

# Step Four: A Fact-Finding and Fact-Facing Inventory

## Before You Begin: A Note From Your Sponsor

This worksheet is a tool to guide you through the "searching and fearless moral inventory" exactly as it is laid out in the "How It Works" chapter of the Big Book (pp. 64-71).

This is *not* a tool for beating yourself up. It is a "fact-finding" mission. We are simply looking for the truth. We are looking for the patterns and "defects of character" that have been causing us pain and blocking us from our Higher Power.

Please do this on paper, not just in your head. Find a quiet space, set aside some time, and be as honest as you possibly can. When you feel stuck, afraid, or ashamed, pause. Take a deep breath. Recite the Serenity Prayer or the Step Three Prayer, and ask for the "courage to change the things I can." This inventory is the first part of that change.

We will do this in three parts, just as the Big Book instructs:

1. **The Resentment Inventory**
2. **The Fear Inventory**
3. **The Harms & Sex Conduct Inventory**

## Part 1: The Resentment Inventory (Big Book, p. 65)

**Instructions:** The Big Book says, "We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry." This is the first column. For each one, we ask ourselves *why* we are angry. This is the second column.

Then, we look at what "part of self" was affected. This is the third column. Was it our...

- **Self-Esteem** (Our pride, how we are seen)
- **Security** (Financial, emotional, physical)
- **Ambitions** (Our goals, our "will")
- **Personal Relations** (How we interact with people)
- **Sex Relations** (Our romantic or sexual lives)

Finally, and most importantly, we set aside the other person's wrongs and look "fearlessly" at our own mistakes. This is the fourth column. "Where had we been..."

- **Selfish?** (Thinking only of "I want," "I need")
- **Dishonest?** (Lies, half-truths, "conveniently" forgetting)
- **Self-Seeking?** (What was I trying to get out of this?)
- **Frightened?** (Was this fear, masquerading as anger?)

## Resentment Inventory Worksheet

I'm Resentful At... (Person, Institution, Principle)	The Cause (What they did to make me angry?)	Affects My... (Self-Esteem, Security, Ambitions, Personal/Sex Relations)	My Part (Where was I Selfish, Dishonest, Self-Seeking, or Frightened?)
<i>Example 1: My Boss</i>	<i>Criticized my work in a meeting.</i>	<i>Self-Esteem, Security, Ambitions</i>	<p><b>* Frightened:</b> (Of losing my job).  <b>Dishonest:</b> (I had rushed that project and acted like it was perfect).  <b>Self-Seeking:</b> (I wanted praise, not criticism).</p>
<i>Example 2: My Partner</i>	<i>Doesn't trust me. Always checking up on me.</i>	<i>Self-Esteem, Personal Relations</i>	<p><b>* Dishonest:</b> (I have a long history of lying to them about my drinking).  <b>Selfish:</b> (I want their trust without having to earn it back). <b>Frightened:</b> (Afraid they will leave me).</p>
<i>Example 3: Myself</i>	<i>My inability to stop drinking. My weakness.</i>	<i>Self-Esteem, Security</i>	<p><b>* Selfish:</b> (I put my desire to drink ahead of everything and everyone).  <b>Dishonest:</b> (I broke promises to myself).  <b>Frightened:</b> (Terrified that I am hopeless).</p>


## Part 2: The Fear Inventory (Big Book, p. 68)

**Instructions:** The Big Book says, "We listed our fears." It's that simple. Get them out of your head and onto the paper.

This can include:

- Fears that keep you drinking (loneliness, anxiety, fear of emotions)
- Fears of what will happen if you stop drinking (loss of friends, not "fun")
- Fears about your life (money, job, health, relationships)
- Ego-driven fears (appearing weak, not being in control, what people think)

For each fear, the Big Book asks, "**Why did we have them?**" The answer is almost always that "self-reliance had failed us." We were trying to "play God" and control things that we cannot control.

## Fear Inventory Worksheet

What is my fear?	Why do I have it? (What is the root cause? Where has self-reliance failed me?)
<i>Example 1: Fear of financial insecurity / losing my job.</i>	<i>Why?</i> Because my sense of security is based <i>only</i> on my paycheck. <i>Self-reliance failed me:</i> I've tried to control my boss's opinion, or I've neglected my work because of drinking. My own efforts are not enough.
<i>Example 2: Fear of being alone / abandoned.</i>	<i>Why?</i> Because I've pushed people away with my behavior. <i>Self-reliance failed me:</i> I try to control people, to make them stay, which often pushes them away faster. Or I hide and lie, so I am "alone" even when people are around.
<i>Example 3: Fear of my emotions (anger, sadness).</i>	<i>Why?</i> I don't know how to handle them without drinking. <i>Self-reliance failed me:</i> My "solution" (drinking) to "fix" my feelings has now become my biggest problem. My self-control is gone.
<i>Example 4: Fear of what people think of me.</i>	<i>Why?</i> My self-esteem is based on outside approval. <i>Self-reliance failed me:</i> I try to manage everyone's perception of me, which is exhausting and dishonest. I'm afraid of them seeing the real me.


## **Part 3: The Harms & Sex Conduct Inventory (Big Book, pp. 68-70)**

**Instructions:** The Big Book asks us to "review our sex conduct" and relationships. This is where we look at *all* the harms we have caused, both to others and to ourselves, that may not have appeared in our Resentment list. We subject our conduct to a series of simple questions. Be honest. Write freely.

### **Question 1: Where had I been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate?**

**Prompts:** Think about...

- **Harms to Others:** Times I said/did something hurtful to loved ones, friends, or coworkers. Occasions of aggression, hostility, or passive-aggression. Moments I ignored or abandoned someone's need.
- **Harms to Self:** Behaviors endangering my health (drinking, self-harm, neglect). Ways I sabotaged goals (work, promises, aspirations). Neglected self-care (sleep, diet, medical care). Financial self-abuse (spending, debt).
- **Dishonesty:** Instances of lies, cover-ups, and half-truths. Times I took advantage of trust (money, favors, relationships). Secret drinking behaviors (hiding, drinking alone).
- **Inconsiderate Actions:** Times I made everything about me. Times I was late, unreliable, or failed to show up.

My Inventory for Question 1:

(Write your response here. Use a list format if it helps.)

### **Question 2: Whom had I hurt?**

**Prompts:** List the specific people (family, partners, children, friends, coworkers, employers, strangers, myself) who were harmed by the actions you listed above.

My Inventory for Question 2:

(Write your response here.)

### **Question 3: Did I unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness?**

**Prompts:** Think about...

- Times I was flirtatious or secretive in a relationship.
- Times I triangulated people or pitted them against each other.
- Times my dishonesty or "people-pleasing" made others suspicious of my real motives.
- Times I "faked" being okay, causing bitterness when the truth came out.

My Inventory for Question 3:

(Write your response here.)

### **Question 4: Where was I at fault?**

**Prompts:** This is where we identify our *motives*. Look at the harms you listed above. What defects of character were driving you?

- **Ego/Pride:** Need to be right, need to appear strong, fear of weakness.
- **Fear:** Fear of loneliness, fear of emotions, fear of loss of control.
- **Selfishness / Self-Seeking:** "I wanted what I wanted," "I deserve it," "It helps me cope."
- **Control:** Situations where I *had* to control the outcome or other people.
- **Other "isms":** Perfectionism (controlling), workaholism (avoiding), victim mentality (manipulating).

My Inventory for Question 4:

(Write your response here.)

### **Question 5: What should I have done instead?**

**Instructions:** The Big Book says, "We tried to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life." We can apply this to *all* our conduct. For the harms you listed, what would a "sane and sound" action have looked like? This is not to make you feel guilty, but to create a new "ideal" to live by.

My Inventory for Question 5:

(Write your response here.)

Instead of... (e.g., lying to my partner)

I should have... (e.g., been honest about my feelings, even if it was hard.)

Instead of... (e.g., neglecting my self-care)

I should have... (e.g., treated myself with kindness and asked for help.)

Instead of...

I should have...

## **Final Step: Completion**

You have now completed the "searching and fearless moral inventory" as described in the Big Book. You have the "raw material" for Step Five.

Take a deep breath. Say the Step Three Prayer: *"God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!"*

**Secure this document.** Do not leave it out. Put it in a safe, private place. The next step is to share this with your sponsor. You are not alone.