

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

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The History Behind the Big Book - Forward to the Second Edition

(Tape 1 - 00:18:04.3)

He said Bill; every alcoholic I know has two questions: 1. Why can't I drink like I used to without getting drunk all the time, and
2. Why can't I quit drinking now that I want to?

the problem

- (1) Explain to them the exact nature of the illness,
- (2) tell them about the physical allergy of the body and the obsession of the mind (two-fold illness), you'll get their attention.
- (3) Then after you get their attention you can talk to them about spirituality.

TELL THEM WHAT THE PROBLEM IS FIRST. Now our book says,

Big Book, p. xvi, line 18 "The broker had gone to Akron on a business venture which had collapsed, leaving him greatly in fear that he might start drinking again. He suddenly realized that in order to save himself he must carry his message to another alcoholic. And that alcoholic turned out to be the Akron physician."

J & C And we all know the story of Bill going to Akron. He and some other guys had put a business deal together. They were going to take over one of the companies there in Akron just through a proxy fight. And while there the whole thing blew up in the face, and his friends all deserted him and left him there in Akron, standing in the lobby of the Mayflower Hotel. Low, sad and depressed, counting the money in his pocket realized he didn't even have enough money to pay his hotel bill. He happened to look through a door off the lobby, into the bar. And I would assume probably the lights were low in the bar, the music was probably playing in the bar, the laughter was great and the smoke was thick, and Bill's mind said I believe I'll go in there and be with people of my kind and I'll feel better. And as he started through the door his mind began to think about taking a drink.

And Bill suddenly realized that if he went in that bar he was going to end up drunk. But he remembered how back in New York City, every time he had tried to help another alcoholic, even though he had failed with them, every time he had tried he himself had felt better. So he said to himself, what I had better do is find me a drunk here in Akron to talk to. Made a few phone calls and came in contact with a lady named Henrietta Seiberling. And Henrietta said, yeah, I know a guy that you can talk to. She said, let me call him and see if I can't set up a meeting for you. So she calls Dr. Bob's house and got hold of Anne Smith, Bob's wife. And said there's a fellow here from New York City that says he may have a possible means that Dr. Bob could recover from alcoholism. Can you bring Dr. Bob over for a visit? And Anne said well I'd like to but she said you know this is the day before Mother's Day, and he brought me home a potted plant, and it's sitting on the table and he's potted underneath the table. She said let me wait until the morning and see if I can get him to come over. So of course the next morning as soon as Dr. Bob woke up she set in on him to go over to Henrietta's and see this guy, and to talk to this guy from New York City. Now you know Dr. Bob didn't feel very good the next morning. Hung over and felt bad and he said I'm not going. And Anne kept after him and kept after him and kept after him and finally, finally Dr. Bob said I'll go over there and give that guy fifteen minutes of my time, and then I'm coming back home. So Anne took him over there, and Bill and Bob went into a room by themselves and they stayed in that room for literally hours. And Dr. Bob came out of that room and he said this is the first man I've ever met that knows what he's talking about when he talks about alcoholism. Let's see what happened to him

Big Book, p. xvi, par. 3 "This physician had repeatedly tried spiritual means to resolve his alcoholic dilemma but had failed."

J & C Bill was surprised to find out Dr. Bob was already in the Oxford Groups. He knew more about the solution: the spiritual experience and the program of action than Bill knew, but he had never been able to apply it to the depth necessary to recover, cause he didn't know what was wrong with him. You see he thought it was willpower. He thought it was moral character. He thought it was sin. Why would he not, that's what everybody had told him up until that time? And what really interested him was the message that Bill had to carry regarding the problem, not the solution, not the program of action, but what alcoholism really consists of.

Big Book, p. xvi, par. 3 "But when the broker gave him Dr. Silkworth's description of alcoholism and it's hopelessness, the physician began to pursue the spiritual remedy for his malady with a willingness he had never before been able to muster. He sobered, never to drink again up until the to the moment of his death in 1950."

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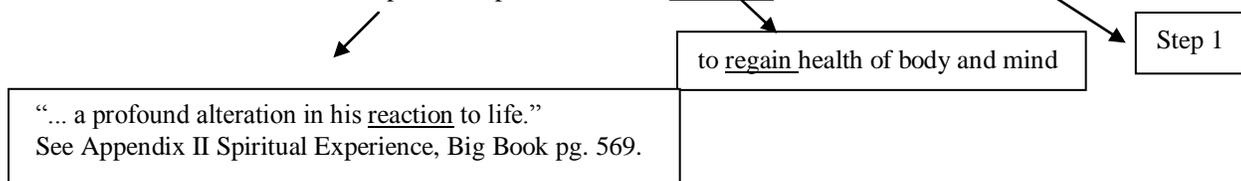
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J & C Bill went in there this time, for the first time he began to talk to Dr. Bob about the allergy of alcoholism. He told him that every time that he would go down by the bar and had every intention to have a drink or two, he would drink more than he intended to, he'd drink more that night or the next day and he'd be off and running again. And he said this Dr. Silkworth had told him that that was a physical allergy that caused him to want to crave more drinks after he took a drink and Dr. Bob said well yes I drink just like that, you really know what your talking about, that's the way I drink too. I would want to have one or two drinks, the next thing I know is I'd drink three, four, five, ten, or fifteen or twenty and didn't know how I got started. He said, you call that a physical allergy that? He said that's right. And he said, another thing he said, when I'm not drinking when I'm sober, I have these thoughts that I want to drink all the time, it's always on my mind, and Dr. Silkworth said, that's the obsession of the mind that would obsess for the idea to drink. And Dr. Bob said, well I have those same kinds of thoughts; you really know what you're talking about. So they reached a rapport through the illness of alcoholism. And he explained it at great detail, and Dr. Bob said that's me, that's just the way I drank. You really know what you're talking about. So they had some identification going.

Now this is the first time that Bill had tried this. Everybody back in New York City, he'd always talked to them about the solution: the great spiritual experience, the big white flash he'd had in the Towns Hospital. When he sat down with Dr. Bob, he didn't talk to Dr. Bob at all about Dr. Bob's drinking either. I'm sure that's what Dr. Bob expected to hear. Everybody else had talked to him about his drinking, but Bill said, let me tell you about my drinking. And through the sharing of his story, talking about his own allergy, Dr. Bob could see himself immediately in it. Through the sharing of his own story, talking about his obsession of the mind, Dr. Bob could see himself immediately in it. And he could see where he had become absolutely powerless over alcohol. And for the first time he was completely defeated when it comes to alcohol. Then he began to apply the little program of action to a depth he had never been able to do before. Then he had a spiritual experience and he recovered from alcoholism too.



Big Book, p. xvi, par. 3 "This seemed to prove that one alcoholic could affect another as no nonalcoholic could."

J & C Through the sharing of our story with a new person, we can affect them as no non-alcoholic could because we have immediate identification

- (1) **about the physical allergy,**
- (2) **about the obsession of the mind,**
- (3) **about the way we think and the things that we do.**

Big Book, p. xvii, par. 1 "It also indicated that strenuous work, one alcoholic with another, was vital to permanent recovery."

J & C Remember Bill was about to get drunk., and he really didn't go see Dr. Bob to sober up Dr. Bob. He went to see Dr. Bob to keep Bill Wilson from drinking. So it proved that night that working with another alcoholic was vital for our own recovery too. Now immediately, one of the Oxford Group tenets was you got to give it away if you're going to keep it. So immediately they made a decision that we're going to have to find us another alcoholic to talk to. Dr. Bob called the Akron City Hospital where he was actually working at that time. Talked to the head nurse and said do you have an alcoholic down there that we can come and talk to? We believe we've found a way to help him overcome alcoholism. She said, oh yeah, we've got a real one down here. He just blacked both eyes of one of the nurses, said we've got him tied down in bed. And Dr. Bob said put him in a private room, we'll be down in the morning to see him. And she said okay, and by the way Dr. Bob, have you tried this on yourself?

So the next morning they go down to see this fellow. He's named Bill Dobson, and you see the picture in AA rooms all over the world of the man on the bed. And this is Bill and Bob sitting there talking to Bill Dobson. Now they didn't talk to Bill Dobson about Bill Dobson's drinking.

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They talked to him about their own drinking.

And through the sharing of their stories Bill Dobson could immediately see what his problem was.

See he'd never known about the allergy and the obsession of the mind.

He could accept the fact that he was absolutely powerless over alcohol, and

he would have to have the aid of a power greater than himself in order to recover.

They began to talk to him about the need for the spiritual experience.

How they had found that necessary to apply those things in their lives in order to recover.

They told him how they applied the little program of action and the results that they got.

Two days later Bill Dobson said to his wife get my clothes out of the closet, I'm going home.

And he gets up and he dresses and he goes home and he starts applying the program of action.

And low and behold he had a vital spiritual experience and he recovered from alcoholism also.

Now this makes three of them. In the summer of 1935 in Akron they all three know the problem, they all three know the solution, they've all three applied the program of action, they've had a spiritual experience* and they have recovered from alcoholism

the 12 Steps

to regain health of body and mind

"... a profound alteration in his reaction to life."
See Appendix II Spiritual Experience, Big Book pg. 569.

(Tape 1 - 00:28:19.0)

10 minutes