

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

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There Is A Solution

(Tape 3 - 00:37:47.0)

J & C OK, now we pointed out the fact a while ago that Bill loves to teach by using examples of something we already know about to teach us something new. That's what he did when he used the great ocean liner. Another trend that Bill has, and I think it's very important for us to realize it, is like most writers he did repeat himself quite often. But every time he repeated himself he would normally find a different word that means the same thing. And if you see what he's doing you can understand him. If you don't though you'll think that he's talking about something different.

There seems to be one key word in this whole thing dealing with spiritual experience and that is the word **change**.

Let's see how many times he said change on page 569 (page 567 in the 4th edition) and how many different ways he had of saying it.

In the first paragraph he talked about a **personality change sufficient to bring about recovery**,

In the second paragraph he again mentioned personality changes but then he said **in the nature of sudden and spectacular upheavals**. An upheaval is to change something entirely.

In the third paragraph, first sentence he said **sudden revolutionary changes**. To revolutionize something is to change it entirely.

Third paragraph last sentence, he said **immediate and overwhelming "God-consciousness"**. To overwhelm something is to change it entirely.

Third paragraph last sentence, he said **vast change in feeling and outlook**.

Fourth paragraph first sentence, he said **such transformations**. To transform is to change.

Fourth paragraph about the middle of it he said **profound alteration**. To alter is to change.

So the key thing here is to change from what we were when we came here to something entirely different up here in our minds.

- To go from restless, irritable, discontented, selfish, self centered human beings, to go from that to one that has peace of mind, serenity and happiness and the willingness to help others is an entire change in the way we think.
- That's a spiritual experience.
- That's a spiritual awakening.
- That's a personality change sufficient to recover from alcoholism.
- That's a psychic change.

Now I can buy into that. To go from what we were to something entirely different in the way we think. Religion has nothing to do with this at all. We make the change through spirituality. It seems that's the only real way that people change, is through spirituality.

They talked about change and I told you that when I got here I had become everything I detested in a human being. And I didn't like what I had become and who I was. So they talk about change and I thought they meant for me to become something that I'm not. So I looked around the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and I found me some heroes. Some people that I wanted to be like and we need those heroes in the beginning. I still need my heroes. Charlie was one of my heroes. So I set about to be exactly like Charlie. I didn't like me so I wanted to be like Charlie. And I almost made it. Thank God I didn't. We only need one Charlie. But I tried to emulate and be exactly like him because I didn't like me. And that's good I needed that. So the type of change I think they are talking about today is to change from what I had become to that which God intended for me to be, just me. And that's a marvelous experience in Alcoholics Anonymous and in life. Just to become who you are and what God intended for you to be, only. And there is only one of those. Thank God. Now let's go back to page 25

Big Book p 25, par 3 If you are as seriously alcoholic as we were, we believe there is no middle-of-the-road solution. We were in a position where life was becoming impossible, and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, we had but two alternatives: one was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best we could;

J & C That's Step 1, remaining powerless.

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Big Book p. 25, par 3 and the other, to accept spiritual help.

J & C That's Step 2, to accept the need for the power greater than we are.

Big Book p. 25, par 3 This we did because we honestly wanted to, and were willing to make the effort.

J & C Now we saw where Step 1, the physical allergy, the obsession of the mind, we saw where that came from, from Dr. Silkworth in New York City. Now you would think that the idea of the spiritual experience would have come to us through religious people. Let's look on page 26 and let's see where this idea really did come from. Now we're talking here about a certain American businessman. This is this fellow names Rowland Hazard. He was the one that stepped in between Ebby and the judge

Big Book p. 26, par 1 A certain American business man had ability, good sense, and high character. For years he had floundered from one sanitarium to another. He had consulted the best known American psychiatrists. Then he had gone to Europe, placing himself in the care of a celebrated physician who prescribed for him. Though experience had made him skeptical, he finished his treatment with unusual confidence.

J & C He didn't go there for a 28-day treatment program. He was with Dr. Jung for a full year. Dr. Jung psychoanalyzed him for one day a week for 52 weeks.

Big Book p. 26, par 1 His physical and mental condition were unusually good. Above all, he believed he had acquired such a profound knowledge of the inner workings of his mind and its hidden springs, that relapse was unthinkable. Nevertheless, he was drunk in a short time. More baffling still, he could give himself no satisfactory explanation for his fall.

So he returned to this doctor, whom he admired, and asked him point-blank why he could not recover. He wished above all things to regain self-control. He seemed quite rational and well-balanced with respect to other problems. Yet he had no control whatever over alcohol. Why was this?

He begged the doctor to tell him the whole truth, and he got it. In the doctor's judgment he was utterly hopeless; he could never regain his position in society and he would have to place himself under lock and key, or hire a bodyguard if he expected to live long. That was a great physician's opinion.

But this man still lives, and is a free man. He does not need a bodyguard, nor is he confined. He can go anywhere on this earth where other free men may go without disaster, provided he remains willing to maintain a certain simple attitude.

Some of our alcoholic readers may think they can do without spiritual help. Let us tell you the rest of the conversation our friend had with his doctor.

The doctor said: "You have the mind of a chronic alcoholic. I have never seen one single case recover, where that state of mind existed to the extent that it does in you." Our friend felt as though the gates of hell had closed on him with a clang.

He said to the doctor, "Is there no exception?"

"Yes," replied the doctor, "there is. Exceptions to cases such as yours have been occurring since early times. Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences. To me these occurrences are phenomena. They appear to be in the nature of huge emotional displacements and re-arrangements. Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them.

In fact, I have been trying to produce some such emotional rearrangement within you. With many individuals the methods which I employed are successful, but I have never been successful with an alcoholic of your description."

J & C Change...change...change...change

Asterisk, for amplification, see Appendix 2. Can you imagine this? This is the world's third most well known psychiatrist at that time. There was Dr. Freud, Dr. Adler and Dr. Jung. Rowland goes to Dr. Jung and is treated for a year. Goes out and gets drunk and comes back, begs the doctor to tell him the whole truth. He has the humility to say "Rowland, I've done all I can do for you. With my knowledge of the mind and my skills I just can't help you anymore. You're probably going to die from alcoholism." And then he could have said, "Rowland I think you're suffering from a bad Valium deficiency. Let me write you a prescription. You come back for another year." He was a good enough man not to do that. And Rowland said, "Are there no exceptions to this?" And this guy

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was great enough to go out of his field and say “Oh ya, ya, ya. Once in a while I’ve seen people like you have a vital spiritual experience. He said “I don’t understand it. It’s phenomena to me but I have seen it happen.”

Now they tell us that Rowland tried to get to Freud first. And Freud wasn’t taking any more patients. He tried to get to Adler and Adler was too busy. Jung was the third choice. Now Adler and Jung were both students of Freud. And Jung had fallen out with Adler and Jung (Freud) on one thing only. Adler and Jung (Freud) thought all answers would lie within the mind. I mean Adler and Freud. Jung thought some people might be able to be helped through spirituality. And thank God that Rowland didn’t get to Freud or Adler. We’d be sitting around today psychoanalyzing ourselves rather than depending upon spirituality. And unfortunately that’s what we are doing in a lot of our AA meetings. Trying to psychoanalyze rather than depend upon spirituality. And what blows my mind to think is this. We alcoholics who are so proud of our 12 steps, and rightfully we should be, I think we need to stop once in a while and remember where they came from.

- Step 1 came from a nonalcoholic neurologist in New York City named Dr. Silkworth
- Step 2 came from a nonalcoholic psychiatrist from the other side of the world named Dr. Jung
- The last ten steps came from a group of people called the Oxford groupers who were nonalcoholic practicing first century Christianity to the best of their ability.

Everything that you and I use for recovery came to us from nonalcoholics. I think we need to remember that. It might be good for our humility to do so. Joe.

Is that odd or is that God?

You know I think about Dr. Silkworth. He knew what the problem was. He observed that through working with 50,000 of us alcoholics and it became his opinion. But he didn’t have a solution for it. Dr. Jung had a solution for alcoholism, the vital spiritual experience, but he didn’t know what the problem was. The Oxford Group had some tenets that we could work. They had the planned program of action, so to speak, but they weren’t involved in the problem nor the solution, either one. And here’s a wholesale miracle that has happened from that moment until this, if you will. Prior to this he said

Big Book p. 27, par 4 Exceptions to cases such as yours have been occurring since early times. Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences. To me these occurrences are phenomena.

J & C He went back and joined the Oxford Group and took the planned program of action and the tenets of the Oxford Group and he recovered and he was able to help Ebby and Ebby brought this to Bill. And Bill was over there getting all this other information gelled in the mind of Bill Wilson. One person. But the miracle is this. Back in those days it was just here and there, once in a great while. Today we can look around these rooms with each other and say to each other, here and now every time an alcoholic will apply these things to their life they too can recover and they call it Alcoholics Anonymous. A wholesale miracle has happened. I am not the miracle. The miracle is Alcoholics Anonymous. And I get to participate in it.

And I’ll go see Bill now as he finishes up with Chapter 2. Probably sitting down and reviewing what he’s told us up to this point. Saying to himself that in the Doctor’s Opinion and my story I was able to show them the problem. In Chapter 2 I was able to show them the solution. Now let’s look at a little picture for just a moment illustrating the solution before we go any further.

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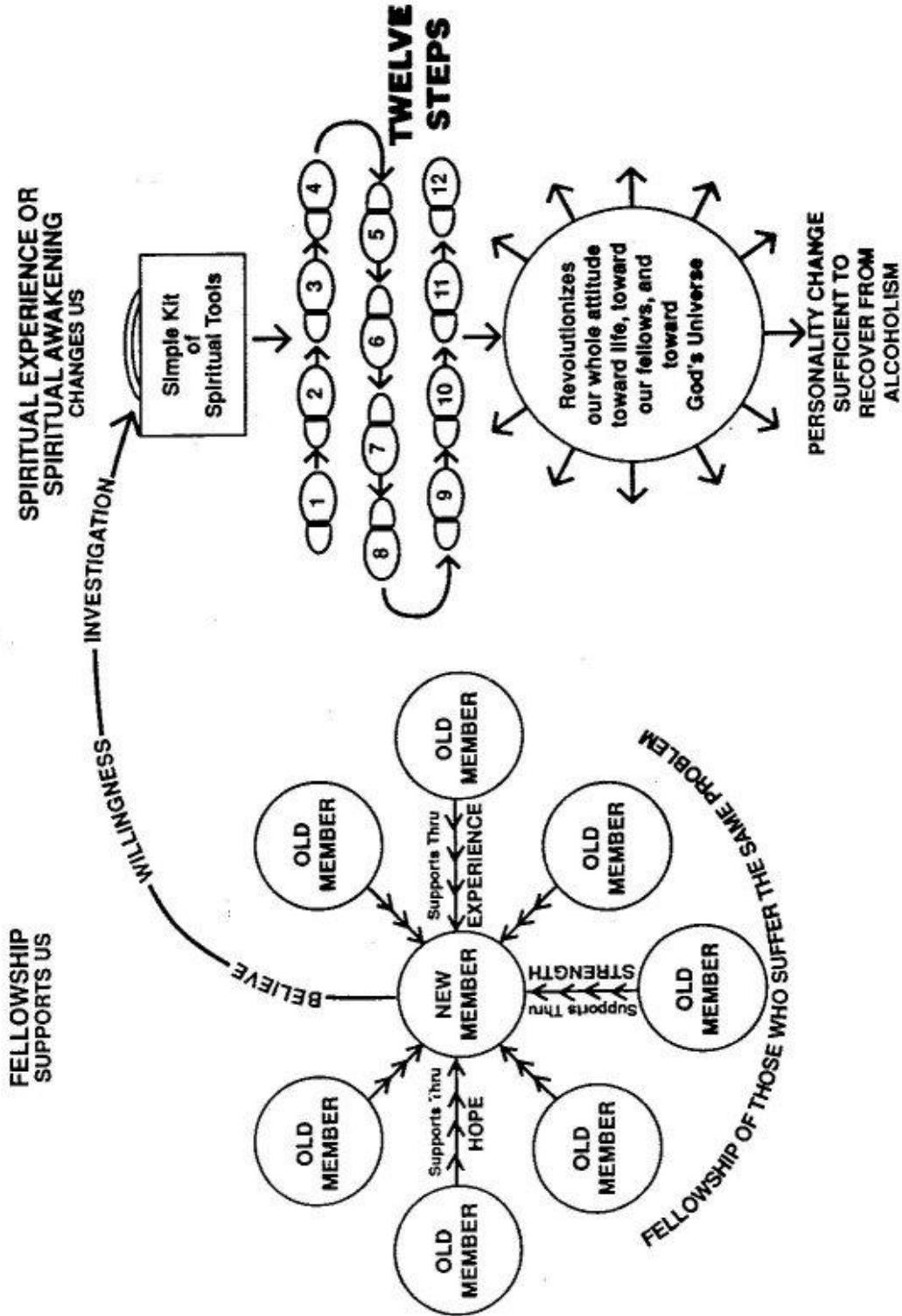
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WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?



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And that little picture we have up here on the screen talking about what is the solution. And on the left-hand side of the picture we see the fellowship, which supports us. Where the older members through the sharing of their experience, strength and hope with the newcomer, provides enough support for the newcomer to be able to stay sober for a period of time. And by the way it's a two way street. As we older members support the new member, then we draw strength from that too. Great strength in the fellowship. It would be almost impossible to be in AA today for very long and not begin to believe that there is some power greater than human power working within this thing. When you hear countless hundreds of people saying

- "it's only by the grace of God" or
- "because of God as I understand him" or
- "because of the power greater than I am I haven't found it necessary to take a drink in" x number of days, weeks, months, years or whatever.

You can hardly hear that over and over and over and not begin to believe there is some power working within this thing. The instant the newcomer begins to believe that, that opens the mind, and they become willing to investigate. And upon investigation we find that simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet, the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. As we work and apply those steps in our lives we undergo a personality change sufficient to recover from alcoholism. And we find a power greater than human power. When that happens to us, we then have become older members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Now we can go back to the left-hand side of the sheet. And we can help support the next newcomer, help them work their program, so they can have a spiritual experience also. The book plainly states that you can not give something away that you haven't got. Now somewhere down the line when they quit working the program out of the book, then in self-defense they starting measuring success by, how long have you been sober? Rather than by the quality of that sobriety. In the beginning everybody was expected to work the program, have a spiritual experience. If they didn't want to do that they were told you might as well leave here cause we can't help you if you don't to that. So our older membership was based on

quality of sobriety rather than quantity of sobriety

Now today you see all kinds of people in AA. You see somebody that has been in here maybe 6 months. They've got a good sponsor. They got immediately into the program. They've worked the steps, they've had a spiritual awakening, and they're always laughing, cutting up, having fun, always helping AA and doing what they can for other alcoholics. They are a delight to beyond and you just love to be around them. Only been sober 6 months. You've got others that have been in the 6-8-10 years. Treated it like a cafeteria. Took some but left what they didn't want. Now they're better than they used to be. But you never know what kind of shape they're going to be in when you run into them. One day they're up, the next day they're down. They're kind of like a yo-yo going back and forth. Then you see some people that have been in here 15-16-18-20 years. Never worked a step, damn proud of it. And they're the ones that say, "By God if you want what we've got and you are willing to go to any damn lengths to get it". Now some of those guys feel so bad you'd like to buy them a drink. You know they would feel better with a drink see.

So we are not talking about quantity of sobriety here. We're talking about quality of sobriety. And only those that have had the spiritual experience can help another have a spiritual experience. You simply can't give away something you don't have.

(Tape 3 - 00:54:50.0)

17 minutes