called a sixth sense of direction. I've got five senses. Everything I know on a conscience level I learned from those. I can see and I can hear I can smell and I can taste and I can touch. But what little bit I've learned through my five sense of direction is just a small amount of knowledge. But if God has all knowledge and all power, if I can tap into him then I can handle any situation in the future with God's help. Whatever it might be. It's long been known. We knew that.

You develop this sixth sense of direction through prayer and meditation.

Most of us when we get here, I didn't know anything about meditation. I thought meditation is when you tried to clear you mind of all thought. And I've never been able to do that. When I wake up in the morning that sucker turns on and it will not clear out. I thought maybe it was chanting. Listening to soft music. That's probably some forms of meditation. But I knew nothing about any of it. I knew very little about prayer. Even raised in church. I only knew two prayers. One went like this.

Now I lay me down to sleep. Pray the Lord my soul to keep. And if I die before I wake.

I'm not into that prayer anymore. That's dealing with death and I don't want nothing to do with that. The other prayer that I used and I bet you used it too went like this.

God, if you get me out of this damn mess I swear I'll never do this again.

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Now I'm going to have to develop a life of prayer and meditation. Would seem to be impossible wouldn't it. Bill Wilson is faced with the job of teaching people who are spiritually bankrupt how to pray and meditate and Bill Wilson don't know how to do it either. Thank God he didn't. Cause if he had really been knowledgeable he would have written in such a manner that I could never have understood it. But he didn't know enough about it to be able to do that. What he did do is what he's done all the way through the book. He gives us some definite valuable suggestions. And he said if we will use those in our lives today we will develop our own life of prayer and meditation. He couldn't tell us how to pray and meditate but he could tell us how to develop our own. He starts for just a few moments over on page 86 he tells us what to do when we go to bed at night. Here it is now in step 11. He said

Big Book, p. 86, par. 1 *"When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest, or afraid? "*

J & C I believe that's step 4 again isn't it?

Big Book, p. 86, par.1 cont. *"Do we owe an apology? "*

J & C That must be steps 8 and 9 again.

Big Book, p. 86, par. 1 cont. *"Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? "*

J & C I believe that's step 5 again.

Big Book, p. 86, par. 1 cont. *"Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken. "*

J & C And there is step 6 and 7 again. So what the book is really suggesting is when we go to bed at night we sit down and kind of take another little inventory. Step 10 was during the day when we're disturbed. Step 11 is before we go to bed at night.

We made up a little sheet here you could use. You can use anything you want to. The main thing is do we inventory or not?

On one side of the sheet we take the basic character defects, selfish, self-seeking, dishonest, frightened, inconsideration. We took all the other defects in the 12 and 12 which are the offshoots of those first four. We put them on the left-hand side of the sheet and called them the personality characteristics of a self-willed person. We tried to find the opposite and put them on the right hand side of the sheet and called that the personality characteristics of a God willed person. Now all we are trying to do is get from the left hand side of the sheet to the right hand side and I can sit down at night with this little sheet and run down through it making a few check marks that shows me where I've been that day. Shows we what I need to continue to work on.

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Never do I find myself on either side of the sheet. The check marks change locations from time to time. But I'm beginning to notice that I'm marking more of them on the right than on the left. And slowly over a period of time we continue to become a different human being. Now I've learned one thing about my sobriety. I am going to inventory. I've got one of two choices. I can put it off and put it off and put it off and put it off until I'm so sick that I'm almost drunk. And then I start trying to dig myself out from under the mess. Or I can take just a few minutes each day and by doing it a few minutes each day I keep myself in reasonably good condition.

And I'm in much less chance of drinking. I find that it takes less energy to do it on a daily basis then it does to wait till I'm almost drunk and then start trying to dig myself out form under it.

A very definite valuable suggestion.

DAILY INVENTORY

When we retire at night,

We constructively review our day.

Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid?

PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF SELF WILL		PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S WILL	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Selfish & Self-Seeking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interest in others
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dishonesty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Honesty
<input type="checkbox"/>	Frightened	<input type="checkbox"/>	Courage
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inconsiderate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Considerate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	Humility – Seeking God's Will
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greedy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Giving or Sharing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lustful	<input type="checkbox"/>	What can we do for others
<input type="checkbox"/>	Angry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Envy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grateful
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sloth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take Action
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gluttony	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Impatient	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patience
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intolerant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tolerance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resentful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forgiveness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Love – Concern for others
<input type="checkbox"/>	Harmful Acts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good Deeds
<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-Pity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self- Forgiveness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-Justification	<input type="checkbox"/>	Humility – Seek God's Will
<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-Importance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modesty
<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-Condernation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self- Forgiveness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Suspicion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trust
<input type="checkbox"/>	Doubt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faith