



## FOURTH STEP INVENTORY

These *Fourth Step* worksheets use the wording from *Alcoholics Anonymous* (the Big Book) pages 63-71. Text in *italics* is quoted from the Big Book. When the word “optional” is used in the worksheets, it means that the Big Book suggests doing this but does not suggest writing anything down. However, many people who have used these worksheets found it helpful to write down their flaws and their specific defects.

Remember, these worksheets are meant to be helpful, but do not feel restricted by them.

These worksheets are not officially produced or approved by Alcoholics Anonymous. They have been circulating unofficially among AA members for at least 50 years in various versions. Their origin is unknown to the producer of this version.

## HELPFUL HINTS

**PREPARATION:** before you start this written Fourth Step, read pages 63-71 in the Big Book and the Fourth Step in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

### NOTE:

1. This inventory is **not** an exercise in beating yourself up. Be scrupulously honest but be fair to yourself. Inventory your strengths as well as your defects.

2. The following checklist merely **suggests** what some people consider flaws. You must decide how they fit with your own moral code. Do not be limited by this list--add your other flaws and assets. It is in this Fourth Step that you begin to discover **your** values--what **you** consider right and wrong,

functional and dysfunctional behavior--and how you live up to **your** standards.

3. This inventory is about who you are **now**, not who you were when you were drinking and taking drugs. Be careful, however, not to blame all past bad behavior on drinking and drugs if the seed of that bad behavior still exists in you.

4. Don't be discouraged when your character defects are not immediately lifted after you have completed your 5th Step--that is the work of the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Steps.

5. **Prioritize!** Spend most of your time on the 20% of your flaws that cause 80% of the trouble in your life. You can initially check off as many flaws as you want on the checklist but then prioritize to the 12 that cause the most trouble. **If you list more**

**than 12 flaws, you are probably beating yourself up!** You must check at least **twice as many assets** as you check flaws or you really are beating yourself up.

**INTO ACTION:** On the following list, check all of your defects **and** all of your assets. This is an inventory of **both** bad and good characteristics. Then discuss your defects (with your best example of each) on the *Review of Flaws* form.

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## Glossary of Words Used in Steps Four and Five

**Moral Inventory** ..A list of personality defects, violations of moral principles, defects in character, maladjustments, and dysfunctional behavior.

Character .....Moral vigor or firmness, especially as acquired through self-discipline.  
Defect .....Lack of something necessary for completeness; flaw; weakness, fault; same as Shortcoming.  
Dishonest.....The act or practice of telling a lie, or of cheating, deceiving, stealing, etc.  
Exact.....Precise, detailed.  
Fault.....Something done wrongly, an error or mistake.  
Fear.....Painful emotion marked by alarm, dread, anxiety, agitation, uneasiness, apprehension, etc.

Frightened .....A temporary or continual state of Fear. Anxious.  
Inconsiderate ..... Without thought or consideration of others.  
Nature.....The essential characteristic of a thing.  
Self-centered ..... Occupying or concerned only with one's own affairs (same as Selfish).  
Self-seeker .....A person who seeks only or mainly to further his own interests.  
Selfish ..... Too much concerned with one's own welfare or interests and having little or no concern for others (same as self-centered).  
Shortcoming..... Falling short of what is expected or required (same as Defect).  
Wrong .....Immoral, improper; not suitable or appropriate.

Footnotes to the list on following page:

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bob's Fourth Step List; in "He Sold Himself Short," (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 292)

<sup>2</sup> Seven Deadly Sins (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 48)

<sup>3</sup> Clarence Snyder's Fourth Step List (one of the original 40 members of AA, see "Home Brewmeister," *Alcoholics Anonymous*, pp. 297-303)

<sup>4</sup> Boy Scout Law, Robert Binkey's *The Official Boy Scout Handbook* (10th edition, 1990)(so? ... what? ...)

## Checklist of Flaws and Assets

4 Character Defect	Opposite Asset 4
aggressive, belligerent	good-natured, gentle
angry <sup>2</sup>	forgiving, calm, generous
apathetic	interested, concerned, alert
apprehensive, afraid	calm, courageous
argumentative, quarrelsome	agreeable
arrogant, insolent	unassuming, humble
attacking, critical	fair, self-restrained
avoidant	faces problems and acts
blocking	honest, intuitive
boastful	modest, humble
careless <sup>1</sup>	careful, painstaking, concerned
cheating	honest
competitive (socially)	cooperative
compulsive	free
conceited <sup>1</sup> , self-important	humble, modest
contradictory, oppositional	reasonable, agreeable
contrary, intractable, pigheaded	reasonable
controlling	lets go, esp. of other's lives
cowardly	brave <sup>4</sup>
critical <sup>3</sup>	non-judgmental, praising, tolerant,
cynical	open-minded
deceitful	guileless, honest
defensive	open to criticism
defiant, contemptuous	respectful
denying	honest, accepting
dependent	accepts help but is self-reliant
depressed, morose	hopeful, optimistic, cheerful <sup>4</sup>
dirty, poor hygiene	clean <sup>4</sup>
dishonest <sup>3</sup>	honest
disloyal, treacherous	faithful, loyal <sup>4</sup>
disobedient	obedient <sup>4</sup>
disrespectful, insolent	respectful, reverent <sup>4</sup>
enabling	setting boundaries, tough love
envying <sup>2,3</sup>	empathetic, generous, admiring
evasive, deceitful	candid, straightforward
exaggerating	honest, realistic
faithless, disloyal	reliable, faithful
falsely modest	honest, has self-esteem
falsely prideful <sup>2,3</sup>	modest, humble
fantasizing, unrealistic	practical, realistic
fearful <sup>3</sup>	confidant, courageous

forgetful	responsible
gluttonous <sup>2</sup> , excessive	moderate
gossiping <sup>3</sup>	closed-mouth, kind, praising
greedy <sup>2,3</sup>	moderate, generous, sharing
hateful <sup>3</sup>	forgiving, loving, concerned for others
hypersensitive	tolerant, doesn't personalize
ill-tempered <sup>1</sup> , bitchy	good-tempered, calm
impatient <sup>3</sup>	patient
impulsive, reckless	consistent, considered actions
inconsiderate	thoughtful, considerate
indecisive, timid	firm, decisive
indifferent, apathetic, aloof	caring
inflexible, stubborn	open-minded, flexible
insecure, anxious	self-confident, secure
insincere <sup>3</sup> , hypocritical	sincere, honest
intolerant <sup>1</sup>	tolerant, understanding, patient
irresponsible, reckless	responsible
isolating, solitary	sociable, outgoing
jealous <sup>1,3</sup>	trusting, generous, admiring
judgmental	broadminded, tolerant
justifying (own actions)	honest, frank, candid
lack of purpose	purposeful
lazy, indolent	industrious, conscientious
loud	tasteful, quiet
lustful <sup>2</sup>	healthy sexuality
lying <sup>3</sup>	honest
manipulative	candid, honest, non-controlling
masked, closed	honest, open, candid
nagging	supportive
narrow minded	open minded
obscene, crude	modest, courteous
over emotional	emotionally stable
perfectionistic	realistic goals
pessimistic	realistic, hopeful, optimistic, trusting
possessive	generous
prejudiced	open-minded
procrastinates <sup>3</sup>	disciplined, acts promptly
projecting (negative)	clear sighted, optimistic
rationalizing	candid, honest
resentful <sup>1,3</sup> , bitter, hateful	forgiving
resisting growing	willing to grow
rude, discourteous	polite, courteous <sup>4</sup>

sarcastic <sup>1</sup>	praising, tolerant
self-important <sup>3</sup>	humble, modest
self-centered	caring of others
self-destructive, self-defeating	self-fulfilling
self-hating	self-accepting, loving
self-justifying <sup>3</sup>	admitting wrongs, humble
self-pitying <sup>3</sup>	grateful, realistic, accepting
self-righteous	humble, understanding
self-seeking <sup>3</sup>	selfless, concerned for others
selfish <sup>1,3</sup>	altruistic, concerned with others
shy	outgoing
slothful (lazy) <sup>2,3</sup>	industrious, taking action
spiteful, malicious	forgiving
stealing	honest
stubborn	open-minded, willing
sullen	cheerful
superior, grandiose, pretentious	humble
superstitious	realistic, no magical thinking
suspicious	trusting
tense	calm, serene
thinking negatively <sup>3</sup>	being positive
treacherous	trustworthy
undisciplined, self-indulgent	disciplined
unfair	fair
unfriendly, hostile, bitchy	friendly <sup>4</sup>
ungrateful	thankful, grateful
unkind, mean, malicious, spiteful	kind <sup>4</sup>
unsupportive of others	supportive
untrustworthy, unreliable, dishonest	trustworthy <sup>4</sup>
useless, destructive	helpful <sup>4</sup>
vain	modest, humble
vindictive	forgiving
violent	gentle
vulgar <sup>3</sup>	polite
wasteful	thrifty <sup>4</sup>
willful	accepting of the inevitable
withdrawn	outgoing
wordy, verbose	frank, to the point, succinct

**Other dysfunctional ways of acting, feeling or thinking which cause others or me pain (specify in the following *Review of Flaws*).**

*See source footnotes on page 2.*

### Instructions for Completion

*First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure.*

### REVIEW OF FLAWS (optional)

	FLAW	Give your best example of this specific flaw in your life.
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		

	FLAW	Give your best example of this specific flaw in your life.
10		
11		
12		

**If you must list additional flaws do so below. Do not beat yourself up.**

## RESENTMENTS

**Do not be restricted by this list. It is just to help you get started. List your resentments on the next pages.**

### PEOPLE

Father  
Mother  
Boy Friends/Lovers  
Brothers  
Sisters  
Sponsors  
Employers  
A.A. Friends  
Acquaintances  
Aunts  
Best Friends  
C.A. Friends  
Childhood Friends  
Clergy  
Co-Workers  
Cousins  
Creditors  
Doctors  
Employees  
Girl Friends  
Husbands

In-Laws

Judges

Lawyers

Life-long Friends

Parole Officers

Police

Probation Officers

School Friends

Teachers

Uncles

Wives

### INSTITUTIONS

Authority

Bible

Child Protection

Church

Correctional System

Education System

Government

Law

Marriage

Health/Mental Health System

Nationality

Philosophy

Races

Religion

Society

### PRINCIPLES

Adultery

Death

God-Deity

Golden Rule

Heaven

Hell

Homophobia

Jesus Christ

Life After Death

Original Sin

Retribution

Satan

Seven Deadly Sins

Sin

Ten Commandments

**MORE from your experience!**

## Step Four *Resentments Checklist Column 4\**

*“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?”*

### SELFISH

- Not seeing others point of view, problems or needs
- Wanting things my way
- Wanting special treatment
- Wanting others to meet my needs—dependence
- Wanting what others have
- Wanting to control—dominance
- Thinking I'm better—grandiosity
- Wanting to be the best
- Thinking others are jealous
- Wanting others to be like me
- Being miserly, possessive
- Wanting more than my share
- Reacting from self loathing, self righteousness
- Too concerned about me
- Not trying to be a friend
- Wanting to look good or be liked
- Concerned only with my needs

### DISHONEST

- Not seeing or admitting where I was at fault
- Having a superior attitude—thinking I'm better
- Blaming others for my problems
- Not admitting I've done the same thing
- Not expressing feelings or ideas
- Not being clear about motives
- Lying, cheating, stealing
- Hiding reality—not facing facts
- Stubbornly holding on to inaccurate beliefs
- Breaking rules
- Lying to myself
- Exaggerating, minimalizing
- Setting myself up to be “wronged”
- Expecting others to be what they are not
- Being perfectionistic

### SELF SEEKING

- Manipulating others to do my will
- Putting others down internally or externally to build me up
- Engaging in character assassination
- Acting superior
- Acting to fill a void
- Engaging in gluttony or lusting at the expense of another person

- Ignoring others' needs
- Trying to control others
- Getting revenge when I don't get what I want
- Holding a resentment
- Acting to make me feel good

### FRIGHTENED (OF)

- Peoples' opinions
- Rejection, abandonment
- Loneliness
- Physical injury, abuse
- Not being able to control or change someone
- My inferiority, inadequacy
- Criticism
- Expressing ideas or feelings
- Getting trapped
- Exposure, embarrassment

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\*Thanks to *Anonymous* in New England.

### Instructions for Completion

**Complete each column top to bottom before proceeding to the next column.**

**Thus, for instance, fill in all the names of those you are resentful at before filling in the column for the cause of each resentment. List real resentments, not imaginary or theoretical resentments. Is the resentment a problem for you, does it cause you pain?**

- Column 1 *In dealing with resentments we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry.*
- Column 2 *We asked ourselves why we were angry.*
- Column 3 *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 4 *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?*
- Column 5 This Column is optional. List specific other defects to show your participation in the resentments.

Reading from left to right we now see the resentment (Column 1), the cause (Column 2), the part of self that had been affected (Column 3), and the exact nature of the defect within us that allowed the resentment to surface and block us off from God's will (Columns 4 and 5).

### REVIEW OF RESENTMENTS

"SELF"

COLUMN 3    COL. 4    COLUMN 5  
Affects My    My    Specific  
                  Own    Defects  
                  Mistakes    (optional)

COLUMN 1		COLUMN 2										Self Esteem	Security	Ambitions	Personal Relationships	Sex Relations	Selfish	Dishonest	Self-seeking	Frightened											
	I'm RESENTFUL at:	The Cause:																													
1																															
2																															
3																															
4																															
5																															
6																															

	I'm RESENTFUL at:	The Cause	Self Esteem	Security	Ambitions	Personal Relationships	Sex Relations	Selfish	Dishonest	Self-seeking	Frightened						
7																	
8																	
9																	
10																	
11																	
12																	

**If you must list additional resentments do so below.**

## FEARS

**Do not be restricted by this list. It is just to help you get started. List your fears on the next pages**

abandonment	flying	needing anyone
aging	fourth & fifth steps	not being good enough
anger	future, the	not being happy
authority figures	getting fat or thin	not being liked
being alone	God	not being perfect
being deceived	going home	people (specify who)
being found out	going out on a “whim”	police, the
being myself	having children	poverty
change	homelessness	procrastination
compliments	homosexuality	rape
confrontation	honesty	rejection
creditors	humiliation	relationships
death	hurting others	resentments, my
denial, my	I’m a fraud and others will find out	responsibility
disapproval	incarceration	risks
disease	intimacy	saying that I can’t do something
divorce	IRS, the	sex
embarrassment	letting go	sponsor, my
employment	living	success
facing myself	loneliness	unemployment
failure	losing hope	unknown, the
fear	love	violence
feelings	mediocrity	work
financial insecurity	money	

***Search your own experience for other fears..***

### Instructions for Completion

### REVIEW OF FEARS

**Complete column 1 from top to bottom before proceeding to the next column. Ask yourself whether the fear is a problem in your life. Be realistic. Discuss significant fears, not theoretical or imaginary fears.**

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

Column 2 *We asked ourselves why we had them.*

COLUMN 1

COLUMN 2

	I'm FEARFUL of:	Why do I have the fear?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

9		
10		
11		
12		

**If you must list additional fears do so below.**

## Step Four Sex Conduct Checklist\*

### Column 1 checklist (*We reviewed our sex conduct over the years past. Whom had we hurt?*)

- Her, him, family, friends, co-workers, etc.
- Me with guilt or shame
- Infecting him/her a sexually transmitted disease
- Involving him/her in legal proceedings
- Embarrassing him/her
- How did I cause the hurt?

### Column 2 checklist (*Where had we been selfish, dishonest or inconsiderate?*)

#### SELFISH

- Using him/her to meet my needs for sex, attention, approval, mothering, or fathering
- Not seeing him/her needs or problems
- Wanting to look good or be liked
- Taking out my emotions on him/her (anger, sadness, etc.)
- Wanting to control him/her
- Wanting special treatment
- Wanting him/her to take care of me
- Wanting more than my share
- Not trying to be a friend

#### DISHONEST (to me or others)

- Leading someone on—saying I care for him/her more than I do because I want sex
- Not admitting my sexual orientation
- Thinking I'm better (grandiosity)
- Being perfectionistic
- Not being clear about my motive (wanting fathering, mothering, approval, approval, or sex)
- Wanting to vent my emotions on or control him/her
- Cheating on him/her

#### INCONSIDERATE

- To her, him, family, friends, co-workers, etc.
- Putting others or myself at risk of disease, legal involvement, and embarrassment
- How I was inconsiderate?

### Column 3 checklist (*Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness*)

#### JEALOUSY:

- Of her, him, family, friends, co-workers, etc.
- How did I cause jealousy (tricking, flirting, also see *Suspicion*, below)?

#### SUSPICION:

- Of her, him, family, friends, co-workers, etc.
- How did I cause suspicion (lying, flirting, tricking, coming home late, etc.)?

#### BITTERNESS:

- About her, him, family, friends, co-workers, etc.
- About me (guilt, shame)
- How did I cause bitterness?

### Column 4 (*Where was I at fault?*)

- Was I selfish, self seeking, dishonest or fearful, thoughtless, uncaring?

### Column 5 (*What should I have done instead?*)

- Not used the person
- Respected him/her
- Tried to be a friend
- Been candid and open
- Cared about him/her
- Treated him/her as I would have wanted to be treated

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\*Thanks to *Anonymous* in New England.

### Instructions for Completion

Complete each column top to bottom before going on to the next column.

- Column 1 *We reviewed our sex conduct over the years past. Whom had we hurt?*
- Column 2 *Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate?*
- Column 3 *Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness?*
- Column 4 *Where were we at fault?*
- Column 5 *What should we have done instead?*

### REVIEW OF OUR OWN SEX CONDUCT

	COLUMN 1 Whom did I harm?	COL. 2 Selfish	Dishonest	Inconsiderate	COL. 3 Jealousy	Suspicion	Bitterness	COLUMN 4 Where was I at fault?	COLUMN 5 What should I have done instead?
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									

If you must list additional sex conduct attach another sheet.