Step IV: ***Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.***

Exactly how one should approach the 4th Step inventory has been a problem for many years. Different guides have been developed by well meaning folks in several 12 Step programs. These range from simple list-making techniques to questionnaires totaling fifty pages and more. All agree that this is a vital Step for anyone serious about recovery; but there are a lot of different opinions out there about how it should be done. Some interesting historical documents have been uncovered by archivist Wally Paton (www.faithwithworks.com) in researching how 4th and 5th Steps were done in the very early days of A.A. The following Assets & Liability Checklist that he found to be in use in the 1940's in the Washington D.C. area sheds some fresh light on how early A.A. approached this Step. The instructions developed by Wally are also presented here.

Instructions for completing the Assets and Liabilities Checklist:

1. Start with the Liabilities side of the sheet. Save the Assets portion of the inventory until you have discussed your list of Liabilities with your sponsor or sharing partner.
2. Look over the list of Liabilities. When a name comes to mind that you associate with a Liability, write it at the top of the column. Then check all the Liabilities that apply to that person, institution or principle. Add other names as you think of them. Keep in mind the inventory is yours, not the other person's. (Examples: Mother, Father, spouse, boss, God).
3. After placing check marks in the boxes to the right of the Liabilities that correspond to the names at the top of the columns, schedule time to discuss the check marks with your sponsor. Remember, recovery comes from sharing your shortcomings, not from analyzing and writing about them.
4. When you have described the various incidents associated with the check marks, your sponsor will help you determine if an amend needs to be made and, if one is necessary, how best to proceed. Together you will circle items where an amend needs to be made.
5. Once you've discussed the Liabilities and agreed upon the amends, you will have to determine the "cause and conditions" that have kept you in the dark and prevented you from finding the spiritual solution to your problems.
6. Your sponsor or sharing partner ends the session by describing the Assets that you already have (those items with the least number of check marks) and those will be strengthened as you make your amends.

The Liabilities with check marks are the character defects that you turn over to God in Steps Six and Seven. The names above the items that have been circled as needing an amend become your Eighth Step list. So, on one sheet of paper you have everything needed to complete Steps Four through Nine and you can "be rid of the things in ourselves which have been blocking us." Not a bad tool for helping to KEEP IT SIMPLE.

MORAL INVENTORY

From: Alcoholics Anonymous (New York, NY: April 1939) and
A.A. – An Interpretation of Our Twelve Steps (Washington D.C.: Sept. 1944)

Liabilities **Watch for--**																**Assets** **Strive for --**
Resentment																**Forgiveness**
False Pride																**Humility**
Envy																**Contentment**
Jealousy																**Trust**
Selfishness																**Unselfishness**
Laziness																**Activity**
Dishonesty																**Honesty**
Fear																**Love**

Blank Assets and Liabilities Checklist

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