

Step 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision^{Step 3} was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once (*fast*) followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor (*drugs, obsessive-compulsive behaviour*) was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions. Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. This was Step Four... We took stock honestly. First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations. (AA p. 63-64)

Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics (*addicts*) than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, (*pride, vanity, egotistical, self-pity, morbidity, jealousy, suspicion, envy, selfishness, self-seeking, self-centeredness, self-justification, insincerity, dishonesty, lying, exaggeration, unthinking, callousness, cruelty, anger, rancor, bitterness, hate, antipathy, lethargy, impatience, fear, cowardice, worry, intolerance, lust, infidelity, inconsideration, anti-social, slander, gossip, prejudice, diffidence, servility, scraping, irresponsibility, unreasonableness, apathy, martyrdom, squandering, and obstinacy.*) for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. (*Would you agree - yes-no?*) When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry (*Column 1*). We asked ourselves why we were angry (*Column 2*). In most cases it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships, (including sex) were hurt or threatened. (*Column 3*) So we were sore. We were "burned up." On our grudge list we set opposite each name our injuries. Was it our self-esteem, our security, our ambitions, our personal, or sex relations, which had been interfered with? (*Column 3*) (AA p. 64-65). We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully (AA p. 65).

Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done (*Column 2*), we resolutely looked for our own mistakes (*Column 4*). Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?

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(Column 4) Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person *(Column 1)* involved entirely. Where were we to blame? *(Column 4)* The inventory was ours, not the other person's. When we saw our faults we listed them *(Column 4)*. We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs *(Column 4)* honestly and were willing to set these matters straight *(Column 5)*. (AA p. 67)

We reviewed our fears thoroughly *(5 Columns)*. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them *(Column 2)*. Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? (AA p. 68)

We reviewed our own conduct *(all harms to others, including sex conduct)* over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? *(Column 4)* Whom had we hurt? *(Column 1)* Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? *(Column 2)* Where were we at fault *(Column 4)*, what should we have done instead? *(Column 5)* We got this all down on paper and looked at it. (AA p. 69)

Step 4 Instruction

If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot. We have listed and analyzed our resentments *(5 Columns)*. We have begun to comprehend their *(Column 4)* futility and their fatality. We have commenced to see their *(Column 4)* terrible destructiveness. We have listed the people *(Column 1)* we have hurt by our conduct *(Column 4)*, and are willing to straighten out the past if we can *(Column 5)*... If you have already made a decision^{Step 3}, and an inventory^{Step 4} of your grosser handicaps, you have made a good beginning. That being so you have swallowed and digested some big chunks of truth about yourself. (AA p. 70-71)

Keep in mind that it is not necessary, for newcomers to talk about every resentment or selfish act, or each person he or she has ever lied to or harmed for the inventory to be thorough. The objective is to get to "causes and conditions". Sometimes it takes only a few incidents to make clear which short-comings have kept the newcomer blocked from an intimate, two-way relationship with the "One who has all power."

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RESENTMENTS: We were usually as definite as this example: (p. 65, A.A. 4th Edition)

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4 (Blocks)	Column 5 (Power)
People, Institutions & Principles Towards whom am I angry?	The Cause Why am I angry?	This affects, threatens, hurts or interferes with my... self-esteem, security, ambitions pocket book, relationships (including sex)	Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes? <i>Identify character defects, liabilities, shortcomings, blocks i.e. false pride, jealousy, lust, dishonesty, envy, greed, fear, sloth, hate, selfishness, impatience, irresponsible</i>	What should I have done instead? <i>Identify assets to strive for i.e. humility, trust, intimacy, honesty, contentment, generosity, love, zeal, forgiveness, unselfishness, patience, responsible etc.</i>
Mr. Brown (Resentment)	His attention to my wife. Told my wife of my mistress. Brown may get my job at the office.	Sex relations Self-esteem <i>Ambitions?</i> <i>Pocket book?</i> <i>Security?</i>	<i>Anger/Resentment</i> <i>Dishonesty & Infidelity</i> <i>False Pride</i> <i>Selfishness, Self-Seeking</i> <i>Lust</i> <i>Jealousy & Suspicion</i> <i>Irresponsibility</i> <i>Fear</i>	<i>Love & Forgiveness</i> <i>Honesty & Faithfulness</i> <i>Humility, Unselfishness</i> <i>Helpfulness to Others</i> <i>Intimacy</i> <i>Trust</i> <i>Be Responsible</i> <i>Trust, Faith in God</i>
Mrs. Jones (Resentment)	She's a nut -- she snubbed me. She committed her husband for drinking. He's my friend. She's a gossip.	Personal relationships Self-esteem	<i>Anger/Resentment</i> <i>False Pride</i> <i>Jealousy & Suspicion</i> <i>Intolerance, Selfishness</i> <i>Irresponsibility</i> <i>Fear</i>	<i>Love & Forgiveness</i> <i>Humility</i> <i>Trust</i> <i>Tolerance, Unselfishness</i> <i>Be Responsible</i> <i>Faith in God</i>
My employer (Resentment)	Unreasonable -- Unjust -- Overbearing -- Threatens to fire me for my drinking and padding my expense account.	Self-esteem Security <i>Pocket book</i> <i>Ambitions</i>	<i>Anger/Resentment</i> <i>False Pride</i> <i>Dishonesty & Stealing</i> <i>Greed</i> <i>Laziness & Sloth</i> <i>Selfishness, Self-seeking</i> <i>Irresponsibility</i> <i>Fear</i>	<i>Love & Forgiveness</i> <i>Humility</i> <i>Honesty & Restitution</i> <i>Generosity</i> <i>Action, Zeal</i> <i>Be Unselfish & Helpful</i> <i>Be Responsible</i> <i>Faith in God</i>
My wife (Resentment)	Misunderstands and nags. Likes Brown. Wants house put in her name.	Personal relationships Sex relations Security	<i>Anger/Resentment</i> <i>False Pride</i> <i>Jealousy & Suspicion</i> <i>Dishonesty, Infidelity</i> <i>Irresponsibility</i> <i>Fear</i>	<i>Love & Forgiveness</i> <i>Humility</i> <i>Trust</i> <i>Honesty, Faithfulness</i> <i>Be Responsible</i> <i>Faith in God</i>

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Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4 (Blocks)	Column 5 (Power)
<p>People, Institutions & Principles</p> <p>Towards whom am I angry?</p>	<p>The Cause</p> <p>Why am I angry?</p>	<p>This affects, threatens, hurts or interferes with my...self-esteem, security, ambitions, pocket book, relationships (including sex)</p>	<p>Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes?</p> <p><i>Identify character defects, liabilities, shortcomings, blocks i.e. false pride, jealousy, lust, dishonesty, envy, greed, fear, sloth, hate, selfishness, impatience, etc.</i></p>	<p>What should I have done instead?</p> <p><i>Identify assets to strive for i.e. humility, trust, intimacy, honesty, contentment, generosity, love, zeal, forgiveness, unselfishness, patience, etc.</i></p>

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FEARS: We were usually as definite as this example:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4 (Blocks)	Column 5 (Power)
People, Institutions & Principles Who or What am I afraid of? What am I afraid of losing or not getting?	The Cause Why am I fearful?	This affects, threatens, hurts or interferes with my... self-esteem, security, ambitions, pocket book, relationships (including sex)	Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes? <i>Identify character defects, liabilities, shortcomings, blocks i.e. false pride, jealousy, lust, dishonesty, envy, greed, fear, sloth, hate, selfishness, impatience, etc.</i>	What should I have done instead? <i>Identify assets to strive for i.e. humility, trust, intimacy, honesty, contentment, generosity, love, zeal, forgiveness, unselfishness, patience, etc.</i>
<i>Fear of no control</i>	<i>Other people make mistakes and are incompetent - if I want anything done right I must do it myself!</i>	<i>Self-esteem Security Ambitions Pocket book Relationships</i>	<i>Arrogance Intolerance Inconsideration Bullying & Abusive Selfishness Self Seeking Jealousy, Suspicion Irresponsibility</i>	<i>Humility Tolerance, Acceptance Be considerate Be kind and courteous Unselfishness Be helpful to others Trust & Faith in God Be Responsible</i>

HARMFUL CONDUCT (Including SEX): We were usually as definite as this example:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4 (Blocks)	Column 5 (Power)
<p>People, Institutions & Principles</p> <p>Whom have I hurt?</p>	<p>How did I harm them? What did I unjustifiably arouse:</p> <p>Jealousy? Suspicion? Bitterness?</p>	<p>What did I affect, threaten, hurt or interfere with?</p> <p>Self-esteem, security, ambitions, pocket book, relationships (including sex)?</p>	<p>Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes?</p> <p><i>Identify character defects, liabilities, shortcomings, blocks i.e. false pride, jealousy, lust, dishonesty, envy, greed, fear, sloth, hate, selfishness, impatience, etc.</i></p>	<p>What should I have done instead?</p> <p><i>Identify assets to strive for i.e. humility, trust, intimacy, honesty, contentment, generosity, love, zeal, forgiveness, unselfishness, patience, etc.</i></p>
<p><i>Spouse (Sex Conduct)</i></p>	<p><i>Had an affair, I aroused jealousy, resentment, distrust. She felt inadequate.</i></p>	<p><i>Self-esteem Sex relationships</i></p>	<p><i>False Pride Lust Infidelity Dishonesty Selfishness Self Seeking Inconsideration Fear of...</i></p>	<p><i>Humility Intimacy Faithfulness Honesty Unselfishness Be Helpful to Others Consideration Faith in God</i></p>
<p><i>My employer</i></p>	<p>Stole products from the store. Slandered his name, thus I aroused, anger and resentment, loss of money.</p>	<p><i>Pocket book Self-esteem Business Relationships</i></p>	<p><i>Dishonesty, Stealing Selfishness Self-seeking Slander Anger/Resentment Greed Fear of not having enough</i></p>	<p><i>Honesty, Restitution Unselfishness Be helpful to others Speak well of others Forgiveness Generosity Faith in God</i></p>

Step 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it? We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator, and to discover the obstacles in our path (*Column 4*). We have admitted certain defects (*Column 4*); we have ascertained in a rough way what the trouble is; we have put our finger on the weak items in our personal inventory (*Column 4*). Now these are about to be cast out. This requires action on our part, which, when completed, will mean that we have admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our defects (*Column 4*). This brings us to the Fifth Step in the program of recovery....

This is perhaps difficult, especially discussing our defects (*Column 4*) with another person.... If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking (*using, acting-out*) (AA p.72). We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. Rightly and naturally, we think well before we choose the person or persons with whom to take this intimate and confidential step. Those of us belonging to a religious denomination which requires confession must, and of course, will want to go to the properly appointed authority (*criminal matters—see a lawyer; mental-emotional issues—see a therapist; medical issues—see a doctor; financial matters—see an accountant, tax lawyer, debt counsellor; moral matters—see a spiritual advisor/sponsor*) whose duty it is to receive it. Such parts of our story we tell to someone who will understand yet be unaffected (AA p.74).

Step 5 Instruction

...talk to the right person. It is important that *they* may be able to keep a confidence; that they understand and approve what we are driving at; that *they* will not try to change our plan. When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time. We have a written inventory and we are prepared for a long talk... We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character (*Column 4*), every dark cranny of the past (*Are you willing to do this - yes-no?*). (AA p.74-75)

Step 5 Paycheck

Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience. The feeling that the drink (*using, acting-out*) problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe. (AA p 75)

My Moral Inventory Checklist

***Self-will (Column 4) Step 4 & 5
(NO POWER)***

***God's will (Column 5) Steps 8 & 9
(POWER!)***

My liabilities, blocks, character defects...

- False Pride, Arrogance, Self-loathing
- Jealousy, Distrust, Suspicion
- Envy
- Selfishness
- Self-seeking
- Dishonesty, Stealing, Lying
- Intolerance, Inconsideration
- Greed
- Lust, Infidelity
- Hate, Anger, Resentment
- Sloth, Laziness, Procrastination
- Impatience
- Fear of...
- Irresponsible, Blaming Others
- _____
- _____
- _____

The assets I need to strive for...

- Humility
- Trust
- Contentment
- Unselfishness
- Helpful to others
- Honesty, Integrity, Restitution
- Tolerance, Acceptance, Tact
- Generosity
- Intimacy, Chaste, Faithfulness
- Forgiveness
- Activity, Zeal, Promptness
- Patience
- Love
- Responsible, Accountable
- _____
- _____
- _____