The Bridge Passage

Big Book pp. 65–67 in plain words — the turn from "what they did" to "where was I wrong"

You made your list. Who you resent (Column 1). What they did (Column 2). What it touched in you (Column 3). Now, before the last column, the Big Book stops and talks to you for three pages. Sponsors call these pages *the Bridge*. They are the reason Column 4 works.

> *"We turned back to the list, for it held the key to the future. We were prepared to look at it from an entirely different angle."*
>
> — How It Works, p. 66

FIRST, THE WORD ITSELF

re-sent = "feel again"

Resentment is old anger I keep feeling again. The hurt happened once — maybe years ago. I replay it, and I burn again today. The book says it is our deadliest problem:

> *"Resentment is the 'number one' offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else."*
>
> — How It Works, p. 64

WHERE YOU ARE IN STEP FOUR

COLUMNS 1 & 2
who I resent, and why

↓

COLUMN 3
what it touched in me — the seven parts of self, fears in brackets

↓

★ THE BRIDGE — YOU ARE HERE
pp. 65–67 — why we look at our own mistakes

↓

COLUMN 4
my own mistakes — the Realization, then selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, afraid

How to use this sheet: one row at a time. Read the book's words out loud. Read the plain words. Then stop and talk: *where is this true in my life?*

THE READING — PARTS ONE & TWO

What We Saw — and What It Costs

This is why the inventory cannot stop at "they were wrong."

PART 1 — WHEN THE LIST WAS DONE

pp. 65–66

THE BOOK SAYS	IN PLAIN WORDS
"We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully." — p. 65	Write it all. Leave nothing out. Tell the truth. Then read it slowly and take a long, honest look.
"The first thing apparent was that this world and its people were often quite wrong. To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got." — pp. 65–66	Yes — people really did hurt us. The book does not deny it. But most of us stopped at "they were wrong" — and never got any further, or any better.
"The usual outcome was that people continued to wrong us and we stayed sore. Sometimes it was remorse and then we were sore at ourselves." — p. 66	Blaming changed nothing. They kept doing it. We stayed angry — at them, or at ourselves. ("Remorse" = feeling awful about what *we* did.)
"But the more we fought and tried to have our own way, the worse matters got." — p. 66	Fighting for my way made everything worse — outside **and** inside.
"As in war, the victor only seemed to win. Our moments of triumph were short-lived." — p. 66	Even when we won, we lost. Being "right" felt good for a minute. Then it was gone.

PART 2 — LIFE OR DEATH

p. 66

THE BOOK SAYS	IN PLAIN WORDS
"It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours that might have been worthwhile." — p. 66	A life full of resentment is a dead end — nothing but unhappiness. Notice the word **only**. And every hour spent resenting is an hour of my life in the trash. ("Futility" = it gets you nothing. "Squander" = waste.)
"But with the alcoholic, whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal." — p. 66	For normal people, resentment is a problem. For us it is **deadly**. Staying sober depends on staying close to God — and resentment cuts that line.
"For when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit." — p. 66	"Harboring" = keeping it and feeding it. Holding a grudge pulls the blinds down. Nobody blocks God's light from me — I do it myself.
"The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die." — p. 66	Blocked off from God, the crazy thinking comes back. Then the first drink. And for people like us, drinking is dying.

hold the grudge → **blocked from God** → **insanity returns** → **we drink** → **we die**

Poison — and the Turn

PART 3 — ANGER IS POISON FOR US

p. 66

THE BOOK SAYS	IN PLAIN WORDS
"If we were to live, we had to be free of anger." — p. 66	This is not about being nice. It is about staying alive.
"The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us. They may be the dubious luxury of normal men, but for alcoholics these things are poison." — p. 66	Old words: a "grouch" = a bad mood you hold on to. A "brainstorm" = blowing up in anger. Other people might get away with those — maybe. We can't. For us, anger is **poison**.

PART 4 — THE TURN: BACK TO THE LIST

p. 66

THE BOOK SAYS	IN PLAIN WORDS
"We turned back to the list, for it held the key to the future. We were prepared to look at it from an entirely different angle." — p. 66	Don't throw the list away — it is a map. Same list, new angle: stop asking *"what did they do?"* Start asking *"what is this doing to me?"*
"We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us." — p. 66	"Dominated" = ruled. If you can make me mad, you run my feelings. My feelings run my choices. So you run my life. **Everyone I resent is my boss.**
"In that state, the wrongdoing of others, fancied or real, had power to actually kill. How could we escape?" — p. 66	"Fancied or real" = imagined or true. It does not matter which. Both kinds can kill us just the same.
"We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than alcohol." — p. 66	Wanting them gone is not enough. Willpower could not beat alcohol, and it cannot beat resentment either. We need a plan that works.

THE READING — PART FIVE

The New Way — Sick, Like Me

PART 5 — THE NEW WAY

pp. 66–67

THE BOOK SAYS	IN PLAIN WORDS
"This was our course: We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick." — p. 66	Here is the plan. The people who hurt us were not monsters — they were **sick in spirit**. ("Perhaps" — the book is gentle. Just try the idea on.)
"Though we did not like their symptoms and the way these disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too." — p. 67	What they did to me was a sign of their sickness — like what I did was a sign of mine. Same disease, different signs.
"We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend." — p. 67	How would I treat a friend with cancer? Not with yelling. That is the standard. ("Pity" here is not looking down on them — it means my heart hurts *for* them.)
"When a person offended we said to ourselves, 'This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.'" — p. 67	Said quietly, inside — to myself, not out loud to them. This little prayer is the tool you will use for every name on your list.

THE PRAYER, WORD FOR WORD

"This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done."

— How It Works, p. 67

THE BBA WAY — SAY IT FOR EACH NAME ON YOUR LIST

"This is a sick person like myself. How can I be helpful to them? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done."

Thy is old English for *your*. "Thy will be done" means: *God, Your way — not mine.*

How We Act — and the Door to Column 4

PART 6 — HOW WE ACT NOW

p. 67

THE BOOK SAYS	IN PLAIN WORDS
"We avoid retaliation or argument. We wouldn't treat sick people that way." — p. 67	"Retaliation" = hitting back. No payback. No arguing. You would not punch a friend for being sick.
"If we do, we destroy our chance of being helpful." — p. 67	Hitting back makes me useless — to them, to me, and to God.
"We cannot be helpful to all people, but at least God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one." — p. 67	I can't help everyone. But God can teach me to stop hating anyone. Each and every one — **no exceptions**.

WHY THE BRIDGE MATTERS

- **It sets the stakes.** Resentment is not a bad mood. For us it is fatal.
- **It proves my way failed.** Fighting and blaming made everything worse.
- **It changes who they are to me.** Not monsters — sick people, sick like me.
- **It gives me tools.** A prayer, patience, and no hitting back.
- **It opens Column 4.** I cannot wish resentment away — so I must look at my own mistakes.

THE DOOR TO COLUMN 4

p. 67

> *"Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?"*
> — How It Works, p. 67 — the very next lines

HOW BBA WALKS IT

- **The Realization** — "How have I done the same things?"
- **Self-seeking** — what I did
- **Selfish** — what I was thinking; my attitude
- **Dishonest** — the lie I was believing
- **Afraid** — the fear underneath it all
- **Harms** — the hurt I caused

The chain: the fears drive the lies, the lies make the attitude, and the attitude is behind the actions.

Without the Bridge, Column 4 feels like beating yourself up. With it, Column 4 is a check-up: find the sickness so God can remove it.
Column 4 is not punishment. It is the way out.

The list held the key to the future. Yours still does.

Alcoholics Anonymous (the Big Book), "How It Works," pp. 64–67 · Big Book Awakening Step Four framework · plain-word notes follow the BBA Step 4 guide in this collection, drawing on Tim M's Step 4 materials