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Talking Back to the Big Book

Shortly after my wife and I were divorced, she and her new boyfriend took my youngest daughter and her boyfriend on a "double-date" down to Opryland in Nashville, Tennessee. This really came down on me hard. The more I thought about it, the angrier I became. In no time at all, this had built up into a major resentment requiring an appeasement of no less than my ex-wife's head on a platter.

Knowing this was not possible, I thought the next best thing was for me to show all of them by getting good and drunk. My oldest daughter, who was at work, decided to call and see how I was doing. I went into the kitchen to answer the phone and promptly chewed her out and just as promptly hung up on her. She had no earthly idea what was going on. After hanging up on her, I was ready to show them all just what I thought of

them for hurting my feelings. As I turned to go, I looked down on the kitchen table and there was my Big Book looking right up at me. I froze in my tracks. For what seemed like an eternity of taking inventories, we stared at each other. It was an impasse. Finally I said to my Big Book, pointing and shaking my finger at it, "OK, OK, you've got one minute and that's it! You hear? One minute and then I'm out of here."

I sat down at the table and flipped it open so aggressively it's no wonder I didn't break the back of the book in the process. But there it was, page 64, glaring at me with the message, "Resentment is the 'number one' offender." I was shocked, almost in a trance. I began to read faster than I ever believed possible. I read to where it says, "We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us. In that state, the wrong-doing of others, fancied or real, had power to actually kill." I finished reading on page 67. The Big Book told me what to do and how to do it and then, I did it!

The anger went away as the first tear fell. I felt so humble. I realized then how close I had come to that

insidious insanity before God intervened with the phone call from my daughter, who wanted nothing in particular. Five phones in the house and I "chose" to answer the one in the kitchen, which wasn't the closest one to me. But it was the one where my Big Book just happened to be.

Call it what you like. I choose to call it a divine intervention, allowing me the momentary hesitation in my stinkin' thinkin'. Just those few short seconds allowed me the time to realize who I was, what I was, and most importantly, where I was in relationship to the Twelve Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The bottom line was this. I realized that both my ex-wife and my daughter had their own lives to lead and their own decisions to make. Neither one was responsible to me for their actions. God had deprived me, much to my momentary dismay, of that lifelong privilege of trying to run everybody else's show.

Upon accepting this fact, my anger not only went away, but my serenity returned. What a great lesson I learned that day.

Bill S., Paducah, Ky.