

4th Step Worksheets

Grant Me the Serenity...

Fourth Step Inventory

These 4th step worksheets use the wording from *Alcoholics Anonymous* (the Big Book) pages 63-71. Text in *italics* is quoted from the Big Book. When the word “optional” is used in the worksheets, it means that the Big Book suggests doing this but does not suggest writing anything down. However, many people who have used these worksheets found it helpful to write down their flaws and their specific defects.

4th Step Worksheets

HELPFUL HINTS

PREPARATION: before you start this written Fourth Step, read pages 63-71 in the Big Book and the Fourth Step in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

NOTE:

1. This inventory is **not** an exercise in beating yourself up. Be scrupulously honest but be fair to yourself. Inventory your strengths as well as your defects.
2. The following checklist merely **suggests** what some people consider flaws. You must decide how they fit with your own moral code. Do not be limited by this list--add your other

flaws and assets. It is in this Fourth Step that you begin to discover **your** values--what **you** consider right and wrong, functional and dysfunctional behavior--and how you live up to your standards.

3. This inventory is about who you are **now**, not who you were when you were bingeing and compulsive over/under eating. Be careful, however, not to blame all past bad behavior on bingeing and compulsive over/under eating if the seed of that bad behavior still exists in you.
4. Don't be discouraged when your character defects are not immediately lifted after you have completed your 5th Step—that is the work of the 6th and 7th Steps.

5. **Prioritize!** Spend most of your time on the 20% of your flaws that cause 80% of the trouble in your life. You can initially check off as many flaws as you want on the checklist but then prioritize to the 12 that cause the most trouble. If you list more than 12 flaws, you are probably beating yourself up!

INTO ACTION: On the following list, check all of your defects **and** all of your assets. This is an inventory of **both** bad and good characteristics. Then discuss your defects (with your best example of each) on the *Review of Flaws* form.

Glossary of Words Used in Steps Four and Five

Moral Inventory ...A list of personality defects, violations of moral principles, defects in character, maladjustments, and dysfunctional behavior.

- Character.....Moral vigor or firmness, especially as acquired through self-discipline.
- Defect.....Lack of something necessary for completeness; flaw; weakness, fault; same as Shortcoming.
- DishonestThe act or practice of telling a lie, or of cheating, deceiving, stealing, etc.
- ExactPrecise, detailed.
- FaultSomething done wrongly, an error or mistake.
- FearPainful emotion marked by alarm, dread, anxiety, agitation, uneasiness, apprehension, etc.

- Frightened A temporary or continual state of Fear. Anxious.
- Inconsiderate..... Without thought or consideration of others.
- Nature..... The essential characteristic of a thing.
- Self-centered Occupying or concerned only with one’s own affairs; same as Selfish.
- Self-seeker A person who seeks only or mainly to further his own interests.
- Selfish Too much concerned with one’s own welfare or interests and having little or no concern for others; same as self-centered.
- Shortcoming Falling short of what is expected or required; same as Defect.
- Wrong..... Immoral, improper; not suitable or appropriate.

Footnotes to the list on following page:

¹ Dr. Bob’s Fourth Step List; in “He Sold Himself Short,” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 292)

² Seven Deadly Sins (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 48)

³ Clarence Snyder’s Fourth Step List (one of the original 40 members of AA, see “Home Brewmeister,” *Alcoholics Anonymous*, pp. 297-303, 3rd edition. (Not in 4th edition)

⁴ Boy Scout Law, Robert Binkey's *The Official Boy Scout Handbook* (10th edition, 1990)

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Checklist of Flaws and Assets

4 Character Defect

Opposite Asset 4

aggressive, belligerent	good-natured, gentle
angry ²	forgiving, calm, generous
apathetic	interested, concerned, alert
apprehensive, afraid	calm, courageous
argumentative, quarrelsome	agreeable
arrogant, insolent	unassuming, humble
attacking, critical	fair, self-restrained
avoidant	faces problems and acts
blocking	honest, intuitive
boastful	modest, humble
careless ¹	careful, painstaking, concerned
cheating	honest
competitive (socially)	cooperative
compulsive	free
conceited ¹ , self-important	humble, modest
contradictory, oppositional	reasonable, agreeable
contrary, intractable, pigheaded	reasonable
controlling	lets go, esp. of other's lives
cowardly	brave ⁴
critical ³	non-judgmental, praising, tolerant,
cynical	open-minded
deceitful	guileless, honest
defensive	open to criticism
defiant, contemptuous	respectful
denying	honest, accepting
dependent	accepts help but is self-reliant
depressed, morose	hopeful, optimistic, cheerful ⁴
dirty, poor hygiene	clean ⁴
dishonest ³	honest
disloyal, treacherous	faithful, loyal ⁴
disobedient	obedient ⁴
disrespectful, insolent	respectful, reverent ⁴
enabling	setting boundaries, tough love

envying ^{2,3}	empathetic, generous, admiring
evasive, deceitful	candid, straightforward
exaggerating	honest, realistic
faithless, disloyal	reliable, faithful
falsely modest	honest, has self-esteem
falsely prideful ^{2,3}	modest, humble
fantasizing, unrealistic	practical, realistic
fearful ³	confident, courageous
forgetful	responsible
gluttonous ² , excessive	moderate
gossiping ³	closed-mouth, kind, praising
greedy ^{2,3}	moderate, generous, sharing
hateful ³	forgiving, loving, concerned for others
hypersensitive	tolerant, doesn't personalize
ill-tempered ¹ , bitchy	good-tempered, calm
impatient ³	patient
impulsive, reckless	consistent, considered actions
inconsiderate	thoughtful, considerate
indecisive, timid	firm, decisive
indifferent, apathetic, aloof	caring
inflexible, stubborn	open-minded, flexible
insecure, anxious	self-confident, secure
insincere ³ , hypocritical	sincere, honest
intolerant ¹	tolerant, understanding, patient
irresponsible, reckless	responsible
isolating, solitary	sociable, outgoing
jealous ^{1,3}	trusting, generous, admiring
judgmental	broadminded, tolerant
justifying (own actions)	honest, frank, candid
lack of purpose	purposeful
lazy, indolent	industrious, conscientious
loud	tasteful, quiet
lustful ²	healthy sexuality
lying ³	honest
manipulative	candid, honest, non-controlling
masked, closed	honest, open, candid
nagging	supportive
narrow minded	open minded
obscene, crude	modest, courteous

over emotional	emotionally stable
perfectionist	realistic goals
pessimistic	realistic, hopeful, optimistic, trusting
possessive	generous
prejudiced	open-minded
procrastinates ³	disciplined, acts promptly
projecting (negative)	clear sighted, optimistic
rationalizing	candid, honest
resentful ^{1,3} , bitter, hateful	forgiving
resisting growing	willing to grow
rude, discourteous	polite, courteous ⁴
sarcastic ¹	praising, tolerant
self-important ³	humble, modest
self-centered	caring of others
self-destructive, self-defeating	self-fulfilling
self-hating	self-accepting, loving
self-justifying ³	admitting wrongs, humble
self-pitying ³	grateful, realistic, accepting
self-righteous	humble, understanding
self-seeking ³	selfless, concerned for others
selfish ^{1,3}	altruistic, concerned with others
shy	outgoing
slothful (lazy) ^{2,3}	industrious, taking action
spiteful, malicious	forgiving
stealing	honest
stubborn	open-minded, willing
sullen	cheerful
superior, grandiose, pretentious	humble
superstitious	realistic, no magical thinking
suspicious	trusting
tense	calm, serene
thinking negatively ³	being positive
treacherous	trustworthy
undisciplined, self-indulgent	disciplined
unfair	fair
unfriendly, hostile, bitchy	friendly ⁴
ungrateful	thankful, grateful
unkind, mean, malicious, spiteful	kind ⁴
unsupportive of others	supportive

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untrustworthy, unreliable, dishonest	trustworthy ⁴
useless, destructive	helpful ⁴
vain	modest, humble
vindictive	forgiving
violent	gentle
vulgar ³	polite
wasteful	thrifty ⁴
willful	accepting of the inevitable
withdrawn	outgoing
wordy, verbose	frank, to the point, succinct
Other dysfunctional ways of acting, feeling or thinking which cause me or others pain (specify in the following <i>Review of Flaws</i>).	

See source footnotes on page 2.

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RESENTMENTS

Here is a list of people, institutions and principles that may be helpful in getting started. Feel free to add to this list.

PEOPLE

Father
Mother
In-Laws
Boyfriends
Husbands
Girlfriends
Wives
Lovers
Brothers
Sisters
Cousins
Aunts
Uncles
Sponsors
Employers
Employees
Co-Workers
12-Step Friends
Acquaintances
Best Friends
Childhood Friends

Life-long Friends
School Friends
Teachers
Clergy
Creditors
Doctors
Judges
Lawyers
Parole Officers
Police
Probation Officers

INSTITUTIONS

Authority
Bible
Child Protection
Church
Correctional System
Education System
Government
Law
Marriage

Health/Mental Health System

Nationality
Philosophy
Races
Religion
Society

PRINCIPLES

Adultery
Death
God-Deity
Golden Rule
Heaven
Hell
Jesus Christ
Life After Death
Original Sin
Retribution
Satan
Seven Deadly Sins
Sin
Ten Commandments

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Instructions for Completion: Resentments

Complete each column top to bottom **before** proceeding to the next column.

For example, list all names first, all causes second, etc. List real resentments, not imaginary or theoretical resentment. Is the resentment a problem for you? Does it cause you pain?

Column 1 *In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry.*

Column 2 *We asked ourselves why we were angry.*

Column 3 *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?*

Column 4 *Referring to our list again. Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?*

Column 5 This Column is optional. List specific other defects to show your participation in the resentments.

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REVIEW OF RESENTMENTS

Reading from left to right we now see the resentment (Column 1), the cause (Column 2), the part of self that had been affected (Column 3), and the exact nature of the defect within us that allowed the resentment to surface and block us off from God's will (Columns 4 and 5).

Tip: try and list resentments in groups, i.e. family, school, relationships, work, etc.

COLUMN 1		COLUMN 2						COL. 3 Affects My	COL. 4 My Own Mistakes			Specific Defects (Optional)								
#	I'm RESENTFUL at:	The Cause:						Self-esteem	Security	Ambitions	Personal Relationships	Sex Relations	Selfish	Dishonest	Self-seeking	Frightened				

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FEARS

Do not be restricted by this list. It is just to help you get started. List your fears on the next pages.

abandonment
aging
anger
authority figures
being alone
being deceived
being found out
being myself
change
compliments
confrontation
creditors
death
denial, my
disapproval
disease
divorce
embarrassment
employment
facing myself
failure
fear

Financial insecurity
flying
fourth & fifth steps
future, the
getting fat or thin
God
going home
going out on a “whim”
having children
homelessness
homosexuality
honesty
humiliation
hurting others
I’m a fraud and others will find out
incarceration
intimacy
IRS, the
letting go
living
loneliness
losing hope
love
mediocrity
money

needing anyone
not being good enough
not being happy
not being liked
not being perfect
people (specify who)
police, the
poverty
procrastination
rape
rejection
relationships
resentments, my
responsibility
risks
saying that I can’t do something
sex
sponsor, my
success
unemployment
unknown, the
violence
work

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Instructions for Completion: Fears

REVIEW OF FEARS

Complete column 1 from top to bottom before proceeding to the next column.

Ask yourself if the fear is a problem in your life. Be realistic. Discuss significant fears, not theoretical or imaginary fears.

Column 1 *We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them.*

Column 2 *We asked ourselves why we had them.*

	COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2
#	I'm FEARFUL of:	Why do I have the fear?

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