

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”.

Specific instructions for the completion of this part of the program are contained on pages sixty-four through seventy-one of the Big Book. The authors of the book wrote it with the following idea – *“We believe and hope it contains all you need to begin”*. Begin what? The new Spiritual way of life required for the alcoholic to recover from alcoholism.

These pages are not intended to replace or even supplement the directions given in the Big Book. They are intended only to help you quickly and thoroughly complete the 4th step as it is described in *Alcoholics Anonymous*. It has been our experience that those who are willing and able to recover have little or no difficulty with this or any of the steps of *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

The Big Book stresses that once an alcoholic has made a decision to abandon their life to as much of God as they understand and is willing to start a new way of life (Step 3) there is no time to waste.

“Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us have never attempted. Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions”.

The following pages are intended ONLY as a help to either “launch” from or “at once” follow your decision with a thorough 4th step of *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Each portion of the inventory; Resentment/Harms, Fear and Sex is attached. Each portion has a cover page with direction by direction information from *Alcoholics Anonymous* on how to complete each part of the inventory. After each cover page is a ‘worksheet’ intended to be used to actually write down your inventory. You should make copies of each of these ‘worksheets’ before beginning.

The last page contains some definitions that may be helpful.

These pages are intended to help the suffering alcoholic, with the guidance of a recovered alcoholic, gain freedom from alcoholism and be equipped to help others recover as well.

Before beginning your 4th step, and before each sitting make sure you do the following:

- Find a quiet place where you can work uninterrupted on the task at hand.
- Before and during each sitting remember who is in charge – God. Ask Him in prayer before beginning each time for guidance, honesty and thoroughness.

Feel free to contact the recovered alcoholic that is helping you if you have any questions during this inventory.

Resentment/Harms List Directions

“Resentment is the “number one” offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.”

Direction 1: *“In dealing with resentments we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry”.* (Complete column 1 from top to bottom) Complete this column as much as possible. Remember it will be God providing the information – your job is to be willing, open-minded and honest. When you have completed this column to the best of your ability start on Direction 2.

****Important:** This is a list of people, institutions or principles with whom you have EVER been angry – regardless of whether you are still angry. If in doubt, write it down.

Direction 2: *“We asked ourselves why we were angry”.* (Complete column 2 from top to bottom) In this column you are to list, in brief summary, the things others have done that angered you. Do not go into morbid detail. Note the examples on page 65 – they are very brief – do not write outside the lines of the column (or on another sheet of paper).

Note: If at any time you recall additional names for column 1 simply add them to the end of the list and then return to where you left off.

Direction 3: *“On our grudge list we set opposite each name our injuries”.* (Complete each sub-column in column 3 from top to bottom). In this column you will check each area that was affected. You may find that many of the entries have several sub-columns checked.

Direction 4: *“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. 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. How could we escape? We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than alcohol”.*

“This was our course: We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. Though we did not like their symptoms and the way these disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too. We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. 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.”

“We avoid retaliation or argument. We wouldn't treat sick people that way. If we do, we destroy our chance of being helpful. 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”.

Now it is time for you to pray for those on the list you have just made – asking God to free you from your anger and give you a spirit of helpfulness. You will need this for your next direction – listing your wrongs.

Direction 5: *“Referring to our list again. Putting out of our minds the wrongs other had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened”* (Complete each sub-column in column 4 from top to bottom). In this column you will check each area that was affected.

After you have completed column 4 for all names on your list, search through your past for people you have harmed who are NOT on your list. Add them to the list of names and complete column 4 for these names as well.

When these directions are completed proceed to the Fears List.

Fears List Directions

“Notice that the word "fear" is bracketed alongside the difficulties with Mr. Brown, Mrs. Jones, the employer, and the wife. This short word somehow touches about every aspect of our lives. It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it. It set in motion trains of circumstances which brought us misfortune we felt we didn't deserve. But did not we, ourselves, set the ball rolling? Sometimes we think fear ought to be classed with stealing. It seems to cause more trouble.”

Direction 1: *“We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them”.*

On the attached page list your fears. It is simpler than it sounds: for example: fear of the dark, fear of heights, fear of rejection, etc...

List all that you can recall. When you have listed them all go on to direction 2.

Direction 2: *“We asked ourselves why we had them”.*

The Big Book gives us all the insight we need into this question: *“Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? Self-reliance was good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough. Some of us once had great self-confidence, but it didn't fully solve the fear problem, or any other. When it made us cocky, it was worse. Perhaps there is a better way - we think so. For we are now on a different basis; the basis of trusting and relying upon God. We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves. We are in the world to play the role He assigns. Just to the extent that we do as we think He would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity. We never apologize to anyone for depending upon our Creator. We can laugh at those who think spirituality the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it is the way of strength. The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. All men of faith have courage. They trust their God. We never apologize for God. Instead we let Him demonstrate, through us, what He can do”.*

No writing is required for direction 2.

Direction 3: *“We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be”.*

The Him we ask is God. *“At once, we commence to outgrow fear”.* This is another prayer we are to make. This time in regards to our fears. Note the common theme of the 4th step prayers. They are intended to make us more useful to God and the people about us.

When these directions are completed proceed to the sex conduct inventory.

Sex Conduct Inventory

“Now about sex. Many of us needed an overhauling there. But above all, we tried to be sensible on this question. It's so easy to get way off the track..

... We do not want to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct. We all have sex problems. We'd hardly be human if we didn't. What can we do about them”?

Direction 1: *“Whom had we hurt”?* – Experience has shown that when honestly looked at we have hurt everyone we have had sexual activity with in one way or another. It is simply a natural byproduct of a life based on self. We start at the top of the list and work our way to the end. As with the Resentment/Harms list we complete column 1 before moving on to column 2. When you have completed this column to the best of your ability start on Direction 2.

Direction 2: *“Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate”?* Look at your past conduct and as appropriate mark each of the sub-columns in column 2 for each name on your list. Complete each sub-column from top to bottom before moving on to the next one.

Note: If at any time you recall additional names for column 1 simply add them to the end of the list and then return to where you left off.

Direction 3: *“Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness”?* Look at your past conduct and as appropriate mark each of the sub-columns in column 3 for each name on your list. Complete each sub-column from top to bottom before moving on to the next one.

Direction 4: *“what should we have done instead”?* You are trying to get a new ideal about your sex conduct – a Godly ideal. This may not happen overnight – you must be willing to grow toward it. In completing this column keep in mind:

“We got this all down on paper and looked at it. In this way we tried to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life. We subjected each relation to this test - was it selfish or not? We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them. We remembered always that our sex powers were God-given and therefore good, neither to be used lightly or selfishly nor to be despised and loathed”...

... “we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer will come, if we want it.”

This is another prayer. As you ask God for guidance in each situation on your list, write down in column 4 what you should have done instead.

“To sum up about sex: We earnestly pray for the right ideal, for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing.”

This inventory is the beginning of this new Godly ideal.

When these directions are completed proceed to the On Completion page.

On completion...

“If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot. We have listed and analyzed our resentments. We have begun to comprehend their futility and their fatality. We have commenced to see their terrible destructiveness. We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all men, even our enemies, for we look on them as sick people. We have listed the people we have hurt by our conduct, and are willing to straighten out the past if we can”.

“In this book you read again and again that faith did for us what we could not do for ourselves. We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him. If you have already made a decision, and an inventory 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”.

Do you want to go on? If so, wonderful! Contact the recovered alcoholic that is guiding you through the steps and ask for your next direction.

Helpful definitions

Resentment List (resentment portion)

resentment: a feeling of indignant displeasure or persistent ill will at something regarded as a wrong, insult, or injury.

self-esteem: ones own opinion of oneself (what I think about myself).

security: the quality or state of being secure, freedom from danger, safety, freedom from fear or anxiety, freedom from the prospect of being laid off <job security>.

ambition: desire to achieve a particular end or goal, short or long term.

personal relations: the various connections between peoples, countries, etc., the various connections in which persons are brought together.

sex relations: sexual intercourse.

pride: ones own opinion of what others think of oneself (what I think others think about me).

Resentment List (harms portion)

hurt: to inflict with physical pain, wound, to do substantial or material harm to; to cause emotional or mental pain or anguish to, offend.

selfish: concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself: seeking or concentrating on one's own advantage, pleasure, or well-being without regard for others.

dishonest: implies a willful perversion of truth in order to deceive, cheat, or defraud, deceitful.

self-seeking: the act or practice of selfishly advancing one's own ends.

frightened: to be afraid.

Fears List

fear: an unpleasant often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger, real or imagined.

Sex Conduct Inventory

inconsiderate: careless of the rights or feelings of others, heedless, thoughtless.

jealousy: intolerant of rivalry or unfaithfulness, disposed to suspect rivalry or unfaithfulness.

suspicion: the act or an instance of suspecting something wrong without proof or on slight evidence, a state of mental uneasiness and uncertainty, doubt.

bitter: distasteful or distressing to the mind.

self-will: stubborn or willful adherence to one's own desires or ideas, obstinacy.