

More on the 4th Step

The 4th step calls for us to examine our lives up to the present day, writing down all important actions and events of a moral or ethical nature, our feelings about them and the character traits in us from which these actions stemmed.

As we face the problems, they lose their power to overwhelm and control us. The chains of self-obsession drop from us one by one, and we are able to know and do our High Power's will more easily, without the need to protect ourselves from uncomfortable feelings by eating compulsively.

Here is a list of the various 4th Step Inventory formats as listed in the OA 12 & 12.

Method 1:

Divide a page into 2: on one side we list our positive characteristics, and write an example of how we demonstrate this quality in our lives.

On the other side, we list the opposite negative characteristics, and write an example of how we demonstrate this quality in our lives.

Here is how the page could be divided:

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

ASSET Give your best example of this specific asset in your life.

Alternative: if writing is helpful, write a paragraph about each asset followed by another paragraph about the corresponding liability.

For some people, writing about each item on our list can promote self-awareness.

Here is a picture that I made to visualize what the book is describing:

Positive & Negative Characteristics			
Positive Characteristics	Example Give your best example of this specific asset in your life.	Negative Characteristics	Example Give your best example of this specific flaw in your life.

Alternative method of the example above:

Write down a particular character defect, and give an example of how you behaved, who was affected and the character asset to strive for.

This can also be done only focusing on one’s positive assets.

The goal is to “continue to grow along spiritual lines.”

Step 4 Moral Inventory			
Character Defect	Give an example of each	Who was affected? (List names)	Character Asset

The list of qualities can be as long or as short as you feel is necessary.

4 Absolutes Inventory

Here I made a picture of how to do an inventory only using the 4 Absolutes. The founders of program used this method, and I believe that they are the foundation of all character defects.

The 4 Absolutes are:

Resentful Forgiving

Selfish Unselfish

Fearful Loving or Faithful

Honest Dishonest

Positive & Negative Characteristics Using 4 Absolutes			
Positive Characteristics	Example Give your best example of this specific asset in your life.	Negative Characteristics	Example Give your best example of this specific flaw in your life.
Forgiving		Resentful	
Unselfish		Selfish	
Faithful/loving		Fearful	
Honest		Dishonest	

Here is a list of character liabilities and assets that might be helpful to focus on:

Examples of Liabilities and Assets:

Ask questions about each specific character trait. Then, examine in writing the ways that we exhibited these characteristics in our lives. Don't feel constrained by this list. *Where are you at spiritually in your relationship with God, other people and yourself?*

Liabilities*Watch for:*

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- Self-pity
 - Self-justification
 - Self-importance
 - Self-condemnation
 - Dishonesty
 - Impatience
 - Hate
 - Resentment
 - False pride
 - Jealousy
 - Envy
 - Procrastination
 - Insincerity
 - Negative thinking
 - Vulgar, immoral thinking
 - Criticizing

Assets*Strive for:*

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- Self-forgiveness
 - Humility
 - Modesty
 - Self-valuation
 - Honesty
 - Patience
 - Love
 - Forgiveness
 - Simplicity
 - Trust
 - Generosity
 - Activity
 - Promptness
 - Straightforwardness
 - Positive thinking
 - Spiritual, clean thinking
 - Look for the good!!

Autobiographical Inventory

In chronological order, list events, emotions, and positive and negative characteristics by periods of time.

Miscellaneous Inventory:

This did not come from the OA 12 & 12. The reference is below.

Write as much as you need to on the following questions:

1. How do you think other people see you? Is that the same as you see you? If not how do you see yourself?
2. Are you working? If so, what kind of work do you do? What do you like the most about your work? The least? If you could make a negative free change of professions today, would you? If yes, to what?
3. Besides work, what else would you like to do with your life?
4. If you used to use drugs and /or alcohol, are there things that you could do better then than now? What about things that you can do better now than when you were under the influence?
5. To boost the image of oneself to others (as well as to oneself), people sometimes develop a set of lies about events from the past that are said so often they begin to seem like they actually happened.. Have you included any of these pseudo-experiences in this inventory? If you don't know for sure, do you suspect any of your answers? Which ones?
6. Another way people enhance their image to themselves and others is by conveniently forgetting to include unpleasant or ugly details of the past. Are there things you have conveniently forgotten to include or purposefully left out of this inventory? Remember. You are doing this inventory solely for your growth, so the person who gets cheated by such omissions is you.
7. What has not been covered in your answers so far, that you think is important to include to get a full picture of yourself?
8. For a lot of people, writing an inventory like this can be a scary process. What kinds of feelings and/or problems did you experience during your writing?

I hope this is helpful and not too confusing. Pick which ever method resonates with your soul!

In love and service,

Shira