12 STEPPERS

Character Defects and Assets Checklist

A List of 75 Character Defects and Their Opposites

Name your defects, rate how often they show up and find the assets that replace them. For Steps 4, 6 and 7 in AA, NA, Al-Anon, CoDA, OA and other 12 step programs.

How to use this checklist

1. **Work one group at a time.** For each defect, check Never, Sometimes or Often. Aim for honest, not harsh.
2. **Write a recent example** beside every defect you marked Often. Specific beats general: "Lied to my boss about why I was late on Monday" beats "I lie sometimes."
3. **Check the assets you can already see in yourself,** even if they're still growing. An inventory with no strengths in it isn't complete.
4. **Use the last page** to pick your top five defects, name what each one does for you and decide what you'll practice instead.
5. **Go over it with your sponsor** or another trusted person in your program. They'll often see what you can't.

> **Start with your Step 4 inventory**
>
> If you've written a 4th step inventory, your defects are already on paper. Look at the "my part" checks and the tally tables, then use this checklist to name the patterns. The free Step 4 Worksheet is at 12steppers.org.

> **Feelings aren't defects**
>
> Anger, fear and sadness are normal feelings. The defect is the pattern we build around them. Constant worry, deep sadness, panic or trauma symptoms aren't character defects; talk with a doctor or licensed therapist. In the U.S., call or text **988** any time or call SAMHSA's free National Helpline at **1-800-662-4357**.

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Pride and Ego · Resentment and Anger

Check **Never**, **Sometimes** or **Often** for each defect. Check the asset if you can see it in yourself. Write a recent example for anything marked Often.

Defect	Never	Sometimes	Often	Opposite asset (check if you see it)	A recent example
PRIDE AND EGO					
Prideful	☐	☐	☐	☐ Humble	
Arrogant	☐	☐	☐	☐ Modest	
Grandiose	☐	☐	☐	☐ Realistic about myself	
Boastful	☐	☐	☐	☐ Unassuming	
Self-righteous	☐	☐	☐	☐ Understanding	
Stubborn	☐	☐	☐	☐ Willing, flexible	
Defiant	☐	☐	☐	☐ Teachable	
Self-willed	☐	☐	☐	☐ Open to guidance	
RESENTMENT AND ANGER					
Resentful	☐	☐	☐	☐ Forgiving	
Angry	☐	☐	☐	☐ Calm, forgiving	
Unforgiving	☐	☐	☐	☐ Merciful	
Vengeful	☐	☐	☐	☐ Peaceable	
Hostile	☐	☐	☐	☐ Friendly	
Argumentative	☐	☐	☐	☐ Agreeable	
Impatient	☐	☐	☐	☐ Patient	
Rude	☐	☐	☐	☐ Courteous	
Disrespectful	☐	☐	☐	☐ Respectful	

Fear and Insecurity · Dishonesty

Check **Never**, **Sometimes** or **Often** for each defect. Check the asset if you can see it in yourself. Write a recent example for anything marked Often.

Defect	Never	Sometimes	Often	Opposite asset (check if you see it)	A recent example
FEAR AND INSECURITY					
Fearful	☐	☐	☐	☐ Courageous	
Insecure	☐	☐	☐	☐ Self-assured	
Worrying	☐	☐	☐	☐ Faithful, present	
Suspicious	☐	☐	☐	☐ Trusting	
Avoidant	☐	☐	☐	☐ Faces problems	
Indecisive	☐	☐	☐	☐ Decisive	
Pessimistic	☐	☐	☐	☐ Optimistic	
Cynical	☐	☐	☐	☐ Hopeful	
Perfectionistic	☐	☐	☐	☐ Accepts progress	
DISHONESTY					
Dishonest	☐	☐	☐	☐ Honest	
Exaggerating	☐	☐	☐	☐ Accurate	
Rationalizing	☐	☐	☐	☐ Candid	
In denial	☐	☐	☐	☐ Accepting reality	
Secretive	☐	☐	☐	☐ Open	
Manipulative	☐	☐	☐	☐ Direct	
Sarcastic	☐	☐	☐	☐ Sincere	
Disloyal	☐	☐	☐	☐ Loyal	

Selfishness · Self-Pity and Shame · Envy and Jealousy

Check **Never**, **Sometimes** or **Often** for each defect. Check the asset if you can see it in yourself. Write a recent example for anything marked Often.

Defect	Never	Sometimes	Often	Opposite asset (check if you see it)	A recent example
SELFISHNESS AND SELF-SEEKING					
Selfish	☐	☐	☐	☐ Giving	
Self-seeking	☐	☐	☐	☐ Selfless	
Self-centered	☐	☐	☐	☐ Caring	
Inconsiderate	☐	☐	☐	☐ Considerate	
Greedy	☐	☐	☐	☐ Generous	
Entitled	☐	☐	☐	☐ Content	
Wasteful	☐	☐	☐	☐ Thrifty	
SELF-PITY AND SHAME					
Self-pitying	☐	☐	☐	☐ Grateful	
Complaining	☐	☐	☐	☐ Appreciative	
Ungrateful	☐	☐	☐	☐ Thankful	
Self-hating	☐	☐	☐	☐ Self-accepting	
Shame-driven	☐	☐	☐	☐ Self-respecting	
Living in the past	☐	☐	☐	☐ Present-focused	
ENVY AND JEALOUSY					
Envious	☐	☐	☐	☐ Happy for others	
Jealous	☐	☐	☐	☐ Trusting	
Possessive	☐	☐	☐	☐ Secure	
Competitive	☐	☐	☐	☐ Cooperative	

Control and Judgment · Sloth · Excess and Appetite

Check **Never**, **Sometimes** or **Often** for each defect. Check the asset if you can see it in yourself. Write a recent example for anything marked Often.

Defect	Never	Sometimes	Often	Opposite asset (check if you see it)	A recent example
CONTROL AND JUDGMENT					
Controlling	☐	☐	☐	☐ Lets go	
Critical	☐	☐	☐	☐ Accepting	
Judgmental	☐	☐	☐	☐ Open-minded	
Intolerant	☐	☐	☐	☐ Tolerant	
Blaming others	☐	☐	☐	☐ Owns my part	
Defensive	☐	☐	☐	☐ Open to feedback	
Gossiping	☐	☐	☐	☐ Discreet, kind	
SLOTH AND IRRESPONSIBILITY					
Lazy	☐	☐	☐	☐ Diligent	
Procrastinating	☐	☐	☐	☐ Prompt	
Irresponsible	☐	☐	☐	☐ Responsible	
Unreliable	☐	☐	☐	☐ Dependable	
Apathetic	☐	☐	☐	☐ Invested	
Complacent	☐	☐	☐	☐ Willing to grow	
Impulsive	☐	☐	☐	☐ Thoughtful	
Reckless	☐	☐	☐	☐ Careful	
EXCESS AND APPETITE					
Lustful	☐	☐	☐	☐ Respectful of others	
Gluttonous	☐	☐	☐	☐ Moderate	
Overcommitting	☐	☐	☐	☐ Balanced	

Relationships and Dependency · In My Own Words

Check **Never**, **Sometimes** or **Often** for each defect. Check the asset if you can see it in yourself. Write a recent example for anything marked Often.

Defect	Never	Sometimes	Often	Opposite asset (check if you see it)	A recent example
RELATIONSHIPS AND DEPENDENCY					
People-pleasing	☐	☐	☐	☐ Honest about my needs	
Enabling	☐	☐	☐	☐ Sets boundaries	
Dependent	☐	☐	☐	☐ Emotionally independent	
Isolating	☐	☐	☐	☐ Connected	
Withdrawn	☐	☐	☐	☐ Engaged	
Unkind	☐	☐	☐	☐ Kind	
IN MY OWN WORDS					
	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Count it up

Number of defects I marked **Often**: _____ Number I marked **Sometimes**: _____ Number of assets I checked: _____

If you checked far fewer assets than defects, look again. Beating yourself up isn't the same as being honest.

STEPS 6 AND 7

My Top Five Defects

Pick the five defects causing the most trouble in your life right now. For each one, be honest about the payoff, then name the asset you'll practice instead and one small action that shows it.

Example (fictional)

Defect: People-pleasing. **What it does for me:** I avoid conflict and people like me, at least for a while. **What I'll practice instead:** Being honest about my needs. I'll wait a day before saying yes to anything new.

#	Defect	What does it do for me? (the payoff)	What I'll practice instead
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Assets I can claim today

_____

_____

Notes from my sponsor

_____

_____

Date: _____ Reviewed with: _____

NEXT STEPS

Where to Go From Here

Your checklist is a working list, not a report card. Come back to it as you work Steps 6 and 7, and again whenever an old pattern shows up.

Keep it going

Step 6: Become willing to let go of the defects on your top five list. If you're not ready yet, the Big Book suggests asking for help to be willing (p. 76).

Step 7: Humbly ask for help with your shortcomings. Many people use the Seventh Step prayer on page 76 of the Big Book.

Step 10: Watch for these same defects in your daily inventory, and practice the opposite asset one day at a time.

Read More Free Online

- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. "Chapter 5: How It Works." *Alcoholics Anonymous (PDF).* The inventory and its "selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened" questions, pages 64 to 71.
- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. "Chapter 6: Into Action." *Alcoholics Anonymous (PDF).* Steps 6 and 7 and the Seventh Step prayer, page 76.
- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. "Step Six." *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (PDF).* Pages 63 to 69.
- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. "Step Seven." *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (PDF).* Pages 70 to 76.
- 12steppers.org. "List of Character Defects and Their Opposites." *12steppers.org.* The full list with real-life examples of every defect.
- 12steppers.org. "Step 4 Worksheet With Questions." *12steppers.org.* The complete 4th step inventory workbook plus standalone worksheets.

Support

- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. "988 Lifeline." *988lifeline.org.* Call or text 988 any time.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. "SAMHSA's National Helpline." *SAMHSA.* Free and confidential, 24/7: 1-800-662-4357.

Disclaimer: This checklist is an educational recovery tool and does not replace professional medical, psychological or legal advice. It is not affiliated with, produced by or endorsed by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services or any other fellowship. Page references are to the Fourth Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous and to Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.