

## Fourth Step Guide

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

### Introduction

This personal inventory guide will assist you in completing your Fourth Step, as instructed in the book of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is a read and write guide. So, let's begin by getting a pen or pencil.

### Getting Started

There are four sections to the Fourth Step, each with a corresponding worksheet you may fill out. The basic process is to read the section, then fill out the worksheet. Feel free to make copies of a worksheet if more space is needed.

The four sections to your personal inventory are:

1. Resentments
2. Fears
3. Sex Conduct
4. Harm Done to Others

### 1. Resentments

*(From page 63, paragraph 4 through page 65, paragraph 1)*

Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision 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 factfacing 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.

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.

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. In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry. We asked ourselves why we were angry. 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.”

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?

We were usually as definite as this example:

<i>I'm resentful at:</i>	<i>The Cause</i>	<i>Affects my:</i>
<i>Mr. Brown</i>	His attention to my wife. Told my wife of my mistress. Brown may get my job at the office.	Sex relations. Self-esteem (fear) Sex relations. Self-esteem (fear) Security Self-esteem (fear)
<i>Mrs. Jones</i>	She's a nut – she snubbed me. She committed her husband for drinking. He's my friend. She's a gossip.	Personal relationship. Self-esteem (fear)
<i>My employer</i>	Unreasonable – Unjust – Overbearing – Threatens to fire me for drinking and padding my expense account.	Self-esteem (fear) Security.
<i>My wife</i>	Misunderstands and nags. Likes Brown. Wants house put in her name.	Price – Personal sex relations – Security (fear)

### Instructions

Complete the “Resentments” worksheet. The format for each column are as follows:

#### Column 1: I'm resentful at:

List all people, places, things, institutions, ideas or principles with whom you are angry, resent, feel hurt or threatened by.

What happened? Be specific as to why you were angry.

How did it make me feel? Specifically, how did it affect the seven parts of self (Self Esteem, Pride, Emotional Security, Pocketbook, Ambitions, Personal Relations, Sex Relations)?

Where was my responsibility in this relationship? What might I have done instead? Where was I at fault? Was I dishonest, selfish, self-seeking, frightened, inconsiderate, etc...)?

[illegible]

## 2. Fears

(From page 67, paragraph 4 through page 68, paragraph 3)

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 of 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 be classed with stealing. It seems to cause more trouble.

We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them. 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.

Perhaps there is a better way - we think so. For we are now on a different basis; the 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.

### Instructions

Complete the “Fears” worksheet. The format for each column are as follows:

#### Column 1: I'm fearful of:

List all people, places, things, institutions, ideas or principles with whom you are fearful or afraid of:

#### Column 2: Affects My:

How did it make me feel? What part of self have I been relying on which has failed me (selfesteem, pride, emotional security, pocketbook, ambitions, personal relations or sex relations)?

Fears WORKSHEET	
I'm fearful of:	Affects my:


**After completing the Fears worksheet, please read:**

*(From page 68, paragraph 4)*

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 outgrow fear.

### 3. Sex Conduct

*(From page 68, paragraph 5 through page 70 paragraph 3)*

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 kind. 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 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?

We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? Where were we at fault, what should we have done instead? We got this all down on paper and looked at it.

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.

Suppose we fall short of the chosen ideal and stumble? Does this mean we are going to get drunk? Some people tell us so. But this is only a half-truth. It depends on us and on our motives. If we are sorry for what we have done, and have the honest desire to let God take us to better things, we believe we will be forgiven and will have learned our lesson. If we are not sorry, and our conduct continues to harm others, we are quite sure to drink. We are not theorizing. These are facts out of our experience.

To sum up about sex: We earnestly pray for the right ideal, for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing. 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 of ourselves. It quiets the imperious urge, when to yield would mean heartache.

### **Instructions**

Complete the "Sex Conduct" worksheet. The format for each column are as follows:

#### Column 1: Whom did I hurt?

List all people with whom you have harmed sexually. Please keep the list to sex conduct only. You will use a similar worksheet on the last section (Harms Done To Others), that are not related to sex.

#### Column 2: The Cause

What happened? Be specific as to how you harmed the people on your list. Where were you at fault? Did I unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion, bitterness? Where was I at fault? Was I selfish, dishonest, inconsiderate, etc...

Column 3: What should I have done instead?

Specifically, what should you have done in each situation?

[illegible]

## Instructions

Column 1: Whom did I hurt?



List all people with whom you have harmed. Use this worksheet for harms done to others that are not related to sex.

Column 2: The Cause

What happened? Be specific as to how you harmed the people on your list. Where were you at fault? Did I unjustifiably around jealousy, suspicion, bitterness? Where was I at fault? Was I selfish, dishonest, inconsiderate, etc.

Column 3: What should I have done instead?

Specifically, what should you have done in each situation?

Harms Done to Others WORKSHEET		
Whom did I hurt?	The Cause:	What should I have done instead?

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## **Conclusion**

*(From page 70, paragraph 4 through page 71)*

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.

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. If you have already made a decision, and an inventory of your grosser handicaps, you have made a good beginning. That being so you have swallowed and digested some big chunks of truth about yourself.

**Congratulations, you've completed your Fourth Step!**