

Fellowship of The Spirit Conference

August 1 – 3, 2008

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Weekend Program Transcript Notes

Friday, August 1, 2008

SCOTT

Pg. 46 ... Much" (3 lines above)

Pg. 143 "If your man accepts ..."

Og, 58 up 4 lines from bottom ..."Some of us .."

Pg. 51 "In the realm of ..."

Pg. 42 up 8 lines "It meant that ..."

Pg. 27 Carl Jung "Ideas, emotions and attitudes"

Pg. 1? "On the other hand ... this is repeated more ..."

"What I needed to do was release my grip on what I knew for sure."

Scott spoke of "surrendering" and claimed that "volunteering" was better. Perhaps it is a deeper letting go ... a surer generosity ... less "resignation" and less likelihood of "white knuckling" it??

Spoke of spirituality as a "garment" which at first is fine and new but which becomes tattered and old. "I want the next garment ... to go on to the next level."

Mentioned the "I'm not good enough" truth ... which Bob will develop deeply with his story of the statue of the Magdalene.

"**Don't** get a sponsor you can relate to ... look for one you can obey!"

Pg. 59 "Here are the steps we took ..." No steps ... no recovery!

"**Willingness** is when you do what your sponsor tells you to do, even if you don't want to!!"

"I don't answer "why" for the men that I sponsor!" "You don't need to know." The implication is "just do it"!

"Alcohol wasn't my problem - it was my answer. Therefore we need a new answer .. At least as good as the *old* answer."

"I've seen people in and out of the fellowship, but *never* in and out of the program. Not 'some get it and some don't', rather some *do it* and some don't!"

Pg. 60 "Having had a spiritual awakening ..."

There are two fellowships I ???

II Pg. 164 Last full paragraph "Abandon yourself ... fellowship of the Spirit."

"I have a single goal in sponsorship ... to have my sponsees outgrow me spiritually."

BOB

Alcoholism doesn't come in bottles ... it comes in people! I drink alcohol because I am an alcoholic ... not "I am an alcoholic because I drink alcohol." Hmmm! And I compulsively eat because I am a compulsive eater? I am a workaholic because I work??

"We don't break out in spots . I break out in a craving. 'The problem of the alcoholic is in the mind.'"

Spoke of his sister and her drinking (non-alcoholic). She drinks and gets the feeling ... and being afraid of losing control, stops drinking. Bob drank, got the feeling ... the feeling that he was **getting** control ..."

Every drink of alcohol I had made me feel like ... I wanted another drink of alcohol. Every drink that does something **for** me will do something **to** me! (Cf. overeating in this!)

Booze - "a low level search for unity (for God)" - Carl Jung

Bob spoke of having S.A.S. when he was drinking: "social **anxiety disorder**".

"Dying of alcoholism takes a long time. It is like "being kicked to death by rabbits" - long before you're dead, you wish you were!"

Spoke of a friend who had cancer, who was at first happy that the doctors were going to operate, because he thought that it meant that he had a chance. But the doctor told him that they were only cutting his insides out so that the cancer had room to grow and so that he would not die so painfully. Alcoholism will cut out one's job, one's children, one's wife, one's financial solvency, one's friends so that it will have room to grow. The relief of alcoholism takes priority over the other things in the alcoholic's life. Also the pain of trying to drink and be a good family man, or employee, etc. is too much, so the alcohol stays and the other things go.

Pg. xxviii (the bottom) re the "phenomenon of craving" That is "Men and women drink essentially because ..." The alcoholic *needs* the effect. "This sensation is so elusive ..." **Denial**: we don't use that word; we say "self-delusion". The "self delusion" are such that we "cannot differentiate the true from the false."

If you're a *chronic* alcoholic there is nothing within you to quench the thirst ... it is not a matter of *if* you will drink again ... it is a matter of *when* you will drink again! The restlessness, irritability and discontentedness is *because* we are thirsty? Or is it that it *causes* us to be thirsty?

The key of my prison (of alcoholism) is on the inside! Always looking for stuff that will make me feel better. **(Looking in my books???)**

"There's a 'yes' in every barrel of 'no's' ... *unless something changes inside!*

There is no way to treat the phenomenon of craving. It's like having sex with a gorilla ... you're not done until the gorilla's done. <g>

SCOTT

Pg. 61 - Past half-way down "Is he not a victim of the delusion ..."

There is among many a confusion between a) happiness and b) pleasure. Pleasure is short lived, can be satiated, and has many short-lived causes. What gives pleasure is usually something physical and/or sensual. Happiness is a spiritual reality. It is what we all want, and we think that money, sex, power, etc. will give it to us. However, these things only give pleasure, and larger doses of the input (often leading to addiction) are needed for pleasure to remain. Happiness, peace of mind, serenity, a sense of being at one with the best that can be known, experienced, understood and hoped for can be as long-lasting as our prayer life can maintain it.

Pg. 44 - The description of alcoholism ... "If when you honestly want to, ..."

Pg. 23 - "Once in a while he may tell the truth ..."

Pp. 58-9 The short form of the steps ??? The rest of the book is the long form??

"I have fired me as general manager of my life."

Quoted a lady member who said, "I'm having trouble getting a grasp on letting go"! <g>

Obsession: thinking about something all the time.

BOB

Tried all kinds of stuff to get sober ... gestalt therapy, inner child, Buddhism, etc., etc. - nothing worked.

Pg. 44 (bottom) "If a mere code of morals ..." but "the needed power was not there".

If I put will power into it I give it "torque" to go the other way. He spoke of a sling shot, where you pull it back and pull it back until, finally it snaps!

Speaking of a guy named Frank - a good man and a priest, : "Frank's dilemma was not lack of religion, or of faith ... it was lack of power!"

An analogy: Spoke of Lake Mead ... taking a person to it ... showing them the huge reservoir of fresh water ... even letting him taste it ... then taking him a few miles into the desert with a map to the lake ... dropping him with no water, and telling him to find the water. If he does not follow the directions, he will wander around and die! (But isn't this *not* having faith in the program ???) %%

Saturday, August 2, 2008

Pg. 31 "Despite all we can say, ..."

Pg. 60 "the 3 abc's ... a god concept that can work ..." See top of pg. 57 "revulsion"

"The revelation was sudden ..."

Notes "decide" in Step Three ... decide - cut myself off from all other options.

Spiritual awakening is a process ...there is not an end to it!

"The first requirement... almost always in collision ... even though our motives are good ..."

Motives are mine ... principles are God's!

I volunteered; I prayed the 3rd Step prayer ... I gave God "carte blanche" ...

There are no wrong reasons for doing the right thing

Pg. 42 - last 2 lines the word is motives Pg. 60 - Step 12 ... the word is principles

BOB

The effectiveness of the whole AA program is based on the making of this decision to turn our will and our lives over to God.

"You don't have to believe in God to take Step Three your life is not longer in the hands of an idiot ... even if turning your life over to a chair."

To move closer to God is not so much moving closer to God as moving away from me.

When I have a problem by turning to myself for an answer, I am turning to the source of the problem for an answer. I need to turn to God. When one has Steps One and Step Two, then Step Three "is automatic"!

I think $a + b = c$ (the 3 pertinent ideas - pg. 60) How does a surrendered person respond to situations. How quick am I willing to change me to match events that I don't like?

Pain does not come from change ... but from my resistance to change. Hmmm.

Pg. 62 - (Bob has his sponsees put 'I' in for "we", etc. in pages 61 to 63 - from the 3 pertinent ideas on ... Self-centeredness Pg. 60 "I'm like the actor ... etc." Fits with Bob's description of his day ... work not going well, having to get stuff for the meeting, the woman with 15 items in the express line, the woman driving 5 miles below the speed limit, the argument over what should be shared at the meeting (he had it all planned out what he thought was needed for his new guy who was meeting him at the meeting) Bob stormed home, and "like Pavlov's dog" phoned his sponsor who told him to read pages 60 to 63

Ego ... the enemy ... "like the actor" Spoke of a presenter who asked each person "What controls you?"

Pg. 62 - "the root of our troubles" bottom of page 61 self=ego=self; If ego is the root ... that means everything else comes from it! The problem of self-righteousness is self, the problem with anything ... judgmentalism is ... self! The "ism" is self.

I can think very poorly of myself ... but I do it constantly ... so I am thinking always and only of myself. I am self-centered. I am "totally self-absorbed".

The obsession with self is actually feeling fear? I am not good enough; life is going to screw me ... how can I protect myself and get what I want? Bob like me was "on the outside looking in". The book says, "We know a loneliness such as few do".

It says we're driven by a hundred forms of fear. Worry, anxiety, apprehension ... anger is always based on fear. Every resentment comes from something having been threatened.

Self seeking is about me getting all I want. Self-pity is depression? Depression is self-pity. Self-pity is because I am not getting all that I want.

Driven by these feelings, I step on the toes of those around me. And then they get fed up. The problem is that I cannot see what I have done. I can't see past myself!

But I will invariably that some time in the past I have made decisions based on self and therefore "the chickens are coming home to roost" - the troubles we think are basically of our own making."

A person who has done Step Four can no longer sell a bill of goods on being a victim.

SCOTT

Pg. 62 - Want to hear some good news. "Our troubles we think ... ect." If the problem is "them" ... we can't do anything about that. But if the problem is "you" then we can do something about it.

Look at "above everything" ... look also at the "musts". "We must or it kills us. God makes that possible".

Self-will keeps us sick. We are lucky if we are hurt enough that we "let go and let God." Self doesn't have power to get itself out of the picture. Again ... "I had to have God's help".

I played God by getting angry when someone dies. I resent .. Because I have judged. I trusted my motives ... I know how things should turn out. When I ask "why" I am playing God. Whenever I lie I play God ... I am making the results come out the way I think they should come out.

ALL THIS STUFF ON PAGES 60 THRU PAGE63 AT "sometimes a very great one was felt at once" ARE THE LONG FORM OF STEP THREE!!

Progress is making the same old mistake, only doing it less often. Or making a brand new mistake of a better quality. We don't get perfection..

Note well "**voicing it without reservation**"

- 1) First requirement
- 2) Quit playing god
- 3) making the decision
- 4) read the prayer/understand it
- 5)
- 6) think well
- 7) decide who is going to hear it
- 8) pray the prayer

Content is much more important than format. There are many, many ways of doing the Steps.

BOB

Step Three is about approaching the process that allows me to turn my will and my life over to God ... by doing the rest of the steps ... daily ... practicing their principles in all my affairs. Step Three is just the turning point.

Your last will (and testament) is your last judgment. If I give God my will, I have to give my God my judgment ... I have to use God's judgment about things. I did not get any relief until I dismantled the judgment machine that was running my life.

WE come to see how wrong we were about *everything*. An awakening allows me to see that all the steps make sense. The ego is what judges. Talked of the Adam/Eve story in connection with this. "Maybe heaven is just a new pair of glasses". I am surrendering everything I think that I know. I am surrendering all the old ideas.

SCOTT

I am having a good day ... Scott's will is being done today. I am having a bad day ... Scott's will is *not* being done today.

"I don't have the power to make a mistake so ugly that God cannot give me the power to make something magnificent out of it."

The Big Book gives 2 time references. It says "Next ... we launched ... " Then it goes on to say "at once" ... or anything in between.

If all I do is write, I will be rid of ink and time ... but of nothing else. It is the observation and prayers. To be rid of the things that have been blocking us.

Business that do not take inventory go broke. It is a fact-finding and fact-facing process to help us "get rid of". We search for the flaws in our make up .. So the good news is I can change them.

We inventory the bad things ??? There are about 26 suggestions on this step

1) Resentment is the number one killer. We set these on paper ... we listed ... everyone and everything we have been angry with. Black and white Write 1, 2, 3, 4 on the two pages side by side ... list goes down the left side of the double pages. Set the time and schedule for writing the Fourth Step. Don't do it perfectly. Write a name, skip a line. (When in doubt, write it down.)

2) We ask ourselves why we are angry. Column 2 from the list ... to the spiral of the spiral note book. (19 words or left)

3) We set out to find if the injury is ours, someone else's. etc.

BOB

Make a list of the people you feel "smugly superior to". It is impossible to have a resentment without have a judgment.

With Step Four, I am building a weapon to use against Self. I was building a weapon against the only enemy I ever had a problem with ... and that enemy was me.

All the ego wants is to be right. I don't care if my ego kill me, as long as everybody knows, after I die, that I was right!

Am I prepared to look at the inventory "from an entirely different angle" ... am I willing to consider that I might be wrong. Self-serving judgments are those I need to change my view of.

"Dear Bob. You don't know crap. God." If I could be that wrong, in this situation, could I be that wrong elsewhere? So I can become ready to realize that I could be wrong elsewhere ... see other persons and situations with a different angle.

"Just don't think about it." I would need *surgery* to do that! So what did I do? I had to realize that the person who wronged me were spiritually sick. "Though I did not like their symptoms ..." They were "*like me* spiritually sick!" When we can see that others are "like me" ... to realize that they too are driven like me ... that they are going to pay the price I have paid in the past for things like them ... I can feel *compassion* for them!

Looking at his dad in an "entirely different angle". "Putting out of our minds ..." Pg. 67?

I can't hide my own behavior in the shadow of your wrongs. I can't use what you did to excuse anything I had done.

The guy started to take care of his father. He made amends to his father until his father died.

SCOTT

Bottom of 66 - "We saw that these resentments must be mastered."

Being spiritually sick is being cut off from God. The bad that I had done was done because I was spiritually sick.

I must realize (make real) and "real eyes" - see with spiritual eyes.

Forgiveness ... we want to be free of resentments by forgiving the one for whom we have a resentment against.

Cf. 551-2 Re a resentment against the author's mother ...

When we are not for giving, we want forgiveness for us and justice for everyone else. FORGIVENESS IS NOT SOMETHING I DO ... IT IS SOMETHING I RECEIVE. That is why I pray on it!

We resolutely look for our own mistakes ... not our part! Pg. 67 See also pg.. 84 - continue to watch for pg. 86 were we resentful page 88 we are then in much less danger pg. 145 we have enemies ... envy jealousy ... all are earmarks of re-immersion of self.

Pg. xvi - though he could not ... all the tenets of the Oxford group ...

It is possible to believe in God and not have a Higher Power ... dependence on God is different than believing in God. I MAKE A FINER QUALITY MISTAKE THAN BEFORE (see above) We learn from the results of our mistakes. We embrace our mistakes.

The learning comes from making the mistakes. If I am not making a mistake, I am not learning.

Consequences are the teaching aspect of a mistake.

What would God have me be ... "happy joyous and free". It is not what God wants me to do! "God if I go to do this, will you go with me?" Fear is a lack of growth ... a lack of spiritual growth.

Whenever I am in fear ... I am in the future. It is not when I find God ... it is where ... it is here (and therefore becomes now). What am I going to do today?

Acceptance ... I don't have to approve a thing to accept it. I need to cease fighting those things over which I have no power.

What are my priorities? ... What am I doing!!!

BOB

Talking about fear ... resentments are fear based ... Fear is an evil and corroding thread ... the fabric of our existence is shot through with it. See also "Did we not ourselves set the ball rolling?"

What are my fears, but judgments? Fear robs us of so much. That is why it ought to be classed with stealing ... it seems to cause much more problem.

Amends is the process of re-establishing oneness. Alcoholism is a disease of separation. Dealing with fear as either being a skunk ... or a turtle. A turtle is better because it has to make less amends.

The difference between faith in trust. You can have faith that the tight wire performer can push the wheelbarrow safely across the high wire. Trust would be if one would be willing to get in the wheelbarrow for the trip! <g>

Having lack of trust doesn't make me a bad guy. It just handicaps me from being able to receive all that God wishes to give me. We learn to get into the wheelbarrow more and more often ... sometimes quickly sometimes slowly. Pg. ? "I had to fearlessly face the proposition ..."

The 2 year (potentially) in prison story.

Cf. Henri Nouwen and the wheelbarrow concept.

Bob, being complimented after a talk, being told that what he shared was fine for him ... because he had self-confidence. Bob left the woman shaking his head. He did not have self-confidence ... he had trust in God and *appeared* to have self-confidence. Bob has what seems to be self-confidence which is really trust in God, in fellow members and in the program.

SCOTT

Serenity is not freedom *from* the storm; it is freedom *in* the storm.

BOB

Pg. 68 "Now about sex ..."

The 3 S's = security, sex and status ... Inventory these ... or see how they impact on our behavior. Character defects unwise behavior is often fear based on not getting or losing either security, sex or status.

SCOTT

Pg. 72 "This brings us to the Fifth Step ... " Pg. 75 - the fifth step promises.

Step Six: We don't work on our character defects ... we let God do that by doing God's will.

BOB

The frogs on the log and decision joke ... Step Seven is where we hear the splash of the frog going into the water.

How do we become entirely ready? Whatever I try to change by will power, gains power. We are not talking about fighting anything. We are talking about a new freedom. "We are placed in a position of neutrality."

There can be a problem with Steps Six and Seven ... we often don't want God to remove the defect; we want God to remove the consequences. We want to eat without getting fat.

The little girl and the candy bar in the vending machine.

BOB

Continued on amends from the talk that I missed. Bob said, "I understood that I had to make amends, but they (who were telling me to make amends) but *they* didn't understand that it was too late. Bob was given specific instructions - cards and phone calls on a weekly basis, cards on birthdays and holidays, etc." When you start working towards God's will for you, the Universe suddenly becomes a very accommodating place.

"I was the black sheep and I was the pillar of strength for my family when my father died. I was the outcast and my family moved from Pennsylvania to Las Vegas to be near me."

Re the one pack of cigarettes, then other packs, then the six pack of pop, etc. etc., and I started to get sick. I started to feel bad ... and started picking everything and everyone a part. I begin to think everyone in AA is a liar and a phony. I don't realize that I am projecting myself into or onto others. I am getting sicker and sicker and one day I got down to thank God for my day, and instead I yelled out, "My God, what the hell is going on?" And right away the answer came, "I was stealing from my boss".

"I had been sharing at AA about my great honesty, and I was just getting to feel so bad about it all." I went and told my boss, and I began paying it bad ... all at once I liked my job. Everything got better."

Making amends, even when the amendeed says that it is not necessary, changes the amender. It is important to make the amend ... regardless. It is a matter of personal integrity.

Pg. 127 - "Although financial recovery ,,,,"

SCOTT

Continuing on amends. "We say that you take your problems to your problems and your solutions to your meetings." The "old freedom" is "four shots of tequila". The new freedom is freedom from the bondage to self.

Pg. 84 - "This thought brings to Step Ten ..." Step Ten is about being present in my own life. Scott mentions that the word "continue" appears about 6 times in a short piece of the writing.

"A revelation is when I figure something out for myself that you have been trying to tell me for six months."

Pg. 103 - we have stopped fighting everyone and anything. Pg. 84 says the same thing. How do we get sanity ... do the first nine steps.

"The laurel is put on the head. If I am resting on my laurels, guess where my head is." <g>

"Every day is the day that I can carry the vision of God's will into my day." Every day ... no days off; vision ... the best we can imagine and hope for.

Discovering things about me that need work, is not finding things that are wrong with me. Discovering things that need work, are the clearest sign that I am on track ... on the spiritual path.

Pg. 156 - "Life was not easy" Their need was to try and give the program away, so they called up a nurse to see if they had a candidate for them to work on.

"The phrase 'Don't drink and go to meetings' is a phrase causing murder." I cannot not drink, unless I have spiritual power ... which is granted through the steps.

BOB

Re "we have entered the realm of the spirit ..." Talked of employees who were neither church goers or 12 Step people ... who are able to be of generous service and able to go with the flow naturally.

Michael Jordan's half court "swish" ... Asked how he did it, he replied, "Sometimes you get in the zone. And when you are in the zone, you can't miss."

Bob thinks that when we are "in the zone", we are in the spirit.

Middle of pg. 85 "It is easy to let up on our program ..." We are not punished for our sins ... we are punished *by* them!

MY INVENTORY NEEDS TO BE A CURRENT REPORT OF **HOW I ACT.**

Conscious contact and the cop in the rear view mirror. We know God is always present, and always available. We know when driving, especially when on certain stretches of road, that the police are present. But when we see the lights of the police cruiser in our rear view mirror, we have *a conscious contact* of the presence of the police on the stretch of road!

SCOTT

Don't let the things that AA gives to you, take you away from AA. Sitting in a restaurant and a man came up ... and I was overpaid for the rest of my life.

"His painful past ..." The dead eyes become alive eyes ... I don't cause it, but I help in it. Those who saw my eyes come alive were overpaid for the rest of their life."

August 3/08

SCOTT

"On awakening ... " It is not important to be comfortable ... it is important not to be dragging the pain of the past into today. If I do that for too long, I will need to medicate the situation ... and for me my primary medication is either the 12 Step Way of Life or alcohol!

"We may not be able ..." Talking of taking the pause before action. Talking of taking time to "pause when agitated" to establish "conscious contact" with our Higher Power. To "improve" a "conscious contact" tells me that thanks to the first 10 steps we have had a contact that we can improve.

"God's will is the best deal there is." We don't "coach" God ... telling God what the outcome should be.

"I don't know that anything can stand up under an assault of love." The

"You are a fabulous husband for my grand daughter." "I should be. I pray for that every day."

"When I ask God for what God wants me to have, I get a lot of help."

"The next right thing. ... I have discovered for me "the last right thing". To get enough time to start the day the next morning ... taking time to prayer and meditation. So the first right thing happens in the a.m.

"What used to be a hunch ..." it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times".

Pg. 35 - "What sort of thinking dominates the alcoholic ..." See top of 36 – "he got drunk again. ..." Exactly what happened and "his story" are not the same thing.

Pg. 86 again ... "When we retire at night we constructively review our day" We are not told to "beat ourselves up". If you want something for yourself ... give it to someone else! What can we "pack into the stream of life".

Don't take the close parking space ... turn the penny over so that the "lucky side" is up. (The heads side)

"We must be careful not to ... morbid reflection ..." We don't beat ourselves up. We stay out of the negativity.

BOB

"I have difficulty with Step 11 ... and with steps 8 and 9, and with steps 3 and four ... and with step one ... I don't follow directions well. Smart guys don't have to."

Bob tried many, many ways to meditate. He had one prayer to meditate on that he often still comes back to

...

"I am the place

Where God shines through,

Him and I are one

Not two

I need not worry, or fret, or plan

He want's me

Where I am and as I am

And if I be relaxed and free'

He'll carry out is plan through me."

"It would be easy to be vague about this matter ... " It says ... were we resentful, selfish, etc." No! That is inventory, says Bob, what has this to do with Step 11 ... with mediation. I went to Buddhist courses ... I'm a smart guy ... I know that inventory is not meditation. Over the years I did about everything I could think of in the first years of sobriety. Except following the directions for Step 11.

Pg. 87 .. "Be quick to see where religious are right" ... in **addition to ... not substitution for ...** Steps 10, 11 and 12 are to fulfill Step 3 ... to "maximize my usefulness".

Prayer is not about self-enhancement (ego) but self-enhancement in the service of others as God wills it. In all that I "move away from self (that's the point) and I "let go and let God".

"I'm not in the relief business. I spent my whole life as a relief junky". I have to find the freedom from the bondage of self. In that I will be able to be of "maximum service to God and my fellows."

Where prayer, meditation and inventory are logically inter-related they form a very firm foundation for living. Inventory is one oar of the rowboat and prayer/meditation is the other.

A good boat, all the directions and charts will not get you to Bermuda from St. Petersburg. You have to do a daily inventory (check on the tides and winds) to insure that the course can be re-set to the true course. I have a chronic need to inventory within the context of prayer and meditation. (Cf. Dirty Mary, Crazy Larry) We never have it together ... we have to continuously inventory within the context of prayer and meditation. We need to pray and meditate within the context of an honest inventory.

Talks of "dis gustion meetings" ... "Does anyone have a problem" ... Take a sick room and ask that question? A roomful of sick people ... sharing ... trying to get an answer from a discussion (disgustion)

meeting is like trying to get a drink from a fire hose ... everyone hoses the questioner with answers ... and the asker, merely looking for relief, often bolts, never to return.

"Where we kind and loving to all?" The Book says "all"! The ultimate task is service without prejudice. Middle of pg. 87 - we ask especially for freedom from self will and are careful to ask for help for ourselves *only*.

"The Ten Commandments are the basis of all Judeo-Christian theology", say Bob. No. The basis of all theology is the knowledge of God which has come from revelation and the experience of God which allows us to experience the revelation.

Who is Chuck Chamberlain ... an alkie that Bob often quoted or referred to.

God's gift is already here. It is creation ... I am just asleep to it. What if everything that I find objectionable is already fixed? What if what my ego judges is not correct ... that is not correctly judged by me.

"Don't have a way." Step Three. Avoid, "This ain't right. That won't work."

Have you ever found yourself in a meeting ... where those you love are ... and you find yourself making one judging thought after another. Ego takes over. "Practicing the presence of God is more about practicing the absence of self." Two dogs ... in a sack ... one representing the sick and one representing the spirit ... they are in mortal combat in the sack ... the one that wins will be the one that is fed the most.

The clamoring for self is clamoring for self-aggrandizement. It is that which will lead to addiction and that which will seek "the easier, softer way" that which will be "off target".

The illusion of power (knowledge) and of being "better than" which gossip brings about. The AA Way is a process designed to push me out of the way. I must decrease so that Christ may increase. There is not a lot of info in the BB about God, but there *is* a lot of info on how to get rid of self!

Pg. 87 - the very bottom of the page ... "We constantly remind ourselves ..." I need this because I am constantly trying to run the show. I am constantly falling back to my default position ... the "I know" principle. I am back to being the "I know guy". The clamorings of self are endless.

SCOTT

The thing is not how often I will get off track ... but how quickly I will get back on. I am praying for what is already given ... what I need to ask for is the openness to notice, appreciate and act on what has always been available.

BOB

A dictionary from 1913 - a definition of meditation prior to all the Beatles era thoughts on meditation ... it had changed.

In that dictionary ... "The general will meditate a war" ... That was the first example given. On awakening, we are a general considering the battle. And we get "good orderly direction" in these pages of 84 plus.

I approach the day with a meditative stance to get back on course to the decision I made is Step Three. If I don't, I go back to me ... and unless I get back to Step 11, I stay with me.

SCOTT

When I want to get closer to God, I work with his people.

"The 12 Traditions are a set of principles that are designed to protect Alcoholics Anonymous from my best motives and intentions."

Pg. 96 "suppose you're now taking the second visit" ... Such a man is ready. If the mind wanders when reading silently ... read it out-loud and that will focus the mind in the present on what is being read.

Sponsorship is the one that can give "much practical advice". That is sponsorship in a few words.

The first responsibility is to give love. The second responsibility is to coach the sponsee through the 12 Steps. I am a playing coach ... I am still working the Steps. I still need the steps.

I've not seen an unattractive woman since I was 12 years old. So I don't sponsor women. It's got to be a sober man, who has done the steps for me. He needs to have a sponsor himself. It has got to be someone who will tell me the truth I do not want to hear. "I'm a one trick pony. It's all I have ... but it works wonderfully."

Gratitude is an action. Meditate on this with respect to Audrey and what that implies for my daily action as a husband. Gratitude is really effective when it is going out of my own way.

Pg. 132 - "We absolutely insist on enjoying life ..." I want a sponsor who has a sense of humor and who enjoys life.

"I'm not here to argue with my sponsor." My sponsor is my final authority in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I believe that there are people who need to be on drugs for depression. Scott checks with a doctor in the program who has 15 years of sobriety and of program. Had 2 people on the meds who did not need them ... according to Scott's "consulting doctor".

Is someone a sponsor or a "fire chief" - someone who comes to you when his ass [tail feathers] is on fire, and asks you to put the fire out, and then goes back to sponsoring himself in his own way.

One can be in the fellowship without being in the program. Being in the program is being in action on the 12 Steps.

"If they're ready you can't do it wrong; if he's not ready you can't do it right".

There's a country song "Give me one more last chance". He says in public, "I saved his life that day."

Everything after "yes but" is bullshit.

Pg. 164 - "you will surely meet some of us ..." The road is the destiny. It is "of" not "to".

Scott listening to Bob's half of a conversation with someone who had a great difficulty/tragedy. "I will be back in town on midnight two days from now. I want you to find 2 men to sponsor before then to tell me about."

When I am awash in an ocean of tragedy, the island of your hangnail takes me out of that and puts me on solid helping ground that is free from self and therefore free from pain.

"God' will is the best deal there is." How do I turn in over to God ... I stay in this day and remain comfortable with whatever He sends.

"I must respect pain. It is my friend. It tells me there is something wrong." (Tenth Step axiom).

An aside: Anonymity is at the *public* level. In support of Dr. Bob's understanding of anonymity.

"There was a piece of sunlight lodged in the center of my chest that I could recall and bask in anytime."

From doing a "hidden favor" for some body.

"Is it okay to fish here?" The storm with the newcomer on a fishing trip.

His sponsee got "his fish" - four pound bass.

"Touching the face of God" - the sky above was black. I could see the definite curvature of the earth ... this beautiful ball that we live and move on. "It was my first spiritual experience. I didn't realize it, but it was."

"I serve a big God. I have learned to dream big".

BOB

Everything is to serve God and others. (Step 12) "I just need to know if there is anything I can do for you."

The guy is in the hospital and in the midst of a severe regimen of chemo therapy ... he is free to be a lover.

That's the point.

Chapter Seven is a sponsorship manual. Prior to reading this chapter, I was a "loose cannon sponsor". (Also prior to particular program experiences?)

The warrants disappeared. Within a month he was drunk. The idea of "pouring cement for his statue" as a motive for getting someone sober.

It was in the 12th Step that I was able to survive sober until I had done the steps so as to have had a spiritual experience. So ... "getting out of self" is a good first step for doing Step 12. But having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps is to actually have something to give. And to follow chapter seven, is to be able to do practical 12th Step work wisely.

"I have never pondered my life for any period of time and come away joyous." With a bottle of vodka, doing this is sort of mushy and not too bad. Doing this sober is not very nice. I'm doing this one time, so depressed, and remember that there is a late evening meeting. I drag myself to the meeting. I am sitting at the back, and I can not hear what is being said. What is going on was like music in a doctor's office ... in the background. My musings on self drowns out the message of the meeting.

The dry heave guy, (the guy coming off a drunk) the pacing guy ... I have a lot of problems and this guy is annoying me. Everybody else has it easier and better than me. Helping Charlie get the meeting area left the way it should be. Leaving with Charlie intending to go separate ways. Alone Bob might have stepped over the guy lying in the parking lot coming off the drunk. But Charlie with the big mouth would tell everybody. So ... ego can save one's life ... sometimes.

He has to go to the hospital ... and has not insurance. I'm going to have to wait for along time. Then he begins to tell Bob about himself ... telling "me about me". And in the early hours of the morning I felt love for this guy. **What I fell in love with was the me I saw (and felt) in him.**

The sun is up, and I'm driving home and I am crying.. I am crying not because of my sad life, but because I had made contact with God. And everything is right as God intends it. I was not only released from the bondage of self, but I was released and aware of it!

"Nothing will so much insure immunity as *intensive* work with another alcoholic."

"Twelfth Step work would buy me these islands in the day"! Well put!

From the chapter "Into Figuring" - after leaving his daughter with her step-father. Had to meet a "knucklehead" newcomer he promised to take to a later meeting.

"If you want to get that stuff, you've got to show up where God is helping you helping others." If you want God to "goose you with the spirit" you need to be working with others.

Huge tall trees need the inter-related network of roots so as not to fall over.

"There has always been a yearning in me to take bigger bites out of life. Ed Downing called it a "divine yearning". A quote: I HAVE A MARVELOUS LIFE TODAY. AND I WANT TO TELL YOU IT'S NOT MY FAULT.

Closing - I STAND BY THE DOOR (I NEITHER GO TOO FAR IN OR STAY TOO FAR OUT...).

Transcribed by Terry from Canada