

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY TAPE GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

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Step 4: Chapter 5 - How It Works

(Tape 5 - 00:51:50.3)

J & C Now then let's see what we do with those three sheets after they're filled out. Joe.

Big Book p.65, par. 4 "We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully. The first thing apparent was that this world and its people were often quite wrong. To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got. The usual outcome was that people continued to wrong us and we stayed sore. Sometimes it was remorse and then we were sore at 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. It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours that might have been worth while. "

J & C 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. When I've got a good resentment churning around 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 reply machine. And replay what she did to me yesterday and replay what that guy did to me a month ago and replay what the 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 about 5 years ago. And replay what my uncle did to me 10 years ago. And replay what my mother did to me 15 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 of 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 here. 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 turned 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, they 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 little time that I have left I want to enjoy every moment of it. I don't want to waste any more time in resentment 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. Here's the worst thing about a resentment.

Big Book p.66, par. 1, line 4 "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 feeling we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die. "

J & C 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 awhile the mind wanting to feel better begins to think about the sense of ease and comfort that comes at once with taking a couple of drinks. Next thing you know we become insane. We convince ourselves it's OK 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

Big Book p. 66, par. 2 "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 turned back to the list, "

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J & C And 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.

Big Book p. 66, par. 3 "We turned back to the list, for it held the key to the future. We were prepared to look for it from an entirely different angle. "

J & C 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.

Big Book p. 66, par. 3, line 3 "We began 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. "

J & C And I stopped and I said 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 had been in charge as far back as I can remember through my resentment towards them. And then I said Man you really are stupid aren't you. Cause some of these people have been dead and buried in the graveyard for years. And they've been reaching out from the grave and they've had me by the yang yang for 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 direct it, 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 reasonable intelligent people. And 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 4 or 5 or 6 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 4. We always here about the step 3 prayer, the step 7 prayer but we never here about the step 4 prayer. Let's see how we can use prayer to remove those deep, deep seeded resentments.

Big Book p. 66, par. 3, line 6 "How could we escape? We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than alcohol."

J & C You see you can't heal a sick mind with a sick mind. You can't wish your way out of it.

Big Book p. 66, par. 4 "This was our course: We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. Though we did not like their symptoms and the way these disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too. We asked God to help us 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."

J & C And I'm like Charlie. I spent many, many years in my life, many hours of life thinking and my mind was racing uncontrollably, and 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, id been sober about 3 or 4 months, o went to a little conference in Apache, Oklahoma. And I met a lady there, some of you know, her name was Alabam Carruthers. Some of you all knew Alabam. See become 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. Cause my last night of drinking I was sitting on a barstool and I had a real sick feeling in my stomach and it wasn't the throwing up type sick it was sick feeling. And she said it was a soul sickness and 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. Cause that's all I've ever wanted was peace of mind. And I loved Alabam. She was always excited about life and what was going to happen next. And after that meeting was over with we were sitting around the lobby of this hotel and it was about 3:00

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in the morning and I was sitting there watching Alabam operate and I wasn't saying anything. Finally it was just Alabam and myself and my little sponsor George, a little black guy laying in her lap. And I began to talk to Alabam. And I said Alabam 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 then at night I'd go home and lay down and my mind would fly open 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 were refelt over and over and over again. And all that anger that you intended to use up on them you're turning it in 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 well yes there is. There just happens to be. and she referred to page 67 and she showed me this information here. And she said some of those deep seeded resentments like you have you'll need some additional help. And she said on page 551 of this book is the story of a lady who had those deep seeded resentments. And if you would turn to that page in the book she said we will see what it had to say. Well Alabam had purse that was about hit big and it was about that deep and she began to look in that purse. You know how they are, digging around. And she finally found one of these books. I didn't think she was ever going to ding 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 to page 551 in her book and in the third paragraph this book says

Big Book, p. 551, par. 3 "I've had many spiritual experiences since I've been in the program, may that I didn't recognize tight away, for I'm slow to learn and they take many guises. But one was so outstanding that I like to pass it on whenever I can in hope that it will help someone else as it has me. As I said earlier, self-pity and resentment were my constant companions and my inventory began to look like a thirty-three year diary, for I seemed to have a resentment against everybody I had ever know. All but one "responded to the treatment" suggested in the Steps immediately"

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

Big Book, p. 551, par. 3, line 11 "but this on posed a problem.

It was against my mother and it was twenty-five years old. I had fed it, fanned it and nurtured it as one might a delicate child, and it had become as much a part of me as my breathing. It had provided me with excuses for my lack of education, my marital failures, personal failures, inadequacy, and of course my alcoholism and, though I really thought I had 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 dunk -- and I didn't want to get drunk any more. 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".

He said, in effect: "If you have a resentment you wasn't 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 tow weeks and you will find you have come to man it and to want it for them, and you will realize that where you used to fell bitterness and resentment and hatred, you now feel compassionate understanding and love"

J & C Well I went home after that meeting and I got in my bed that Sunday night, laid down and my old mind flipped over again and started racing, uncontrollably. And I said now 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. I don't know how long it went on it was 2 or 3 weeks or more I don't know. But it seems like I was in constant prayer for them, 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 at this stop light. Just the length of a stoplight is what happened. I looked over at that beautiful house sitting over there and the grass was so green just beautiful. 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...it was just a beautiful morning. And I thought to myself, my God how long

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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 from the sunlight of the spirit I really do know what that means. I really do. Cause that morning it was so vivid. Now what happened was that those people did not change. But my thoughts and feeling towards them did change. You see. And has never returned again. Thank God for this program called alcoholics anonymous. I've been there and I don't want ever to return again.

(Tape 5 - 01:08:10.0)

17 minutes