

# 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 - 00:38:57.8)

But the fellowship, as it grew and got bigger and bigger and bigger they began to experience the power of fellowship, they then began to question the need for the severity of the program in the book. And they said

Do you mean that we really have to turn ALL of our will and our life over to the care of God, as we understand him?

Can we give him the drinking and keep the rest?

Do you mean we are going to have to share ALL of our life story with another human being?

Hell God already knows about it, we know about it, why tell somebody else?

They began to say you mean we have to have God remove ALL of our character defects?

Hell we won't have any personality left if he does!

And they began to talk about, do you mean we have to make amends to ALL those people we've harmed?

And they began to say such things as, well maybe we don't need to do every bit of that.

Maybe me could take some of it, and leave some of it?

Maybe we can do it cafeteria style? Pick what we want, and leave that that we don't want?

And along about that time came the great advent of the treatment centers. Now please don't get us wrong, we have nothing against the treatment center. They serve a worthwhile purpose. But in the treatment centers people begin to hear some other type of words and some other languages. They begin to go into a group therapy thing and they begin to sit around the tables and talk about their problems and they begin to develop such terms as the dysfunctional family. And they begin to use such words as chemical dependency, and they began to talk about significant others, and they began to discuss meaningful relationships and they begin to talk about dysfunctional sex, and they begin to talk about this and they begin to talk about that. And the program in the treatment center wasn't like the program in the book, "Alcoholics Anonymous". Well naturally the new people from the treatment centers coming into A.A. wanted to talk about what they knew to talk about is what they had learned in other places.



And slowly, slowly, slowly, the program in the fellowship began to change. And as the years went by, it began to change more and more and more, until today sometimes you go to an A.A. meeting and if they didn't read the preamble before the meeting, you wouldn't know what kind of meeting you're in, because they talk about everything except alcoholism and recovery there from it. We like to refer to those meetings as group depression meetings. You go in there feeling pretty good. Half way through the meeting you might as well just go ahead and blow your brains out...hell it's not even worth living any longer.

So what we're going to be talk about this weekend is not the program in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous today.

We're going to talk about the program in the book, "Alcoholics Anonymous," that the first one hundred used, which has never been changed.

**The program in the fellowship has definitely changed.**

**The program in the book has never changed.**

Let's go to Roman numeral xx, let's see how effective this thing used to be, when the program in the book and the program in the fellowship were the same.

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*Big Book p. xix, last line "While the internal difficulties of our adolescent period were being ironed out, public acceptance of A.A. grew by leaps and bounds. For this there were two principal reasons: the large numbers of recoveries, and reunited homes. These made their impressions everywhere. Of alcoholics who came to A.A. and really tried.*

- (1) 50% got sober at once and remained that way;
- (2) 25% sobered up after some relapses, and
- (3) among the remainder, those who stayed on with A.A. showed improvement.

*Other thousands came to a few A.A. meetings and at first decided they didn't want the program. But great numbers of these --about two out of three--began to return as time passed."*

J & C If my math is correct that's 75% of those people who came to A.A. in the early days and worked the program that's in the book stayed sober, eventually. I know in my area, I don't know what it's like in you're area, but we can't talk about 75%. We can't talk about 50%. We can't talk about 25%. I doubt if we can talk about 10%, truthfully. And the reason for that I believe is that the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous got away from the program that's in the book called Alcoholics Anonymous and that worked. And so what we're going to do this weekend as Charlie said, we're going to talk about the fellowship that's in the program called Alcoholics Anonymous, and we're going to ask each and everyone of you to go back to your groups and listen to the conversations that you hear around the tables and see how closely it tallies with the program that's in the book called Alcoholics Anonymous. And if it doesn't we suggest you do something about it. That's our charge to you this weekend.

A lot of we older members of Alcoholics Anonymous tend to blame this problem on the newcomer. The newcomer comes in here, and they want to talk about the only thing they know to talk about. And too many we older members have said well we can't identify with those people anymore, so we're just going to stay home. And when we do, we've abdicated our responsibility for Alcoholics Anonymous, we've turned it over to the sickest of the sickest, who are the newcomers, and then we stand back and say look what they're doing to our A.A. Now I think that's our responsibility, to be sure that every newcomer that walks in the door, and we tell them, that stuff you've learned, wherever you've learned it, is probably good information, but that is not A.A. information, here's A.A. information. And we start talking about the program of recovery in the book, "Alcoholics Anonymous". And

we take them (newcomers) by the hand, and we lead them through this program of recovery,  
so they can have a spiritual awakening also.

I think they call that sponsorship, and that's sorely, sorely lacking in A.A. today.  
And I think that's our responsibility, it's not the responsibility of the new people;  
It's the responsibility of we older members.

And we need to stand up and stand pact,  
and insist that in our meetings we talk about alcoholism and recovery there from;  
the program in the book.

And I'll just bet you we can see more people recover from alcoholism. Probably never will get back to 75%, but we can certainly do better than we're doing today.

Now we're not going to preach anymore. That's all the preaching for this entire weekend I guarantee you. Hope you don't believe that.

Now that we know a little bit about the history, let's go back to the Table of Contents (Roman numeral v) let's look at it for just a moment. Let's see if we can't see the same pattern in this book that the first one hundred used. Do all of you have one of these little folders like this? Okay, we're going to put a picture up here on this screen, I know some of you will hardly be able to see it at all from this location, but you'll have a picture in that book which will match it if you can't see it.

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Action Necessary for Recovery

**GOAL 2**  
Solution

**GOAL 1**  
Problem

<p><b>DRS. OPINION</b> Chapter 1 – Bill's Story</p>	<p>Chapter 2 – There Is A Solution Chapter 3 – More About Alcoholism Chapter 4 – We Agnostics</p>	<p>Chapter 5 – How It Works Chapter 6 – Into Action Chapter 7 – Working With Others</p>
<p>STEP 1</p> <p><b>POWERLESS</b></p>	<p>STEP 2</p> <p><b>POWER</b></p>	<p>STEP 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12</p> <p><b>HOW TO FIND POWER</b></p>

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I'm in the printing business and I have been all of my life and I print books like this and I've been in conversation with many people and when I started reading this book Alcoholics Anonymous I guess I must have had brain damage or something, but it never dawned on me that this book was laid out in any particular way. After all a bunch of old alcoholics wrote it so what would they know about laying out a book I thought, so I didn't pay any attention to that. Come to find out though this book had lots of good information lots of good help with laying out this book.

## **This book is laid out in a particular manner to bring about certain ideas.**

Each chapter is very, very important. Each page is very, very important. Each paragraph is very, very important.

One paragraph leads to the next and the information in that paragraph on that page leads to the next.

And that's the way it goes in this book Alcoholics Anonymous, everything is important, and it's laid out in a certain sequence to bring about certain ideas.

Most books have two particular goals, especially this one does.

And the 1st goal in this book **it tells us what the problem is**, and that's the goal number one. And they're going to use

The Dr.'s Opinion, and }  
Chapter 1 - Bill's Story } basically to tell us what the problem is.

And then the 2<sup>nd</sup> goal is going to be the solution; they're going to give us **the solution to the problem** that they described. And they know we're going to have problems with that solution just like they did. So they're going to talk

Chapter 2: There Is A Solution  
Chapter 3: More About Alcoholism

The solution has to do with spiritual matters and they know we're going to have some of those problems.  
So they wrote down

Chapter 4: We Agnostics for those of us who had problems in that area.

And the 3<sup>rd</sup> goal is **actions necessary for recovery** and we're going to begin with

Chapter 5: How It Works  
Chapter 6: Into Action,  
Chapter 7: Working with Others

So this book is laid out in particular reasons to bring about certain ideas all the way across, all the way through the book. And that helped me in studying the book.

I hear people today talking about going to a Step Study Meeting. And they're always referring to studying the steps out of the Twelve and Twelve and if you'll notice these chapters correspond with the steps also. And any time you're studying the Big Book, you're studying the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In that Dr.'s Opinion & Bill's Story, we're going to see nearly all the information, a little bit of it in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 but most of it will be in The Dr.'s Opinion and Bill's Story. We'll be able to see everything that we need to in order to see what our problem really is, and we'll **be able to see where we are absolutely powerless over alcohol and our lives have become unmanageable**, and really that's Step 1.

Step 1 If we're going to boil it down to just one word would be powerless.

Then when we can see that powerless condition,

Then obviously the answer to that is going to be power and remember Ebby told Bill

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it has to be the aid of a power greater than human power.

So through Chapters 2, 3 and 4,  
we're going to be able to see that power,  
and we're going to get some new information about spirituality so  
we'll be able to come to believe that maybe that power could help us also.

And there where you'll do Step 2. That's the power;

We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.  
I know we're powerless, and we know we need the power, and the only other thing we need to know is how do you find that power.  
And that's what Chapter's 5, 6, and 7 are about. There we will see the last 10 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

And if we follow them (The Steps)  
we will have a spiritual awakening,  
we will have found the power,  
and we're no longer powerless over alcohol.

I read this book for years before I saw that sequence. The same identical sequence that Bill and Bob and the first one hundred had to know.

What is the problem?	Step 1	(The Doctor's Opinion ) (Chapter 1 - Bill's Story)
What is the solution?	Step 2	(Solution) (Chapter 3 - More About Alcoholism) (Chapter 4 - We Agnostics)
What is the program of action necessary to find it?	Steps 3-12	(Chapter 5 - How It Works) (Chapter 6 - Into Action) (Chapter 7 - Working with Others)

And we'll begin to study the book in this manner. It becomes a very fascinating book; to see how each chapter ties into the next chapter to convey these certain ideas in the proper sequence.

(Tape 1 - 00:50:57.3)

12 minutes