The Instructor’s Manual accompanies the DVD Integrating Therapy with 12-Step Programs (Instructor’s Version). Video available at www.psychotherapy.net.

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Instructor’s Manual for Integrating Therapy with 12-Step Programs
With Joan Ellen Zweben, PhD

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Instructor’s Manual for

INTEGRATING THERAPY WITH 12-STEP PROGRAMS

with Joan Ellen Zweben, PhD

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Tips for Making the Best Use of the DVD

1. USE THE TRANSCRIPTS
Make notes in the video Transcript for future reference; the next time you show the video you will have them available. Highlight or notate key moments in the video to better facilitate discussion during the video and post-viewing.

2. GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
Pause the video at different points to elicit viewers’ observations and reactions to the concepts presented. The Discussion Questions provide ideas about key points that can stimulate rich discussions and learning.

3. LET IT FLOW
Allow the session to play out some so viewers can appreciate the work over time instead of stopping the video too often. It is best to watch the video in its entirety since issues untouched in earlier parts often play out later. Encourage viewers to voice their opinions; no therapy is perfect! What do viewers think works and does not work in the session? We learn as much from our mistakes as our successes and it is crucial for students and therapists to develop the ability to effectively critique this work as well as their own.

4. SUGGEST READINGS TO ENRICH VIDEO MATERIAL
Assign readings from Suggestions for Further Readings and Websites prior to viewing. You can also time the video to coincide with other course or training materials on related topics.

5. ASSIGN A REACTION PAPER
See suggestions in Reaction Paper section.

6. ROLE-PLAY IDEAS
After watching the video, organize participants into groups of three. Assign each group to role-play a therapy session with a client
INTEGRATING THERAPY WITH 12-STEP PROGRAMS

who struggles with an addiction, with a focus on helping the client integrate therapy and a 12-step program. Each role-play shall consist of one therapist, one client and one observer. After the role-plays, have the groups come together to discuss their experiences. First have the clients share their experiences. Then have the therapists talk about their experiences in the session, and, finally, ask for comments from the observers. Open up a general discussion on what participants learned about integrating these two treatment approaches.

An alternative is to do this role-play in front of the group with just one therapist and one client; the entire group can observe, acting as the team behind the one-way mirror. Before the end of the session, have the therapist get feedback from the observation team and bring it back into the session with the client. Follow up with a discussion that explores what does and does not work in integrating therapy with 12-step programs.

7. WATCH THE SERIES

This video is one in a series portraying effective approaches to therapy for addictions. Each video in the series presents a master therapist working with a real client, just as you see here. By showing several of the videos in the series, you can expose viewers to a variety of approaches, allowing them an opportunity to see what fits best for their own style and beliefs.

The approach demonstrated in this video assumes that therapy and self-help groups have complementary roles in the process of recovery. Many issues can be addressed most effectively in therapy, but clients also need to forge connections with a community that supports recovery. Participation in self-help groups creates a strong support system that can enhance recovery in ways that are different from what a professional therapist can do alone. There are many approaches to self-help, but Zweben focuses in this video on 12-step groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous.

Other videos in the series use different therapeutic models. We can reflect upon the differences among these models by exploring the following questions:
• How does the model explain the addictive process?
• What assumptions does the model imply about the process of change?
• How is theory translated into practice in real-life situations?
• What is the role of the therapist?
• What outcomes are associated with successful therapy?
• How does the therapist work with people who have mental health problems along with addiction?
• What kinds of research support the approach?

8. PERSPECTIVE ON VIDEOS AND THE PERSONALITY OF THE THERAPIST

Psychotherapy portrayed in videos is less off-the-cuff than therapy in practice. Therapists or clients in videos may be nervous, putting their best foot forward, or trying to show mistakes and how to deal with them. Therapists may also move more quickly than is typical in everyday practice to demonstrate a technique. The personal style of a therapist is often as important as their techniques and theories. Thus, while we can certainly pick up ideas from master therapists, participants must make the best use of relevant theory, technique and research that fits their own personal style and the needs of their clients.

*A NOTE ON CONFIDENTIALITY

Because this video contains an actual therapy session, professional integrity is required to protect the confidentiality of the client who has courageously shared his personal life with us.
Group Discussion Questions

Professors, training directors and facilitators may use a few or all of these discussion questions keyed to certain elements of the video or those issues most relevant to the growth, development and interests of the viewers.

INTRODUCTION

1. **A Different Animal:** What is your gut reaction to the notion of integrating psychotherapy with 12-step programs? Does it seem feasible that these two approaches can coordinate, or do you see them as mutually exclusive? What experiences from your own life inform your opinion?

2. **Personal Growth:** Zweben indicates that in addition to working toward abstinence, psychotherapy for addictions also includes all the personal growth goals of any other psychotherapy. How do you feel about this? Is it possible to do personal growth work in psychotherapy before abstinence? If so, are there caveats or requirements? If not, why not?

3. **Self-Castigation:** Zweben’s asserts that while some people see the “self-castigation” aspect of 12-step programs (i.e. using the identity of a recovering person as a way of castigating oneself) as the primary purpose of meetings, there are many other features of 12-step programs that may be predominant therapeutic factors. What do you think about that? Do you agree with her characterization of the emphasis on shared dysfunction as self-castigation? Do you frame it differently? How do you see people benefiting from 12-step programs without emphasizing that aspect? What do you think about her statement that self-castigation is not a feature of 12-step programs at all, but a feature of individual people?

4. **The Community:** What do you think about the idea that people do so well in 12-step programs in part because they provide a sense of community that is lacking in modern society? Does the
concept of “the community as change agent” make sense to you or would people be better off just doing it on their own?

PSYCHOTHERAPY SESSION

5. **Mobilization**: What does Zweben do in particular that helps Mark (the client) mobilize around his desire to return to AA? How does she approach his ambivalence and help him harness his motivation to get better? How does she work with him to facilitate a shift away from his pattern of being mobilized only by bad consequences? Do you think these approaches are effective? How so?

6. **A Year**: What do you notice about the way Zweben works with Mark regarding his pattern of maintaining sobriety for a year at a time? What meaning does the year have for you in this case? If you were Mark’s therapist, how might you have worked with him differently?

7. **Daughters**: What do you think about the discussion between Zweben and Mark, about how his drinking affects his daughters’ lives? Why do you suppose Zweben did not delve into this issue with Mark at this time? Do you think she could have taken this further? If the timing were right, how would you explore his thoughts and feelings about his daughters and drinking more deeply?

8. **“I don’t have any excuse”**: What reactions come up for you when Mark describes how easy it would be to get involved in 12-step meetings and that he has no excuse for not starting? If you were the therapist in the room with Mark, would it be difficult for you to remain empathic and non-judgemental with a client like Mark? Would you find yourself getting impatient, or slipping into pep talk or advice-giving mode?

9. **Resistance**: What stands out for you in the way Zweben works with Mark’s resistance, especially his fear of judgment by a sponsor and his statement that it would not be feasible to go to a meeting every day? Did you find her approach effective? What might you have done differently?
DISCUSSION

10. **Strengths and Challenges:** What do you think would be particularly challenging for you about working with a client like Mark? What unique strengths would you bring as a therapist that could make working with him rewarding and successful?

11. **The Therapeutic Relationship:** How would you characterise the therapeutic relationship in this video? How significant do you think the relationship was in this particular course of therapy?

12. **The Model:** What do you think about this model for working with clients who are addicted to substances? Does it make sense to you? Do you see yourself using it in your work with this population? What would you do differently from Zweben’s model?

13. **Zweben’s Style:** What about Zweben allowed Mark to feel comfortable enough to engage in the therapy? How did she join with Mark?

14. **Personal Reaction:** How would you feel about being a client of Zweben’s? Do you feel an alliance could be made, and that she would be effective with you? Why or why not?
Psychotherapy.net

Reaction Paper for Classrooms and Training

• Assignment: Complete this reaction paper and return it by the date noted by the facilitator.

• Suggestions for Viewers: Take notes on these questions while viewing the video and complete the reaction paper afterwards, or use the questions as a way to approach the discussion. Respond to each question below.

• Length and Style: 2-4 pages double-spaced. Be brief and concise. Do NOT provide a full synopsis of the video. This is meant to be a brief reaction paper that you write soon after watching the video—we want your ideas and reactions.

What to Write: Respond to the following questions in your reaction paper:

1. Key points: What important points did you learn about psychotherapy and the 12-step approach with clients who are addicted to drugs and/or alcohol? What stands out in how Zweben works?

2. What I am resistant to: What issues/principles/strategies did you find yourself having resistance to, or what approaches made you feel uncomfortable? Did any techniques or interactions push your buttons? What interventions would you be least likely to apply in your work? Explore these questions.

3. What I found most helpful: What was most beneficial to you as a therapist about the model presented? What tools or perspectives did you find helpful and might you use in your own work?

4. How I would do it differently: What might you have done differently than Zweben did in the video? Be specific in what different approaches, strategies and techniques you might have applied.

5. Other Questions/Reactions: What questions or reactions did you have as you viewed the therapy in the video? Other
comments, thoughts or feelings?

Suggestions for Further Readings, Websites and Videos

BOOKS


WEB RESOURCES

[www.psychotherapy.net](http://www.psychotherapy.net) In-depth Interview with Stephanie Brown, PhD on Psychotherapy and Addictions

[www.ebcrp.org](http://www.ebcrp.org) East Bay Community Recovery Project, where Dr. Zweben is Executive Director

[www.baartcdp.com](http://www.baartcdp.com) BAART Programs runs The 14th Street Clinic in Oakland, California, a substance abuse treatment program founded by Dr. Zweben
INTEGRATING THERAPY WITH 12-STEP PROGRAMS

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org  Alcoholics Anonymous
www.na.org  Narcotics Anonymous
http://naadac.org  NAADAC: The Association for Addiction Professionals
http://csat.samhsa.gov  The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, US Department of Health and Human Services
www.niaaa.nih.gov  National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

RELATED VIDEOS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PSYCHOTHERAPY.NET

Cognitive Therapy for Addictions
   – Bruce S. Liese, PhD

Couple Therapy for Addictions
   – Barbara S. McGrady, PhD

Harm Reduction Therapy for Addictions
   – G. Alan Marlatt, PhD

Motivational Interviewing
   – William R. Miller, PhD

Reality Therapy for Addictions
   – Robert E. Wubbolding, EdD

Solutions Step By Step: A Solution-Focused Approach to Treating Substance Abuse Problems
   – Insoo Kim Berg & Norman Reuss

Stages of Change for Addictions
   – John C. Norcross, PhD

Treating Alcoholism in Psychotherapy, Volumes I & II
   – Stephanie Brown, PhD
Complete Transcript of a Demonstration of Integrating Therapy with 12-Step Programs With Joan Ellen Zweben, PhD

Note to facilitators: We have marked indicators at five-minute intervals throughout the transcript, which coordinate with chapter markers on the DVD, so that you may easily skip to desired points within the session.

PSYCHOTHERAPY SESSION

Joan Zweben–1: Hi, Mark. I’m Joan Zweben.

Mark–1: Hi Joan.

Zweben–2: Hi. And I was wanting to know what you hope to get out of being here today?

Mark–2: As a session, I haven’t had many counseling sessions. I don’t know exactly what to expect or an interview like this of this nature. Um, to be honest with you I don’t know. I don’t exactly know why. I don’t know why I’m here, I’m being interviewed, but I don’t know what issues that I need to discuss . . .

Zweben–3: Sure.

Mark–3: I’m not a doctor, I mean I know my problems, but I don’t know how to interpret them or sometimes how to effectively work through them.

Zweben–4: Okay. Or how to use this time?

Mark–4: Exactly.

Zweben–5: We have a particular interest in people and how they use twelve step programs or have obstacles to using twelve step programs,
so we can discuss that, but we can really talk about anything we get into in the course of the 45 minutes that we will spend today.

Mark–5: Okay.

Zweben–6: Can you give me a little big picture about how you got here, what your issues are with alcohol and drugs, and where you are in your recovery?

Mark–6: Okay. As far as where I’m at in my recovery, I’m not, I guess you could say I’m a practicing drinker. I know that, I’ve been making some inquiries lately about getting back into the twelve step programs in the area. But to go back, I come from a big family of alcoholics. So, it started when I was in high school. Growing up. In the home, it was in the home. It was in the high school where I went. I picked it up really easy at teenage parties, although you know that the average teenager goes and has a couple and that would be it. But I would be the one at the end they’d have to help up and take home. So, it progressed and progressed to I came to a point in my life where I would have to either take care of where I was going in the future.

2–3

I didn’t do very well at all in high school, and everybody else was going off to college. I’m not going to say I failed miserably in high school, but there was a border there. So I chose the Marine Corps, which is a perfect place for an alcoholic. Nothing about the Marines, but the perfect atmosphere. It was accepted, and it just, I was able to be where I wanted to be there, and I guess it was a drinker. So after that, after I got out of the Marine Corps., after Desert Storm, I came back. Some family members and friends told me, look, aren’t you getting a little tired of this? Oh, and in the Marine Corps I had an incident where I got in trouble out in the town on one of the bases, and as a, not as a punishment but as just part of the process, I had went into rehab there. In the Marine Corps. So that was my first experience with twelve step. And I enjoyed it. But as, it would seem to me that every time I tried, I would get to about a year, and I don’t know exactly, it’s been a while since I’ve been to the meetings and everything, but I can’t imagine at what point in the steps I am at there after a year or
maybe it’s psychologically where you are supposed to move up and beyond certain issues, or maybe I’m just stuck there at that year, and I get disgruntled, or maybe I think, oh well, I got this licked. And I can make excuses to go drink now.

Zweben–7: When you say a year, do you mean a year with no drinking?

Mark–7: Right.

Zweben–8: Well, what about other drugs like marijuana?

Mark–8: No, no. In high school I experimented with marijuana, but that was it. No cocaine, none of that. Just the alcohol use.

Zweben–9: I see. So when you say year, that means clean of everything.

Mark–9: Right. But not necessarily the model twelve stepper, or if there is, just maybe getting to the point where I can function. It seems, I could do well, I could be on my ninth month and things are going real well. Last time I’d been through the program and somewhere around my ninth month I got my new job, the job I have now for the last five years, and things have been happening really well for me. But recently issues in the house, my daughters are getting older. You know, the pile of beer cans on the table is not acceptable anymore. And I want to take care of going back to the twelve step program. So basically, that’s where I’m at right now.

Zweben–10: I see. Wait. I’m a little unclear. So you had nine or ten months about five years ago when you got, when you . . .

Mark–10: I kind of skipped over. In the Marine Corps. I had about nine or ten months. I got stationed to Okinawa, Japan so I guess maybe a new location. I picked up drinking there again.

Zweben–11: I see.

Mark–11: I got lucky as far as drinking goes. I got sent to Desert Storm. No alcohol at all.

Zweben–12: How was that?

Mark–12: Um, oh, you look at the newspapers and you look at the
TV and say oh my soul. Whew, that was an easy one. But it’s not necessarily easy. I was on a tank. One of the ground troops. It was easy for the spectator watching CNN I suppose, but it was something I would never want to do again. It was just an experience I could never... never volunteer for again. Never. I made it through fine on my tank. Made it through fine. We had some scrapes and stuff, but it’s just the, visualizing it on TV is not anything like being there in the middle of this chaos I guess you can call it.

Zweben–13: So you had a really hard time in that stint.

Mark–13: With the war it wasn’t physically hard.

2–8

And emotionally hard it wasn’t that bad until the very, the war was over. We were in southern Kuwait City and we had liberated an airport and we were resting there because it was over. And everybody, the elation, you know, you could hear the jubilation fire in the city and we would, we were riding out, and they were all greeting us and waving and everything. But after that, I’d been there for a couple more weeks, and when it sets in and the adrenaline’s gone, you’re just sitting there thinking to yourself, wow. You know, the things you see and some of the things that have been going on around you for the six to ten days and not even to mention the air war, they don’t sink in until you actually have time to process them. You’re not really processing them while you’re doing them. You’re saying, I gotta take care of this, so when you process them you’ve got to really stop to think, wow, that was really horrific, the dynamics of that.

Zweben–14: So it sounds like you have leftovers from there now.

Mark–14: Yeah, I do. I don’t have, not like shellshock or anything like that, but just, I use it as a point sometimes in reference to my motivations. The only motivations I really have nowadays are the negative ones. Like tax time. Gosh last day. That’s the negative motivation. Fortunately, I had gotten it done, but this is the first year I didn’t have to rush out and get, but in my life when I have to take care of some important things, it seems like it’s just I’ll wait, and I’ll wait, and I’ll wait until something makes me do it. Um, and in my
drinking in the past, the incident in the Marine Corps had forced me into it. And you know in the back of your mind that you should be doing it anyways. And then after a while you take that, seems like that year for me, nine months to a year where I say well this is things are happening. I got a new job. So I get out of the Marine Corps. A year and a half goes by. I get into a car wreck. Some serious damage to my ear, scars and nothing to the other person. But it’s just one of those, another wake up calls. Gee, what am I doing now. What have I done? Time to take care of it. So I went to rehab again in 1993. 1993, 1994. And things went well for about actually a little over a year. I got a new job, and shortly after my fiancé at the time and I got our first apartment, we were scheduled to get married, I started drinking again. So, it’s just a cycle. I guess.

Zweben–15: So what do you think happened? What went into the decision to start drinking again?

Mark–15: It’s not one of the, it’s not a “I’m cured.” I wouldn’t be foolish enough to think that. It’s at first I think it’s maybe I can get away with it or nobody’s watching. I don’t know. I mean it’s just, when it gets to that point I think to myself well I can handle it. But it’s, and then the next day when you wake up and you say what are you doing? But then there were no repercussions from yesterday so why not today? Or I could say to myself I can have so many drinks tonight and not go to work smell like alcohol tomorrow. So basically that’s where I’m at right now. I’ve been looking into some information, and when I say looking into, it’s not a lie. But it’s I could, for the last week I’ve been looking into it. If I really truly had been looking into it I would have went exactly where I know I’ll find it. So, I’ve got…there’s just no motivation sometimes to, I know what I have to do.

2–13

Physically I feel okay today, so I’m thinking, well, I didn’t get run over by a car. I didn’t get into a bar fight when I was, nothing’s happened, so I’ve got some more time to drink. So I don’t want tomorrow to be that incident that makes me go back and do that, something looming over my head or like the negative motivation that I was saying.
Zweben–16: Tell me if I understand you that a lot of what mobilizes you about drinking and other things is bad consequences. And you want to make the shift to be mobilized by something more positive than that? Going towards rather than...

Mark–16: Exactly. Um, when I was a child it would be like if it takes me all summer I’m going to go off that high dive. And you wouldn’t believe the, I don’t have a name for it . . .

Zweben–17: Passion.

Mark–17: Where is that? Where is that at now? I’m 33 years old. Where is it? You know? And then you see, read books and magazines on inspiration. Some 80-year old guy is running triathlons and what happened to me? Where is that at?

Zweben–18: Well, but alcohol is a depressant drug.

Mark–18: Exactly.

Zweben–19: It’s kind of hard to have that if you are drinking it all the time. So it sounds like you had some sense of real vitality during the periods you were sober.

Mark–19: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Gosh, I could get things accomplished. And to me cleaning my bedroom, I guess I, I’ll go to the, a week and a half will go by. I won’t clean my bedroom. It should be every other day. I’d straighten out the bed, dust, vacuum, what have you. So, those kind of things where you stay home and is it clean the house tonight or sit around and do nothing or drink or whatever. I don’t really go out except to dinner with my wife every now and then. But I don’t go out to the bars or with the buddies after work. It’s not social drinking. It’s basically sitting by myself or my wife drinks occasionally so . . .

Zweben–20: How does she feel about your drinking?

Mark–20: She notices that I am not complete motivated. Especially, we moved into a new house, and there’s so many chores to get done, and there’s only so many times she’s going to ask me to finish the landscaping or something, or just something I should have done a long time ago she asked me to do and I said yeah, and just hadn’t, done half of it or not done the whole thing or stuff like that. So I don’t know. I
don’t, it’s not that I don’t have energy. The job I have is, I work on a dock unloading and loading trucks. Forklift operator. You know I can lift and move boxes all day. But that’s, if you don’t do that you get fired, so, I have to do that. But I just can’t seem to get any of that passion towards any other aspect of my life. Every day just, things like your hopes and dreams. You still have them, you know, but you just decide to do something one day and you just forget about it the next because you know I would drink. So basically that’s where I am. I’m stuck.

Zweben–21: Now you said when you were involved with twelve step programs before you liked them.

Mark–21: I do.

Zweben–22: What do you like?

Mark–22: Socializing comes to mind number one. I like people. I like the interaction, and it beats getting in trouble to me. It’s a little smothering at times and when after meetings everybody wants to go out for coffee and all this other stuff, and I don’t know. I don’t know. A lot of the huggy stuff that I don’t really like.

2–18

But other than that, I enjoy it. I enjoy the socializing.

Zweben–23: So, the socializing is fine, but the smothering was when it…extended too far . . .

Mark–23: Well, sometimes you know you get to know a lot of the huggy, touchy feely type stuff. A lot of people just want to hug you, and I’ll settle for a handshake, stuff like that. It doesn’t, I would never say that to somebody, you know. But it would just, you know, I would never, I wouldn’t embarrass them. But then sometimes it’s genuinely, I enjoy something like that. An old friend I might see or something like that. It’s different, but I don’t know what it is about the year, the year into it. I’ve categorized it. I’ve look at it each time, and it’s right about a year.

Zweben–24: Yeah.

Mark–24: And I’m trying to think well my intentions are this next time
when I get there is to ask why there’s usually that trip up or whatever it might be. Whether it’s me or I don’t know. I can work on it there.

_Zweben–25:_ Well, you’ve come up with what I think is a big piece of the answer where when you’re doing well and it’s easier to convince yourself that you can handle it now. You’re feeling good.

_Mark–25:_ Right.

_Zweben–26:_ So as long as you are motivated by negative stuff only, negative consequences only, it would be very easy to fall in the trap.

_Mark–26:_ Exactly.

_Zweben–27:_ So, for this time now part of what you’ve expressed earlier is you want to be motivated more positively to sustain the goodies rather than to avoid the problems, and that would be an important thing to keep your eye on as you get more time.

_Mark–27:_ Right. It would always be nicer to think I walked in here instead of been pushed in here. First couple of times, the first time I might have been kicking and screaming. I wasn’t an idiot, and the questions the doctors asked me, I was truthful on. So it’s not like oh, by the way Mr. Solidy, you’re an alcoholic. Oh gee, thanks. I’ll go to AA right away. It’s not how it generally works. But I knew that I had a problem. And the second time, like I said, the car accident, and I don’t want a third incident to make me go.

_Zweben–28:_ And you mentioned your kids played a role in this now.

_Mark–28:_ Well, they’re going through DARE.

_Zweben–29:_ Oh.

_Mark–29:_ And they’re very sharp.

_Zweben–30:_ Yes.

_Mark–30:_ It’s hard to be role model for a child when you’re not doing the right things anyways. What kind of role model would I be if I kept up my negative behaviors or the drinking and probably negative behaviors too besides associated with drinking, just a, I want to be that role model, that they look up to and they talk about instead of looking outside the home for one and find one there.
Zweben–31: Do they talk to you about your drinking?

Mark–31: No.

Zweben–32: I see.

Mark–32: Not in a negative . . .

Zweben–33: You know that they’re . . .

Mark–33: Yeah, I know. I know. Well yeah, they could say Dad you only let me have one Pepsi, but you’ve had your fourth beer. And you can’t answer that. You can’t say, well, it’s the way it is. I have a hard time with just answering that question. So it’s the stuff like that that’s, you know, what happened to that paper that I had you sign yesterday. You said you left it on the table. And it would be under my ashtrays and under my things that I left from work, and I didn’t clean up after myself, you know. Just stuff like that. I don’t like, it just seems an untidy part of my life, and I need to make it cleaner. Before my daughters, well like I said, they’re pretty bright. They’re not slow by any means. So I’m sure that they see a problem. They haven’t confronted me on it. They are 11 and 12. So I don’t know if they know how to. If they were older, I’m sure they might say something different.

Zweben–34: Sooner than you think.

Mark–34: Exactly. My friend’s parents don’t do that or my friend’s father doesn’t do that.

2–23

So I want to shift away from all that. I want to take care of some of the things I need to.

Zweben–35: So have you looked into meetings to go to?

Mark–35: Yes. In the last, it’s been about a week. I mean I’ve, I have, this is going to sound like a lame excuse, I’ve got to get this pamphlet that has all the local meetings. And there is a club in the area, so I’ve got to go to the club. During one the meetings pick up the pamphlet and just go basically. So, and they’re at all different times of the day. So I really don’t have an excuse, and I need to go and take care of this as
soon as possible before like I said this, before any incidents or before anything happens.

**Zweben–36:** So, it sounds like you have strong pulls positive and negative that you are really mobilizing to tackle it. You know what you have to do.

**Mark–36:** I know what I have to do.

**Zweben–37:** But there’s obstacles.

**Mark–37:** I get home from work. I could tell myself I’m tired and go to the refrigerator instead. And in the morning, when I’m getting up for work, I think my god, I had the perfect opportunity yesterday. What happened? And I can think about it all day, you know. Here’s what I’m going to do. Here’s what I’m going to do. The whistle blows and something different happens. I get home. So I don’t need to go home right away. I should just go right to where I need to go and get the information and start talking to some people because I have family members that are involved, but I just want to do it myself, but then it’s not even a program about doing it yourself. It’s about getting help. So, some of the issues there where I need to, I don’t have to do it all by myself. I can ask for a ride. I can ask for help. You know, I can ask where they’re at in town. So that’s what I am going to work on.

**Zweben–38:** Well, those things are sort of the nuts and bolts of getting here, but I wonder if some of it isn’t that this is a really big step for you to commit yourself to this effort again and going to meetings is a symbol of that.

**Mark–38:** It is. Just going to meetings was just the ticket and you could just go to meetings for the rest of your life and that would be it. You wouldn’t have to worry about drinking anymore, but that’s not it. You need to go to the meetings and work on the things I say I want to work on right now, but when the closet’s open, what really happens? When somebody asks me a question in a meeting or asks me how does that make me feel, well to be honest with you I don’t know if I’ll be… I can do that. I can open up to people, but that’s where the work is.

**Zweben–39:** Are you talking about in a twelve step meeting?

**Mark–39:** Yes.
Zweben—40: Do people normally around here ask questions in meetings?

Mark—40: No, no, no. I’m sorry. They don’t ask questions. But if I wanted a sponsor and if he was wondering about my sincerity or lack thereof, I’d say look. What are you going to do? What are you going to do to, I can say well I’ll make 90 meetings in 90 days. And he would say well what if you miss a day. Well 90 meetings in 91 days. Well, I’ve never used that line, but I thought to myself well if he said that to me well then, I just, it’s a lot easier saying it to go to meetings and having to work like I said work on yourself and doing the things you need to do inside of the twelve step program. I can say I need it and I can say I want it, but when I get there, working it, you know the first two steps I can say honestly I 100%, but when it gets to down the line where you’ve got to do some work,

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some soul searching, then it gets painful there and you need to, what’s easier? Staying home or doing that?

Zweben—41: I’m getting a feeling you’re worried you’re going to open up some can of worms that you can’t handle.

Mark—41: Not that I can’t handle. Well, no, I don’t know. I can’t honestly say no. I can’t imagine anybody with a drinking history like mine for so many years in and out of the program. Some of just the unrelated incidents that happen in my life that kind of fall into your lap, yeah. Everybody, I mean, there are some scary things in there, yeah.

Zweben—42: The other thing I wondered about, you were saying that when you’re just participating in the meeting itself wasn’t that scary, but it was the interaction with the sponsor and the kind of questions the sponsor would put. How do you feel, I’m putting a lot of questions to you here.

Mark—42: Do you want an honest answer?

Zweben—43: Sure.

Mark—43: I may never see you again.
Zweben–44: I see. So that makes it different.
Mark–44: Right.
Zweben–45: Yeah.
Mark–45: And I can’t see anybody else in here because of the lights.
Zweben–46: I see.
Mark–46: So that’s easy.
Zweben–47: I see. But so it’s being questioned by somebody that you’re…
Mark–47: That I know. That I will see, and he might say oh my soul, you did that? But I know he won’t. He might come back and say yeah, well I’ve been there too. But I’ve got to, you’ve got to, I can talk about it all I want, but it’s actually going and doing it, getting it over with I guess. I don’t know. You know I never truly got a real sponsor. I’ve always asked somebody hey, can you be my temporary sponsor. What’s that? Just somebody I can call? Not that that’s not important. You can always talk to somebody, but that’s not really, it’ll get to the time where you need a real sponsor, and I have, just laying the whole thing on the table. That’s scary. You know you are going to tell these people some things that you haven’t even told your wife or your, other people in your family. Or at least that’s the way I perceive things would work because I’d never gotten a sponsor, a true sponsor. And maybe I just get to the point where I don’t need a sponsor, I don’t need this, I don’t need that. I feel good. Got a new job. It’s that type of pattern I need to get away from.
Zweben–48: Yeah. ‘Cause a sponsor is one of the most meaningful parts of the program for a lot of people. The sense I got as you were talking about it is being judged harshly by the sponsor was a real issue.
Mark–48: Yeah.
Zweben–49: And we all know that can happen if you don’t pick him carefully.
Mark–49: Exactly. But that’s just a risk I’m going to have to take because you can’t, can’t have an omelet without breaking any eggs.
Zweben–50: Yeah. Yeah. Have you ever been in any kind of therapy?

Mark–50: There was a group, I’m not going to make light of it. There was a group, I went to the Veteran’s Memorial for the rehab, and there was a questionnaire that was handed out. And I was asked to participate because I was a combat veteran. And basically they were unobtrusive questions. They weren’t, you know, they ask do loud noises scare you. That wasn’t that type of thing, and I filled it out, and then they asked me if I wanted to sit in on this post traumatic stress. I’m thinking okay I’ll sit in a couple of times. And I was the only one from Desert Storm. It’s going to sound like an excuse, but the whole room was 10, 2–33

15 guys are Vietnam veteran era discussing a lot of the, a lot of the combat and a lot of the missions and stuff like that. And to me that just seemed, I couldn’t relate to them on that level. Now if it had been a different atmosphere, maybe like a one on one or a smaller group dynamic thing of my peers, because my peers from Desert Storm 90% of them haven’t seen the casualties up close or even hand to hand combat like some of these other gentleman were. So that type of stuff. And I don’t know. And it seemed that I wasn’t taken seriously enough. So that’s why I said I didn’t really care for that group. Now if it had been other people, other circumstances, like my peers for example, that would be different. Maybe I could have have benefitted more from that type of thing, but I don’t know exactly how that would tie in. I’m not a doctor. But I do know that …

Zweben–51: Well, no, I think that you are on the right track. That their experience was so different, and yours was painful, and it’s important to have somebody who really understands that and doesn’t minimize what you went through because what they went through was different.

Mark–51: Right. I mean the ground war only lasted six days. I would take any other six days of my life and replace those, so to me that would, I don’t know, that would give you some idea of people say hey we got this thing going on in Europe right now, and I’m like sorry
guys. Can’t help you, you know. I’m not a conscientious objector, I just would not go back to the military. Even if there was combat or not. I just, the whole atmosphere, the camaraderie is great, but you just, if I’m going to try to work on myself, that’s not the type of atmosphere that I need. It’s like going out with the buddies and shooting pool. Sure pool might be a sport, but it’s where they play at that gets me in trouble. So. Like in the military, I enjoyed it, but no thanks.

Zweben–52: Reason I asked you about therapy is that I think psychotherapy and twelve step programs are complimentary. That there are things you get out of twelve step that you can never get out of therapy, and there are some things that you can get out of psychotherapy more regularly. And the key is to recognize when you’re not getting what you need and go for where you’re likely to get it. Just like you recognized that you need a group of Desert Storm era people who understand what you’re talking about and aren’t measuring it by the standard of what went on in Vietnam. It’s that same kind of thing that you, people do get much of what’re wanting from sponsors and from twelve step meetings, but sometimes probing the feeling states and being in a situation where that person’s job is to work with you on that issue and nothing else, the psychological issues, not just the recovery issues, you can get more from a professional situation.

Mark–52: Right. Well, when it comes to motivation I guess nobody else is going to light the fire under your pants. So, I’m just going to have to get moving.

Zweben–53: What would help you do that?

Mark–53: Besides something negative?

Zweben–54: Yeah.

Mark–54: Oh, a day off. No, being off of work early then and going over to the club and getting all the information. I still have all the books and some other books. Dusting them off and starting to read them. My wife knows what I want to do and she is 100% behind me, so that’s not an issue.
So just going and doing it. Basically that’s it. But …

Zweben–55: So asking for part of a day off is one way.

Mark–55: Um, I was kind of making light because these places, they’re open late. The club is open late. They have late meetings, but I use the excuse of I had a long day. I go home and relax and not want to get up, but I need to go from work right there. Not necessarily have to, or day off. I might tell my bosses that, but I just need to go from work. Don’t even go home. Go right there, meet some people, stay there long enough, hit a meeting, come home, go to bed. Or sit around and digest and then the next day, I just need things to occupy my time instead of drinking. It wouldn’t be feasible for me to go to a meeting every day. So I need maybe a hobby. Maybe doing the lawn, landscaping. My wife’s been asking me about that. I just need to do things. I need to stay busy. Because if I just sit around and think, I just, boredom is a problem, and you know, if I get bored, I would drink, basically.

Zweben–56: What would make it hard for you to go every day at least for a while?

Mark–56: Well, my daughters, but I’ve got some pretty understanding family. I think I could cover that.

Zweben–57: Do you understand why that’s useful?

Mark–57: Well, I mentioned earlier 90 days, 90 meetings in 90 days.

Zweben–58: But do you understand why people say that?

Mark–58: Not entirely. Not...

Zweben–59: You get a momentum and a routine and it’s in some ways easier once you really get into it and at that level of intensity then some other things can carry you.

Mark–59: Right. Well, that would basically fill in the blank spots instead of the, idle spots, excuse me. Yeah. I do have a wonderful family, so covering for me the couple of hours until my wife gets home, or I could just go to a later meeting, just, basically that was an excuse. I could feasibly do 90 in 90 days. And it wouldn’t really be a
lot of work to find babysitters and stuff like that. So, yeah. Yeah. I just have to go there. I have to start. The first day.

**Zweben–60:** Was coming here part of mobilizing yourself?

**Mark–60:** Yeah. I mean I didn’t drink today. It’s going to be too late for me to go home and drink, so that was easy. So tomorrow, today’s Wednesday, okay. Thursday, tomorrow I need to find out what times the meetings are in my local town and take care of some things. I have to get the ball rolling and in the next week or two try to find at least, I use the word, temporary sponsor. I need to find a real sponsor too. But I’m not going to rush into that. At least not the first week. I’m going to be comfortable with somebody. I don’t want to, you used the word, I don’t want to lay everything out and have somebody be rejected morally because somebody thinks I did something horrendous or how could you do that, you know. How could you let that happen? Something like that. I don’t want to hear that. At least from a sponsor.

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Now if I need to take my medicine, then that’s what I have to do, but if somebody’s telling me I’m being a jerk, then that’s fine. Within the parameters of AA, the twelve steps.

**Zweben–61:** But could you picture yourself saying to somebody, I need you to tell it like it is to me but it wouldn’t help if you were harsh with me. Could you lay that out?

**Mark–61:** If I was talking to somebody, and I was asking them as a role reversal, I would never be judgmental. That’s a lie. In my mind I can’t help but I think some things, you can’t help what you think at a given time. I wouldn’t tell him. Now if he had said to me, you know, I’ve been just cheating on my wife for the last five years and it’s really getting the better of me, well stop. That’s, that’s not one of those okay, what else? You see that. It’s not, see maybe I’m judgmental on some things and not others, but something is continually doing, well now see …

**Zweben–62:** Yeah. We’re almost out of time. I just was hoping that if you can articulate what you need from a sponsor and how you
need him or her, him probably, to act, you are more likely to make a connection where that’s understood from the outset, and it sounds like that is very important, the right kind of balance.

**Mark–62:** See, but I would need somebody I was completely comfortable with. Although if you think about it, the person you are completely comfortable with, well in AA, may or may not be the best sponsor for you, because it would probably be a real good friend. And you could find yourself being not so truthful or I don’t know. You’re right. I would need somebody to lay it on the line. I would think.

**Zweben–63:** Well, I think we’re coming to the end, and I want to thank you for coming.

**Mark–63:** Well, it was my pleasure.

**Zweben–64:** Good.

**Mark–64:** Thank you.

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