

WEEK #12: Chapter 5 — HOW IT WORKS (*Step 4 – Sex Conduct / Harms Done*)

“Now about sex. Many of us needed an overhauling (change) there. But above all, we tried to be sensible on this question.” (Big Book P68, Paragraph 4) We're going to be dealing with how we **think about sex** more so than how we perform sex. This “sex thing” is quite a bit different with human beings than it is with the other animals of the earth. You have to remember that all the other species are **God directed**. Whatever they do, whether it is sex, eating, sleeping or where they shelter **is all dependent upon God's direction, period**.

When it comes time for them to reproduce, whenever it might be, God usually signifies this by some change in the female species. There is physical change. The male of the species senses this change. The male prepares himself and the two join together. Then, they go their separate ways. They really don't have any choice in their sex life. They can't decide when they're going to do it. That's decided by God, usually at certain times of the year, depending on which species they are. They cannot decide who they're going to do it with. That is usually decided by God also. They can't decide how many times they're going to do it. They can't decide in what position they're going to do it. For them, it is primarily a reproductive thing, period. **It's all done with God's direction.**

God made us human beings a little bit different. Because he gave us this thing called **self-will**. He gave us the **ability to think** about not only sex, but every aspect of our lives as well. So he gave us the ability to make decisions about it. Of course he wanted us to use sex for reproduction of the human race, but he also made it very enjoyable for us so we would do it. He also gave us the ability to choose who we were going to do it with, where we are going to do it, when we were going to do it and how many times we were going to do it and in what position we were going to do it.

We think that **most of the troubles with the human race, which are sex related**, originate not so much from the physical act itself, as from the way we *think* about sex. Because it's through sex that we become **emotionally** involved with each other. If we couldn't think and reason and have this intelligence, our emotions would not be involved. Therefore, most of the troubles that we have are not so much from the physical act of sex, as it is from the **emotional or mental side of sex**.

What we are going to do by using our book, is to take **a look at our past sex life**. We will see that some of the things that we have done in the past (and are maybe still doing) end up hurting other people. If we hurt others, it's likely they are going to **retaliate** against us, and that in turn is going to cause more pain and suffering for us.

We are also going to find out how to look at our sex lives. If we are not doing it the way we think we should, or as often as we think we should, it tends to make us irritable, restless and discontented. It is very difficult for us to get a handle on a future sex life, where we can be relatively free of worry or fear concerning it. The analysis is like what we had to do with fear and resentments. We had to see what fear and resentments did to us. Now we are going to see how sex really affects us.

[READ: Page 68, Paragraph 4 → Page 69, Paragraph 2]

We heard those “voices” all of our lives. There are those who say sex is dirty, and you ought to do it one time in one position with one person only, and the only purpose for doing it is to reproduce, and if you enjoy it, there must be something wrong with you. And I've heard those voices over and over and over. This is the extreme on one end of the scale.

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I read that last statement in paragraph 2 with complete relief, because I just knew that this book was getting ready to condemn me for what I had done in the past and I knew it was getting ready to tell me what I was going to have to do in the future. I had already made up my mind I wasn't going to pay any attention to it at all. I was relieved to see that the Big Book was not going to do that, and thank God it doesn't because if the Big Book tried to tell me what was right and what was wrong in the sex area and what I had to do in my sex life, then the Big Book could not match all human beings anywhere in our world. Our book is designed to be helpful for any alcoholic, anywhere in the world. So thank God it stays out of that kind of controversy.

[READ: Page 69, Paragraph 3 → Page 71, To End of Page]

We see the same set of instructions in the Big Book on Page 69 for the sex inventory that we saw for the fears and resentments inventory except they are worded slightly differently. By looking at the past and writing it down on paper and analyzing it, we can develop an ideal for the future. We reproduce and multiply, it's a part of life. Just like our resentments and fears, our sex drive is the same way. It's a great battle, the battle of life:

Either we can let God control these things or these things can dominate us.

[DESCRIBE & DISCUSS INVENTORY PROCESS OF SEX CONDUCT]

INSTRUCTION SIX OF THE INVENTORY PROCESS

Analysis of Sex Conduct

Let's look at the worksheet; **“REVIEW OF OUR OWN SEX CONDUCT & HARMS DONE”** {See Workshop Workbook P.82}. *(We will use this sheet for both the analysis of our own sex conduct and again for harms done to others that are not related to sex. We will start with the analysis of our own sex conduct.)*

Preparing a List of Sex / Relationships:

➤ COLUMN 1: Who Did I Harm?

We make a list of those people we have harmed by our conduct of the past. Most of us know exactly what we have done and who we have hurt. There's a thing inside ourselves that usually tells us the difference between right and wrong, between what to do and what not to do. Usually when we've harmed someone by our sexual misconduct, we know we have.

➤ COLUMN 2: What Did I do?

Ask yourself these questions:

- 1. Did I arouse Jealousy?**
- 2. Did I arouse Suspicion?**
- 3. Did I arouse Bitterness?**

There are many ways that we hurt people in a sexual manner. Sometimes when we are in a relationship and emotionally involved as in a marriage, and we go outside the marriage and do things we shouldn't be doing and our partner finds out about it, we have hurt that individual. If there are children in the home and our escapades have created problems in the home, then surely we have harmed our children. If the partner outside the home becomes common knowledge, then

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they too are hurt. If she is married we've hurt her husband and her children. With one sexual act we can hurt 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 people very easily.

Sometimes we hurt people simply by demanding more than our fair share. We are using sex to the extent that we have to have more and more of it. Maybe our partner doesn't want to do it that much, and we selfishly demand that they do it any time that we want to and we end up hurting them emotionally, not just physically. We also hurt people by withholding sex from them using it as blackmail to get something else we want.

➤ **COLUMN 3: Affects My**

In column 3 we look at what part of "Self" is affected. We think this will be the most revealing thing in this sexual inventory. Refer again to your **BASIC INSTINCT OF LIFE HANDOUT {Workshop Workbook p. 62}**. We might think that most of the troubles that we cause for others would come from the sex instinct. Once in a while that's probably true, to get the physical release, the emotional gratification that comes at the moment of successful completion of sex. Maybe we are doing it at the wrong time and the wrong place with the wrong person and we hurt each other because of the sexual instinct. But, we think that we are going to find in most cases, our **sexual harms** don't come from the **sexual instinct**, but from the **social or the security instinct**.

We found out a long time ago as boys growing up, that you could use sex to build self-esteem. The more members of the opposite sex you could get, the more of a man you were, and some of the girls had the same problem. **If that is what we are using sex for, not to reproduce the human race, nor to enjoy, it is to build self-esteem and that falls under the *social instinct*.**

Sometimes we use sex to **obtain security**, or maybe we are just **lonesome**; maybe we just want someone to pay attention to us. We found out a long time ago that we can **give sex to get or get back a personal relationship, and to build our emotional security. If that is what we are using sex for, that is not to reproduce the human race, not to enjoy then it is to fulfill the social and security instincts of life.**

Sometimes we use sex for **material security**. Maybe we are in a situation sexually that we really would rather not be in. We find we have become **overly dependent** upon that person for **material security**. We are afraid to not have sex even though we may not want to do it. **If that is what we are using sex for, not to reproduce the human race, or to enjoy then we are using it to build material security.**

Sometimes we use sex to **get even with another human being**. They go out and do something and that infuriates us, and we say we will show them. Then we go out and do the same thing to get even with them. The fallacy with that is that we can't afford to tell them that we did it. But there we are using sex to get even with another human being, not to reproduce or enjoy.

Sometimes we use sex to **force our will on another human being**. They aren't doing what we want them to do, so we say we'll show them. We'll just cut them off from sex. We won't let them have any until they come around to our way of thinking. There we are again using sex not to reproduce, or enjoy but to force our will on another human being.

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➤ **COLUMN 4: My Defects**

What is the exact nature of my wrongs, faults, mistakes, defects, shortcomings?

1. Self-Seeking & Selfish
2. Dishonest.
3. Frightened.
4. Inconsiderate.

What is the nature of the wrong? What is the inherent characteristic of it? What is at the core of it? If I wasn't so “**Selfish**”, I wouldn't be demanding more than my fair share. If I wasn't so “**Selfish**”, I wouldn't be demanding that they do it in ways that they don't want to. I wouldn't be doing things that I shouldn't be doing in the first place.

If I wasn't so “**Dishonest**”, I wouldn't be doing those things and sneaking around and lying about them. If I wasn't so “**Self-Seeking**” or “**Frightened**” that I wasn't going to get all I wanted before I died, I wouldn't be out there doing all those things.

If I don't change those things in the fourth column, I'm going to keep doing the same things I've always done. I'll keep hurting other people, and they will continue retaliating against me and I'm never going to have any peace of mind.

Analysis of Harms Done Other than Sexual

Referring to our inventory sheet again, we follow it just like we did on all the other inventory sheets focusing on “**Other Harms Done**” (non-sexual).

➤ **Column 1: Who Did I Hurt?**

These are the people I might have hurt financially, or I may have undercut them and taken their jobs away. I may have stolen from them or hurt them physically in various different ways. If we have hurt other people, we know who we have hurt. We make a list of them.

➤ **Column 2: What Did I Do?**

➤ **Column 3: Which Part of “Self” is Affected?**

I really can't do anything to hurt another human being unless one of my Basic Instincts of Life is out of control. If my desire for personal relationships is too great, it may cause me to hurt another human being in some way. If my desire for security or sex is too great, it may cause me to hurt another human being. Always there will be a part of self affected.

➤ **Column 4: My Defects**

If I stay **Selfish, Self-Seeking, Dishonest, Frightened and Inconsiderate**, I'm going to keep right on hurting other people. Fear, Guilt and Remorse will eat me up and eventually cause me to drink.

Once again we are doing Step 4, this last sheet is part of the Inventory process: Taking all the worksheets together, Resentments, Fear, Sexual Conduct, & Harms Done: In the fourth column are listed the exact nature of the wrongs for Step 5; The Defects we are willing to turn loose of in Step 6; the Shortcomings we'll ask God to take away in Step 7; Column 1, has all the names that will come from these worksheets to be used for Steps 8 and 9 at a later date. **When I'm through with this last worksheet, then I have completed the entire Step 4 Inventory.**

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The last paragraph in the Big Book on page 70 says, ***“If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot. We have listed and analyzed our resentments.”...***

I hear in A.A. some people say “utilize and don't analyze”. Well I think in some places that is a good idea. What it means is let's quit doing so much talking and start working. **To analyze something really means to get down to the truth of it.** You know when a Detective comes to the crime scene he analyzes the crime scene; he's trying to see the truth of it.

Analyze is just another word that Bill uses which means truth.

We've made a searching and fearless, moral, truthful, honest, analytical inventory. He doesn't say so but we've listed and analyzed our fears. We've listed and analyzed our sexual conduct. We've listed and analyzed all harms we've done other than sexual.

Big Book page 70, paragraph 4 – ***“We've begun to comprehend their futility and the fatality. We have commenced to see their terrible destructiveness. We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and goodwill towards all men even our enemies, for we look upon them as sick people.”...***

You see there is a positive result in every Step. **For an alcoholic to begin to learn tolerance, patience and goodwill towards all men, even his enemies, is one hell of a personality change already! And all we have done so far is Step 4!**

Big Book page 70, paragraph 4 – ***“...We've listed the people we've hurt by our conduct and are willing to straighten out the past if we can.***

In this book you read again and again that faith did for us what we could not do for ourselves. We hope that you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him. If you've already made a decision (Step 3), and an inventory of your grosser handicaps (Step 4), you have made a good beginning. That being so, you have swallowed and digested some big chunks of truths about yourself.”

I think one of the greatest mistakes in AA today is that everybody is sitting around waiting to get well so they can do Step 4 perfect, and the Big Book recognizes we're not going to do it perfect.

We've looked at our grosser handicaps for:

Resentments, Fear, Sexual Harms Done, Harms Done to Others - Other than Sexual

What are the grosser handicaps?

Selfishness, Self-Seeking, Dishonest, Frightened, and Inconsiderate Attitudes (Emotions)

We've looked at all those things!

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Instructions for Completion of the “Sex Conduct & Harms Done” Inventory

- 1) We listed all the people we had harmed. Complete Column 1, from top to bottom. Do nothing on Columns 2, 3 & 4 until Column 1 is complete.
- 2) We asked ourselves: *“What Did I Do?”* Complete Column 2, from top to bottom. Do nothing on Columns 3 or 4 until Column 2 is complete.
- 3) We ask ourselves: *“Was it my self-esteem, my security, my ambitions and/or my sex relations which caused this harm?”* Complete each sub-column within Column 3, going from left to right, starting with “companionship” and finishing with the “sexual ambitions” section. Do nothing on Column 4 until Column 3 is complete.
- 4) Referring to our list again and putting out of our minds the wrongs of others, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes, asking: *“Where had I been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened & inconsiderate?”* We ask ourselves this question and complete each area of Column 4.
- 5) In the far right column, on the back of the worksheet or on a separate sheet of paper, write down your faults as revealed by Column 4.
“Where did I set the ball rolling?”
“Where was I at fault?”
“What should I have done differently?”
- 6) Reading from left to right, we now see the harm (Column 1), what we did to cause this harm (Column 2), the part of self that caused this harm (Column 3) and the exact nature of the defect within us that allowed the harm to surface and block us off from God's Will (Column 4).

Congratulations, you have completed Step Four!

ASSIGNMENT: Read Pages 72 through the Second Paragraph Page 75. Be prepared to discuss the material you read. Start looking for someone to take the Fifth Step with and set a specific date.

