

## STEP FOUR

*Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

Principle	Theme	Action	Defect	Result
Courage; Truth	Know self	Self- examination	Self-pity/ Pride/ Resentment	Insight

### PRAYER

- *This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done. {BB, p. 67}*  
- *God, remove my fear and direct my attention to what You would have me be. I am sorry for what I have done and have the honest desire to let You take me to better things. I believe I will be forgiven and will have learned my lesson. Mold my ideals and help me to live up to them and what I should do about each specific matter. I pray, earnestly for the right ideal, for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity, and strength to do the right thing. {BB, p. 67, 68, 69, 70}.*

**REWARDS** - (a) perspective on self (humility); (b) brand-new kind of confidence and a sense of relief

### NOTES

- a) STEP SIMPLIFIED: *Write about how and why I got to where I am.*
- b) Pre-AA STEP: *I made a thorough and searching inventory of everyone else and found them lacking.*
- c) HOW TO WORK THE STEP: **BB page 64:** para. 1, lines 1-9; para. 2, lines 1-6.
- d) Steps 4, 5, 6, and 7: “Get Right with SELF”
- e) THREE BASIC INSTINCTS OF LIFE
  - SOCIAL - (Self-Esteem, Personal Relations, Ambition)
  - SECURITY - (Material, Emotional, Ambition)
  - SEX - (Acceptable, Hidden)
- f) Do immediately after 3<sup>rd</sup> step; inventory Resentments, Fears, and Sex Conduct (**BB**)
- g) Inventory Resentments, Fears, and Harm Done to Others, making sure to analyze the “4<sup>th</sup> column” – what is it in me behind each; work column down, not across rows (**Joe McQ**)
- h) Why do it?
  - o “*misdirected, necessary, God-given instincts [have] become liabilities*” (**12 & 12**)
  - o Our self-will blocks us from God’s will; so we need to “*identify the manifestations of self-will so we can start to eliminate them*” (**Joe McQ**)
- i) Write it, don’t just *think* it (**12 & 12**)

**REFERENCES:** - BB - Chapter 5 - How It Works p. 63-71

### PROMISES:

- 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. {**BB, p. 68**}
- *At once, we commence to outgrow fear.* {**BB, p. 68**}
- *We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all men, even our enemies, for we look on them as sick people.* {**BB, p. 70**}
- *As we persist, a brand-new kind of confidence is born, and the sense of relief at finally facing ourselves is indescribable.* {**12 & 12, p. 50**}

## Step Four

### *Made a searching and fearless inventory of ourselves.*

*CREATION gave us instincts for a purpose. Without them we wouldn't be complete human beings. . . Yet these instincts . . . often far exceed their proper functions. . . tyrannize us. Nearly every serious emotional problem can be seen as a case of misdirected instinct. When that happens, [they] have turned into physical and mental liabilities.* {12 & 12, p. 43}

*Now we discover our liabilities and strengths. Lots of people buy and restore and then live in old houses. To get the job done right, they have to take inventory of what is there, what is not. Then they can throw out what they don't want and go get the things that might be missing.* {Father Joe Martin, ASHLEY}

*We want to find exactly how, when, and where our natural desires have warped us. We wish to look squarely at the unhappiness this has caused others and ourselves. By discovering what our emotional deformities are, we can move toward their correction. Without a willing and persistent effort to do this, there can be little sobriety or contentment for us. Without a searching and fearless moral inventory, most of us have found that the faith which really works in daily living is still out of reach.* {12 & 12, p. 43}

*. . . for success, do the one asked for, NOT a "fearing and searchless" inventory.* {unknown}

*When I became willing to accept my own powerlessness, I began to realize that blaming myself for all the trouble in my life can be an ego trip back into hopelessness. Asking for help and listening to the messages inherent in the Steps and Traditions of the program make it possible to change those attitudes which delay my recovery.* {DAILY REFLECTIONS, p. 35}

*When I uncovered my need for approval in the Fourth Step....(I learned) this "need" can be very crippling. Today I still enjoy getting the approval of others, but I am not willing to pay the price I used to pay to get it.* {unknown}

*Similarly, my false pride always kept me overly concerned about my reputation. Since being Enlightened by the AA program, my aim is to improve my character.* {DAILY REFLECTIONS, p. 101}

*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 physically and mentally ill, we have been spiritually sick.* {BB, p. 64}

*During the times I didn't have love in my life I most assuredly had fear. To fear God is to be afraid of joy. In looking back, I realize that, during the times I feared God most, there was no joy in my life. As I learned not to fear God, I also learned to experience joy.* {DAILY REFLECTIONS, p. 116}

*Take a searching and fearless moral inventory. We must find out what we've got, what we need to get rid of, and what we need to acquire. There are 20 character defects to ask about -- the individual wrongs are not necessary to go over, just the defects that caused them. Going over the questions, you ask that the person be honest and admit his defects to himself, to you, and to God (where two or more are gathered in His name, there shall He be.) By admitting, the person also takes.* {Clarence Snyder 1944 - A.A. Sponsorship Pamphlet}

*A person who has been motivated by self-will has been making wrong judgements – resulting in resentments. He has been practicing wrong believing – resulting in fear. And he has taken, because of his fear and resentments, wrong actions – resulting in harms to others.* {Joe McQ}

## BB

1. Do right after 3<sup>rd</sup> step; identify & shed our obstacles (liquor only a symptom, analyze causes and conditions)
2. Take stock like a business:
3. Resentments the #1 offender:
  - Leads to futility and unhappiness
  - Fatal for alcoholics
4. The spreadsheet (Who angry at /The cause(s)/ Affects what about me?/ Why?)
5. The Process:
  - a) List **resentments** (people, institutions, principles)
    - Look at what was threatened: self-esteem, finances, ambitions, relationships
    - *If we were to live, we had to be free of anger.*
  - b) Opposite each name specify injury
  - c) Realize they are perhaps spiritually sick too
  - d) Ask God for the tolerance, pity, patience we show to the sick
  - e) Ignoring harms done us, looked for our own mistakes
  - f) Review **fears** – self-reliance did not go far enough
  - g) Ask Him to remove our fear and show us what He would have us be.
    - *We never apologize for God. Instead we let him demonstrate, through us, what he can do.*
  - h) Review **sex** conduct – where had it been selfish, dishonest, inconsiderate?
  - i) Ask Him *to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them.*
6. Lots of discourse on sex: many opinion; get advice, esp. from God; must stop hurting others
7. Write it down!

## 12x12

1. Why Take an Inventory? (42-50)
  - a) Basic problem: misdirected, necessary, God-given instincts become liabilities
  - b) Discover them (how, when, where) to “move toward their correction”
  - c) Categories of misdirected instincts: **obsession; dependency; domination**
    - Conflicts within selves & others’ instincts in collision
    - Underlying cause of why we drank
  - d) Why we avoid Step 4
    - Self-Pity: depressing; guilt & despair (*pride in reverse*)
      - Sponsor: comfort; “*not so bad*”; list some assets too
    - Self-Righteous: (a) problems are *caused by drinking*; (b) problems are *caused by other people*
      - Sponsor: discomfort; reveal chink in their armor to admit to defects
    - Sometimes, it’s a bit of both (egomaniac with an inferiority complex)
  - e) More about liabilities (AKA **defects; moral violations; maladjustments**):
    - Spiritual Axiom (almost): If disturbed, 1<sup>st</sup> ... quiet disturbance regardless of who or what caused it
    - *Seven Deadly Sins*: **Pride; Anger; Envy; Gluttony; Greed; Lust; Sloth**
    - Failings generate fear, which generates more defects; “\_\_\_ is NEVER ENOUGH”
  - f) Rewards of Step 4:
    - Gain perspective on self (humility)
    - Get brand-new kind of confidence and a sense of relief – “THAT’S why my life sucks”
    - Show that pride and fear are boogeymen
    - Demonstrate willingness to move forward
2. How to do it? (50-54)
  - Beginning of a lifetime practice
  - Start with the worst and easiest
  - QUESTIONS: (a) Sex instinct; (b) Financial Security; (c) Emotional Security
    - A discourse on our relationship woes
    - If a Q is objectionable, probably concerns a troublesome defect
    - If think you’re good: probably burying things
  - Write it, don’t just think it!

*The Steps We Took (Joe McO):*

1. Our self-will blocks us from God's will; so we need to "*identify the manifestations of self-will so we can start to eliminate them*"
2. Inventory Resentments, Fears, and Harm Done to Others, making sure to analyze the "4<sup>th</sup> column" – what is it in me behind each; work column down, not across rows
3. It's not enough to just vent resentments. All you do is make room for the next one. Must analyze – get to the root cause. If we see the truth about them, we won't have them anymore.
4. Work down columns, not across rows.