



Step Four Guide

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Congratulations on making the decision to do Step 4. This *A Home Away* Step 4 Guide is a direct adaptation of the recommendations from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. There are many, many ways that Step 4's have been done. This method is the original, tried, true and tested form, and the one that we feel has worked the best for the most. However you decide to do your Step 4, the important thing to do is to do it. In addition to these instructions, this package includes:

Appendix I - Definitions of Words Used in Step 4

Appendix II - Diagram of Instincts and Self

Appendix III - Resentment Inventory Prompt Sheet

Appendix IV - Fear Inventory Prompt Sheet

Worksheet A - Resentment Inventory Worksheet

Worksheet B - Fear Inventory Worksheet

Worksheet C - Sex Conduct and Harms to Others Inventory Worksheet

Please read through these instructions before beginning. It is recommended that you take no more than 1 or 2 weeks to do Step 4, and to do your Step 5 within one week of completing Step 4.

I suggest you have a *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous* beside you to work with and start with the 3rd Step Prayer:

God, I offer myself to Thee-to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always! (p. 63)

Getting Started

Take a moment to go over the definitions of words used in Step Four (Appendix I) and become familiar with the meanings of these words.

What is the purpose of Step 4? We find the answer in The Big Book on p. 64.

Though our decision [Step 3] was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to 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.

Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. This was Step Four. A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking a commercial inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, to get rid of them promptly and without regret. If the owner of the business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values. (p. 64)

The next paragraph begins to explain exactly what must be done.

We did exactly the same thing with our lives. 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. (p. 64)

The three “common manifestations” of self-will are our resentments, our fears, and our sex conduct and harms to others. A.A.’s *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* essay on Step 4 delves deeper into these manifestations, but for the purpose of this inventory the focus is on the three basic instincts of human life which create self. These are God-given, inherently good and needed to survive, but have gone awry. The three basic instincts are: the social instinct, the security instinct, and the sex instinct. This concept is illustrated for you in the diagram of instincts and self (Appendix II).

1. The Resentment Inventory

The first manifestations of self to be inventoried are your resentments towards people, institutions, or principles. All those with whom you are *angry*, with whom you are *hurt*, *threatened*, or *interfered with*, with whom you feel have wronged you, with whom you have stayed sore at, with whom you feel *“burned up” toward*, and with whom you *hold a grudge*. Also included in this list should be people, institutions or principles with whom you are *annoyed with*, *agitated by*, or *let down by*; also include regrets, because regret is resentment toward your self. The Big Book states clearly why this inventory is crucial.

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. (p. 64)

The word resentment comes from the Latin word “sentire” which means “to feel”. The “re” means it is felt over and over and over. Each time the incident is replayed over in the mind, what the other person did gets worse, and your part in it becomes less. These complaints become cemented by replay and by telling the story with others, sometimes for decades, or whole life times.

Take out your Resentment Inventory (Worksheet A) and see that it resembles the example on p. 65. There is an added 4th column from p. 67. Here are the instructions from p. 64:

In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. (p. 64)

Column 1 - “I’m Resentful At”

We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry. (p. 64)

Start writing all the names of the persons, institutions or principles you resent in the first column until you are finished. You’ll know you’re finished when you can’t think of anyone or anything else. Most likely more will come to mind over the next few days. Check the Resentment Inventory Prompt List (Appendix III) to jog your memory.

Column 2 - "The Cause"

We asked ourselves why we were angry. (p. 64)

Why am I resentful, *burned up* or *sore* at whoever or whatever is written in listed in each line of Column 1. What did they do that made me angry? List all the resentments you have for each person, place or thing. Complete this column, top to bottom, before going on to the third column.

Column 3 - "What Part of Self was Hurt or Threatened?"

In most cases it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships (including sex) were hurt or threatened. So we were sore. We were "burned up". (p. 64)

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? (p. 65)

On the bottom right of p. 65, "pride" is added to the list. In Column 3 there are listed seven ways that self can be affected.

- *Self Esteem*
- *Pride*
- *Emotional Security*
- *Pocketbook*
- *Ambitions*
- *Personal Relation*
- *Sex Relations*

Column 3 requires only checks. Start with the first section in Column 3, working top to bottom before going on to the next one, until all seven are done. Columns 1, 2, and 4 do not require lengthy explanations, only brief, bullet statements to jog your memory during Step 5. You can go into greater detail then.

When the first three columns are complete, the Big Book takes an important, two-page break from the Resentment Inventory to explain how to soften your heart toward these people, institutions and principles. The authors tell us to pray for ourselves (that we may have a better attitude toward them), and to pray for them as well. Why? Because to recover, you must be free of these resentments. Why must there be freedom from resentments? Can't there be justifiable anger with these people? Don't they deserve the ill will they receive? Don't you have a right to be "burned up"?

Resentment is the number one offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else; from it stem all forms of spiritual disease. (p. 64)

It leads only to futility and unhappiness; to the precise extent that we permit resentment do we squander the hours that might have been worth while; this business of resentment is infinitely grave; it is fatal; when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit; the insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again; these things are poison; because of it the world and its people really dominated us; the wrong-doing of others fancied or real had power to actually kill. (p. 66)

We begin to comprehend the futility and fatality of our resentments; we commence to see its terrible destructiveness. (p. 70)

Never forget that it is a deadly hazard to an alcoholic. (p. 117)

The greatest enemies of us alcoholics include resentment. (p. 145)

I can't afford resentments against anyone because they are the build-up of another drunk. (p. 325)

I realized I had to get rid of my last resentment for my reprieve was running out and if I didn't get rid of it I was going to get drunk. (p. 551)

To maintain sobriety, resentments must be released. Turn back to the list, for it holds the key to your future. You must look at it from an entirely different angle, and this angle becomes your 4th Column. Before beginning it is suggested to pray something like this:

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. (p.67)

Further direction is found on p. 552.

If you have a resentment you want to be free of, if you will pray for the person or the thing that you resent, you will be free. If you will ask in prayer for everything you want for yourself to be given to them, you will be free. Ask for their health, their prosperity, their happiness, and you will be free. Even when you don't really want it for them, and your prayers are only words and you don't mean it, go ahead and do it anyways. Do it everyday for two weeks and you will find you have come to mean it and to want it for them, and you will realize that where you used to feel bitterness and resentment and hatred, you will now feel compassionate understanding and love. (p. 552)

Column 4 – “Where was I to blame?”

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

Column 4 is the “exact nature of our wrongs”. What did you do to set the ball rolling? What is your part? This is your inventory; disregard the other person completely. Entirely finish Column 4 before moving on to the Fear Inventory.

2. Fear Inventory

Page 67 starts to talk about fear:

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 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 classed with stealing. It seems to cause more trouble. (p. 67)

Fear is a thief! It robs you of your relationship with God and others, and prevents you from reaching your full potential. There are really only two fears: fear of not getting what I want, and fear of losing what I have. Use the Fear Inventory Prompt Sheet (Appendix IV) to help you identify your fears. Turn to the Fear Inventory (Worksheet B) and start at the first column.

Column 1 - “My Fears”

We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. (p. 68)

Column 2 - “Why do I have them?” (Usually False Evidence Appearing Real)

We asked ourselves why we had them. (p. 68)

Column 3 - “How did I set the ball rolling? How did self-reliance fail me?”

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. (p. 68)

Column 4 - "What perhaps is a better way?"

Perhaps there is a better way – we think so. For we are now on a different 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. We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. At once, we commence to out grow fear. (p.68)

Write out all four columns of the Fear Inventory (Worksheet B) before continuing to the next inventory. Finish each column completely, top to bottom, before moving on to the next column. None of these columns require long explanations; they should be brief to jog your memory for Step 5. Once all columns are completed move forward to the Sex and Harms Inventory.

3. The Sex and Harms Inventory

The information starts on p. 68.

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. Here we find human opinions' running to extremes – absurd extremes, perhaps. One set of voices cry that sex is a lust of our lower nature, a base necessity of procreation. Then we have the voices who cry for sex and more sex; who bewail the institution of marriage; who think that most of the troubles of the race are traceable to sex causes. They think we do not have enough of it, or that it isn't the right kinds. They see its significance everywhere. One school would allow man no flavor for his fare and the other would have us all on a straight pepper diet. We want to stay out of this controversy. We do not want to be the arbiter (or judge) 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? (p.68)

Here are instructions for your third and final inventory (Worksheet C).

Column 1 – “Who did I hurt?”

Whom had we hurt? (p. 69)

Column 2 – “What did I do to hurt them?”

We reviewed our sex conduct. (p. 69)

Column 3 – “What difficulties did I unjustifiably arouse?”

Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? (p. 69)

Column 4 – “Where am I at fault?”

We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest or inconsiderate? Where were we at fault...

Column 5 – “What should I have done instead?”

...and what should we have done instead? (p. 69)

It is on this inventory that we also list harms other than sex related.

We have listed the people we have hurt by our conduct, and are willing to straighten out the past if we can. (p. 70)

Begin writing each column separately, top to bottom, before moving to the next column. Column 3 and 4 require checks only, and Columns 1, 2 and 5 do not require long explanations. Use brief bullet statements to jog your memory for Step 5.

The book continues by saying that we need to develop an ideal for our future sex life, and a way of testing future relations.

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.

Whatever our ideal turns out to be, we must be willing to grow toward it. We must be willing to make amends where we have done harm, provided that we do not bring about still more harm in so doing. In other words, we treat sex as we would any other problem. In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer will come, if we want it.

God alone can judge our sex situation. Counsel with persons is often desirable, but we let God be the final judge. We realize that some people are as fanatical about sex as others are loose. We avoid hysterical thinking or advice. (p. 69-70)

To sum up about sex:

- *We earnestly pray for the right ideal,*
- *We pray for guidance in each questionable situation,*
- *We pray for sanity, and*
- *If sex is very troublesome, we throw ourselves the harder into helping others.*
- *We think of their needs and work for them. This takes us out ourselves. It quiets the imperious urge, when to yield would mean heartache. (p. 70)*

The last part of the 4th Step out of the Big Book is to come up with a future sex ideal and praying that you move toward it. Write out your ideals on paper.

Step 4 concludes with the last two paragraphs of chapter 5:

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. (p. 70)

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 [Step 2]. If you have already made a decision [Step 3], and an inventory of your grosser handicaps [Step 4], you have made a good beginning. That being so you have swallowed and digested domes big chunks of truth about yourself. (p. 71)

Congratulations! Now it is time to move on to Step 5.



Appendix I - DEFINITIONS OF WORDS USED IN STEP FOUR

Ambition	Our goals or plans for the future, or what we want.
Arbiter	One chosen to judge.
Bitterness	Pain, suffering, ill will or regret.
Defect	Lack of something necessary for completeness. Same as shortcoming - what blocks me off from God and others.
Dishonest	The act or practice of telling a lie, cheating, deceiving, stealing. Not dealing with reality.
Exact	Very accurate, precise, correct.
Fatal	Causing death.
Fault	Something done wrongly, an error or mistake.
Fear	A feeling of anxiety, agitation, uneasiness or apprehension.
Finite	Limited.
Frightened	A temporary or continual state of fear.
Futility	Uselessness.
Ideal	Goal, aim, conception, standard, mental image.
Inconsiderate	Without thought or consideration of others.
Infinite	Without limits, boundless.
Institution	Significant practice or relationship in a society or an established organization or corporation, especially of public character.
Inventory	Written list of items (used to evaluate personal characteristics).
Jealousy	Feeling of rivalry, unfaithfulness, or the loss of another's exclusive devotion.
Mistake	A wrong action or statement (caused by faulty judgment).
Mold	To give shape to, to exert influence on.
Moral	Honest, truthful. Relating to the practice, manners, or conduct of men/women, as social beings, in relation to each other, and with reference to right and wrong.
Nature	The essential characteristic of something (root cause, the truth of where the wrong began - what created the wrong).
Paradoxically	A statement that seems contradictory or opposed to common sense, but is true.
Personal Relationships	My relations with other human beings and the world about me.
Pocketbook	Anything of a material nature (money, property, buildings, jewelry, etc.)
Pride	An excessive and unjustified opinion of oneself: either positive (self-love) or negative (self-hate). An alcoholic's pride is usually based on how we think others view us.
Principle	Rule or code of conduct, fundamental law or assumption.
Resentment	Comes from the Latin word "sentire" which means "to feel", and when you put "re" in front of any word, it means "again", so the word resent means "to feel again".

Sane	Healthy, able to appraise the effect of one's actions.
Security	My general sense of personal well being, usually based on my demand for my own way: either to dominate those about me or to become overly dependent upon them. Has two possible viewpoints - financial security or emotional security.
Self-Centered	Occupied or concerned only with one's own affairs.
Self-Esteem	What I think of myself, how I view myself: either high (positive = self-love) or low (negative = self-hate).
Selfish	Concerned with one's own welfare or interests and having little or no concern for others.
Self-Seeking	Constant looking to further one's own interest.
Shortcoming	Falling short of what is expected or required. Same as defect - what blocks me off from God and others.
Sound	Showing good judgment, healthy, free from flaw or defect.
Subjected	To study motive.
Suspicion	To have doubt or mistrust, with little or no proof.
Wrong	Judging, believing or acting incorrectly.



Appendix II - PRIMARY INSTINCTS OF LIFE WHICH CREATE SELF

SOCIAL INSTINCT	SECURITY INSTINCT	SEX INSTINCT
<p>SELF-ESTEEM – What I think of myself High (Positive = self-love) or Low (Negative = self-hate)</p> <p>PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS – My relations with other human beings and the world around me.</p> <p>AMBITIONS – My goals or plans for the future to gain self-esteem and personal relationships (to be liked, accepted and respected)</p>	<p>POCKETBOOK – My desire for anything of a material nature (money, property, buildings, etc.) to be secure.</p> <p>EMOTIONAL SECURITY – My general sense of personal well-being, usually based on my demand for my own way: either to dominate those about me or to become overly dependent upon them.</p> <p>AMBITIONS – My goals or plans for the future to gain material wealth and/or emotional security.</p>	<p>My desire to have sex and reproduce.</p> <p>AMBITIONS – My goals or plans for the future regarding my sex life.</p>
<p>RESENTMENTS “Wrong Thinking or Wrong Judging”</p>	<p>FEAR “Wrong Believing”</p>	<p>HARMS OR HURTS “Wrong Acting”</p>
<p>Feelings of bitter hurt or indignation, which comes from rightly or wrongly held feelings of being injured or offended.</p>	<p>Feelings of anxiety, agitation, uneasiness, apprehension, etc.</p>	<p>Wrongful acts, which result in pain, hurt feelings, worry and financial loss, etc., for others and also self.</p>



Appendix III - RESENTMENT INVENTORY PROMPT SHEET

Here is a list of people, institutions and principles that may be helpful in your resentment inventory. Feel free to add to the lists if you need to.

<u>PEOPLE</u>	<u>INSTITUTIONS</u>	<u>PRINCIPLES</u>
Father (Step)	Marriage	God (or any Deity)
Mother (Step)	Church	Bible
Sisters (Step)	Religion	Retribution
Brothers (Step)	Races	Ten Commandments
Children (Step)	Law	Satan
Grandfather (Step)	Authority	Death
Grandmother (Step)	Government	Life after death
Aunts	Education System	Heaven
Uncles	Hospitals	Hell
Cousins	Health Care System	Sin
Clergy	Correctional System	Adultery
Police	Mental Health System	Golden Rule
Lawyers	Ministry for Children and Families	Original Sin
Judges	Philosophy	Seven Deadly Sins
Doctors	Nationality	Love, honor, obey
Employers	Rehabs	Reciprocity Theory
Employees	Mental Institutions	Twelve Steps
Co-Workers	Canada Revenue Agency	Twelve Traditions
In-Laws		Twelve Concepts
Husbands		"Do unto others..."
Wives		"Can't be too thin"
Creditors		"Love thy neighbor"
Childhood Friends		"Don't put off until tomorrow..."
School Friends		Slogans
Teachers		
Life Long Friends		
Best Friends		
Acquaintances		
"Bible-Thumpers"		
Girl Friends		
Boy Friends		
Parole Officers		
Probation Officers		
A.A. Friends		



Appendix IV - FEAR INVENTORY PROMPT SHEET

Fear Of Abandonment	Fear Of Government	Fear Of Not Having Enough
Fear Of Acceptance	Fear Of Guns	Fear Of Not Having A Job
Fear Of Anger	Fear Of Having Children	Fear Of Parents
Fear Of Animals	Fear Of Having No Children	Fear Of People
Fear Of Authority	Fear Of Heights	Fear Of Physical Pain
Fear Of Being Alone	Fear Of Hospitals	Fear Of Police
Fear Of Being Found Out	Fear Of Hurting Others	Fear Of Public Speaking
Fear Of Being In A Relationship	Fear Of Insanity	Fear Of Other Races
Fear Of Change	Fear Of Insects	Fear Of Rejection
Fear Of Confrontation	Fear Of Insecurity	Fear Of Relapse
Fear Of Creditors	Fear Of Intimacy	Fear Of Religion
Fear Of Crying	Fear Of Jail	Fear Of Responsibility
Fear Of Disapproval	Fear Of Lies	Fear Of Sex
Fear Of Disease's	Fear Of Living	Fear Of Sin
Fear Of Doctors	Fear Of Loneliness	Fear Of Sobriety
Fear Of Drowning	Fear Of Losing A Child	Fear Of Stealing
Fear Of Dying	Fear Of Losing A Spouse	Fear Of Success
Fear Of Failure	Fear Of Losing A Parent	Fear Of The Truth
Fear Of Fear	Fear Of Love	Fear Of The Unknown
Fear Of Feelings	Fear Of Making Amends	Fear Of Violence
Fear Of Gangs	Fear Of Men	Fear Of Wealth
Fear Of Gays	Fear Of Not Being In A Relationship	Fear Of Women
Fear Of Getting Old	Fear Of Not Being In Control	Fear Of Working
Fear Of God	Fear Of Not Having Sex	Fear Of Writing Inventory
Fear Of Gossip	Fear Of People	Fear That There Is No God
Fear Of The Dark	Fear Of Driving	Fear Of Retribution
Fear Of Falling	Fear Of Reading Maps	Fear Of Punishment
Fear Of Financial Insecurity	Fear Of Travel	Fear Of School
Fear Of Embarrassment	Fear Of Staying the Same	Fear Of the Future
Fear Of Being too Young	Fear Of Being Unlovable	Fear Of the Past
Fear Of The Steps	Fear Of Fitness	

Here is a list of fears that may be helpful in your Fear Inventory. Feel free to add to this list if you need to.



Worksheet A. FOURTH STEP INVENTORY: RESENTMENTS

1	2	3						4						
I'm Resentful At	The Cause	What Part of Self Was Hurt or Threatened?						Where Was I To Blame?						
<p>The names of people, institutions, or principles with whom I am angry.</p> <p>"We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty."</p>	(Why I Am Angry)	Self Esteem	Pride	Emotional Security	Pocketbook	Ambitions	Personal Relations	Sex Relations	Dishonest	Selfish	Self-Seeking	Frightened	Inconsiderate	<p>The Nature of Our Wrong</p> <p>Be specific, e.g.:</p> <p>Lied to Mom</p> <p>Cheated on Spouse.</p>



Worksheet B. FOURTH STEP INVENTORY: FEAR

1	2	3	4
<p><i>I listed my fears. (68:1)</i> (Remember to include the fears identified in the Resentment Inventory. Also consider the opposite fear.)</p>	<p><i>I asked myself why I had them. (68:1)</i> (The justification you tell yourself for having the fear, usually another underlying fear.)</p>	<p><i>But did not I, myself, set the ball rolling (67:3) How did self-reliance fail me? (68:1)</i> How am I contributing to the fear? This includes considering if my own selfishness and self-centeredness was involved. (62:1) (This is similar to the fourth column of Resentments. Also, is the fear imagined or real?)</p>	<p><i>What, perhaps, is a better way? (68:2-3)</i> Just to the extent that we do as we think God would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity. We direct our attention to what He would have us be.</p>

