

Big Book Comes Alive Study Group

Joe & Charlie Audio Workshop

Let's look at this picture up here again for just a moment. Over here on this side (left) we can see that because of the allergy we can no longer safely drink alcohol. But as we said before, that's not going to bother us if we don't take the first drink. So apparently the problem is going to be over on this side.

The real problem centers in the mind telling us we can drink,
rather than in the body that ensures that we can't drink.

The Doctor told us then, and they tell us today there's nothing that can be done for that. So the only possible means of recovery will be to find a way to live where our minds don't tell us it's okay to drink. And we're dealing here with our emotions. We're dealing here with the way we think. We're dealing here with the way that we feel whenever we're sober. We are very, very complex human beings. Not only are we complex physically, but we also are complex mentally too. And all people experience emotions. All people experience from time to time anger, resentment, fear, worry, depression, excitement, elation, guilt, remorse. These are all emotions that all human beings have.

Now somewhere back in our lifetime as we begin to experience those emotions as we grow up, we start seeking a solution to them. And like me when I was a kid growing up I was just an emotional basket case, couldn't hardly function in normal society. Always scared to death, always worried, always angry, always doing things that I shouldn't do and feeling the guilt and the remorse associated with that. Now I used to think that only we alcoholics did that. But I found out today that that's normal as kids grow up, everybody experiences these kinds of feelings. And they start looking for an answer and many people find it in many different ways. Some people find that when they don't feel good emotionally that they can go out here and start working and the excess work seems to make them feel better. Some people find that when they're emotionally fouled up they can eat certain foods and that seems to make them feel better. Some people are into sexuality, that makes them feel better, and some people find that there's establishments like this building (Casino) that if you're emotionally disturbed you can do a little gambling and that makes you feel better.

Now it doesn't make any difference what you find that makes you feel better. When you find the solution to that emotional problem your mind has a memory bank, it immediately records the solution. And the reason it does that is the next time you have that emotion problem you don't have to go looking for a solution, your mind feeds it back to you. Well a little gambling made me feel better, or that food make me feel better or that work made me feel better or whatever. Now that's called mental addiction and everybody has that. You know we become mentally addicted to certain types of automobiles, we become mentally addicted to our hairdressers, we become mentally addicted to certain dishwasher products that we use, dish soap. You know we got a problem, we find the answer, the mind records it, feeds it back to us the next time we have the problem.

As a kid growing up I had that emotional problem and one night somebody gave me that drink of moonshine whisky and immediately those problems disappeared, and that great exciting in-control feeling came over me and I was allowed to ask that girl to dance, take her home and get in the back seat of that '36 Chevrolet. It answered my problem that night. My mind immediately recorded what it did for me. The next time I got into a solution (situation) where I didn't feel right, things were not right, my mind said if you could find a

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drink you'd feel better. And I found a drink of whiskey and by God the magic happened a second time. In other words, alcohol became the solution to my emotional problems.

Now if I had been nonalcoholic and that worked for me, that would have been great, but I also had that physical allergy over there on that (left) side. And when I had the problem and I used the solution, it sure enough made me feel better BUT also it triggered the allergy and I would drink more than I intended to drink and I would end up drunk. And I would repeat that cycle over and over and over and over and over and over again,

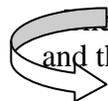
the mind causing me to drink,
the allergy causing me to get drunk.

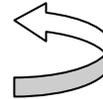


want more

The emotions after coming off the drunk to feed the mind caused me to drink and the drink then would trigger the allergy

and as time went by it got worse and worse and worse because this is a progressive illness, the drinking would become harder and harder, the trouble would become more and more. The restlessness, irritability, guilt, remorse became more and more. The emotions became worse and worse (the emotional barometer), to trigger the idea of taking the first drink.

 mind destroying the body,
and the body destroying the mind.



Now somewhere down the line I said to myself one day, 'Charlie, you're gonna have to do something about your drinking'. Now I didn't say you got to quit drinking, I said you're going to have to do something about your drinking.

So the first thing we alcoholics do, to do something about our drinking is,

- 1) We decide we're going to control our drinking while drinking.

Tonight we're just going to have two beers, we're just going to have two drinks. Go to the Liquor Store and buy a half a pint cause nobody can get drunk on half a pint. And I spent 3 or 4 or 5, 6 years trying to control my drinking while drinking. Anybody in here ever try to control your drinking while drinking? Well now I can see why

That (controlled drinking) would not
work because of the allergy

the more you drink,
the higher the craving;
the higher the craving
the more you want,
the more you want,
the more you drink ...

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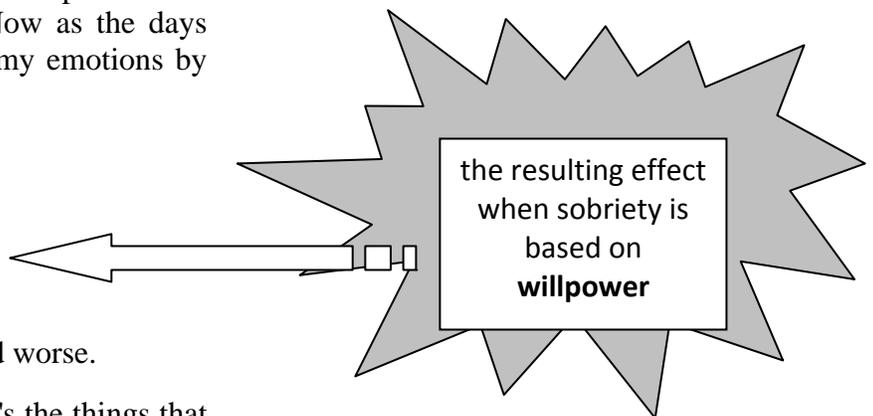
And after 4 or 5, 6 years of trying to control my drinking while drinking I said to myself one day, 'Charlie, I don't believe you can drink anymore'. Took me a long time to realize it. And I said I don't believe you can drink anymore.

So what do we alcoholics do when we finally decide we can't drink anymore?

- 2) We trot out the most useful tool we have and we put it right there, and it's called WILLPOWER.

And we say sick him will, we're through with that drinking, we'll never take another drink as long as we live. Now believe me, you people that are non-alcoholic, when we say we're going to quit drinking, that is exactly what we intend to do. You see we are strong-willed people. We can use our willpower to handle all other problems and we assume that we can use willpower here and we really intend to quit drinking. Now as the days went by, I haven't done anything about my emotions by the way,

I'll just quit drinking,
and as the days go by
these emotions begin to build up.
The fear, the guilt, the remorse,
the shame, the worry,
the depression, becomes worse and worse.



It's not the big things in life that kill us, it's the things that all people have to go through on a daily basis in life. It's getting up every damn morning and going to work, it's a bitching wife, it's a griping husband, it's screaming kids, it's burnt bacon, it's broken shoe-strings, it's flat tires. All the things that everybody has to go through and these emotions start building up (emotional barometer). Now after a while the mind says, 'a drink would make you feel better'. But remember I put willpower in here, and willpower said, 'no siree we're not going to drink, we quit', and that day we don't drink. The next day the emotions are still here and they're building up a little higher and a little higher and a little higher and it said, 'God a drink would make me feel good, and the mind said, 'no siree we've quit drinking, we ain't never going to drink again'. The next day the emotions are still here and they're building up a little higher and a little higher, and your mind begins to say, 'well hell you've been sober 90 days, you've proven you're not an alcoholic, one drink wouldn't hurt anybody'. Your mind says, 'no, we're not going to do that, we've quit drinking, hell we've sworn off, we'll never take another drink'. The next day the emotions are still here and there building up higher and higher and the mind says, 'by golly anybody's been sober 92 days owes them self a drink'. And we begin to think about that great exciting in-control feeling that comes with one or two drinks. We begin to think about the sense of ease and comfort that Dr. Silkworth talks about here.

And as we begin to think about what alcohol is going to do for us,
it begins to push out the idea of what it does to us.

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And we begin to forget the jailhouse, we forget the last car wreck, we forget the divorce courts and the hospitalization and the mind begins to key in on one thing and one thing only, what it's going to do for us. Then when the desire to drink comes, willpower's no longer there. Cause you see the only time willpower is there is when the mind sees something wrong with what it wants to do, and just before we drink, we don't see anything wrong with drinking.

willpower becomes non-existent, we take the drink we trigger the allergy
we go through the well know stages of a spree
we emerge remorseful with a firm resolution not to do this again.

And we repeat that cycle over and over and over.

The body destroying the body over here (left hand side),
the mind over here causing us to drink more and more (right hand side).

if you can't safely drink because of the body
and if you can't quit because of the mind,
then you've become absolutely powerless over alcohol.

And that's our problem. Now if you're going to solve a problem you got to be able to attack it somewhere. I can't attack it over here (physical), can't do nothing about that, maybe I can attack it over here (mental).

- If I could find a way to live where I could be sober and not be restless, irritable and discontented.
- If I could find a way to live where I could be sober and not be filled with shame, fear, guilt, and remorse, just maybe I could find a way to live where I could have peace of mind, serenity and happiness.
- Maybe I could find a way to live where I could be sober and have that great sense of ease and comfort that comes at once by taking a couple of drinks.
- Maybe I could find a way to live where I don't need to take a drink in order to make me feel better, and that's called recovery.

the program of recovery that's found in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

As we use our program, as we go through the steps,
these kinds of feelings down here begin to disappear,
and they begin to be replaced with peace of mind, serenity, and happiness.

guilt, remorse,
resentment,
SELF-PITY,
FEAR

And under those conditions our emotions do not build up to the level that suggest we take a drink to feel better, because we already feel better. That's what the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous do for us. Fellowship alone will not bring that about, the program will.

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Let's read the very next statement in the Big Book,

Big Book p. xxvii, par. 2 *“On the other hand--and strange as this may seem to those who do not understand--once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules.”*

J & C And as Charlie said, those few simple rules are the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. And our book says that in the Twelve and Twelve, that if you practice as a way of life will expel the obsession to drink and make the person happily and usefully whole.

And that is called recovery,

and that's is exactly what the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous is all about.

A.A.'s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
Foreword p. 15, par. 3

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS SESSION THE DR. 'S OPINION THE DISEASE CONCEPT OF ALCOHOLISM.

Bill's Story

(Session07a -

09:59 minutes)

Synopsis; It is proven today, that acetone ingested into the human system and that remains there for an appreciable period of time, will produce an actual physical craving for more of the same. Discussed the progressive physical illness of alcoholism

Bill's Story

J & C Last night we spent quite a bit of time talking about the problem,

talking about

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the physical allergy that ensures we can't safely drink,

talking about

the obsession of the mind that ensures that we can't keep from drinking

and the ultimate conclusion to that was
if you can't safely drink without getting drunk,
and if you can't keep from drinking,
then you've become absolutely powerless over alcohol

and most certainly our lives had become unmanageable if not at that time then we just keep on drinking and after a while they will be for sure. So this morning we're going to look at an example of a guy that had that problem. A good textbook never tells you anything anyhow but what it don't back it up with more information.

And we're going to look at Bill's Story this morning and Bill's Story is a classic example of an alcoholic who had the allergy and who had the obsession of the mind. Now we got to remember back in the 1930's Bill learned very early on the value of sharing your story with another alcoholic, when he went to see Dr. Bob, and immediately Dr. Bob could see his problem also. They went to see Bill Dobson and they shared their stories with Bill Dobson. Bill Dobson could see his problem through their stories, and they learned very early on that it was necessary for one alcoholic to identify with another in order to be able to get their interest and get their attention. And when the Big Book was first published they knew they wouldn't be able to sit down with the first person out here in California and share their story one on one.

So the Big Book had to be complete enough to do that. So they said we'll put Bill's Story in here at the very beginning, and another alcoholic in reading Bill's Story will be able to identify with Bill.

And if we can identify with Bill and see his alcoholism, see him make a recovery from that condition, we can begin to believe and we can begin to hope that we're enough like Bill Wilson and if he could recover from that condition then just maybe we could too. Now a lot of you have said we have trouble identifying with Bill Wilson cause after all he was a night school lawyer and we were not, after all he was a New York City stock speculator and we were not, and a lot of the women say we can't identify with him because he's a man, and many people say well he was an older fellow and we couldn't identify there either. **But if we look for the way Bill thinks, and the way Bill acts and the way Bill drinks, if we're a real alcoholic there's not an alcoholic in this room that can't identify with Bill Wilson.**

So as we go through Bill's Story this morning we'll look for

1. identification,
2. **the progression of alcoholism**
3. him drinking finally for the sickest reason of all, complete oblivion,

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then well look and see how Bill recovered from alcoholism and if we've identified with him then we begin to believe that if he could do it just maybe we could it too...identification, the beginning of believe, the beginning of hope.

I too didn't think I could identify with Bill Wilson that I've seen pictures of and he was an old man I thought. Turned out **he was 43 years old when this book was written**, so a relatively young man. But as I began to study and read Bill's Story I began to see that he was a very optimist person, hardworking, had lots and lots of willpower. He was a self made man who became very successful in his own right. And through Bill's story we're going to see what he was like, then we're going to see how he learned that he was sick, and then we're going to see how he affected a recovery. So the total story of Alcoholics Anonymous is contained in Bill Wilson's story. So let's go to page one, Bill's Story. He said

Big Book p. 1, par. 1 *“War fever ran high in the New England town to which we new, young officers from Plattsburg were assigned, and we were flattered when the first citizens took us to their homes, making us feel heroic. Here was love, applause, war; moments sublime with intervals hilarious”*

J & C Anybody ever have any moment's sublime with intervals hilarious?
I have. I love the way Bill writes.

Big Book p. 1, par. 1, line 6 *“I was part of life at last, and in the midst of the excitement I discovered liquor. I forgot the strong warnings and the prejudices of my people concerning drink. In time we sailed for "Over There." I was very lonely and again turned to alcohol. “ We landed in England. I visited Winchester Cathedral. Much moved, I wandered outside. My attention was caught by a doggerel on an old tombstone:*

"Here lies a Hampshire Grenadier
Who caught his death
Drinking cold small beer.
A good soldier is ne'er forgot
Whether he dieth by musket
Or by pot."

J & C Now when he says that about pot, he's not referring to this wacky weed. He's talking about a pot of beer, that's the way they used to drink it over in England at that time. He said

Big Book p. 1, par. 3 *“Ominous warning which I failed to heed.” “Twenty-two, and a veteran of foreign wars, I went home at last. I fancied myself a leader, for had not the men of my battery given me a special token of appreciation? My talent for leadership, I imagined, could place me at the head of vast enterprises which I would manage with the utmost assurance. I took a night law course, and obtained employment as investigator for a surety company. The drive for success was on. I'd prove to the world I was important.”*

J & C I already identify with Bill Wilson. **That seems to be one of the main characteristics behind every alcoholic I've ever known. The great drive for success**

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was on; I'll prove to the world that I'm important also. It seems to be the driving force behind each one of us.

Big Book p.2, par 1, line 4 *“My work took me about Wall Street and little by little I became interested in the market. Many people lost money but some became very rich. Why not I? I studied economics and business as well as law. Potential alcoholic that I was, I nearly failed my law course. At one of the finals I was too drunk to think or write. Though my drinking was not yet continuous, it disturbed my wife.*

J & C I can identify with Bill.

Big Book p.2, par. 1, line 11 *“We had long talks when I would still her forebodings by telling her that men of genius conceived their best projects when drunk; J & C I have no trouble identifying with Bill Wilson. Big Book p.2, par. 1, line 13 “that the most majestic constructions philosophic thought were so derived.”*

J & C I can identify with Bill. Charlie said last night we make our living selling fast talk to slow thinking people, and Bill's trying to do some of that here, but we all know that Lois didn't buy that. He said

Big Book p.2, par. 2 *“By the time I had completed the course, I knew the law was not for me. The inviting maelstrom of Wall Street had me in its grip. Business and financial leaders were my heroes. Out of this ally of drink and speculation, I commenced to forge the weapon that one day would turn in its flight like a boomerang and all but cut me to ribbons. Living modestly, my wife and I saved \$1,000. It went into certain securities, then cheap and rather unpopular. I rightly imagined that they would some day have a great rise.*

I failed to persuade my broker friends to send me out looking over factories and managements, but my wife and I decided to go anyway. I had developed a theory that most people lost money in stocks through ignorance of markets. I discovered many more reasons later on.”

J & C Now Bill is referring to a time back in the 1920's when the stock market was on a roll. Just about everybody that dealt with stocks was making money. All you had to do was buy them and hold unto them, let them go up in price, sell them, take your profits, buy some more. Everything was done on about a 10% margin; everything was pure speculation. Bill really became one of the first investment counselors on Wall Street. He began to say look, sooner or later this bubble is going to burst. Sooner or later we're going to have to start making our decisions based on fact rather than speculation. He went to the people who had the money and he said I don't have the money to do this but if you guys would back me financially, I'll leave New York City and I'll start visiting these companies. And I'll look at the plants and I'll talk to the employees and I'll examine the books wherever I can and I'll write up reports and send them back in here and we'll start making our decisions whether to buy or not based on fact.

And they said, no, Bill, we don't need that kind of information. We're making about all the money we want to make anyhow. And you know how we alcoholics are, if we get a good

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idea, stubborn as hell, we're going to carry it out one way or another. He said the hell with them, I don't need them anyhow, I'll just go do this on my own. He said,

Big Book p.2, par.3 *"We gave up our positions and off we roared on a motorcycle, the sidecar stuffed with tent, blankets, a change of clothes, and three huge volumes of a financial reference service. Our friends thought a lunacy commission should be appointed. Perhaps they were right. I had had some success at speculation, so we had a little money, but we once worked on a farm for a month to avoid drawing on our small capital. That was the last honest manual labor on my part for many a day. We covered the whole eastern United States in a year. At the end of it, my reports to Wall Street procured me a position there and the use of a large expense account. The exercise of an option brought in more money, leaving us with a profit of several thousand dollars for that year."*

J & C Bill and Lois, traveling on the motorcycle, living in the tent, went up and down the eastern seaboard of the United States and he wrote up reports on approximately 100 of the largest companies in the eastern states sending them to New York City. The guys that had the money saw them and say oh yeah man this is great information and immediately they put Bill on the payroll, gave him a large expense account, the exercise in option made a good profit, for the first time in his life he's got something. He came from a little town called East Dorset, Vermont, he had never had anything before in his life. Here's how he feels

Big Book p.3, par.2 *"For the next few years fortune threw money and applause my way. I had arrived."*

J & C God how many of us have done the same kind of things Bill did?
