

AWAAY CONFERENCE – November 4, 2017
WORKSHOP: Steps 4 – 7, 12:15 p.m.

I. STEP 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. (BB, pp. 66-71)

Step Four is not: a bottomless free-fall through a pit of guilt and failure.
Step Four is: an excavation to uncover untouchable treasure.

A. I don't want to do this. I feel bad enough, do I have to feel worse?

1. This is the cure for what's making you feel bad in the first place.
2. As an alcoholic, you lived a double life for so long you don't even know what's real about you anymore. (12/12, p. 55)
3. P.S.: Even without alcohol, you're a woman. When asked "who are you?" your DNA may respond: "Who do you want me to be?"
4. Everything real about you is covered up with a thick layer of garbage; that is, "vengeful resentments, self-pity, and unwarranted pride" (12/12, p. 47) and natural fear that cripples every person who walks the earth.
5. Being honest about that garbage and excavating it will get you to the truth of who you are: the truth that will set you free. "As we persist, a brand-new kind of confidence is born, and the sense of relief at finally facing ourselves is indescribable." (12/12, pp. 49-50)

B. I'm scared to look and BTW, I'm not the only one at fault here!

1. The fear to look is like a coat on your bedpost in the dark: looks like a monster until you turn on the light and see what it really is. Excavating other people's garbage is unpaid, nasty labor that breaks you for nothing. "[T]he testimony of A.A.'s who have really tried a moral inventory is that pride and fear of this sort turn out to be bogeymen, nothing else." (12/12, p. 50)

C. Fine, then how do I actually do this?

1. Do the work in order prescribed: resentments, fears and sex.
2. The actual analysis looks like this:

1. Name the person, place, thing, institution, idea or principle that makes you feel angry (or scared, depending on which heading you're working on).
2. In general, why does this person, or these things, ideas, etc. truly enrage you or terrify you so? Don't skimp on the facts.
3. How does this impact your: self-esteem (how I see myself), pride (how I think others see me), money, personal relationships, ambition, emotional security and sex relations?
4. What's my part in it? Do I contribute to this in some way by being dishonest, selfish, self-seeking, frightened, inconsiderate?

Be real. Be thorough. Be well. Don't be afraid of how deep your rage or fear or shame may go. You didn't get sober to deny your feelings – that's what you did when you drank. Feel what you feel. Write what you feel. Exceed the column width by miles, as needed. **You are more than what you feel and more than what you've done. The real you is waiting underneath these things. Rescue you: partner with your HP and excavate.**

II. STEP 5: Admitted to God, ourselves and another living person the exact nature of our wrongs. (BB, pp. 55-62).

A. I don't want to do this.

1. No, but you do want to be sober and this is what it takes if you are finally, once and for all, going to be able to live with yourself and get smart about who you really are. Until you do this, your "willingness to clean house is largely theoretical." (12/12 , p. 60)
2. "A.A. experience has taught us we cannot live alone with our pressing problems and the character defects which cause or aggravate them. If we have . . . come to know how wrong thinking and action have hurt us and others, then the need to quit living by ourselves with those tormenting ghosts of yesterday gets more urgent than ever. We have to talk to somebody about them." (12/12, p. 55)

B. Who do I talk to?

1. Who do you trust and who has the wisdom and maturity to help you? It can be your sponsor, but doesn't have to be. You can do the Step with a spiritual advisor, your counselor/therapist/doctor, or a closed-mouth, understanding friend. (BB, pp.)(12/12, p. 61)

2. Your confidante must be mature and wise enough to help you answer the ultimate question: what is the exact nature of the wrong? ***It's not what you did so much as why you did it.*** What are the patterns of mistakes, character flaws that emerge from your life story? What is the exact nature of the errors that drove you to those actions?

C. What do I say and do?

1. Your fourth step is partly your life story. Not a laundry list of wrongs and mistakes, but the things that genuinely have caused you hurt, shame, guilt, anger and confusion. Tell your story.
2. Ask for feedback. Your confidante is there to help you see the exact nature of your wrongs. What patterns are emerging? This is a puzzle, an analysis of things you've excavated, a code to break. This is the walk to real answers, not the walk of shame.
3. After you leave, go home and take an hour to be quiet and think it over. Did you say everything you wanted and needed to say? Is there some area of shame or secret that you just couldn't get through. You can continue your Fifth Step, it's not a one and done. Feel the relief of knowing you aren't living a secret anymore. (12/12, p. 57-58). Thank your HP for getting you through it and sticking with you.

III. Step 6: "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." (BB, p. 86)

A. So all I have to be is flawless?

1. Nope. "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character" is A.A.'s way of stating the best possible attitude one can take in order to make a beginning on this lifetime job. This does not mean that we expect all our character defects to be lifted out of us as the drive to drink was. A few of them may be, but with most of them we shall have to be content with patient improvement." (12/12, p. 65)
2. "The key words 'entirely ready' only underline the fact that we want to ***aim*** at the very best we know or can learn. The only urgent thing is that we make a beginning, and keep trying." (12/12, p. 65). We don't have to be perfect, just walk in that direction; "it will seldom matter how haltingly we walk." (12/12, pp. 65-66). "The only question is are we ready?" (12/12, Pp. 65). The moment we say "No, never" our minds close against the grace of God. (12/12, p. 69).
3. Are you willing to erase hard-and-fast lines and look at everything with an open mind? (12/12, pp. 68-69). Are you willing to observe how you love

some of your defects and even take pride in them, or try to hide/soft-pedal them? (12/12, pp. 66-67). Willingness is all.

IV. STEP SEVEN: “Humbly asked God to remove all these defects of character.” (BB, pp. 70-76)

A. I don’t want to be a saint or spend hours in line at the DMV.

1. No worries. Asking a Higher Power to remove your defects of character will not propel you directly into sainthood, nor immediately plunge your life into a series of tribulations designed to purge you of your defects (such as a sudden problem with your car title that requires hours in the DMV, all to purge you of impatience).
2. Like everything else in the program, this is a Process. It requires you to set your will in alignment with the will of a Higher Power. Happily, you and your Higher Power always have, and always will, want exactly the same things for you: freedom and love. Your Higher Power just has more perception and maturity to know the best ways to accomplish that common goal.
4. Being humble simply means admitting that our way of doing things isn’t working and when we need help to overcome specific problems in our lives.
5. We do Step Seven to give up our addiction to fear. “The chief activator of our defects has been self-centered fear—primarily fear that we would lose something we already possessed or would fail to get something we demanded. Living upon a basis of unsatisfied demands, we were in a state of continual disturbance and frustration. Therefore, no peace was to be had unless we could find a means of reducing these demands. The Seventh Step is where we make the change in our attitude which permits us, with humility as our guide, to move out from ourselves toward others and toward God.” (12/12, p. 76).

B. The Prayer: Sealing the Deal

1. “When ready, we say *something like this*: "My Creator, I am now willing that single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen." (BB, p. 76)(emphasis added).
2. You’re ready if you’re willing. If you like the traditional words, go for it. If not, just something like it, whatever expresses the same thought, in your own way. Your program, your HP.

