

Working the 4th Step

Joe McQ. & Charlie P. · session 7 of 9

Page 63: house cleaning and when to take Step Four

00:00

Charlie 00:00

Let's go to the bottom of page 63. We've made our decision. We've uttered our prayer. And the book says: next, we launched out on a course of vigorous action. The first step of which is a personal house cleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision was a vital and crucial step. It could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by strenuous effort to face and to be rid of the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom, so we had to get down to causes and conditions. Now, we always like to stop here for just a moment and look at the time element between step three and step four, we always hear people asking the question: How long should you wait after you do step three until you start on step four, and we hear all kinds of answers. Sometimes they'll say, well, 30 days, and maybe 90 days, or maybe six months. We heard a professional in the field one time counseling people to wait a minimum of two years. And our question back to that person was: how many people have you killed with that statement? You see, we're trying to find a way to live where we not only can be sober, but we can have a little peace of mind, serenity, and happiness. And every day that we put off and procrastinate, step forward, is a day that we're still filled with resentments, a day that we're still filled with shame, and fear, and guilt, and remorse. Another day that we don't feel good. And we really don't know how many days we could go without our mind beginning to think about taking a drink. And next thing you know, we've convinced ourselves that it's okay to drink, and we end up drunk all over again. I don't know how many days I could go under those conditions, and frankly, I'm not very interested in finding out. Our book tells us when we should take step four. Step three will have little permanent effect unless at once followed by this strenuous effort, which is step four. And you know, that does make sense, doesn't it? As far back as I can remember, four has always followed immediately after

Joe 02:44

three.

Charlie 02:48

Now, knowing that, and knowing we might get drunk if we don't get on with step four, why would we still tend to procrastinate? And I think two or three reasons behind it. Number one is fear. Some of we older members tend to play king off of the mountain with his step. And we tell the newcomer how tough it is. By God, just wait till you get to step three or four, blah, blah, blah, blah. We just literally scare them to death. Let us be the first to say today that if we take step four, according to the big book Alcoholics Anonymous, there is nothing whatsoever to be afraid of. And I think we're all going to see that in just a little bit. Okay, knowing there's nothing to be afraid of, then why would we still tend to procrastinate? And I think probably one of the gravest reasons is simply confusion. For years, we could not see how to do step four according to the big book. And the reason we couldn't see it is the instructions are there, but they are so simple that we alcoholics, with our keen intellectual alcoholic minds, looking for something more complicated, overlook the simplicity of step forward. So, in our desperation, we read over in step five something about sharing all your life story. And we said, Oh, that's what they wanted us to do in step four is write our life story so we could share it in step five. That's what I did in the beginning. Now, my life story might not have been important to others, but it must have been to me. There were 92 pages in it. I took it to another poor, suffering human being and asked them to read it, and they did. And he said, Not very pretty, is it? And I said, No, it isn't. He said, you'll never have to be that way again. He threw it in the waste paper basket. And I learned nothing from my life story to contribute to my alcoholism. Certainly, nothing new. Because everything I wrote down, I already knew it, so nothing new came out of it. And today I realize that 95% of my life story really doesn't have anything to do with my alcoholism, anyhow. The fact that I was born in 1929, I don't think that's got a thing to do with my alcoholism. It may have had something to do with somebody else's alcoholism, but not mine. The fact that I graduated from high school at age 17, went immediately into the service, I don't think it's got a thing to do with my alcoholism. The fact that I was married at age 21, I don't think it's got anything to do with it. But I tell you what, it did do. The 95% that had nothing to do with it very effectively covered up the 5% that did. And I learned nothing from my life story to contribute to my alcoholism. So, in our desperation, again, somebody in Minneapolis, Minnesota wrote a four-step inventory guide. We took the Minneapolis guide, combined it with the big book, and got more confused yet. Somebody in Dallas, Texas, wrote a four-step inventory guide. We took the Dallas guide, combined it with a Minneapolis guide, combined it with a big book, and got more confused yet. I have no idea how many are floating around today. We saw one that had 20 pages in it. I'll guarantee you, if you weren't crazy as hell

when you took it, you would be when you were through with it. It was one of those. All the time, the instructions have been here. We just never could see them before because we didn't understand how Bill writes. And I think today, if we can just kind of sit back and relax, look at a few simple ideas, we're going to see how easy this thing really is. There's two things we've got to remember. First, he loved to use comparisons. Talking about one thing that we already know to teach us something new. Also, he did not like to repeat himself using the same words over and over. So he would tell us something, then turn around and tell it again, but use different words the second time. And bearing those two thoughts in mind, I think we can see how simple this thing really is. He starts out by saying, Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. This was step four. Immediately, he jumps into business. He says, A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. And I think his first comparison is this. You know, if you had a business, and I don't care what it is, selling ladies' purses, men's watches, bicycles, or whatever, if you did an inventory once in a while, and by the way, inventory is defined as a written list of items. If you didn't go in there and make a list of the things that are in there, you wouldn't know what's been stolen that you didn't get paid for. If you didn't inventory once in a while, you wouldn't know what's been sold and you need to reorder to put new stock in its place. If you didn't inventory once in a while, you wouldn't know what's become damaged. Nobody wants to buy it. It's sitting there taking up valuable floor space day after day after day. You're probably paying interest on borrowed money to put it in there in the first place. If you didn't inventory once in a while, you wouldn't know what's become out of style. You need to put it on sale so you can get it out of the store to put something new in its place. If you had a business and you did an inventory once in a while, you probably would go broke, and I think we can all see that. Okay, in our personal lives, we have a business too. Greatest business in the world for us. And it's the business of finding a way to live where we can have a little peace of mind, serenity, and happiness so we don't have to go back to drinking. And if we don't inventory in our personal business, chances are we're not going to find what's damaged and unsaleable in our heads that's going to cause us to go broke too. And going broke for us is simply going back to drinking. So, whether we're dealing with a personal business or a business business, in either case, we would probably go broke without the inventory. Now, then, he's going to tell us how to take a business inventory. He says, taking a commercial. Now, Dad Burnham, he could have said business again, couldn't he? But he'll use the word commercial, which means the same thing. Taking a commercial inventory. Now Joe up here on the screen, and you also have it in your handout material. We're going to have a little picture up here that's going to be called Inventory Comparison. I think it's step five in your handout sheet. On one side says business, the other one says personal. And we're going to take a few key words out of the big book and put it under business. He said, taking a commercial inventory is a fact-finding,

and we're putting fact-finding under business and a fact-facing process, we're putting fact-facing under business. It is an effort to discover the truth, and we're putting truth under business about the stock in trade, and we're putting stock in trade under business. The stock in trade is what's in there to sell: the ladies' purses, the men's watches, the bicycles, or whatever. One object is to disclose damaged or unsaleable goods, and we're putting under object, under business, disclosed damaged or unsaleable goods to get rid of them promptly and without regret. And we're putting promptly and without regret under business. In other words, we're going to go in there and we're going to try to find the facts. When we find them, we're going to face the facts. We're looking for the truth about the stock in trade. We're trying to find the damaged and unsalable goods. The good items will not cause us to go broke. Oh, they resell every day and we're making money off of them. The damaged and unsaleable goods, they're the ones that are blocking the floor space and the shelf space and costing us money. When we finally find them, we're going to try to get rid of them promptly and without regret. We can't put anything new in there in their place until they're gone. We're trying to find the stock in trade this damage and get it out of there. If the owner of the business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values. He's got to be honest. Once in a while, he'll try to fool himself. He'll say, Well, the reason these ladies aren't buying these purses is they just don't understand what's good for them. You know, he made the decision to buy them. He hates to admit that he made a mistake. And he may keep them in there longer than he should. And if he does, it's going to cost him money every day. Is there anybody in here who would have any problem with what he's told us about the business inventory? That we're going to try to find their facts. When we find them, we're going to face them. We're looking for the truth about the stock in trade. We're looking for the damaged and unsaleable goods. When we get rid of them, we're going to or when we find them, we're going to get rid of them promptly and without regret. Always looking for the stock in trade that's damaged. Anyone got any problems there? Okay, now watch him. He used a series of words to tell us how to take our personal inventory, which means basically the same thing. He said, We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly. So we go to step four, and step four says, Now we're under personal on the right-hand side of the sheet. Step 4 said we made a searching, and we're putting searching straight across from fact-finding. They mean the same thing to find the facts, to search out the facts. We made a searching fearless, and we're putting fearless straight across from fact-facing. They mean the same thing. To face the facts, to fearlessly look at them. We made a searching fearless moral, and there's where we got in trouble. We said, oh, damn. There's that list of dirty, filthy, nasty items. And we don't want to look at them, and we sure as hell don't want to show them to anybody else. Now, I'm not sure what all Bill Wilson knew, but I know one thing: this guy understood the English language. And I really believe that if he'd wanted you and I to make

a list of dirty, filthy, nasty items, he would have said we made a searching and fearless, amoral or immoral inventory. He didn't say that. He said moral. Bugged the hell out of us. Till eventually we went back to the dictionary. Do you know what the word moral is defined as? Truth. Things as they really are. The right and wrong of any given situation. The truth about things. So truth and moral mean exactly the same thing. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of what? Of ourselves. We're the only stock in trade that we have in this business of staying sober. Nobody else can make us sober, and nobody else can make us drink. Oh, I'll agree, they can make us thirsty as hell once in a while, but they can't make us drink. We decide whether we drink or not. Now, what part of us decides whether we drink or not? Is it our body or is it our mind? The real problem of the alcoholic centers in the mind. So we're going to look inside ourselves, in our minds, and we're going to find those flawed thinking processes, which is the damaged and unsalable goods that block us off from God. Now we've made a decision to turn our will over to God. And as long as our mind is filled with damaged and unsalable goods, then God can't direct our thinking. We're going to have to find them, and after we once find them, then we're going to get rid of them promptly and without regret. And when those flawed thinking processes leave our minds, then our mind is opened up for God's thinking to enter. But it's only after they're gone that God can enter. Now, there are three common manifestations of a life run on self-will, and we've already talked about them. The flawed thinking processes in our mind that blocks God out are resentments, fear, guilt, and remorse associated with the harms done to other people. And as long as our mind is occupied with those thoughts, then God's thoughts can't come in. It's just that simple. Now I like to look at my head up here as a little bitty store, not much, a little bitty quick trip or 7-Eleven, not a hell of a lot in it, never has been over here in this part of my store. I've got some display cases, and they are filled with resentments. Damn him, damn her, by God. I'll show them. Bla-di-bla-di-bla-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba. Those display cases are already full. God simply cannot get in there because He is blocked out by the damaged and unsalable goods called resentments. Over here in this part of my store, I've got a little file cabinet and it's filled with fear. Oh my God, what's she going to do when she finds out about this one? Oh my God, what's the banker going to say when that check hits there this time? He's already told me he's going to file on me next time. Oh my god, is that my car sitting out in the front? Front end torn up, don't know how oh my god, and on and on and on. God can't get in there. He's very effectively blocked out by those fears. Back here in the back of my store, I've got a little file room and it's full of guilt and remorse. God dwells on each of us. We know the difference between right and wrong. We do these things that hurt other people. We're scared to death what they're going to do when they find out, and the guilt and remorse begins to eat us up. God can't get in that storeroom, He's already blocked out of there. Have an emergency phone call for whom? Pam and Paul Madison.

The business inventory comparison: fact-finding and damaged goods

05:00

The little store in our heads: resentment, fear, guilt and remorse

16:00

Joe 18:21

Who? Pam or Paul Madison. Pam or Paul Madison.

Charlie 18:25

Pam or Paul Madison. Okay.

Joe 18:27

I put the tape cable back at the

Charlie 18:29

back. I hope everything's all right. Now, if I want God to direct my thinking, then I'm going to have to do something about the removal of these resentments and these fears and this guilt and remorse. And if I can remove them, then God's thinking can enter into my mind and direct those portions of my mind where He was effectively blocked out. Now, my book is getting ready to show me just exactly how to look at these things truthfully. It's getting ready to show me how to remove them. Then, the greatest thing it's going to show me is how to keep them from coming back in the future. And if I'll do my part, then God can direct my thinking. But until I've done my part, God can't. It's just that simple. He says, We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly, truthfully, morally. First, we searched out the flaws in our makeup which caused our failure. Being convinced that self manifested in various ways in what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations. Resentment is the number one offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we've been not only mentally and physically ill, we've been spiritually sick. When the spiritual balance is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. So, the first thing we're going to do is look at these resentments. Now, I think we need to look at that word and make sure we understand what it means. The word resentment is made from two old, old words. First is the letters RE, RE. When you see re in front of another word, it always means to do again. Like a repaint, replay, redo always means to do again. The last part of this word, sentiment, comes from an old word called sentiri, which means to feel. So the word resentment itself means to refeel. Okay. Let's say we're going through life, which we do on a daily basis, remembering always that everybody has got self-will. That's one of the problems, it's standard equipment. Everybody's got self-will. From time to time, other people get sick in self. Maybe their social instinct is out of culture.

Maybe their security instinct or their sex instinct is fouled up. And they do something to me that threatens one of my basic instincts of life. Maybe they put me down in the eyes of other people and it threatens my self-esteem. Maybe they do something to threaten one of my personal relationships. Maybe they rip me off and steal my money from me. Maybe they do something to interfere with my sex life. Or maybe they do something that threatens one of my ambitions for the future. Now, when they do that, that's a wrong on their part for doing so. That's not a resentment. It doesn't become a resentment till I go over in the next room. Or, I go home that evening and I replay that thing in my mind, and I feel the pain the second time. The first time they did it to me, it hurt me. But when I go over here and replay it and feel the pain the second time, then I'm doing it to myself now. They did it to me the first time, but I'm doing it the second time. And after a while, I'll replay it again. And I'll feel the pain the third time. And what I found in my life is, I'm not always completely honest with me. Because it seems as though when I replay this thing, each time I tend to change it just a little bit. And I tend to make what they did to me just a little bit worse. I tend to make what I did just a little bit less. I tend to make the pain just a little bit deeper and you let me play it over in my head enough times after a while I can say to myself I was just standing there doing nothing. And they come along and did it to

Resentment defined: re-feeling and the replay machine

21:00

Joe 24:07

me.

Charlie 24:15

I love to watch football games. And in a football game, you'll see a guy called a quarterback that sometimes will throw a pass. And the guy that's supposed to receive it, many times it's thrown up high on purpose so the other guys can't catch it. And the guy that's going to receive it, several, many times, has to jump way up in the air to catch it. Now, the members of the opposing team. They have learned that if you can hit this guy while he's still up in the air, before he really gets good control of that ball, you can knock it loose from him. So they wait until he jumps up in the air, and when that ball touches his fingers, they knock the hell out of him. Now he's completely defenseless now, and they'll hit him, and sometimes it'll just turn him upside down. He'll fall on his head, his neck bends sideways, his legs spread apart, one arm bends completely behind his back, and it just hurts the hell out of him. And you can see that he's hurt. Now, the football game, though, is like the game of life. It's going to go on. They're not going to stop it very long. One of two things will happen with this guy. They'll run out there and check him over, and if he isn't hurt too bad, they'll pump a little air in him and get him up

and get him going again. If he's hurt too bad, they'll drag him off to the side, they'll put somebody in his place, and the game starts again. The football game is going to continue. I don't care what's happened. Now, the announcer up in the booth, though, he's got a resentment machine. Because after a while he'll say, Let's look at that again. And this time it is in slow motion and living color. My God, it looks twice as bad as it did the first time. You can see how far his neck really did bend. How far his legs spread apart, and how badly that arm was bent. And it looks twice as bad as it did the first time. After a while, the announcer will say, Let's look at that again. The game's been going on now for 15 minutes. The announcer's still bouncing this guy up and down, up and down, up and down off the

Joe 26:41
ground.

Charlie 26:44

Now we alcoholics have up here in our heads a little resentment replay machine. And we get up in the mornings and we tune it up in living color. We clean the lens on it because we don't want to miss nothing. And we shine it on the world all day long, and we record everything they do to us that's bad. And we go home at night and sit down and play it over in our head and make ourselves sick and blame it on them. Now, once in a while we have a bad day. Once in a great while, they won't do anything to us. That's a bad day for an alcoholic. We've got our machine cleaned up, the lens is clean, tuned up, we're shining it on the world, and nobody will do anything to us. We don't have anything bad to record. Don't recall nothing good. Do you know what we record those days? By God, we record what they're thinking. That's what we do. We go home at night, play it over in our head, make ourselves sick. Now, there's a bad thing about resentment because each time you play it over your head, each time you throw it out there, after a while, it turns around, it comes back at you. And when it comes back at you, it comes back as self-resentment. And we begin to resent ourselves for being in a position to have those things happen to us. And after a while, self-resentment turns to self-pity. And that's the sickest, sickest that a human being can be up here in their head: to be filled with self-pity. And we alcoholics love self-pity. We like to get up early in the morning, put self-pity on as a cloak of dignity. And as we go out the door, we say, Here I come, mean old world. Just do it to me. I know you're going to get me because you always do. It is a sick, sick way to build our self-esteem. Because after all, if the whole world is picking on us, we must really be somebody. And my God, we love that self-pity. If you want an alcoholic mad, if you want to make them mad, you try to feel sorry for one of us. And we'll tell you in a hurry, don't you feel sorry for me? That's my damn job, you know. Is there any way that God can enter a mind filled with that kind of crap? No way. Our thinking is controlled and dominated by these resentments and all the

things that go along with it. God is absolutely, completely blocked out of our mind through these resentments. At the very least, we're going to have to do something about them. Now, the instructions on how to do them are here in the big book Alcoholics Anonymous are just so simple that we never could see them before. We've given you a sheet in your handout material called a review of resentments. I believe that's page 9 and 10. And what I would ask you to do now is take those last two columns, try to fold them over where you can't even see them, where all you're looking at is column 1, 2, and three. The example on page 65 has already been filled out, and we didn't know the procedure that Bill used to fill it out. That's where a lot of our confusion is. So, what we've given to you in the first three columns is page 65 in the blank form. We want to emphasize we're not trying to bring another inventory in AA. We've already got enough of those. Page 65, the resentment sheet that you have is 65 at the blank form. Column 1, I'm resentful at column two is the cause, column three affects my. Now let's see if we can't find the instructions on how to fill it out. In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. Okay, you've got the paper now, and we're going to start setting them down.

Filling the resentment sheet: columns one, two, and three

29:00

Joe 31:14

You know, we're always taught to read from left to right. And if you read from left to right and trying to figure out the inventory on page 65, you would start with the Mr. Brown and you'd write down the resentment, and then you'd change your mind and go to the second column and write down the cause. Then you'd change your mind again and go to what part of self was affected, and you have to use those basic instincts of life and try to write down what part of self was affected. Then you'd go back to the first column mentally and write down Mrs. Jones. Then you'd change your mind again and go to the second column. Well, you get the idea if you do that long enough, if you have a mind like mine, it says tilt. Just too much information. And I say, well, what the hell? All they wanted was a life story anyhow. So I just disregard this. Well, we didn't know how to fill out this column. It seems to us that you fill this out one column at a time from top to bottom, leaving a little space in between the names in column one. So you'll fill that in over in column two and a little bit later. Because our book said that we listed people, institution, or principal with whom we are angry, period. From top to bottom, in column one, we would simply write down all the people, principles, or institutions with whom we are angry from top to bottom, leaving a little space between each one of them all the

Charlie 32:30

way down. People, that's self-explanatory. The institutions are those things such as the police department, the Innteralven Ruee Service, the Federal Government, the Church, etc. Principles

are those old, old guiding, I hate to use the word laws, but it's the only thing I can think of: natural laws that's interfered with our style of living. The Ten Commandments, that's a set of principles. And when I was out there drinking, I don't want to hear nothing about the Ten Commandments. I'm breaking all of them but one, and maybe I broke it in the blackout too. I don't know. Another old principle I'd always hated said, What goes up must come down. I never cared for that one. Another one said, What you give out is what you get back. Another one said, There are no free rides, you'll pay for whatever you get. And my dad used to say, When you lay down with dogs, you'll get fleas on you every time. Those old, old principles that interfered with our style of living. Now, you don't need to be sober very long to do this. All we've got to do is take these things out of our head, put them down on paper. You don't have to have a high education to do this. If you can't write, you feed the names to somebody else and let them write them down. And while our mind is on one thing and one thing only, let's fill out the first column from top to bottom. I've never seen an alcoholic yet that did not know just who and what by God we're mad at. We spend thousands of hours sitting around in bars talking about it. All we got to do is take it out of our head, put it down on a piece of paper, and we would have completed the first instruction. And hopefully, the same thing will happen to you that happened to me when I did this. They came to me and they said, list your resentments. And I said, I don't have any. And they said, surely you got one or two. Maybe you don't understand what the resentment is. And they explained to me that it was to refeel old pains and old hurts. And I said, oh, yeah, I've got a couple of those. They said, put them on paper. Leave a little space in between each one. So I got a sheet of paper and leaving space between, like the book does first thing I knew, I had about eight names on that sheet of paper. And I got it, reached over and got another sheet of paper. And after a while, I had eight more listed. And I got another sheet of paper, and next thing you know, I had eight more listed, and I got another sheet of paper, and I got up to about 152. And I said, Man, you're mattering hell and everything. I did not know that. You can only see one resentment at a time in your head. I don't think any of us will ever see how many resentments we really do have and how much they control and dominate our thinking till we get them all down on a sheet of paper and see them in their entirety for the first time. Now, we've made a decision to let God direct our thinking, and if we've got that many resentments, then resentments direct our thinking, and God can't, and it's just that simple. Just by the listing of the names, we learn something very valuable about ourselves. How resentful we really are. You just can't see this stuff in your head. It has to go on paper. So we filled out the first column. Now, Bill said, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Jones, my employer, and my wife. He probably had more than that. I think he just didn't want to use any more space in the big book. Mine was that long, long list of about 152 names. We

asked why we were angry, period. Stop right there and go to the second column, the cause. Now, he's in the illustration, and he used it here very short and sweet, just four or five little words, not too many words to describe the cause. Simplicity is the key here in the second column. Now, he's resentful of Mr. Brown. Why? His attentions to my wife. He told my wife of my mistress. Brown may get my job at the office. I don't even know Mr. Brown. I'm already mad at him myself. Now he's resentful at Miss Jones because she's a nut. She snubbed me. She committed her husband for drinking. He's my friend and she's a gossip. What she did was put his old drinking buddy in the nut house. And he don't like that at all. He's mad at his employer. Why? Well, he's unreasonable and unjust and overbearing. Probably said, Say, Bill, by the way, where were you all day yesterday anyhow? He threatens to fire me for drinking and impading my expense account. That's unreasonable as hell, isn't it? Yeah. Very narrow minded. Now he's m he's really mad at his wife. She misunderstands and nags and she likes old Brown. And she wants the house put in her name. You tie that together liking Old Brown wanting the house put in her name, it's about time to get a little bit upset, isn't it? So, simply in the second column, we just write down, we ask ourselves why we were angry beside each name one at a time, using four or five little words to describe the cause. There may be one cause, or there may be two or three causes, but we simply write them down in the second column.

Charlie 38:13

We're not going to write any big long essays. No. Just a few simple words by each name. And there may be one cause, and there may be multiple causes as we have here. Whatever it is, we put it down. I filled out the second column, and I begin to realize something that's become very valuable to me. I begin to realize it's not the people and the institutions that I'm upset with. It's what they've done to me that's got me upset. You know, I can take Mr. Brown out of here and put Mr. Green in. I'll be just as upset with Green as I am with Brown, if he does the same thing to me, I could take Mrs. Jones out of here and put Mrs. Smith in. If Smith does the same thing, I'm going to be just as upset with her as I am with Jones. Well, I could take my wife out of here and put my mistress in. And if she does the same thing, I'll be just as upset with her. I begin to realize it's not them that's got me upset. It's what they've done to me that's got me upset. Now, the reason that's valuable is because of this. I'm getting ready to start out on a lifetime-changing process to develop the best possible relationship that I can with the world and everybody in it so I can have maximum peace of mind and serenity. A part of that relationship is a little later on in my program, I'm going to have to go to a bunch of people and ask them to forgive me for what I've done to them. By the same token, I'm going to have to forgive others for what they've done to me. And a part of that forgiving process can start right here. When I begin to realize it's not them, it's what they've done that's got me upset, that starts getting names out of the way. And it's going to make it a lot easier to handle this in the future. So I

filled out two columns now. Number one, I learned how resentful I really am, how much that blocks me from God. And number two, I've learned it's not them I resent. It's what they've done to me that I actually resent. Two valuable things.

Joe 40:29

Now let's look at the third column. In most cases, it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships, including sex, were hurt or threatened. So we were sore, we were burned up. On our grudge list, we set opposite each name our injuries. Was it our self-esteem, our security, our ambitions, or our personal or sex relations which have been interfered with, we were usually definite as this example. And again, using that information that we got from the basic in-sinks of life, we said simply fill out the third column what part of self was affected by that. What basic instinct was threatened by the actions that those people did.

Charlie 41:10

I can't be upset with you unless you've done something to threaten one of these basic instincts of life, if you threaten my social instinct in any way, my self-esteem, my personal relations, etc., you're going to upset me and make me angry. If you threaten my security, either material or emotional, you're going to upset me and make me angry. If you threaten my sex life in any way, you're going to upset me and make me angry. And as I begin to fill out the third column and put down the part of self that is affected, in most cases, I begin to see a pattern develop. Maybe of the side each name, I'm putting down self-esteem. Maybe I begin to see my main problem is self-esteem. Maybe I'm putting down security. Maybe I see where my main problem deals with security. Maybe I'm putting something under sex each time. I begin to realize that the sex thing is my main problem. I begin to see which part of self really does stand out. Probably going to be a combination of all three. But I can certainly see which part of self really does predominate and stand out when I keep seeing it appear over and over and over and over again. When I filled out the third column, here's where I've learned something that I think is the most valuable thing I ever learned about me. As I filled out the third column for the first time in my life, I could see where anger comes from. I've always had a problem with anger. I've always acted and reacted with anger. I would do something that would hurt other people. I would be ashamed of it. I'd say, I'll never do that again. I'll turn right around, get angry, do it all over again. You can't do anything about a problem until you understand the problem. I never did understand where anger comes from. I always thought it was just one of those feelings that flitted into your mind, you could do nothing about it. Today I realize that anger comes from a threat to one of these basic instincts of life. Now, if my basic instincts are under control at the level that God intended, if my relationship with God is okay, you can do about anything you want to to me,

and I'm not going to experience anger over it. But I'll guarantee you, if my instincts are out of control, my relationship with God is not right. About anything you do to me that threatens a basic instinct creates anger. And I romp and stomp and raise hell with you and everybody around you. You know, this lady that I'm married to today, hopefully I can introduce you to her tomorrow. She's here with us this weekend. A beautiful lady named Barbara. If there's any such thing as a black belt Al-Anon, she's one of them. She's got now about thirty-one or thirty-two years in the Alanon Fellowship. great program. But Barbara is like all human beings, she has self-will too. And once in a great while, she'll get sick in self. Alan Honors do that once in a while. Not too often, but once in a while. And she'll do something that threatens one of my basic instincts of life. And when she does it, it hurts. Now, I found that if my relationship with God is right and my instincts are at the level God intended, I'm able to say, well, the poor old thing, they're sick just like we are, and they can't help it any more than we can, and that thing will just slide off of my back and just won't bother me at all. And I just go on about my business. Now, thirty days later, though, the same lady does the same thing. Only this time my instincts are not under control. And my relationship with God's not right today. And I react to what she did with anger. And I romp and I stomp and I raise hell with Barbara and everybody around me all day long. The same lady did the same thing, but I choose to react to it in an entirely different manner based upon my relationship with God and where my instincts are that day. Thank God I've learned that. Because you see, I can't do anything about Barbara. And I can't do anything about any other human being on earth. But I can do something about my relationship with God and keeping my instincts under control where I don't have to get angry. And if I don't have to get angry, I'm in much less chance of drinking than I am if I just continue that anger over and over and over. Thank God I've learned that. One of the best pieces of information I ever found. Now we have filled out three columns. Column one, we listed the people we're angry with, resentful at, and we realized how resentful we really are, and how much that blocks us off from the sunlight of the Spirit. Column 2, we've learned it's not them we're resentful at, it's what they've done to us. Column three, we've learned it's not even what they've done to us, it's how we choose to react to it based on our relationship with God and whether our instincts are under control or not. Now, we're going to fill out a couple names here from our inventories. We're not going to do the whole thing, but just two or three names as an example. The first thing, first name on my sheet was this lady named Barbara. 30 some odd years ago, I hated this lady with a purple passion. If I could have done away with her and not get caught, I believe I would have done it. I used to lay awake at night fantasizing about this thing. Tomorrow morning, when she's on the way to work, and by the way she always worked, I believed in her being self-supporting through her own contributions.

Joe 47:50

Always thinking of others.

Charlie 47:52

Always thinking of others. Tomorrow morning, when she's on the way to work, she's going to get run over by a big semi-truck. It's not going to be just any trucking company, it's going to be a very affluent trucking company. And they're going to run over her and kill her, and then I'm going to sue them. And I'm going to come out of this deal, getting rid of her with two or three million dollars in hand. You El-Anons are not the only ones that fantasize. We alphas did it too, believe me, we did. Second name on my sheet was the Internal Revenue Service. God, I hated those people with a purple passion. Just mention their name, and I begin to froth at the mouth immediately. Joe, what was the first name on your inventory sheet? Rose. Rose. Wife, number one, Rows. Now it's just that simple. That's how you fill out the first column. We go to the second column. Why am I so upset with Barbara? Well, the last year before she went to Al-Anon, she had the audacity to file for divorce three times. She's spending more money on lawyers and divorces, and I'm spending on booze and everything that goes with it. And my God, I hated her for that. Why am I so upset with the Internal Revenue Service? Well, they're trying to put me in jail, that's why. Joe, how come you're so upset with Rose?

Joe 49:27

She had an affair with another man after all I've done to her.

Charlie 49:38

Had an affair with another man. Really upset with her. Now we go to the third column. Now, Barbara filing for divorce three times. Is that a threat to my self-esteem? Oh, you betcha. What are other people going to think about me now taking this lady back after she's filed for divorce three times? Barbara filing for divorce three times, is that a threat to my personal relationships? Sure it is. She's going to take the kids and she's going to leave or they're going to kick me out, one of the two. No personal relationships. Her filing for divorce three times, is that a threat to my security? Oh, yeah. By the time she's through, she'll have it all. Don't worry about that. Is it a threat to my sex life? Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. She probably won't let me have any sex if we get a divorce. The Internal Revenue Service trying to put me in jail. Is that a threat to my self-esteem? What are people going to think about me after this deal is over with? Is it a threat to my personal relationships? They're not going to let me have any relationship with my wife and children if I'm in jail? Is it a threat to my security? Oh, yeah, they're going to take

every penny I've got by the time it's over with. Is it a threat to my sex life? The kind I'd like to have, you betcha, it's a threat to it. There may be some in there I don't want, but Old Rose have an affair with another man. Is that a threat to Joe's self-esteem? Is it a threat to his personal relationships. It's a threat to his security. Yeah, he'll have to go to work now. She's been supporting him for the last 10 years. A threat to his sex life? Oh, yeah. All these things are a threat to those things. Okay. When we have finished out these three columns and we've been able to see column one, how many resentments we have, column two, the cause of the resentment, column three, the part of self that was affected, and we've learned valuable information about ourselves just by filling out those three sheets. Now, then let's see what we do with those three sheets

Joe 52:21

after they're filled out, Joe. See, we went back through our lives, nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we finished, we considered it carefully. The first thing apparent was that this world and its people were often quite wrong. To conclude that oh, it was wrong was far as as Mosef ever got. I always knew that. The usual outcome was that people continued to wrong us and we stayed sore. Sometimes it was remorse, and then we were soared ourselves. But the more we fought and tried to have our own way, the worse matters got. As in war, the victor only seemed to win. Our moments of triumph were short-lived. Now it's plain that a life which includes deep resentment, but leads only to fertility and happiness. To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours which might have been worthwhile?

Why resentment is fatal and the Step Four prayer

53:10

Charlie 53:10

And I read that last statement and I stopped and I tried to look back in my life and see how much time I've squandered in resentments. Now, I don't know about you guys, but I know about me. And when I've got a good resentment churning around up here in my head. I'm pretty well paralyzed from doing anything worthwhile. And one of my favorite things that I was doing back when I was drinking was to get up early in the morning, have a drink of whiskey and a cup of coffee, and turn on my resentment replay machine and replay what she did to me yesterday. And replay what that guy did to me a month ago. And replay what that person said to me six months ago. And replay what that damn boss did to me, about a year ago. And replay what that damn policeman did to me five years ago. And replay what my uncle did to me ten years ago. And replay what my mother did to me fifteen years ago, and replay what my father did to me 20 years ago. And it took me just about an hour to run through that tape, and I loved

every moment of it. When that tape would run out, I'd have another drink, whiskey, and another cup of coffee, and I would turn on my Get Even machine. Now, by God, the next time she does that, I'll do this and she'll do that, and socko. I'll put it on her. They're not going to treat me that way. And it took me just about an hour to run through that tape. And I loved every moment of it. When I came into AA, I found out the only difference was I wasn't taking the drink of whiskey. I was having the cup of coffee, turn on the resentment replay machine, run it for an hour. Another cup of coffee, turn on the get-even machine, run it for an hour. I have spent literally thousands and thousands and thousands of hours in resentments. And as far as I can tell, they've never done me any good whatsoever. They certainly never made me any money. They never made me feel better. They only made me feel worse. They never straightened up a relationship with another human being. It only made them worse and worse and worse. And as far as I can tell, that was absolute, complete, wasted time. Now, as a human being, I really believe today that I'm allotted just so much time to be here on earth. And I'm beginning to approach the end of mine. And for the first time in my life, not only am I sober, but I am peaceful, happy, and free. For the first time, in my life I'm sober and I feel great. I didn't know that you could be sober and feel as good as I feel today. What a little time that I have left, I want to enjoy every moment of it. I don't want to waste any more time in resentments or anything else that blocks me off from God. I want to enjoy every moment of every day that I've got left. I simply do not intend to waste any more time in resentments. They block you off from God, they block you off from your fellow man, they just make you sicker and sicker and sicker. And what time we spend in them is an absolute waste of time. That's one of the worst things about a resentment. Wasting what time we have left in resentments. But that's not the worst thing.

Joe 57:13

Here's the worst thing about a resentment. He said, but with the alcoholic whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feelings, we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns when we drink again, and with us to drink is to die.

Charlie 57:33

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

live, we had to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us. They may be the dubious luxury of normal men, but for alcoholics, these things are poison. We turn back to the list. You see, this is why you've got to have a written inventory. If you had it in your head, you would have lost it already. We turned back to the list, for it held the key to the future. We were prepared to look at it from an entirely different angle. Always before, I looked at it to see what those suckers had done to me. Today, I would look at it to see what that resentment is doing to me. And if it's blocking me off from God and maybe causing me to get drunk, then I'm looking at it from an entirely different angle. We begin to see that the world and its people really dominated us. In that state, the wrongdoing of others, fancied or real, had power to actually kill. And I stopped and I said, Heart, Charlie, how dumb can you be? All my life, I've been proud of the fact that I stand on my own two feet. Nobody tells me what to do. I don't need your advice, thank you. And I suddenly realized that other people, through my resentment toward them, have controlled and dominated my thinking as far back as I can remember. And if they've controlled and dominated my thinking, they've controlled and dominated my actions, they have absolutely, completely controlled and dominated my entire life for me. I always thought I was in charge, but I suddenly realized other people have been in charge as far back as I can remember through my resentments toward them. And then I said, Man, you really are stupid, aren't you? Because some of these people have been dead and buried in a graveyard for years. And they've been reaching out from the grave, and they've had me by the yang-yang as far back as I can remember. And when I saw that, I said to hell with them. I'm not going to let those people, alive or dead, live in my head rent-free any longer. I've made a decision to let God direct my thinking. And if others directed alive or dead, justified or unjustified, then God can't. And it's just that simple. And an amazing thing happened to me right here. We alcoholics fancy ourselves as reasonably intelligent people. I don't know that we're smarter than anybody else, but I think we're reasonably intelligent people. And we don't like to look stupid. And when I saw the stupidity of letting those people control me and dominate me, it looked so dumb that about 95% of these resentments begin to disappear automatically when I saw how stupid that really was. But I found that I had four or five or six that were so deeply embedded in my mind for so long that they didn't automatically disappear when I saw the stupidity behind them. And for those, I had to have some additional help. We now come to the first prayer in the big book in step four. We always hear about the step three prayers, the step seven prayers. We never hear about the step four prayers. Let's see how we can use prayer to remove those deep, deep-seated

resentments. He said, How could we escape? We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than alcohol. So you can't heal a sick wine with a sick mind. You can't wish your way out of it. Well, this was our course. We realized that the people who'd wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. And though we did not like their symptoms and the way they disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too. It's part of the prayer. We ask God to help us to show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended, we said to ourselves, This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him. God, save me from being angry. Thy will be done. And I'm like Charlie. I spent many, many years in my life, many hours of my life, thinking. My mind was racing uncontrollably, figuring out some way I could get even with those people. And I finally figured out a way to get even with them. Well, the way you get even with people is you pray for them. And when you pray for them, then you're even. You see, I didn't know that. And after I got sober, I'd been sober about three or four months, I went to a little conference in Apache, Oklahoma, and I met a lady there, some of you know. Her name was Alabama Carruthers. Some of you all knew Alabama. She became a big influence on my life. And she said a couple of things that night that really struck me. She said she had a soul sickness. And I could identify with that. Because my last night of drinking, I was sitting on a bar stool and I had a real sick feeling in my stomach, and it wasn't a throwing up type sick, it was a sick feeling. And she said it was a soul sickness. I said, That's what I had, a soul sickness. And then she said another thing that night. She said, I have peace of mind today. And boy, I mean, that really struck me because that's all I'd ever wanted, was peace of mind. And I loved Alabama. She was always excited about life and what was going to happen next. And then, after that meeting was over, we were sitting around the lobby of this hotel, and it was about three o'clock in the morning, and I was sitting there watching Alabama operate, and it wasn't saying anything. Finally, it was just Alabama and myself, and my little sponsor, George, a little black guy, laying in her lap. And I began to talk to Alabama. I said, Alabama, you said you had peace of mind tonight. How did you get peace of mind? I want peace of mind. And she said, Well, Joe, tell me what's going on in your mind. And I told her how I was going to meetings and going to meetings and going to meetings. But at night, I'd go home and lay down, and my mind would fly over, and I'd begin to think about all those situations that we talked about. And she said, Well, Joe, you're just full of resentments. And I said, What is a resentment? See, I didn't know. She said a resentment was old angers and old hurts that are refelt over and over again and over again. And all that anger that you intended to use up on them, you're turning it on yourself and making yourself sick and blaming it on them. She explained that to me, and it took a while for me to understand. Finally, I did. And I said, Well, is there any solutions for these? And she said, Yes, there is. This happens to be. And she referred to page 67 and showed me this information here. And she said,

some of those deep-seated resentments, like you have, you're going to need some additional help. And she said, on page 551 of this book is a story of a lady who had those deep-seated resentments. If you turn to that page in the book, she said, We'll read and see what it had to say. Well, Alabama had a purse that was about this big, and it was about that deep. And she began to look at Pearls, you know how they are, they're digging around. And she finally found this one of these books. I didn't think she's ever going to find it. She pulled it out of there and she said, Well, let's look at page 551 and see what this says. So I turned over page 551 in her book, and on the third paragraph, she said, This book says that I've had many spiritual expenses since I've been in the program, many that I didn't recognize right away, for I'm slow to learn, and they take many guises. But one was so outstanding, I like to pass it on whenever I can, and I hope that it will help someone else as it helped me. As I said earlier, self-pity and resentment were my constant companions, and my inventory began to look like a 33-year diary, for I seemed to have a resentment against everybody I'd ever known. All but one responded to the treatment suggested in the steps immediately.

Charlie 66:18

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

Joe 66:24

But this one posed a problem. It was against my mother, and it was 25 years old. I had fed it, fanned it, and nurtured it as one might a delicate child. And it had to become as much a part of me as my breathing. Now, he had provided me with my excuses for my lack of education, my marital failures, personal failures, inadequacies, and of course my alcoholism. And though I really thought I'd been willing to part with it now, I knew I was reluctant to let it go. One morning, however, I realized I had to get rid of it, for my reprieve was running out. And if I didn't get rid of it, I was going to get drunk, and I didn't want to get drunk anymore. In my prayers that morning, I asked God to point out to me some way to be free of this resentment. During the day, a friend of mine brought me some magazines to take to a hospital group I was interested in. And I looked through them, and a banner across the front of one featured an article by a prominent clergyman in which I caught the word resentment. Now he said in effect, and here it is. He said, If you have a resentment you want to be free of, if you will pray for the person or the thing that you resent, you will be free. If you will ask in prayer for everything you want for yourself to be given to them, you will be free. Ask for their health, their prosperity, their happiness, and you will be free. Even when you don't really want it for them, and your prayers are only words and you don't mean it, go ahead and do it anyway. Do it every day for two weeks, and you'll find that you've come to mean it and want it for them, and that you will realize that where you used to feel bitterness, resentment, and hatred, you now feel

compassion, understanding, and love. Well, I went home after that meeting and I got in my bed that Sunday night, lay down, and my old mind flipped over again and started racing uncontrollably. And I said, Well, I think I'll pray for those people. So I started praying for those people that night, and my list got longer. The next day I prayed for those people again, and that afternoon I prayed for those people, and that night I prayed for those people. And I don't know how long it went on, it was two or three weeks or more, I don't know. But it seemed like I was in constant prayer for day and night, praying for those people. I don't know exactly what happened, but I do know that one morning, it was one of the beautiful spring mornings we have in Oklahoma, and I got stuck in this stoplight. Just the length of a stoplight is what happened. I looked over that beautiful house sitting over there, and the grass was so green, it was just beautiful. The greenest green I'd ever seen. The tulips were in full bloom, red and yellow. The little squirrels were in the trees, and the birds were in the trees whistling. And I got, is this a beautiful morning? And I thought to myself, My God, how long has it been since I've seen that? You know, I could not remember. I could not remember. And when this book talks about being cut off in the sun, light of the Spirit, I really do know what that means. I really do. Because that morning it was so vivid. Now, what happened was that those people did not change, but my thoughts and feelings toward them did change, you see. And it has never returned again. Thank God for this program called Alcoholics Anonymous. I've been there, and I don't want to ever return again.

Charlie 69:25

I think the reason this works so well is prayer for another human being, prayer for their welfare and their happiness is probably one of the greatest expressions of love that one human being can have for another. And love and hate can't exist on the same plane. And as we pray for that human being, asking that God give them in their life the same thing we want in ours: peace of mind, serenity, happiness, etc. over a period of time that resentment will begin to disappear. Sometimes it just takes two or three prayers. Sometimes it takes every day for two weeks. Sometimes it might take every day for two months. But if we will consistently do it, we will find sooner or later that that resentment is replaced with love and the resentment disappears. Now, if you've got a resentment that you don't want to get rid of, for God's sake, don't pray about them. Because if you do, you're going to lose it. I know, I speak from experience. You know, I had a guy that I really, really, really resented. And again, I think I would gladly have put him away if I could have gotten by with it without getting caught. And when I got to this part of the inventory, I went to my sponsor. Now, this is going to be one of those take it to the grave resentments. I had no desire to remove it at all. And I'd worked on all the others, but this one just stuck in there. And I went to my sponsor and I told him about it, and he said, Charlie, you've got to get rid of that resentment. And I said, I don't want to get rid of this resentment.

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

Joe 72:42

See, what I learned from this experience is that love is forgiving, and love is forgiving, you see.

Charlie 72:50

Now, just think, this old head up here that these display cases over here were filled with resentments has now been emptied out. The resentments, the damaged and unsavable goods called resentment, has now been removed from my mind. Now, when that happens to me, there's another natural law that applies that says nature abhors a vacuum. No such thing as a vacuum or void. There's always something trying to rush in and fill it up. If those resentments disappear. God's not going to leave another hole in my head. I've got enough of those already. They will have to be replaced with something else. And the only thing that can replace them will be the opposite of them. Where my mind used to be filled with resentments, that portion of it is now filled with love, patience, tolerance, compassion, and goodwill toward my fellow man. That's God's thinking. My thinking was the resentment. God's thinking is love, patience, tolerance, compassion, and goodwill. And that part of my mind is now filled with God's thinking. You see, there's nothing negative here at all. This is a positive happening. In part of my mind, I've now got peace of mind, serenity, and happiness. Much less chance of drinking now than I was when I started the inventory process. And what really blew my mind is this: I didn't have to go to any other fellowships, and I didn't have to read any other books to find love, patience, tolerance, compassion, and goodwill. If God dwells within me, and my book says He does, then that's always been a part of my makeup. I just never could use it before. In my chase for money, power, prestige, sex, and what I thought were the good things of life, those thoughts had to be repressed to let me operate on the level I wanted to operate on. But now that

resentments are gone, they automatically come to the surface. I've never seen anything like this before. I don't really understand how this works. I simply know that if I do the simple things the book tells me to do, this happens automatically, and resentments are replaced with love, patience, tolerance, compassion, and goodwill toward my fellow man. But it would do me no good to get rid of resentments if I didn't know how to keep them from coming back, because the world is full of sick people, and they're going to do it to me again tomorrow. And if I'm not careful, I'll resent. And it seems as though I don't get just one. When I get one, let me play with it just a little bit and then I've got two. And let me play with those two and then I've got ten. And the next thing you know, I'm a basket case and I'm sick all over again. I've got to do one more thing. Let's unfold those last two columns on your inventory sheet. And let's go to page 67 and we'll see if we can't find the information to fill out the last two columns. In the second paragraph on page 67, it says, referring to our list again. See, you've got to have a written inventory. This is the second time. We've had to go back to it now? Referring to our list again, putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Uh-oh. We've never done this, have we? We've always looked to see what they did. We've never looked to see what we did. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely. Where were we to blame? The inventory was ours, not the other man's. When we saw our faults, we listed them, we placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight. So we go to the fourth column. And if you'll notice the heading on the fourth column said, What did I do? Putting out of mind the wrongs others have done, I resolutely looked for my own mistakes. What did I do, if anything, to set in motion trains of circumstances which in turn caused people or institutions to hurt me and eventually led to my resentment of them for doing so. So I went to column four and I looked at this lady named Barbara and I said, Now, Charlie, you forget what she did. You forget her filing for three divorces. What did you do, if anything, to set that in motion? And it took me just about five seconds to realize that if I hadn't been out there screwing around, she probably wouldn't have caught me. And she probably wouldn't have filed for divorce in the first place. Took me another two or three seconds to say to myself, well, if I hadn't been sneaking around behind her back, lying to her all the time. Completely dishonest with her. She probably wouldn't have filed for divorce in the first place. Another three or four seconds, and I was able to say to myself, well, if I hadn't been blowing all of her money on booze and what I think was important, she probably wouldn't have filed for divorce in the first place. And I began to realize why I loved that resentment. Because you see, when I could concentrate on her filing for divorce and play that over and over and over and over in my head, gradually distorting the picture every time I played it over, making what she did a little bit

worse and what I did a little bit less, and letting me play it long enough, I could gradually transfer all blame to her and make myself as pure as the driven snow, and it was all her damn fault in the first place. I thought, my God, Charlie, have you done that with any other resentments here? I looked at the Internal Revenue Service. I said, now forget what they're doing to you trying to put you in jail. What did you do, if anything, to set in motion the fact they're trying to put you in jail? Well I didn't take two seconds to be able to say if I hadn't been cheating on my income tax, they wouldn't have been trying to put me in jail anyhow. And rather than look at what I had done to them. I had played it over and over and over and over, distorted the picture, transferred all blame to them, made myself as pure as the driven snow. That way I could continue through life doing what I wanted to do and never have to look at me because, after all, it's all their fault in the first place. Joe in this resentment against Rose, what did you do, if anything, to set that in motion?

Columns four and five: what did I do, and the character defects

73:00

Joe 80:59

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

Charlie 81:08

Sneaking around behind her back and lying to her all the time. And Rose finally got enough of it. She said, I'll show him. And she went out and had her own affair. And Joe had over a period of time played that resentment over and over, gradually transferred all blame to him, or to her, made himself as pure as the driven snow. I went down through my list of resentments. I never found a name on there that I hadn't done something to them to set this thing in motion, and I had resented it and played it over and over and distorted the picture, transferred all blame to them, made myself as pure as the driven snow. If you're a practicing alcoholic, you've got to develop these kinds of skills. You know, we have a conscience. We're not drunken bums. We know the difference between right and wrong. And I don't think we could live with ourselves if we had to honestly see what was going on whenever we're out there doing our thing. But you see, we never have to see it because we've got this convenient thing called resentments that we play them over and over, distort the picture, and transfer all blame to others. And we men go from woman to woman to woman, and you ladies go from man to man to man, and we go from job to job to job, and we go from city to city to city, and we go from country to country to country, and it's always their damn fault. That's the only way we could live the kind of life we were living by being able to transfer blame to others. And none of us realize how much we've been doing that until we take an honest look at these resentments and see the part that we played. Now, in the fifth column, you see the major character defects talked about in the big

book. Where had I been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened, or inconsiderate? All other character defects stem from these. In the fifth column, I asked myself this question: Which of the above character defects caused me to do what I did, or caused me to want to hold on to the old resentment, even though I may have done nothing to cause it. Now, going back to Barbara again, if I hadn't been so selfish, I wouldn't have been out there doing those things that hurt my wife and children. If I hadn't have been so dishonest, I wouldn't have been sneaking around behind her backline to her all the time. If I hadn't have been so self-seeking and frightened, saying to myself, Man, you're getting close to 40 years old. If you're ever going to do some of that, you better go do it before it's too late. Fear drives us to do things like that. If I hadn't been so inconsiderate of my wife and children, I wouldn't have been taking the chance of hurting them in the first place. I begin to see in the fifth column the type of character I had become through my years of living a life run on self-will. And when I saw it, I didn't like it. It made me sick. You see, I always fancied myself as a reasonably good person until I saw how I had become so selfish and so dishonest and so inconsiderate of other people, that I was continually doing things that hurt others, and they retaliated, and I resented for it. I began to see that if I don't change those things in the fifth column. If I stay selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened, and inconsiderate, that I'm going to keep right on doing the same old things I've always done, drunk or sober. I'm gonna keep right on hurting people, and they're gonna retaliate, and I'm gonna resent, and eventually it's gonna block me off from God, and I'm gonna get drunk over it, but just think: if I could become a little less selfish, oh, I don't have to get perfect, I never will, but if I could become a little less selfish, if I could become a little less dishonest, if I could become less frightened and self-seeking, if I could become a little more considerate of other people and their needs and their wants. Maybe I wouldn't have to do some of that kind of stuff. Maybe I wouldn't hurt people. And maybe they wouldn't retaliate, and I wouldn't have to resent. And just maybe I wouldn't have to get drunk over it. You see, what we're really doing here is step four. This is the resentment part of it. But out in the fifth column, I now see the exact nature of the wrongs that I'm going to talk to another human being about when I take step five. The resentment is the wrong. That's what blocks me off from God. But what's the exact nature of it? That means what's the truth of it? What's at the core of it? What's the inherent characteristic of it? That's what we'll talk about in step five. You know, when a guy comes to me and he's committed adultery 44 times. I don't care about that. All I want to know is what is within him that caused him to do it in the first place. If he's stolen 364 times. I don't care about that. What I want to know is what's within him that caused him to do that. That's what we'll talk about in step five. In that fifth column, I now see the character defects, and I'm going to become willing to turn loose of in step six. Out there in that fifth column, I see the shortcomings now I'm going to ask God to take away in step seven. And in my case, all the

names from column one came off of this sheet to be added to the sheet later to be used for steps 8 and 9. Because you see, when I get to step 8, it says I've got the list. I made it when I took step 4. In my case, every one of those. In your case, probably some of them. In my case, all of them. Now, what I've really done, if I have done this the way the big book says, is I have prepared myself with all the information I need for steps 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, resentment-wise. Not only have I gathered all the information I need for 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, well, I've had a positive result here. Resentments have disappeared, and they've been replaced with love, patience, tolerance, compassion, and goodwill. Did we do anything to be afraid of? No. Did we make a list of dirty, filthy, nasty items? No. Did we do anything that was too complicated? No. I've never seen anything like this inventory, according to the big book. Now I hear some of you saying, and I hear awful good. I've got good hearing. Charlie hears good. I hear some of you saying, well, Charlie, that's probably right on those that we did something to them. But how about those that did it to us? And we didn't have anything to do with that? How about those that hurt us as kids growing up? How about those that hurt us in our marriages that we didn't do anything to cause it? Aren't we justified in having that kind of resentment? Well, I guess we are if we want to get drunk over it. But you see, a justified resentment blocks you off from God, just like an unjustified resentment does. When you've got a justified resentment churning around in your head, then whoever or whatever you're resenting is controlling your thinking. If they're controlling your thinking, they're controlling your decisions. They're controlling your life for you. And you have given them power to actually kill you because you've given them power to cause you to get drunk again. Now, if you've got one of those resentments, and I don't care what it is, I don't care whether it's physical abuse, mental abuse, sexual abuse, or whatever. You know, I keep hearing in AA all the time this sexual abuse thing. And it usually centers on young women. But let me tell you something, men know about that too. I don't know how many fifth steps I've taken with men, and nearly every one of us, somewhere in the background, we've had that kind of stuff too. It's not just women, it's men. If you've got one of those kinds of resentments and you don't want to get rid of it, knowing full well it might get you drunk. And we better get it on this sheet of paper and take a look at it and see what we're doing with it. We're probably using it for rationalization and justification. To rationalize not doing things we ought to go do, or just as importantly, to rationalize and justify doing things that we shouldn't be doing in the first place. Oh, the greatest excuse in the world is: if they hadn't done that to me, then I wouldn't have to be the way I am today. They call that victimization. I don't really think we've got any place for that in AA. We're all adults. It's time for us to realize that whatever's happened to us in the past does not have to control what we do today. The only reason for that is to justify, rationalize, and etc. The woman in the book, she used her resentment against her mother to justify her lack of education. Bull. She could have gotten an

education if she wanted to bad enough. She used it to justify her marital failure, bull. Mama didn't have anything to do with her marital failure. She even used it to justify her alcoholism. Mama had nothing to do with her alcoholism. She became alcoholic because she drank whiskey. And she drank enough of it, she became alcoholic. Now, I think it's time for us to realize we are responsible for what we think and how we feel. We are responsible for what we do today. Mother and daddy and other people are no longer responsible for that. Maybe they were when we were little kids, but we're not little kids any longer. It really doesn't make any sense to let somebody hurt me 5, 10, 15, 20 years ago and then let them hurt me every day for the rest of my life. If I'm resenting them, they've got me and they're going to kill me. I need to put them on this sheet. Put down their name. What did they do to me? What part of self is affected? What did I do, if anything, to set it in motion? In this case, nothing. But then let's look in the fourth column. Are we so dishonest with ourselves we refuse to see the truth? If you've got a resentment in your head today, it's not true. I'm going to say that again. If you've got a resentment in your head today, it's not true. Oh, it was based on truth, and it's partially true. But if you've played it over and over and over, you've distorted it and it's no longer true. Can we honestly look at it and see the truth behind it? Let's look in the fifth column and see if maybe we are so frightened of facing life without it, we refuse to turn it loose. Because you know, after all, if we turn it loose, then we've got to take responsibility for our own behavior. It's a hell of a lot easier to blame it on others. Are we so afraid of facing life without it? We won't turn it loose. Are we so inconsiderate of another human being that we fail to recognize that people that do those things to us, they're not necessarily bad people. They're sick people. They didn't necessarily do it to us, they would have done it to anybody in that position. If we could even begin to consider that, maybe we can start a forgiving process. Maybe we could straighten up a relationship with another human being before it's too late. After they're dead, it's too late. I'll guarantee you it is. Maybe we can do it while we're all still alive. If we will do those things, I think we can get rid of that resentment too when we really see the truth behind it and what we're doing with it. If we can't get rid of it that way, then we can use the ultimate tool. By golly, we can pray for them. And if we pray for one of those people resent, that doesn't mean that we approve of what they did. That doesn't mean we're going to take them by the hand and walk hand in hand with them for the rest of our life. What it means is we're tired of letting them control us, dominate us, and rule us every day for the rest of our life. We can get rid of those kind of resentments too. And if we don't want to do that, then chances are we're using it for some reason. And we need to look at it very, very carefully, Joe.

Joe 95:54

It takes two people to make a prison, the prisoner and the jailer. You have to turn them loose and let them out and turn them loose. All those people that I hate hated had to turn them loose.

Charlie said, I don't want to be a victim in them anymore and I don't think Alcoholics Anonymous may be the only association left on the face of the earth that won't allow us to be victims. There's victims going on all out there. Everybody wants to be a victim of something. But we and AA won't let each other do that because we have a way out. When everything else fails, we can pray for them. They need the prayers, and we need to practice.

Charlie 96:29

You know, I see in many AA meetings where we've gone into this group therapy stuff, and we sit around the table and we discuss what those people did to us, and we try to figure out why they did it. We'll never understand why they did it. The thing is, they did it. Then we start trying to discuss and figure out why it made us the way we are. We'll never understand that. The fact is, that's the way we are. The real question is, what are we going to do about it? Are we going to continue to let them kill us? Are we going to get rid of that jazz? That's what AA is about. It's not to sit around and talk about problems. It's to sit around and talk about how do you solve the problems. And resentment is the number one problem for every alcoholic. And if we can get rid of them, then we're peaceful, happy, and free. Until we do, we'll never be free of it. We went through a process yesterday afternoon. The first part of the inventory process. There, we learned how to look at our resentments, to take an honest, truthful, moral inventory, and as we listed those resentments, we began to see the truth about them, really. The first thing we saw in column one is how many resentments we really did have, how much that blocked us off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The second thing we saw in column two: it's not those people or institutions we resent, it's what they've done to us that we actually resent. The third thing we found out in column three: it's really not even what they've done to us. It's how we choose to react to a threat, to one of our basic instincts of life, which is going to determine whether we're resentful or not. So, just in filling out those three columns, we learned some very valuable information. We also were able to see in the big book that resentments was an absolute waste of time. That whenever they're churning around in our heads, we're pretty well, paralyzed from doing anything worthwhile. And we find that if we honestly look at them, most of us have spent literally thousands and thousands of hours in resentments. And as we look back at that time in our lives, we can see where they really never did do us any good. They never really straightened up a relationship with another human being, never made us feel better, only made us feel worse, never made us any money for sure. And as far as we can tell, it's absolute wasted time. But we also said that's not the worst thing about a resentment. The worst thing is it very effectively blocks us off from God. Blocked off from God, we don't feel good. We begin to become insane. We begin to think about taking a drink. Next thing you know, we end up drunk all over again. And when we truthfully and honestly looked at those resentments, we could really begin to see how other people have controlled and dominated us throughout our

entire lifetime through those resentments. Now, we always thought that we had it under control, that we determine what we said and what we did, but we suddenly realize that we really have done nothing but react to others to our resentment toward them. That looks so stupid to us, that about 95% of those resentments automatically disappeared. The other 5% that was so deeply embedded, we found through prayer that we could remove them also, so we could be resentment-free, if we follow the procedures outlined in the big book. The real revealing thing is, though, the amazing thing is, that after we became resentment-free, God wouldn't allow another hole in our head. It had to be replaced with something else. The only thing that could replace it was the opposite of the resentment. And where we used to feel resentment, we now feel serenity, a little peace of mind, a little happiness, compassion, goodwill, love, those are all God's thinking rather than our individual thinking. And we found that that came to us automatically. Those things had always been a part of us, we just never could use them before. Now their resentments are gone, then God's thinking automatically begins to replace the resentment, and we're in much less chance of getting drunk now than we were when we started the process. We went back to the resentment sheet and we looked at it from an entirely different angle now. We began to look at it to see what had we done to set that thing in motion or what did we do we'd never looked at before. And in our fourth column, we found that in almost all cases, whatever the resentment was, we ourselves did something to set it in motion. And we hurt other people, they retaliated, we resented, we played the resentment over and over and over, distorted the picture, finally transferred all blame to other people. A good practicing alcoholic has to be able to do that. We just couldn't live if we didn't have that ability. So, we really, in the fourth column, really did begin to look at the truth of the resentment to see the part that we had played. And in most cases, we ourselves set the ball rolling. We looked in the fifth column to see the exact nature of that resentment. The resentment was the wrong, but what was at the actual core of it or at the center of it? And in the fifth column, we found the type of personality that we had developed through our years of living on self-will and living as a practicing alcoholic. And we found just about every time we had hurt anybody in the past, it was either through selfishness or through dishonesty or because we were self-seeking, frightened, or through inconsideration of other people. And we begin to see in the fifth column that if we don't change those things, we're going to keep right on doing the same things in sobriety that we used to do when drinking. We're going to continue to hurt people. They're going to retaliate. We'll resent, and eventually get drunk over it. And we begin to see in the fifth column the things that we will need to change in our personality if we want to live with peace of mind, serenity, and happiness in the future. We summed it up by saying we were in the process of doing the resentment part of step four. In the fifth column, we now had all the information we needed for steps five, six, and seven, and then the names in the first column,

those that we had harmed, they come off of there to be added to the list to be used for eight and nine at a later date. So we really ended up in this simple little inventory with all the information we needed for 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 resentment-wise. A very positive thing took place. Resentments disappeared and they were replaced with love, patience, tolerance, compassion, and goodwill. So there was nothing to be afraid of. There was nothing too complicated. There was not a list of dirty, filthy, nasty items, just a simple inventory. Now, we don't want to give you the impression that you can always be 100% free of resentments. You know, God never gave us anything bad. It depends on what we do with things as to whether they become bad or not. A resentment used right can be used for a worthwhile purpose. If somebody does something to me that threatens my self-esteem, if it would cause me to look at me and see some things that I need to change, and I go ahead and make those changes, then that resentment can be used for a worthwhile purpose. For instance, if we're living in the neighborhood, all the old houses are run down, mine's no worse than anybody else's, they all need painting. They've got broken window screens and panes. And I sit on my front porch each evening after work, and I rock and I rock, and I'm very complacent about that situation. One day I look up, though, and some idiot has moved in across the street. He's out there painting his house, fixing his window screens, and window panes makes my house look bad. I resent the hell out of him for doing that. I say, Who in the hell is he moving here and in here and screwing up this whole neighborhood? Now, if I use that resentment right, it'll cause me to look at my house and become a little bit ashamed of it. Next thing you know, I paint my house, fix my window screens and window panes. My next-door neighbor resents me for doing so. Next thing you know, he fixes his house up, and his neighbor resents him. And after a while, God's got the whole neighborhood cleaned up like it should have been in the first place. That's the proper use of a resentment, but we alcoholics won't use it that way. We'll sit on the front porch and we'll rock and we'll rock and we'll resent and we'll resent. 30 days later, we'll go over there at midnight and burn his damn house down. We'll show him. So So it really depends on what we do with resentments that determines whether they're going to be for bad or good. And if we use one rightly, it's going to disappear anyhow. The ones that kill us are those that we just leave in our head and it is fester and fester and fester and we get sicker and sicker until eventually it creates a real problem for us, Joe?

The fear inventory and outgrowing fear

105:59

Joe 105:59

This morning we're going to talk about fears a bit and we're not going to psychoanalyze ourselves in any manner. We're simply going to do like the book suggested yesterday. We're going to find the facts and we're going to face the facts and eventually through this process

we're going to accept the facts as they really are, truthfully. And it says also that when the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. The spiritual malady not only is my relationship with God, but my relationship with me, my mental attitudes, and my relationship with other people. So that's another form of spiritual malady that I had. And Dr. Jung said we're going to have a look at our ideas, emotions, and attitudes, and that's what we're doing through this inventory process. We're looking at ideas, emotions, and attitudes and see where they came from. And if we will, we'll go back now to page 18. And I'm going to read this little paragraph and tells my whole story in one little paragraph. He says, An illness of this sort, and we've come to believe it, an illness, involves those about us in a way no other human sickness can. If a person has cancer, all are sorry for him, and no one is angry or hurt. But not so with the alcoholic illness. For with it goes annihilation of all things worthwhile in life and engulfs all whose life touches the sufferers. It brings misunderstanding, fierce resentment, financial insecurity, disgusted friends and employers, warped lives of blameless children, sad wives and parents, and anyone can increase the list. In other words, it's a family illness. It affects everybody in the family to some extent. And if you live with one of us very long, you'll be affected by it in some manner for sure. And as I look back in my life to see where these ideas, emotions, and attitudes that were to become the guiding force of my life started way, way back. So now let's go back to page 67. And again, we're not trying to psychoanalyze ourselves. I just found the facts. I accepted the facts as I looked at the facts, and I could see where I'd come from. Said, notice that the word fear is bracketed alongside the difficulties with Mr. Brown, Miss Jones, the employer, and the wife six times along that column. This short word somehow touches about every aspect of our lives. It was an evil and corroding thread. The fabric of our existence was shot through with it. It set in motion trains of circumstances which brought us misfortune we felt we didn't deserve. You know, you do the crime, you do the time. That's the way that is. But we did not we ourselves set the ball rolling? See, I did that myself to me because I didn't know any better. Sometimes we think that fear ought to be classed with stealing. It seems to cause more trouble. Now, we reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them. Here it is for me. Wasn't it because that self-reliance failed? Self-reliance was good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough. Some of us once had great self-confidence, but it didn't fully solve the fear problem or any other. When it made us cocky, it was worse. So what we're going to do here this morning is basically it's about the same thing that we did with the resentments. We have a little list here, and it's a review of our fears. And we're simply going to look at our fears, where they come from, the ideas, emotions, and attitudes behind them, and what we're fearful of, and we're going to write them down in these columns, just like we did with resentments. And it won't take very long to do this. The first column, it says, Who or what

did I fear? I list people, institution, or principles whom I fear. And again, in column one, I simply write down the people, the institutions, and the principles that I feared, leaving a little space from top to bottom, one column at a time. And we list

Charlie 109:46

those. Now, we men tend to say, well, we don't have much fear. We're tough. We're macho. But we're not talking about physical fear anyhow. We're talking about all these fears that run through the mind from time to time, and I think if we carefully look at them, we'll find that we all have fears connected, certainly, with our marriages. We have fears connected with our children. We have fears connected with our jobs. We have fears connected with the internal revenue service. We have fears connected with the police department. We have fears connected with the federal government. We have fears connected with the church. We could just go on and on and on and name literally thousands of fears that people have. Now, I'm not going to attempt to psychoanalyze myself. I'm not going to say that these fears are things that come from things way back in my early childhood, like mother setting me sideways on the potty when I'm two years old or something. Some fear we're supposed to have, anyhow. It's just like resentments, fear can be used for a worthwhile purpose if they're used right. Mainly, what we're looking at are these fears in our head that just continually kind of control us and rule and dominate us. We've made a decision to let God direct our thinking. And if we have that many fears, then God can't, the fears do. And I found out the same thing here with these fears that I did with resentments. I didn't think I had very many fears instead, I started putting them on a piece of paper. You can only see one at a time in your head. But as I began to fill out sheet after sheet after sheet, I began to realize how much fear really does control me, rule me, and dominate me. So I did the same thing that I did with resentments: started top to bottom, listed each fear, leaving a little space between each one of them. And it's amazing when we see how much fear we really do have. We'll never see it till we put it on a sheet of paper.

Joe 111:50

Joe? See, for many years, I didn't think I had any fears at all. I thought that was a very brave attitude that I had. And after I filled out this first column, I could see that the fears was throughout my whole attitude and outlook on life. It permeated every part of my life. I was fearful of everything and everyone, and I did not know that. I didn't know that. So I go to the sex column, second column.

Charlie 112:14

Oh, he got it on his mind this morning. Yeah. I can hardly wait. I believe he must have got over his headache. Yeah.

Joe 112:23

That brain damage this morning. Thinking about it. So I simply go to the second column and I write down beside each of these people or principles or institutions of whom I'm fearful. What am I afraid of in conjunction with those people? Am I afraid they're going to do something to me? Am I perhaps going to go to jail for some of the things that I did? Am I going to lose something of value? Am I going to lose faith? Will it result in divorce? Will it destroy a personal relationship? Might lose my job. Those kinds of questions I ask myself beside each of those people and institutions and principles, as I listed in step one.

Charlie 113:00

And once again, as we fill out that second column and we begin to look at these fears, we're going to find that nearly all of them are going to revolve around about one of two or three things, anyhow. Nearly every fear I've ever had revolves around the fact that I'm either not going to get something that I really want, or I'm going to lose something I've already got, or I've done something to another human being I shouldn't have done, and I'm worried to death about what they're going to do whenever they catch me. Nearly all of them will center somewhere around those things. So we simply just put down the cause of the fear. And again, I'm not going to say, well, I'm afraid of the dark because mother set me on the potty sideways. Some fear I'm supposed to have. You betcha, I'm a little bit afraid of the dark. Why? Well, I don't have headlights and I can't see at night, and that keeps me from getting hurt. It brings caution. I'm a little bit afraid of the heights. Why? Well, I don't have wings and I can't fly. Keeps me from getting hurt. But if those kinds of fears should keep me from going outside after dark, if they should keep me from riding in an elevator or an airplane, then I better look at them very closely. They're beginning to really, really rule me and dominate me. Most of my fears, though, center around just basically two or three things. I'm afraid I'm going to lose what I got, not going to get what I want, or I've done something I shouldn't have, and I'm afraid what they're going to do when they catch me. Very simple process. Column

Joe 114:27

three. Go to column three and what part of self was affected. And again, that's why I need that information on the basic instincts of life and the working knowledge of some of those words and ideas to enable to do the third column. If you don't have a God in your life and you're living without God and you don't need other people and you're living on your own will, then there's only one thing you can do, and that's to try to satisfy your basic instincts of life, and that's what I was doing. I was operating on my own. So, what part of myself was affected? Was it my self-esteem? Was it my security, my ambitions, personal or sexual relations which have been interfered with? Those are the things that happened. And I look down at the third column, and

beside each name, again, in each instance, I write down one of those basic instincts of life, the part of me that was affected by these

Charlie 115:15

things. You know, I can't experience fear unless there's a threat to one of the basic instincts of life. And I found out as I filled out the third column, just like I did with resentments, I found out where fear comes from. You know, I didn't know where resentments came from, I didn't know where anger came from, I didn't know where fear comes from. Today I realize it comes from a threat to one of these basic instincts of life. And just like with a resentment, if my basic instincts are at the level that God intends for them to be. If my relationship with God is right, then you can do about anything you want to to me, and I'm not going to experience fear because of it. But I'll guarantee you, if my instincts are not under control, my relationship with God is not right, then about anything you do or say to me is going to create fear. Absolutely amazing what we learn about ourselves just by filling out these simple little columns. Now, let's go to the fourth column.

Joe 116:13

Go to the fourth column, and we'd try to put out of our minds all these things that happened so far, and we'd write down what did I do? What did I do to set the ball rolling? Did I do the crime to do the time? Yes, I did that. Was it when my wife was going to divorce me and I was fearful of it? What did I do? What were some of the things that I did? Well, I was uncaring for her. I didn't care about her. I didn't consider her in any manner, in any way, and therefore I was afraid, and I didn't know that. See, I really didn't know that I was afraid of those things.

Charlie 116:42

It told us way back in step three that we invariably find that we've made decisions based on self, which later placed us in a position to be hurt. And we've made decisions trying to satisfy our basic instincts of life, and running on self-will, those basic instincts become insatiable things. We never get enough to satisfy them. And we're continually doing things that end up hurting and harming and creating other people. And then we've got to be scared to death what they're going to do whenever they catch us. And even if they don't catch us, the guilt and the remorse eats us up here, just like with resentments. So we begin to look at the part we played, and we find that we did the same thing with fears that we did with resentments. As we played them over and over and over in our head, we actually distorted the picture. And the fears that we have in our head today are not true. Oh, they started untruth, but they are no longer true. You see, that's one of the definitions of one of those wrongs. Fear is incorrect believing. And if we carefully look at each one of these fears, we're going to find that they're absolutely wrong. They

started with truth. We've distorted the picture. And once again, we've used them to transfer blame to others so we don't ever have to look at ourselves. Same identical thing as with resentments. Now let's look into the fifth column.

Joe 118:09

In the fifth column, I simply looked down in these instances. Was I selfish in those interests, in those particular items? Yes, I was very selfish because I was so fearful I was selfish. I was afraid I was going to lose things that I already had, or I was afraid I wasn't going to get some things that I wanted. Was I dishonest? Yes, I was dishonest. I took things from other people that didn't belong to me. And I was very dishonest. It seemed to me like to be successful in any manner was okay with me. So I was extremely a dishonest person, and I certainly didn't know that particularly. And then I was self-seeking and frightened and inconsiderate of other people for sure because I wanted what I wanted when I wanted it, and I didn't make a damn how I got it, was the way I looked at my life. And if you got in my way, you just shouldn't have. So I was a very selfish, self-seeking, frightened, and inconsiderate individual. And I did not

Charlie 118:58

know that. You know, it's absolutely a life living on hell. Whenever you're scared to death, you're not going to get something, you really do want it. And then through dishonesty, you go ahead and get it, and then you've got to be scared to death what they're going to do whenever they catch you. And even if they don't catch you, the guilt and the remorse eat you up. And our lives really do become an absolute living hell in trying to satisfy these basic instincts of life, and we just really drive ourselves absolutely dingy until we get an opportunity to truthfully look at these things. Now, out there in that fifth column, once again, we see the exact nature of the wrong. The fears are what's wrong. The wrong, because we find out most of them are incorrect. They're what blocks us off from God. But what's the actual truth behind them? Well, if we wasn't so selfish, if we wasn't so dishonest, if we were not so self-seeking, frightened and inconsiderate, we wouldn't have to experience near as much fear as we do. But I'll guarantee you: if I stay selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened, and inconsiderate, the same old things are going to drive me. I'm going to do the same old things I've always done. Fear, guilt, remorse is going to absolutely eat me up. Sooner or later, it blocks me off from God. It causes me to get drunk. So, once again, what we're doing here in this little inventory sheet, we are doing step four. This is the fear part of it. Out in this fifth column, we see the exact nature of the wrong for step five, the defects for step six, the shortcomings we're going to ask God to take away in step seven, and then once again, many of the names over here in column one will be people and institutions we've harmed, and we're scared to death what they're going to do whenever they catch us. So, those names will come off of column one. They'll be added to the sheet to be used

later on for steps 8 and 9. We got some off of the resentment sheet. We got some off of the fear sheet, also. And one thing that absolutely amazed me is when I really looked at this truthfully, I began to see a lot of the names, same names appearing on the fear sheet that I had on the resentment sheet. I had never tied that together in my head before. Barbara was on both sheets. I resented her and I certainly feared her. I'm still a little bit afraid of that lady today. If she ever finds out everything that I was doing about 30 years ago, she's probably going to file for divorce again. I don't know. I resented the Internal Revenue Service and I feared the Internal Revenue Service. They were also on both sheets. I never really had tied that together in my head. Now, if you think resentments look stupid in your head, wait till you get these things down on paper about fears? Now, fears look awful good in your head, but when you get them down on a sheet of paper, they really do look double-dumb when you see the truth about them. Resentments look stupid. Hell fears look even worse than that. And they look so dumb, about 95% of them are going to disappear anyhow when you see the truth about them. Once again, there's going to be one, two, three, four, or five. It's been embedded in our minds so deeply, we're probably going to have to have a little help in order to get rid of some of those. We now come to the second prayer in the big book on step four, regarding fears.

Joe 122:51

You know, when I prayed for those people that I resented, my ideas, emotions, and attitude toward them changed. They didn't change, but I did. Now, prior to this idea about these fears, my whole attitude and outlook upon life was involved in these fears. I had fears in every area of my life and didn't know it. Of course, I hadn't had a God in my life either. But I've took step three and I've got God in my life. And now I'm on a different basis. And the book says, perhaps there is a better way. We think so, for we're now on a different basis, the basis of trusting and relying upon God. We trust our infinite God rather than our finite selves. We're in the world to play the role He assigns. Just to the extent that we do as we think he would have us and humbly rely on him, does he enable us to match calamity with serenity? Now, we never apologize to anyone for depending upon our creator. We can laugh at those who think that spirituality is the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it's the way of strength. The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. All men of faith have courage. They trust their God. Now, we never apologize for God. Instead, we let Him demonstrate through us what He can do. Here's more prayer. We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. And at once we commence to outgrow fear. And you know, as I look back at that, my sponsor told me in those early days, he said the most important thing about prayer, the two most important things about prayer: one of them is to start, and the other is to continue. And as I look back over my life, I can see that every time I prayed, I changed just a minute amount, just hardly noticeable. The next time I prayed, it was just a little bit more. And the next time I prayed, it was a little bit

more. And as time goes by, I can see a real reliance upon God today in my life. It wasn't that way in the beginning. But when I started trusting and relying upon God rather than myself, then those fears began to come away from me. They weren't as intense as they had been. And they began to get in the area where God intended for them to be. And at once, I commenced to outgrow these fears.

Charlie 124:56

You know, we hear always about the promises on page 83 and 84. We never hear about the promises that are spread throughout the entire book. And I think one of the greatest promises to be found anywhere in the book is what Joe just read. We ask him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what he would have us be at once we commence to outgrow that fear. Now we can take these deep-seated fears, dislike deep-seated resentments, through prayer on a daily basis, asking God to take this particular fear away from me, direct my attention to what He would have me be instead of that, and at once I commence to outgrow that fear. And over a period of days, as he directs my attention to what he would have me be, and I try to be that, as I ask him to take that fear away, some morning I wake up and that fear is gone. It really, really does work. And I think the reason that it really works is when we're asking God to take it away and direct our attention to what he would have us be, then that's one of the great expressions of courage and faith that we human beings can have. Courage, faith, and fear will not exist on the same plane. The fear will be replaced by the courage to do the opposite of that fear. And as we begin to change, it'll be replaced by faith that God really can do these things. And slowly we can remove those fears too. Now, just think: this file cabinet up here in my head that was filled with fears has now been emptied out. That damaged and unsalable goods caused fear is gone, at least to the level that God intends for it to be. Once again, God's not going to allow another hole in my head. The fears, if they disappear, they've got to be replaced with the opposite. And the opposite will be faith and courage, the opposite of the fear itself. I found out I didn't have to go to any other fellowships, read any other books to get faith and courage. If God dwells within me, that's always been a part of my makeup. I just never could use it before. In my chase for money, power, prestige, and sex, in my desire to fulfill the basic instincts of life, in my worries about I wouldn't get what I want, and I'd lose what I got, or they're going to catch me at it. Faith and courage had to be repressed, and I had to operate on that fear level. But now that the fear is gone, faith and courage automatically come to the surface. Another positive happening. Two-thirds of my store now have some peace of mind, serenity, and happiness in them, and I'm in much less chance of drinking now than I was before I started the inventory process. You see, we don't have to wait till step 12 to get something good out of this. Every step brings a positive result. There's nothing negative about any of our program, period. Now, also, just like with the resentment, knowing that fears block you off from God and that they might get you drunk, if

you've got a fear that you don't want to turn loose of, you better look at it very, very closely. Because we can also use fear to rationalize and justify not doing something we really would like to do, or just as importantly, we can use it to justify continuing to do things that we know we shouldn't be doing. And if we've got one of those and we don't want to get rid of it, we better look at it very, very closely. Let me give you an example of how you can use fear to rationalize and justify. How many of you in here this morning, and please be truthful with me. How many of you would really like to go back school and finish your education? Could I see your hand? Oh my God, about half of you at least. Now I'm going to ask you another question: How many of you really do intend to do that? Oh, about a half of those hands went up this time. I wonder why. Nothing in the world but fear. Fear that we won't measure up, fear of failure, fear of hard work, actually keeps us from doing things that we really would like to do. Now, if we can ask God to take that away and direct our attention to what do you have us be instead, then every one of you that wants to go back to school will end up doing it. But until that fear is gone, it's going to drive most of us away and keep us away. We use it to rationalize, justify, just like we did with resentments. So, if we got one of those, let's look at that closely, too. All my life, I love to work in my hands. All my life, I wanted to build a set of kitchen cabinets. Never would do it because I knew there'd be a lot of mistakes, people would laugh, and I would be embarrassed. Now, after I worked the program for quite some time, one time I got the courage to build a set of kitchen cabinets. Now, they don't look very good, and there's a lot of mistakes, and people laugh at it, but I really don't give a damn. It don't bother me anymore, see? So we can overcome these things with God's help. It's amazing what we can do with these things. Bottom of page 68. Now about sex. We're getting ready now to look at the storeroom back here that's filled with guilt and remorse. And it seems as though we human beings hurt each other in the sexual area probably faster and easier than we do in any other way. And I think there's a reason for that. You know, the other animals here on earth, they have a sexual urge just like we do, so that they can and will reproduce themselves. But the difference between their sex life and ours is simply that they don't have this thing called self-will. Most of the other animals here on earth, they don't really have any choice in their sex life. When it comes time for them to reproduce themselves, God usually signifies that by some physical change in the female of the species. The male senses that change, prepares himself. The two join together, and it's kind of like bang, bang, thank you, ma'am. And when it's over with, they normally go their separate ways. Not always, but usually they do. Now, they didn't think about having sex before they had it, and they didn't think about having sex while they were having it. They couldn't decide when they were going to do it. God made that decision for them. They usually can't decide who they're going to do it with. They can't decide whether they're going to do it with one or more partners. They can't decide how many times they're going to do it, and they can't even decide what position

they're going to do it in. So, therefore, you see very few sexual problems amongst the other animals here on earth. I've never seen a cow on a psychiatrist's couch yet talking about sexual dysfunction. They just don't have those kind of problems. We human beings are a little bit different. You see, God gives us this thing called self-will, and we can make choices about our sex lives. We can have sex any day of the year that we wish to. We can decide who we're going to have sex with. We can decide whether we're going to have it with one or more partners. We can decide how many times we're going to do it, providing we're physically capable of doing so. We can even decide what position we're going to do it in. They tell me there's something like 64 different positions a human being can have sex in. I have no idea what they are. I only found three in my lifetime, and two of those damn near killed me. I'm not sure I'm going back to them. So, what we're going to look at here for just a few minutes this morning is not so much as to how we do sex, but as to how we think about sex. Because how we think about it determines how we're going to do it, and that determines whether we're going to hurt other people or not. And that determines whether we're going to have to eat up with fear, guilt, and remorse associated with our sex lives. So we're going to look just a few minutes at how we think about sex. He said many of us needed an overhauling there. Now, you older fellas, don't get your hopes up. We're talking about mental, not physical. But above all, we tried to be sensible on this question. It's so easy to get way off the track. Here we find human opinions running to extremes, absurd extremes, perhaps. One set of voices cry that sex is a lust of our lower nature, a base necessity, of procreation. I've heard them all my life. They're the ones that say sex is a dirty thing. You ought to do it at one time, in one position, with one person only. The only reason to do it is to reproduce yourself. And if you enjoy it, it's a sinful thing. I've heard them as far back as I can remember. They are to the extremes on one side. Then we have the voices who cry for sex and more sex, who bewail the institution of marriage, who think that most of the troubles of the race are traceable to sex causes. They think we do not have it enough of or that it isn't the right kind. They see its significance everywhere. And you hear them today. They're the ones who say you ought to be able to have sex anytime you want to, anywhere you want to, with anybody you want to, as many times as you want to, you ought to be able to enjoy it every time, and if you don't, there must be something wrong with you. And maybe they call that the sexual revolution. Main thing I see wrong with it, it happened 25 years too late for me to participate in it. I know

Now about sex: reviewing our own conduct

129:00

Joe 135:18

that.

Charlie 135:22

One school would allow man no flavor for his fare, and the other would have us all on a straight pepper diet. Well, we want to stay out of this controversy. We do not want to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct. We all have sex problems. We'd hardly be human if we didn't. What can we do about them? And I read that last statement with great relief because I knew this book was getting ready to condemn me for what I had been in the past. I knew it was getting ready to tell me what I was going to have to do in the future, and I'd already made up my mind that I wasn't going to pay any attention to it at all. And I was relieved to find out that we're not going to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct. We simply are not going to get into that question. This book is meant to be helpful to anybody, anywhere. And we start trying to tell people how they're going to have to conduct their sex lives. We start condemning them for what they've done in the past, and surely, surely, we're going to alienate people. Besides that, what's sexually acceptable in one part of the world may not be acceptable at all in another part of the world. So we simply are not going to get into that question. What we are going to see is a simple little way to review our own past sex conduct, see what we've been doing with it. See if perhaps we've been using it for the wrong purposes in some cases. Look at those people we've hurt by it. Then try to shape a sex life of the future, where we can still engage in it and enjoy it, yet at the same time not hurt other people. And if we don't do something about it and we continue to hurt other people and feel the fear, guilt, and remorse, sooner or later it'll block us off from God and we end up getting drunk over it. Very simple process, Joe.

Joe 137:19

Certainly, I'm not going to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct, and I needed an overhauling in that area when I arrived at Alcoholics Anonymous. And again, we're going to look at the ideas, emotions, and attitudes behind these sexual conducts that I had. And I look back in my life, and when I was about 12 or 13 years old, I got to thinking about this a lot. I mean, a lot. Almost gave me brain damage from thinking about it. So I went to my mom and I said, Mom, of course, my dad's in the nut house, you see, I can't be talking to him. So I went to my mom and I said, Mom, I've been thinking about this sex thing. And she said, Oh, my God, Benny Joe scared her to death. That's my name, Benny Joe. She said, Oh my God, Benny Joe. She said, That's not a good thing to be thinking about. In fact, it's a dirty, filthy, rotten thing to be thinking about, she said. And you ought to save it for the one you love. Think about that. And she said, The only time you're supposed to have sex is when you want to have children. Well, let's see, she had five children. She had sex five times, I figured. Well, no wonder my dad was in the nuthouse. But somehow I just didn't believe what she was telling me. And we had sex education when I went to school, too, but they called it recess. And also in West Tulsa, Oklahoma, there

was a place called the Jenkins Cafe. And every day and every evening in front of the Jenkins Cafe, there was a gathering of very wise, intelligent, experienced men and women of about 15 or 16 years old. And they were more than glad to share with you all they knew about sex. And some of those guys told me that they were having sex with two or three different partners a night, they said. Sometimes they were having sex as many as ten times a night, they said. And you know, the fallacy of all this is I tried to live up to that because that's what I thought of. I never could, but I tried. And I was sober two or three years in Alcoholics Anonymous before I figured out they were lying to me. At least I hope they were lying to you. You better hope they were lying to you. So, certainly, I needed an overhauling there. When I got here, I had the spiritual knowledge of a seven or eight-year-old boy. I had the coping skills of an eight or nine-year-old boy, and I had the sexual knowledge of a 12- or 13-year-old boy. Do you think I needed overhauling in all those areas? How many of you got your sex information pretty much the way I did, somewhat. I needed to sit down and look at this, didn't I? You know, I remember the very first time I ever had sex. I was very selfish and self-centered and dishonest and self-seeking, and I was also alone.

Charlie 140:04

That's why he's wearing glasses today, too. Every time we say that, two or three of you guys whip your glasses off and put them in your pocket. Thank you, six. And gals. Okay, let's look at the next paragraph now very carefully. We're going to see here the same set of instructions that we used to look at sex that we had for resentments. The only difference is they're worded a little differently, which is Bill's way of doing things. We've reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness? Where were we at fault? What should we have done instead? We got this all down on paper and looked at it. So, once again, we made up a little sheet to avoid any confusion, and it looks just about exactly like the resentment sheet, except we call it a review of our own sex conduct. And in this little sheet, a review of our own sex conduct, we have the same five columns. Column one: Who Did I Hurt? Now I doubt if there's anybody in this room this morning that ever heard anybody in the sexual area that we don't remember just exactly who that is. That seems to be a form of knowledge that we all have. There might be some question as to what do we do to hurt people in a sexual area. Well, certainly we hurt them in many different ways. For instance, if I'm in a married relationship and I go outside of that relationship and I have sex out there, and my wife finds out about it, then surely I've created a problem from her, if not physically, at least emotionally. If that sexual escapade creates a trouble between my wife and I, there's children in my home, then I've hurt my children also by the same sexual escapade. If the lady I had sex with out there, if it becomes common knowledge, I've hurt her too. If she has a husband and children, I've hurt them also.

You know, one sex act could hurt many, many different people. I think sometimes we hurt people in a sexual area by demanding more than our fair share. Maybe our partner isn't too keen about having sex every time we want to. Rather than consider their needs, wants, and desires, we selfishly demand that they have sex with us when they really don't want to. Surely that creates a problem for them, if not physically, at least emotionally. I think sometimes we hurt people in the sexual area by demanding that they do things with us physically, sexually, that they really don't want to do. And once again, rather than consider their needs and wants, we selfishly demand those things. Surely we create a problem for them, if not physically, at least emotionally. I think sometimes we hurt people in the sexual area just by withholding sex. Maybe we're not too keen to have sex every time our partner wants to, and rather than consider their needs and wants, we selfishly withhold when perhaps we should give in a little more often. I think we hurt many people in many different ways, and we pretty well know what they are. Column one, we list their names. Column two, what did I do to hurt them? Column three, what part of self is affected? Now you would think if I hurt anybody in a sexual area that it would be caused by the sex instinct. And probably part of the time that's true. Sometimes, in order to get the physical, the emotional gratification that comes at the moment of successful completion of the sex Act. Maybe I'm doing the wrong thing at the wrong time with the wrong person because of the sex instinct. But I think if we will carefully review each situation, we're going to find that usually the other two instincts are involved just as much as sex, and in many cases, even more so, and sometimes sex really doesn't have a hell of a lot to do with it. Now, I'm going to express an opinion. And I want to make sure that everybody understands this is my opinion. It's not AA's opinion, not Joe's, not anybody else's, just mine. Today, I am convinced that God gave us the sex urge so that we could reproduce ourselves. I'm also convinced He made it a very enjoyable thing so we would do so. I don't think you and I would do the kind of work involved in sex if we didn't get something out of it. Now, if we're doing sex for purposes other than reproduction or enjoyment, then we might be doing sex for purposes other than what God intended. For instance, we boys found at a very early age that you can use sex to build your self-esteem. After all, the more members of the opposite sex you can attract to yourself, the greater man you really are, we thought. Now we boys, I don't what you girls called it, but we boys called it John Wayneism. Jane Wayne. Joe said Jane Wayne. Some of you girls tell me you use sex for the same purposes. Now, if that's what we're using sex for, that has nothing to do with reproduction, really has nothing to do with enjoyment. That's to fulfill a part of the social instinct, and sex really doesn't have a hell of a lot to do with it. Sometimes we use sex to buy a personal relationship. Maybe we're just lonesome. Maybe we just want somebody to pay attention to us. And we found out a long time ago we can give sex and buy back a personal relationship. Now that's not to reproduce, that's not to enjoy, that's also to fulfill a part of the

social instinct. Sometimes we use sex to buy material security. Maybe we're in a sexual situation we really would rather not even be in. But we've become so overly dependent upon another human being for our material well-being that we give sex to buy back material well-being. Has nothing to do with reproduction or enjoyment, that's to fulfill the security instinct. Sometimes we use sex to get even with another human being. Maybe we're in a relationship and our partner's gone out and done something they shouldn't have done, and it infuriates the hell out of us, and we say we'll show them, and we'll go out and we'll do exactly the same thing. The fallacy in it is after we've done it, we can't afford to tell them we did it. But certainly, we didn't use sex there to reproduce or to enjoy, we used it to get even with another human being. Sex really doesn't have a hell of a lot to do with that. Sometimes we use sex to force our will on another human being. Maybe our partner isn't doing what we think they ought to do. We say, We'll show them. We'll just cut them off at the pass. We won't let them have any sex till they come around to our way of thinking. Now, we boys aren't too good at that. We only last two days at the most. You girls have honed it to perfection. You know exactly how to do that, and I don't blame you. I would use it too for that. That has nothing to do with reproduction or enjoyment. That's to force our will on another human being. I was absolutely amazed as I filled out that third column to see what I had actually been using sex for. Two things happened to me almost automatically. As I filled out the third column, a lot of my guilt began to disappear. I thought I was just a dirty, rotten, no-good SOB. But I found out that I used sex for purposes other than what God intended. Not because I'm a bad human being, but because I'm a sick human being in those areas. And I needed that sex to build the personal relationships and etc. And when I saw that, a lot of guilt began to disappear. Tell you another thing that started happening to me in column 3. I began to get a handle on this sex thing. You see, I always thought I was over sex, and that caused me to do those things. But in Column three, I found out, hell, I'm not oversexed, I'm under secure. And I use sex to build my security and to build my self-esteem. And when I saw what I was doing with sex, it began to look pretty stupid to do those things. And a lot of that desire to go do it at the wrong time in the wrong place with the wrong people began to disappear. And I started getting a handle on the sex thing right here in the third column. I think it's one of the greatest things that we can do for ourselves, especially we men. We tend to use sex to build self-esteem. And sex doesn't have really anything to do with it. We tend to use it to build our self-esteem. And when I saw that's what I was doing with it, then a desire to go do it became less and less. Column 4. What feelings did I create in others? Did I unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness? What should I have done instead. In column 4, not only are we looking to see those things that we did, but we also need to be looking at what we should have done instead. We're trying to shape a new sex life of the future, where we can still engage in it and enjoy it, yet at the same time not hurt other people. Column

5. Which character defect is involved? Same old ill. If I wasn't so selfish, I wouldn't be doing some of those things in a sexual area that hurt other people. If I wasn't so dishonest, I wouldn't be sneaking around behind my wife's backline to her all the time, anyhow. If I wasn't so afraid of facing life without that sex to build my self-esteem and ego and etc., probably wouldn't be doing it in the first place. If I really considered my wife and my children and other human beings ahead of my own needs and wants, I wouldn't be doing those things that's going to take a chance on hurting other people. But I'll guarantee you: if I stay selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened, and inconsiderate, I'm going to keep right on doing the same old things. I'm going to keep right on hurting people in the sexual area. I'm going to have to be scared to death of what they're going to do if they catch me. The guilt and remorse eats me up. Sooner or later, it blocks me off from God, and I end up drunk over it. It's not a question of right and wrong. It's a question of what we can do and live with it with peace of mind and happiness and be able to stay sober in the future. At the very least, we're going to have to do something about some of these things, or sooner or later it eats us up. Now, once again, we're doing step four. This is the sex part. In the fifth column, we see all the information now we need for step 5, 6, and 7. Quite naturally, all the names in column 1 will come off of this sheet and be added to the sheet to be used later on for steps 8 and 9. Again, I was amazed to see in many cases the same names appearing on all three sheets. Barbara was certainly on all three sheets. I even had the internal revenue service on all three sheets. I resented them and I feared them and I gave them a pretty good screwing before I got through with them, too.

Shaping a sane sex ideal and harms other than sexual

152:29

Joe 152:29

Now, let's see what we do with this information. He said, in this way, the way it was just outlined, in this way, we tried to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life. We subjected each relation to this test: was it selfish or not? And prayer is going to be used three different times in this in the next page or so. Here's the first one: We ask God to mold our ideals and help us We remembered always that our sex powers were God-given and therefore good, neither to be used lightly or selfishly, nor to be despised or loathed. See God never to give us anything that was bad. Whatever our ideal turns out to be, we must be willing to grow toward it. We must be willing to make amends where we've done harm, provided that we do not bring about still more harm in so doing. In other words, we treat sex as we would any other problem, more prayer. In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer will come if we want it. God alone can judge our sex situation. Counsel with others, other persons is often desirable, but we let God be the final judge. We

realize that some people are fanatical about sex as others are loose. We avoid hysterical thinking or advice.

Charlie 153:42

You know, this is an area that I don't think we need a whole lot of advice in, anyhow. I think all of us, deep down inside, we know what we should be doing and what we shouldn't be doing. You know, I've never been in a sexual situation yet that was wrong, that I didn't know it was wrong before I ever got into it. Didn't keep getting into it. But I never got into one yet that was wrong, that I didn't know it was wrong before I ever got into it. And if you start running around asking people for sexual advice, if you ask six different people, you're going to get six different answers. And then you'll have to decide which one of those to follow. And besides that, I really can't think of a worse place in the world to get sexual advice than in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. I think that's a hell of a place to look for it. I think all we've got to do is listen to that little voice inside. I think it pretty well knows, and I think it'll pretty well tell us what we should and what we shouldn't do. And if we follow it, we're probably not going to hurt other people.

Joe 154:48

Now, suppose we fall short of the chosen ideal and stumble. Does this mean we're going to get drunk? Well, some people tell us so. But this is only a half-truth. It depends on us and our motives. Now, if we're sorry for what we've done and have an honest desire to let God take us to better things, we believe we'll be forgiven and have learned our lesson. Now, if we're not sorry and our conduct continues to harm others, we're quite sure to drink. Now, we're not theorizing, these are facts of our experience.

Charlie 155:14

You know, I had a young fellow come to me not long ago. He's still in his 20s. And he said, Charlie, my sponsor told me I couldn't have any sex the first year of sobriety. Is that right? And I said, no, that's not necessarily right. I said, you can have all the sex you want the first year. The second year, you can have it with other

Joe 155:35

people.

Charlie 155:40

You know, sometimes it's hard enough to quit drinking without doing some other things, too.

Joe 155:46

Now, to sum up about sex, we earnestly pray for the right ideal, more prayer. We earnestly pray for the right ideal for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity and for the strength to do the right thing. Now, if sex is very troublesome, we throw ourselves harder into helping others. We think of their needs and work for them. This takes us out of ourselves. It quiets the horny condition. Oh, it quiets the imperious urge when to yield would mean heartache. Oh, Bill used

Charlie 156:14

some fancy words, didn't he? Okay. Now we're going to make one other suggestion before we leave the inventory. The book says we have the list for our amends. We made it and we took step four. And we've looked at people we've heard on the resentment sheet. We looked at them on the fear sheet. We looked at them on the sex sheet, but there's other people we've hurt in other ways too that perhaps haven't popped up on any of these sheets. Maybe somebody we stole money from them, or maybe somebody we hurt physically, many ways we hurt people. And any of those names that haven't come up on at least one of these three sheets, we suggest we take this fourth sheet: a review of harms other than sexual, and do exactly the same thing with it that we have done with the other sheets. Column 1, who did I hurt? Column 2, what did I do? Column 3, what part of self is affected? Column four, what feelings did I create in others? What should I have done instead? Column five, which character defect is involved. And if we'll do that, then we've got everything we need here for 4, 5, 6, and 7, 8, and 9. And when we've done this sheet, when we have completed our inventory, we've got everything we need now for 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. And now we're ready to get on with our business. very simple procedure. Now, let me ask you something. Did we see anything here to be afraid of? Did we see anything that was so complicated we couldn't do it? Did we make a list of dirty, filthy, nasty items? Did we get any positive results from this? Yes. Is there any reason why we shouldn't go ahead and do step four. We don't need to procrastinate any longer, do we? It is simple enough that we can get with it, get on with the program.

Summing up: everything for Steps 4 through 9

158:35

Joe 158:35

A little bit of study, a little bit of help with your sponsor, and a couple of evenings, you're going to have it done just that quick.

Charlie 158:41

Now, the book says: if we've been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot. We have listed and analyzed our resentments. Now, some people look at the word

analyzed as a bad word. All this is, is another word that means truth. We have taken a truthful, a moral, truthful, honest, analytical inventory. To analyze something simply means to get down to the truth of it. Now he didn't say it, but we've listed and analyzed our fears. We've listed and analyzed our sexual harms. We've listed and analyzed harms other than sexual. We've begun to comprehend their futility and their fatality. We have commenced to see their terrible destructiveness. Now, here's some results. We have begun to learn tolerance, patience, and goodwill toward all men, even our enemies, for we look on them as sick people. My God, what a change in personality already. This is a real change taking place here in step four. We don't have to wait till step 12 to get something. We have listed the people we've hurt by our conduct and are willing to straighten out the past, if we can. In this book, you read again and again that faith did for us what we could not do for ourselves. We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him. If you've already made a decision and an inventory of your grosser handicaps, you have made a good beginning. That being so, you have swallowed and digested some big chunks of truth about yourself.

Joe 160:25

So, now what are some of the grosser handicaps in which we've looked at? Resentment, fear, guilt, and remorse. What are some of the basic character defects that we've looked at in the basic cause. Selfish,

Charlie 160:38

dishonest, self-seeking, frightened, and inconsiderate. We have really looked at those things very carefully, haven't we? Now, the book recognizes it will never be perfect. It said, these are our grosser handicaps. I think one of the great mistakes being made in AA today is everybody's sitting around and waiting until they get well so they can do step four perfect. You can't do that. Let's get rid of these grosser things. We've got another step later on that we're going to use this process for the rest of our life. We'll be inventorying forever, and it'll get better and better. But these are the major things that kill us. We got them behind us now, we can get on with our business. You know, I think this is all the inventory I need, anyhow. As I look back in my lifetime, I can't spot an emotional problem I've ever had that didn't revolve around one of three things: madder than hell at somebody, scared to death about something, or I'd done something I shouldn't have done, and the guilt and remorse was eating me up. As I project my mind in the future, I don't see anything that's going to bother me that's not going to revolve around the same three things: madder than hell, scared to death, or filled with guilt and remorse. I think this is a perfect inventory for people like us, and we will continue to work on it the rest of our lives, anyhow. Now, I don't know whether you all have noticed or not, but nearly all the information in the big book on sex is on page 69. I don't know that that has any significance

whatsoever. That just happens to be where nearly all the sex information is, is on page 69. You know, we heard a story about a young lady who had been in AA about 90 days and she went to her sponsor and she said, Sponsor, I've got a problem. Her sponsor said, What is it? She said, Well, it's this sex thing. She said, Sober, I don't know what to do. Anything I've ever done in the sexual area, tried to attract a member of the opposite sex or anything else, it's always been while drinking. And sober, I just don't know how to function. Her sponsor said, Well, go home, get out your big book, read page sixty-nine. It will have the answer to any problems you might have. So the young lady goes home, gets her book out and proceeds to read, but she got confused on page numbers. Instead of page 69, she read page 96. Just for the hell of it, why don't you go to 96 and see what she read? I think that's one of the most appropriate things I've ever read. It just goes on and on and on.