

## WEEK #6 – How It Works (*Step 3*)

### Joe and Charlie Transcript

You know back on page 45 it said the main object of this book was to enable me to find a power greater than myself which would solve my problem. And Bill's going to sit down here now and he's going to right some of the best spiritual information the worlds every seen a little formula, or proposals he called them, the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. I can just see Bill with the problem that he has. You know we've got Protestants in AA and we've got Catholics in AA, we've got Jewish people in AA, we got a sprinkling of Muslims in AA, we got some Buddhists come into AA at that time and how are you going to write a set of steps or proposals that's not going to offend these people, quite a chore for a guy like Bill or anybody, to tell you the truth. The Oxford Groups were coming from 1st Century Christianity, they had those 4 absolutes and they were really, really strong. They wouldn't give you any slack at all. They were more interested in the letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law. Bill was interested in the spirit of these things rather than in the letter of them, that's why it's a spiritual program. So Bill had one gigantic problem here try to write these steps in order to in such a manner they wouldn't offend anybody. And he accomplished that through the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

These 4 absolutes that the Oxford Group said you had to practice were ***absolute love, absolute purity, absolute honesty, and absolute unselfishness***. These alcoholics were having a hell of a time being absolute anything except absolute drunks you know. They said Bill we need to get rid of that kind of stuff. Also they had made their own little steps, six of them which came from the Oxford Group tenets. But Bill could see loopholes in these steps that the alcoholic mind was slipping through and he knew they were going to have to have more strength, and he knew they were going to have to be expanded, but he didn't know how far. In trying to satisfy that bunch, in trying to satisfy the people from all different religions, and trying to satisfy those that didn't want God in here, Bill had a terrible time with it. By that time, AA had divided into, you might say, three factions.

In Akron where Dr. Bob was they didn't have any problem with God. Dr. Bob was a highly religious man, he used the Bible and he insisted that everybody he worked with use it too. God was no problem there.

But the New York City people were an entirely different breed of cat. They really didn't want anything to do with God if they could avoid it. They would have preferred a book dealing with the mind rather than spirituality, PERIOD. There was finally a third faction that said, let's talk about God, but let's not talk about him too much, let's come down somewhere in the middle of this thing. So Bill's trying to satisfy them all, and he said he tried, and he tried, and he tried and he tried to get started on Chapter 5. This is going to be the directions on how to recover. Bill said "I simply can't do it!" He said "One night while in bed leaning with a pillow behind his back against the headboard, pad and pencil in hand trying to start Chapter 5, I finally just gave up. I put down the pad and the pencil and I prayed and asked God for help and direction and then I meditated for maybe 10 or 15 minutes. After a while I reached over and picked up the pad and the pencil and it felt as if the pencil had a mind of its own as it raced across the pages." In less than 30 minutes Bill had written 'How It Works'; One of the greatest pieces of spiritual information the world has ever seen. After he had written it he went back and numbered these proposals and he found out there were twelve (12), and he hadn't set out to write twelve (12). He went back and numbered them to be sure and there were twelve (12) alright. Now almost immediately after having done that somebody knocked on the door. One of the guys in the New York City group had one of his sponsees with him; they knew that Bill stayed up late working on the book anyhow so they had

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come by to see Bill on their way home. Bill could hardly wait to show the work to this old older member. “Look, look, look, at the new 12 steps!” The older member said “What in the hell is this! We only had Ten Commandments and now you’ve got twelve. Six has been sufficient for everything up till now. I don’t like it at all!” The fight was on. They fought and fought until Lois finally came in and gave them a cup of coffee and settled them down. Then Bill presented ‘How It Works’ to the other members and that’s when the crap really hit the fan. They began to say to Bill, “This sounds too much like the Oxford Group absolutes. You’re going to have to get some of that stuff out of there. Bill you’re trying to give directions to people and you don’t have the right to tell anybody what they have to do!” And Bill this, and Bill that, and Bill this and Bill that. And they almost destroyed not only the book project, but the little fellowship in its entirety. Can you imagine what kind of fight you would have if you left here today and went back to your group and you had 12 steps when you left but now you had 24? There would be a little fightin’ going on don’t you think? That’s what Bill was up to

Let’s read ‘How It Works’, which most of you have probably heard before, from the original manuscript. As we read through, I think you’ll be able to see the differences between what Bill wrote that night and what the fellowship forced him to change in order to have what we have today. Let’s go through it for just a moment and see the differences.

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#### Chapter 5 - Original Manuscript

“Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our **DIRECTIONS** (*path*). Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a **WAY OF LIFE** (*manner of living*), which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it--then you are ready to **FOLLOW DIRECTIONS** (*take certain steps*). At some of these **YOU MAY BALK** (*we balked*). **YOU MAY THINK YOU CAN** (*we thought we could*) find an easier, softer way. But **WE DOUBT IF YOU CAN** (*we could not*). With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that **YOU ARE DEALING** (*we deal*) with alcohol--cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for **YOU** (*us*). But there is One who has all power--that One is God. **YOU MUST** (*may you*) find Him now.

Half measures **WILL AVAIL YOU** (*availed us*) nothing. **YOU STAND** (*we stood*) at the turning point. **THROW YOURSELF UNDER** (*We asked*) his protection and care with complete abandon. **NOW WE THINK YOU CAN TAKE IT.**

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Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as **YOUR** (*a*) program of recovery:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol--that our lives had become unmanageable
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care **AND DIRECTION** of God, as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely **WILLING THAT** (*ready to have*) God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly **ON OUR KNEES** asked Him to remove our shortcomings- **HOLDING NOTHING BACK.**
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make **COMPLETE** amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought though prayer and meditation to improve our (*conscious*) contact with God (*as we understood him*), praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual **EXPERIENCE** (*awakening*) as the result of this **COURSE OF ACTION** (*these steps*), we tried to carry this message to **OTHERS, ESPECIALLY** alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs

**NOW YOU MAY EXCLAIM** (*many of us exclaimed*) "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the alcoholic {that's The Doctor's Opinion, Bill's Story, Ch. 2, Ch. 3} the chapter to the agnostic {Chapter 4} and our personal adventures before and after {Bill's Story, and those in the back of the book} **HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO SELL YOU** (*make clear*) three pertinent ideas:

- (a) That **YOU ARE** (*we were*) alcoholic and **CAN NOT** (*could not*) manage **YOUR** (*our*) own **LIFE** (*lives*) {Step One}
- (b) That probably no human power **CAN RELIEVE YOUR** (*could have relieved our*) alcoholism. {Step Two}
- (c) That God **CAN AND WILL** (*could and would if He were sought*) {The rest of Step Two}

**IF YOU ARE NOT CONVINCED ON THESE VITAL ISSUES, YOU OUGHT TO RE-READ THE BOOK TO THIS POINT, OR ELSE THROW IT AWAY.**

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You could see that Bill's intention was not **suggestions**; he was going to give us **real directions** on how to work the Steps and when to work the Steps. He's giving us precise, specific, clear-cut directions on how to do that and he was very adamant about that. But the crap hit the fan and they demanded he make some changes in this original "How It Works". The chapter 'How It Works' that we have in the book today includes the changes that were forced upon Bill. So Bill made a little compromise. He said "I will make these changes but from now on I will complete the rest of this book or else you can do." Well they didn't want to write the rest of the book; they wanted Bill to

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continue to do that, so they agreed to continue to let Bill write the rest of the book without much interference on their part

I can just see old Bill when he wrote this and gave it to them and they begin to fight and argue over it and they begin to tell him he's going to have to change it. Remember Bill's stubborn and bullheaded just like the rest of us. And he said "No, I'm not going to change this" and they said, "Well Bill you are, don't you remember it's not your book it's our book. That's the deal we made to begin with." He said "That doesn't make any difference. I'm not going to change this part of the book." And they said, "Well you are going to change it." And he said "what you guys don't realize is these aren't my words anyhow, these are Gods words. They came after prayer and meditation." And they said, "We don't give a damn whose words they are, it's our book, and you're going to change it."

Finally Bill realized that if he didn't compromise, they would destroy this project and maybe the whole fellowship. There was a non-alcoholic psychologist around in those days and he made some suggestions. He said, "why don't you change it from directions to suggestions, you'll still get your meaning across and probably more people would accept it. Where you're saying you, you, you," he said, "don't do that; don't tell them what they have to do, change that to we. Say this is what we had to do. You'll get your message across and more people will probably accept it." And he said, "Where you're saying must, must, change that to ought, ought and it will be more acceptable." Bill very reluctantly made those changes. Now today we don't know if they hadn't made the changes, if they'd left it like it was originally maybe instead of two million worldwide (1988), we'd have 10 million. But also if they hadn't made the changes instead of 2 million worldwide we might only have ten thousand. Who knows? Nobody knows. We just know this is the history behind this particular part of the book.

Bill was cunning, baffling and powerful also. He said "Okay, I'm going to compromise with you, but you're going to have to compromise with me." And they said "what do you want?" He says, "I'm tired. I've fought with you all I'm going to fight. If you want me to finish the book, give me the authority to do so. If you don't want to give me the authority, then you finish the book." They didn't want to give him that authority, but they didn't want to finish the book either, so they very reluctantly agreed to that.

What Bill knew that they didn't know, is that two pages later he's going to put **DIRECTIONS**, and **YOU**, and **MUST** right back in the book. He's had it in the book all the way up to 'How It Works', they jerked it out, then he puts it back. That ruins some of the continuity of the book, but now we see what happened it makes more sense. The other thing that is so apparent is when he says back here about the three pertinent ideas: "Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after have been **designed to sell you** (*make clear*) three pertinent ideas..." He's talking about the Doctor's Opinion and the first four chapters and the stories in the back of the book. Now if we've been sold on those three pertinent ideas

(a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives." Then we're through with Step 1

(b-c) If we've come to believe that no human power could relieve our alcoholism and that God can and will. Then we're through with Step 2

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Now the very next statement says if you are convinced then you are now at Step 3. You see the fallacy of trying to start somebody in Chapter 5 is that it starts at Step 3. And it's hard to start with Step 3 unless you've got 1 and 2 behind you. People come to us today and they say, well how do you work Steps 1 & 2? You don't, they are not working steps. There is no action involved here. These are conclusions of the mind that we draw based upon information presented to us in the Doctors Opinion and the first four chapters. I've always been powerless over alcohol and because of that, my life has been unmanageable. I just did not know that, nor did I know why, until I read the Doctor's Opinion and the first four chapters. There's always been a power greater than I am that could restore me to sanity, I just did not believe that He would nor did I understand the insanity until I read the Doctor's Opinion and the first four chapters.

If I can say to myself today, I'm powerless over alcohol and my life is unmanageable I'm through with Step 1. If I can say to myself today, I have come to believe there's a power greater than I am can restore me to sanity I'm through with Step 2. Now then I'm ready to look at Step 3. Now I might make a decision.

*Big Book p. 60, par 3 "Being convinced, we were at Step 3"*

We haven't took Step 3 yet we were just there

*Big Book p. 60, par , cont. "which is that we decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood Him. Just what do we mean by that, and just what do we do?"*

Well that's a very good question now isn't it? What does Step 3 mean? Well, we're going to make a decision, that's part of it. To do what? To turn our will, and what is our will? Our will is our thinking, and our life is our actions. We're going to make a decision to turn our will and our life over to the care and direction, is what the Step used to say, to God, as we understand him.

**Our will is our thinking  
Our life is our actions**

We're going to make a decision to let God direct our thinking and direct our life in Step 3. We haven't done that yet, but we're getting willing to do that.

I've always heard a lot of people say one of the most misunderstood steps in the Big Book is Step 4, and I'll agree with that. But I don't think Step 4 is any more misunderstood that Step 3 is. I hear people today say, I've been in AA about 5 years, my life's still all screwed up and I don't understand why cause I turned it over to God three years ago when I took Step 3. Now

We don't turn anything over to God in Step 3. We make a decision to do something in Step 3, and the decision itself implies we're going to take some further action to carry it out.

Now one of the greatest examples I can think of is probably 4,5,6 years ago now Barbara and I made a decision to come to Los Angeles, California to visit some of our relatives. But we didn't do anything to carry that decision out, and sure enough we didn't get to Los Angeles that year either. Second year in a row we made a decision to come to Los Angeles and visit our relatives. Again we didn't do anything to carry that out and we didn't get to California either. Third year in a row we made that decision. Only this time it was a little different. This time I took the car down and had it

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serviced. Barbara packed the clothes and a little food, and we got in our car and we drove from our home to Tulsa, Oklahoma. Then we drove to Oklahoma City. Then we drove to Amarillo, Texas. Then we drove to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Then we drove to Flagstaff, Arizona. Then we drove to Barstow, California. Then we drove to San Bernardino, and then we drove to Los Angeles. And by golly one day we ended up visiting our relatives in Los Angeles. Not because we made a decision, but because we took the action necessary to carry out that decision.

**Now what is it we're deciding to do?** Well, we are making a decision to turn our will over to the care and direction of God as we understood him.

**What is our will?** Well, our will is nothing more than our thinking apparatus. Our will is nothing more than our mind. Our will is nothing more than this thing up here that tells us what to do, and what not to do.

A good example of the word will, tying it together with mind. Let's say that some of us are beginning to approach the end of our lives, which a few of us in here are. And we've gathered up a few material things and we've become concerned about what's going to happen to them when we pass on. We'll go down and sit down with an attorney and we'll tell that attorney what we want done with those things. I want this to be my spouse's, this to go to my daughter, I want this to be my sons, and etc. Now that attorney will take my thinking coming from my mind that day, write it down in legal terms on a piece of paper. I'll sign it, the attorney will sign it and we'll put it in a safe. Now a year or two or three later, sure enough I kick the bucket. If my family's like most of them they're going to call the undertaker and say come and get him, get him ready and let's get him out to that cemetery about as soon as we can. A couple of days later they all gather out at the cemetery, they have me suspended over a hole in the ground, they're all standing around that hole. Somebody says a few words and gives a little prayer. And I hope it's somebody from AA that does it. And when the ceremony's over they start dropping me down in that hole. If my families like the rest of them they're not going to wait until I get to the bottom of the hole. As soon as I start down they jump in the car and they head for that attorney's office. And that attorney gets out that piece of paper and reads to them what my thinking was two or three years prior to that time when I was sitting there in that office. We know they call that piece of paper a will. It's not by accident.

**Will, thinking, mind are all synonymous.**

I'm making a decision to turn my thinking apparatus over to the care and direction of God as I understand him. What else am I deciding to turn over? Well I'm deciding to turn my life over to the care and direction of God as I understand him. And what is my life? My life is nothing more than my actions. What I am right now as of this moment is a sum accumulated total of all the actions that I've taken throughout my entire lifetime has made me what I am today.

**All action is born in thought**

You can say that again please. All action is born in thought. Sometimes we react to a situation so fast we think that we do it automatically but we don't. I can't even reach out and pick up this cup of water unless my mind tells my body to do so. So if all action is born in thought then it stands to reason my life is going to be determined by how I think.

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**If my thinking is okay, chances are my actions will be okay, chances are my life's going to be okay too.**

**If my thinking is lousy, chances are my actions I take will be lousy and chances are I'm going to have a fouled up life too.**

When I got to this stage of the program I went to my sponsor and I said I don't think I'm going to be able to take Step 3. And he said Why? And I said because if I turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand him, I have no idea what he would have me be. And he may want me to be a missionary, and he may send me to China, and I sure as hell don't want to go there. And he just laughed and he said let's look at it this way, at least it wouldn't be in the hands of an idiot would it? He said let's look back through your lifetime. He said you've always been a selfish, self-centered, self-willed human being. You've always done what you wanted to do whenever you wanted to do it and to hell with the rest of them. Is that right? Well you know it is. He said the end result of that is that you almost destroyed your life and just as importantly, you've almost destroyed the lives of those around you that care for you. He said just think,

**If God could direct your thinking it might become better.**

If you're thinking becomes better, then your actions and your life's going to become better. And just as importantly, the lives of those around you that care for would probably become better too.

Left on your own resources, you're always going to do the same things you've always done. You're going to remain restless, irritable and discontented. You're going to stay filled with shame, fear, guilt and remorse. Sooner or later under those conditions, you're going to go back to drinking again.

If you don't find some way to be sober and have a little piece of mind, serenity and happiness, you'll never have any long lasting sobriety and you can't do that on self will.

And he made it clear to me in such a manner that I was able to make the decision to turn my will, which is my thinking apparatus, and my life, which is my actions, over to the care of God as I understood him. It is absolutely amazing what has taken place since that time.

Remember in the area of the Foreword to the First Edition they said that "precisely, specifically, with clear-cut directions". You know Bill wrote down those precise, specific, clear-cut directions in the original "How It Works", but they forced some changes on him. And when these changes came out, what we see in the book now, those are the changes that we're make so a little continuity of the book gets mixed up here. Bill's precise, specific, clear-cut directions were altered a little bit but later on he puts them back in the book.

By the way, as far as we know, we're the only species on earth that's ever faced with this decision. It seems as though all the other species on earth don't have self-will. Whatever they do, at any given time, is always done on God's time at God's direction. It seems as though we human beings

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are the only species that God gave this thing called self-will to. Therefore you see very few of the other species here on earth in trouble. I've never seen a tree hit a car yet.

The one thing wrong with self-will is everybody's got one, that's one of the things wrong with it.

So our book says and he gives us these little instructions now and there going to come short and sweet and we have to be prepared to see them. And he says,

*Big Book, p. 62, par 3 "The first"*

he's going to tell us what to do first.

*Big Book, p. 62, par 3 "The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis we are almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though our motives are good. Most people try to live by self-propulsion. Each person is like an actor who wants to run the whole show; is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in his own way. If his arrangements would only stay put, if only people would do as he wished, the show would be great. Everybody, including himself, would be pleased. Life would be wonderful."*

Wouldn't that be nice if everybody would mind? They won't mind me they just won't do it, because they have self-will. My will for my wife and my children is one thing. Their will and their life is another. They have self-will and their thoughts are different from mine. Sometimes and most of the times they are in conflict. They just won't mind me. I know they'd be a lot better off if they would, but they won't. Now some twelve or thirteen years after Bill wrote the Big Book, and after many, many years experience with some of the great teachers and minds in the world, and after many, many years of experience with us alcoholics, Bill was forced to write the Twelve and Twelve. And he was really trying to push the Traditions on the fellowship. He was hard selling the Traditions to the fellowship and they weren't buying a lot of it, but they needed the Traditions and he knew that. So he decided to write the Traditions and he thought well I'll put some short stories or short essays about the Steps in with the Traditions and maybe if they will read the Steps they will eventually read the Traditions. So he wrote the Twelve and Twelve for us. The Twelve and Twelve again is just the short essays, short stories about the Steps. It doesn't tell you how to work the Steps it is the short stories about the Steps

The only piece of literature in A.A. that tells you how to work the Steps, is the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

But in the area of the 4th Step, in the Twelve and Twelve there is some of the best information the world's ever seen on self-will and what makes people tick. It's called, "The Basic Instincts of Life". And I always suggest to people that I sponsor that they go to the Twelve and Twelve, read the first three or four pages about the Basic Instincts of Life, get a working knowledge about the words that you see in there, and then look them up in the dictionary because they're very important words, and then we're going to use them a little later on in the third column when we get ready to do the 4th Step inventory. So I needed a working knowledge of that information, and Bill in his usual manner wrote some of the best information about the basic instincts of life. Very, very important information

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I think we have to face the fact that in 1937/38/39, when Bill was writing the Big Book he was not a spiritual giant. He was not a great student of human nature. Bill was a night school lawyer and New York City stock speculator yet he was able to write one of the most spiritual books the world has ever seen dealing with human nature. Surely, surely God took a hand in the writing of the Big Book and used Bill's hand to write the book.

But by 1950/51/52 Bill knew a lot more about spirituality, a lot more about human nature, a lot more about we alcoholics than he did back in the 30's. He'd studied with some of the greatest minds in the world for a period of years. And I think he felt that he had some new information that he could give us that would make it easier for us to work the steps according the Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous.

Basically that's what he says in the 12 and 12, that the Big Book has always been the basic text and always will be. You simply can not work the program out of the 12 and 12. I see lots of people try it. But they can't do it because there are no directions on how to work the steps. And I think that's why a lot of people love it. They can get in it and dance around and philosophies and they never have to do anything except talk. But there is some information in there that is absolutely invaluable, that if we can see it and understand it and accept it, it makes the working of the steps out of the Big Book so much simpler and so much easier. And these three basic instincts of life that Joe's talking about, he taught me in step 4 in the 12 and 12 more about what makes me tick and what makes me do the things I do and act the way I act. He taught me there more in 2 or 3 pages than I had learned in some 40 years of living at that time. Let's look at them for just a moment. I think it will make it a lot easier to be able to see why we need to make our decision in three plus it sets us up really with information for step 4. Now in your handout sheets you've got a little picture in here about the middle in there somewhere I think it's page 7 and 8 in your handout material, which says the basic instincts of life which create self.

And he said that  
All human beings are born with three basic instincts of life.  
They are God given,  
They are absolutely necessary for survival of the human race  
Therefore they are a good thing.

The first thing he talked about is the social instinct. And he said all human beings are born with the desire to be liked, to be accepted, to be respected by other people. He said all human beings were born with the desire to come together in groups with other people. He said if we didn't have those desires and cared nothing for each other that the world would go into complete anarchy, dog eat dog situation would reign, and eventually under those conditions the human race would fail to survive.

Now he used several terms under the social instinct. He uses the term **companionship**...that's nothing more than wanting to belong or to be accepted.

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So many of us grew up on the outside of the crowd looking in, wanting to be and knew we could not be.

He uses the term **prestige**...that is, wanting to be recognized or to be accepted as the leader of the group.

And the world needs leaders. I guess somebody back in the old caveman days had to say “John, get behind that tree with your spear. Jack you get over there with your club. And Mary-Jo and I will run this sucker through here and we’ll have something”. Somebody’s got to do that. Most people will take one of two directions. Either let me be a part of or let me be the leader of. And in either case it’s based upon what other people think of us.

**Self-esteem:** what we think of ourselves.

And that’s usually high or low based upon what other people think of us or what we think other people think of us. If they seem to like us and accept us we feel pretty good towards ourselves. If it feels like they reject us and they don’t want us, then we feel pretty lousy towards ourselves.

**Pride**... And I’m glad I got into the habit of going to the dictionary. I always thought pride was something you ought to have. All I ever wanted to be as a young boy growing up, I wanted to grow up to be a man who walked tall with pride and just a little bit sideways like John Wayne does. Until I looked it up in the dictionary and it says **pride**... is an excessive and unjustified opinion of oneself.

We either think too well of ourselves or too little of ourselves. In either case it’s not the truth.

**Personal relationships:** our relations with other human beings and the world around us.

**Ambitions:** the plans for the future.

To be liked, to be accepted, so on and so forth. All human beings have these things. Now if I want to be liked and accepted and respected by the world and the people in it the first thing I’ve got to do is decide, well what do they want from me?

Society teaches us those things as we grow up. It’ll vary in different parts of the world. One part of the world perhaps it’s a good education. Another part of the world it’s to be large landowner. Another part of the world it’s to have a large family. Any number of things based upon where we live in the world. And as we grow up and they teach us these things and we ourselves set goals for ourselves as to what we want to become in the future. And if we’re going to reach the goals that we set for ourselves we’re going to have to work at it. You can’t just be a bum and sit on your duff and be successful and people like you and accept you. If it’s a good education you’re going to have to work at, whatever it might be.

By the same token we’re going to have to make some sacrifices. There are some things that I would really like to do as a human being that are very pleasurable and very exciting that if you catch me at it you’re not going to like me at all. And I don’t think you and I would do the work necessary to reach the goal nor make the sacrifices necessary unless we get a reward for doing so. And the great reward, Bill said it in his story when he said I had arrived.

God how many of us have done it. We set that goal and we just literally worked our tails off for years and the day we reach the goal and they pat us on the back and they say “Ah Joe you’re a

## WEEK #6 – How It Works (*Step 3*)

### Joe and Charlie Transcript

fine fellow, you're a good man, you're doing great". There's a feeling that comes over us which is one of those indescribably wonderful feelings... a great, great feeling. The only thing wrong with it, it seems to be just a temporary feeling. No sooner do we reach the goal, we get the praise, we get the recognition, we get the prestige from it and we look around we say "Is this all there is to it?" And we set another goal. And we work and we work and we strive and we strive and we sacrifice and we reach the new goal and we get the praise and recognition, feels great, doesn't last long and we set another goal.

It seems to create within we human beings an insatiable desire for more and more power, more and more recognition and we're not getting it fast enough or they're not giving it to us the way we think they ought to, so what do we do about it? Well we start taking shortcuts. We start doing a little lying, a little conning, a little manipulating, a little stepping on other peoples toes and climbing on their backs and the instant we do so we create pain and suffering for others. They in turn retaliate against us and create pain and suffering for us.

**It's plain to see, that a life run on self-will could hardly ever be a success.  
Under those conditions we will always be in collision with people, places and things.**

Second basic instinct he talked about is the **security instinct**. Now, I know that in AA we try to live one day at a time. But I also know that just about everybody in this room has got an insurance policy. The purpose of the insurance policy is to protect ourselves in the future. Bill said all human beings are born with the desire to be secure in the future. He said if we didn't have that desire we wouldn't provide the food, the clothing, the shelter, and the things that we need to survive. And next winter we would just simply freeze to death or the next drought season we would starve to death. So this desire that we have to be secure in the future is a God given thing and it is necessary for our survival. Now once again if you're going to be secure in the future you have to decide well what is it that I need in order to be secure?

Society usually teaches us those things as we grow up and it varies in different parts of the world. In one part of the world you only need \$4. In another part of the world you need \$4,000. In another part of the world maybe you need \$4,000,000. In another part of the world you need 198 coconuts. Whatever it is that they use to measure, trade and barter with. Based up what we're taught, we set goals for ourselves and we begin to work at it. Now if you're going to be secure in the future you can't just sit on your duff and be a bum. You're going to have to work. You're going to have to make some money. You're going to have to invest it.

At the same time you've got to sacrifice. Hell we can't blow it all today and be secure tomorrow. And I don't think you and I would do the work necessary to reach the goal or make the sacrifices necessary if we didn't get a reward for it.

Once again the great reward is that great feeling that comes at the moment of successful completion of the goal. How many of us have done it? We set the goal for the new dress, for the new shoes, for the new suit, for the new drapes, for the new couch, for the new home, for the new car, for the new piece of property, for the new business and we work and we work and we strive and we strive and the day that sucker is paid for and nobody can take it away from us. What a great, great feeling that is. Hell back when I was a kid hardly anybody owned their own homes. Once in a great while somebody would buy a home and they would sacrifice everything they had to

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pay that sucker off and the day they paid it off the feeling was so great they would call in the neighbors and we would have a great party and celebrate it by burning the mortgage. How great that was. The only thing wrong with it is that it's just a temporary feeling. No sooner got the sucker paid off that I looked around and his house is bigger than mine. He has a Cadillac and I'm driving a Chevrolet. And he's got a Brooks Brothers suit and I bought mine at Kmart. And that causes us to set another goal. And we work and we work and we strive and we strive and we reach the new goal, feels good, doesn't last long, we set another....seems to create an insatiable desire for more and more and more and more. And we're not getting it fast enough. They're not giving it to us like we think they should. So what do we do? We take shortcuts. We lie, we cheat, we con, we manipulate, and the instant we do we hurt other people. They retaliate against us, creating pain and suffering for us.

**Plain to see, that a life run on self-will can hardly ever be a success.**

Third basic instinct he talks about is the sex instinct. He said all human beings are born with the desire to have sex. Now, it may get turned off by bad teachings or bad happenings but he said all human beings are born with the desire to have sex because if we don't have sex we can't reproduce ourselves. And if we don't reproduce ourselves, sooner or later the human race is going to fail to survive.

So just like the other two, if you're going to reproduce yourself through the sexual act you're going to have to work at it. Hell you can do more work in three minutes of sex, if you can last that long, than you'll do all day digging a ditch. Don't you older fellows remember how it used to be when we got through with it? My God you'd just fall over sideways, the sweat is just pouring off of you, and you can hardly get your breath. You feel like you've died, gone to heaven and come back two or three times. Gets excited doesn't he? And I don't think you and I would do that kind of work if we didn't get a reward for doing so. And the great reward is that great feeling we get both physically and emotionally at the moment of the successful completion of the sex act. One of the greatest rewards that a human being can experience. But also just like the other two it seems to be just a temporary feeling. Hell you no sooner get through doing it that you get to thinking about doing it again. And it's such a pleasurable and exciting thing that the next thing you know you get to thinking about doing it in different ways. Then you get to thinking about doing it in different positions. Then you get to thinking about doing it with different people. And the next thing you know we're doing it at the wrong time in the wrong way with the wrong people and the instant we do so we create pain and suffering for others. They in turn retaliate against us, which creates pain and suffering for us.

**It's plain to see, that a life run on self will can hardly ever be a success.**

The fulfillment of these things are so pleasurable that all human beings from time to time will overdo in one or more of these areas and create pain and suffering for others.

You'll notice on that little chart there's a circle called Self. That's where self-will comes from. It comes from these three basic instincts of life. You'll also notice coming out of the self circle there is one called '**wrongs**', which is another word we need to look at.

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Somewhere we got the idea that wrongs meant a list of dirty filthy nasty items. But if you go to the dictionary and look it up you'll find several definitions of it.

Wrong - incorrect judgment of other people = resentment

Wrong - incorrect believing = fear

Wrong - are the harms and hurts that we do to other people

Now it's easy to spot a selfish, self-centered human being. One who is running on self-will, not running on God's will. A selfish, self-centered human being is always madder than hell. Damn him. Damn her. By God I'll show them. They're not going to treat me that way. Blahdy blahdy blah blah blah. . A selfish, self-centered human being is always scared to death. They can't depend on God. They can't depend on other people. And if we're an alcoholic reaching the end of the road we can't depend on ourselves any longer and we're running absolutely scared to death all the time. . A selfish, self-centered human being, in order to fulfill the basic instincts of life are always overdoing and creating harms and hurts for others. Then we've got to be scared to death of what they're going to do when they catch us. And even if they don't catch us, if God dwells within each of us, we know the difference between right and wrong and guilt and remorse associated with those things begin to eat us up.

A person whose mind is filled with resentment, a person whose mind is filled with fear, a person whose mind is filled with guilt and remorse, does not feel good.

Eventually searching for a way to feel better we begin to think about the sense of ease and comfort that comes at once by taking a couple of drinks. Next thing you know we believe we can drink and we end up drunk all over again. So at the very least we're going to have to do something about this selfish self-centered human being and it seems the only way you can do anything about that is through God's help because God made self-will. And only God has the power to overcome that. And at the very least we're going to have to do something about these resentments and these fears and this guilt and remorse in order to find the peace of mind, serenity and happiness for good long term sobriety.

You know if every human being in the world today could fulfill these three basic instincts at the level that God intends there would be no conflict on earth today. But all human beings have self-will.

All human beings from time to time will overdo in one or more areas creating conflict for others and for themselves. I never knew that. I just knew I was always in trouble. I just knew I was always madder than hell. I just knew I was always scared to death. I knew guilt and remorse was eating me up but I didn't know where it came from. See they gave me the rules but they never taught me how to play the game. AA has taught me how to play the game. And now that I know how to play the game I don't break the rules anymore and I don't hurt other people and I'm not scared to death and I'm not filled with guilt and remorse. This is the greatest information I have ever seen about what makes me tick and what causes me to do the things that I do. Joe.

*Big Book p. 62, par. 1, line 3 "Whatever our protestations, are not most of us concerned with ourselves, our resentments, or our self-pity?"*

## WEEK #6 – How It Works (Step 3) Joe and Charlie Transcript

It's not that I thought too well of myself, or that I thought too little of myself. It's that I thought of myself only. That was my problem.

*Big Book p. 62, par 2., line 1* "Selfishness, self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt."

You know alcoholism: I, self and me. You see if you don't have a God in your life, and I didn't, there's only one thing left to live by and that's the satisfaction of these basic instincts of life. And I tried to live my life based upon the satisfaction of those basic instincts. And I overdid in many, many of those areas.

*Big Book p. 62, par 3, line 1* "So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible."

Can't heal a sick mind with a sick mind. Only God makes that possible.

*Big Book p. 62, par. 3, line 19* "And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help."

*Big Book p. 62, par 4, line 1* "This is the how and the why of it."

You see he told how it works. Then he told us why it won't work because of selfishness and self-centeredness. And now he's going to tell us how it really works.

*Big Book p. 62, par 4, line 1* "This is the how and the why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work."

Everything I read leads me to believe that this is a God directed world. Now if it is a God directed world then those of us who have been self directed and those of us that have tried to direct everything and everybody around us ...we've been trying to do God's job for him. We're not God, we've just been playing at being God. And the book says we're going to have to quit doing that if we want any peace of mind, serenity and happiness in the future. I think

One of the great mistakes I see today in AA is people trying to force themselves to be better. And self-will cannot overcome self-will.

Only God can overcome self-will.

So if we want any peace of mind, serenity and happiness it looks like we're going to have to turn to God and let him be the Director. Let him do his job, which is direction.

Next direction.

*Big Book p 62, par 4, line 28* "Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director."

Not our suggestor, our Director. He's got his word back now. From here on it'll be directions.

## WEEK #6 – How It Works (*Step 3*) Joe and Charlie Transcript

*Big Book p. 62, par 4, line 30* "He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children. Most Good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.

And what is that idea of this concept. That he is the principle and we are his agents, He is the Father, and we are His children, he is the boss, I work for him. Now when I first got into this area of the 3rd Step I used God like you would an errand boy. I said, God please help me to stay sober, and by the way, while you're at it, help me get my wife back. Which one? The second one, I don't want that first one back. That first one didn't drink, she was mean and ugly. I like the one that drank.

God get me a job by the way pick up a little extra money for me, I need some money. I used God like you would an errand boy, send him out like that. And after I got sober I got to reading in that other book, that big, big book and in the front of that book

There's a story about this fellow he worked for six days and rested. Now to my knowledge he didn't have to go back to work anymore. So it looks as though if there's any work being done around here it's going to be me doing the work. He's the principle, we're the agents, He's the Father, we're the children, He's the boss, I'm the employee. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom. Now he's referring once again to that wonderfully effective spiritual structure.

Step 1 Willingness    Foundation  
Step 2 Believing     Cornerstone

Now he tells us what we're building, "A triumphant arch through which we're going to pass to freedom". He said the keystone to that arch is a simple little idea that we're going to let God be the Director

You know in the old, old days when they built arches, the stones were all stacked loosely without mortar, and they began to lean together and there was a center stone up here called the keystone. If it was cut right, it would support the entire arch, but if it wasn't, it would slip out and the arch would collapse.

Well the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we're going to pass to freedom, is this simple little idea - that we're going to let God be the Director. For most of us that's the first time we ever had that idea. If we once had it as children we lost it somewhere. Instead of letting God be the Director, we we're the director, cause we told God what we wanted. God do this, God do that, God give me this, God give me that, God if you do this for me, I'll do that for you. And now only did we direct God we directed everybody around us. Now we can quit doing that. We're going to let God be the Boss from this day on. Now that is a radical idea for people like us. This is the decision that we're making

*Big Book p. 63, par. 1, line 1* "When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our own little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. "

## WEEK #6 – How It Works (Step 3) Joe and Charlie Transcript

You see I was always a taker. And takers are losers in life. Contributors are those that win I've noticed.

*Big Book p. 63, par. 1, cont. "As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn."*

You know they used to come over to my house on Monday night from that little church about two blocks from my house, and these guys wanted to talk to me about being reborn. And you know what I did for them, I'm drinking and man it's Monday night football, and they'll be talking about reborn about 8 o'clock they'd be knocking, and I'd run them off, I'd say you guys get out of here, it's Monday night football, I don't want to talk to you, get. And that's the way I did with those guys, and I didn't understand this reborn then at all. And I got to reading in that other book when I got sober and there's this story in there and this guy's name was Nicademus. And Nicademus was about like me, just dumber than a stump. And he asked that guy, what do you mean by being reborn. Do you mean I've got to go back into my mother's womb. See how dumb he was? And he looked at him and shook his head and said Nicademus don't you know you can't do that? Didn't you go to the University? Aren't you educated? You can't do that.

When I'm talking about being reborn  
I'm talking about the renewing of your mind.  
Old ideas cast aside, new ones accepted.  
Reborn in my mind

I understood that then. And now I'm ready to do business, I'm ready to do the third Step.

And I knew what they did on Sunday morning at that little church up there about 11 o'clock, and I couldn't wait till I got there. And they basically asked people to come down and do the third Step prayer. So I waited till next Sunday, got there about 3 or 4 minutes till 11:00, I didn't want to get there too early I might hear something that would help me. I got there about 3 or 4 minutes till 11:00 and sure enough they asked people to do that and I came down there and I did, just as the book says,

*Big Book p. 63, par 2, line 1 "We were now at Step Three. Many of us said to our Maker, as we understood Him: God, I offer myself to Thee -- to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always! We thought well before taking this step making sure we were ready; that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him."*

And I don't know what exactly happened that particular morning, but I do know this. From that Sunday morning till this moment, my life hasn't been the same. It's as if I been walking on the dark side of the street all those years and all of a sudden I'm on the sunny side of the street. And I don't know what happened except I do know that my life has changed. Thank God.

*Big Book p. 63, par. 2, line 20 "We thought well before taking this step making sure we were ready; that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him."*

## WEEK #6 – How It Works (*Step 3*)

### Joe and Charlie Transcript

I think the word utterly means completely, whole heartedly, all the way, the entire ball of wax. I hope you don't make the mistake I did. The first time I took Step 3 I got on my knees, which I very seldom did in those days. I said God, I offer myself to Thee -- to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties..... so on and so on and so forth. And as I finish it up I said now this applies to my alcohol, don't fool with my sex life. Stay out of my money. I can handle that too. God probably said, What an order, I can't go through with it. I said you take the alcohol and I'll take care of the rest. Today I realize the fallacy in that is as far as I know God doesn't even drink, he don't want the alcohol, He's wants me, and He wants all of me.

Just think. If God could direct my thinking in all areas, it might even become better in my sex life, if might even become better in my money areas. If might even become better in all areas. When my thinking becomes better in all areas then surely my life will become better in all areas too.

I think there's a valid reason behind this. I am told that we alcoholics are born to live in three dimensions. We are born to live with God, with ourselves, and with our fellow human beings.

And if we are praying with other human beings for the first time, we are beginning to get ourselves back together in all three dimensions the way God intended in the first place.

We alcoholics are the funniest people in the world. We'll let our families see us on our knees in the bathroom hugging the porcelain bowl, puking our guts up, morning after morning, after morning. We come to AA and try to straighten out our lives, and we're ashamed and embarrassed to let people see us prayer. Isn't that something? Praying in the company of other human beings is always better. Anybody I work with that I sponsor I require that they take Step 3 with me for two reasons. Number one, if they take it with me I know they have taken it. That's the only way I know for sure. But the real reason is that every time we do it together it means more to me, and it has more strength and more power for me. I think it's a great idea.

We've made our decision, we've uttered our prayers, and the book says:

*Big Book p. 63, par. 4, line 1 "Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision (Step 3) was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of the things in ourselves which had been blocking us (Step 4). Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions."*