12 STEPPERS

Step 4 Fear Inventory Worksheet

A Guided 4th Step Fear List With Examples

A printable 4th step fear inventory with a fear prompt list, worked examples and columns that show how each fear drives your behavior. For AA, NA, Al-Anon, OA, CoDA and other 12 step programs.

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Want the complete 4th step workbook?

This worksheet is one part of the free **Step 4 Worksheet** from 12steppers.org, which includes all four inventories, a character defects and assets checklist and guided reflection questions. Find it at 12steppers.org.

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SECTION 1

Before You Begin

Step 4: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Why Fear Gets Its Own Inventory

Look closely at a resentment and you'll usually find fear hiding behind it. The Big Book describes fear as a thread running through nearly every part of our lives (page 68).

It also suggests that many fears grow where self-reliance has failed us. Recovery offers a different footing: trust in a Higher Power, the group or the principles of the program, however you understand them. This worksheet helps you name your fears so they stop running the show from the background.

How to Use This Worksheet

1. **Read, then write.** Each section opens with a short explanation. Read it, then fill in the chart that follows.
2. **Go one column at a time.** Finish all of Column 1 before you touch Column 2. This keeps you from arguing your case on every line and helps patterns show up.
3. **Work with a sponsor.** Step 4 is designed to be shared in Step 5. Ask your sponsor how they'd like you to approach it, and call them when you get stuck.
4. **Set a steady pace.** Pick a regular time and place to write. Don't rush and miss things, and don't let it drag on for months either.
5. **Keep it private.** Store your inventory somewhere secure and share it only with the person you choose for Step 5.

Suggested Reading

Read the fear section of Chapter 5, "How It Works," in *Alcoholics Anonymous* (pages 67 and 68) before you begin. It's free to read online at aa.org. Members of other fellowships can pair this worksheet with their own step literature.

A note on safety and self-care

Inventory work can stir up painful memories, including trauma, abuse or grief. That's normal, and it doesn't mean you're doing it wrong.

Some fears come from real danger, including abuse or violence. If you are not safe right now, your safety comes first. Reach out to someone you trust or a local support service before working on this inventory.

If you feel overwhelmed or unsafe, pause and reach out. In the U.S., you can call or text **988** (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline) any time, or call SAMHSA's free National Helpline at **1-800-662-4357**. This worksheet is a recovery tool, not medical or mental health treatment.

SECTION 2

How the Fear Inventory Works

Unlike the resentment inventory, your fear list doesn't need a person or event attached. If something worries you, makes you anxious or quietly shapes your choices, it belongs here.

How to Fill Out the Fear Chart

Column 1: I'm afraid of	List every fear you can name. Use the prompt list in Section 3. Finish the column before moving on.
Column 2: Why?	What's underneath the fear? Where did it come from? What are you afraid will happen?
Column 3: Affects my	Check which parts of self the fear threatens.
Column 4: Behavior	How does this fear show up in what you do? How does that behavior affect the people around you?
Column 5: Trust	What would it look like to face this fear with trust instead of control? Keep it practical.

> **Tip: start with your resentment list**
>
> If you've done a resentment inventory, read down its Column 4 and look for every box you checked under “frightened.” Each one points to a fear worth listing here.

The Seven Parts of Self (Column 3)

Self-esteem	How I see myself.
Pride	How I think other people see me.
Emotional security	My sense of being safe, loved and okay inside.
Material security	My money, job, home and possessions. The Big Book calls this the pocketbook.
Ambitions	My plans, goals and hopes for the future, in any area of life.
Personal relations	My relationships with family, friends, coworkers and others.
Sex relations	My romantic and sexual relationships and how I want them to be.

SECTION 3

Fear Prompt List

Check every fear that fits, even a little. Then carry them into Column 1. Add your own; this list is only a starting point.

SECURITY

- ☐ Abandonment
- ☐ Being alone
- ☐ Losing my job
- ☐ Money running out
- ☐ Debt
- ☐ Losing my home
- ☐ Losing custody or my kids
- ☐ Illness or disease
- ☐ Aging
- ☐ Death
- ☐ Legal trouble
- ☐ Relapse
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

RELATIONSHIPS

- ☐ Rejection
- ☐ Intimacy
- ☐ Commitment
- ☐ Conflict
- ☐ Criticism
- ☐ Other people's opinions
- ☐ Authority figures
- ☐ Being controlled
- ☐ Trusting people
- ☐ Anger (mine or others')
- ☐ Violence
- ☐ Sex
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

SELF AND FUTURE

- ☐ Failure
- ☐ Success
- ☐ Not being enough
- ☐ Being found out
- ☐ Being a fraud
- ☐ Being myself
- ☐ Feelings
- ☐ Making mistakes
- ☐ Asking for help
- ☐ Change
- ☐ The unknown
- ☐ Sharing my inventory
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

RECOVERY

- ☐ Meetings or speaking up
- ☐ Getting a sponsor
- ☐ Working the steps
- ☐ Doing Step 5
- ☐ Making amends
- ☐ Losing my old friends
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

BODY AND HEALTH

- ☐ Pain
- ☐ Weight or appearance
- ☐ Doctors or medical news
- ☐ Mental health
- ☐ Sleep
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

OTHER FEARS I NOTICE

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Fear Inventory

List your fears even if there's no resentment connected to them. Work down one column at a time. Shaded rows are examples.

		COLUMN 3: AFFECTS MY...								
Col. 1 **I'm afraid of...**	Col. 2 **Why do I have this fear?**	Self-esteem	Pride	Emotional security	Material security	Ambitions	Personal relations	Sex relations	Col. 4 **How does this fear show up in my behavior? How does it affect others?**	Col. 5 **What would trust or faith look like here?**
Being alone	Growing up, I felt like I only mattered when someone needed me.	✓		✓			✓	✓	I cling to partners, text constantly and get angry when people are busy. People pull away, which feeds the fear.	Spending an evening alone without panicking. Calling a friend in the program instead of demanding attention.
Money running out	I've been broke before and lost an apartment.		✓	✓	✓		✓		I hide purchases, avoid opening bills and snap at my partner when money comes up.	Opening the mail, making a simple budget and being honest about where things stand.

Fear Inventory (continued)

Need more rows? Print this page again or add rows in the Word version. List your fears even if there's no resentment connected to them. Work down one column at a time. Shaded rows are examples.

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Fear Inventory (continued)

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SECTION 5

Patterns, Facing Fear and What Comes Next

Read back over your chart. Some fears will turn out to be the same fear wearing different clothes. Naming those core fears is the real payoff of this inventory.

Which parts of self do my fears threaten most?

	Times checked
Self-esteem	
Pride	
Emotional security	
Material security	
Ambitions	
Personal relations	
Sex relations	

1. The two or three fears that show up most often for me are:

2. The resentments these fears seem to feed:

3. How my fears show up in my closest relationships:

4. One small, practical step I can take toward trust this week:

Facing Fear

The Big Book doesn't ask us to stop feeling afraid. It suggests relying on a power greater than ourselves instead of our own limited strength, and asking for our fear to be removed so we can turn our attention to who we're meant to be (page 68).

In practice, that often looks simple. Call your sponsor. Go to a meeting. Take the next right action even when your hands are shaking.

What Comes Next

Sex conduct inventory	The next part of Step 4 looks at relationships, where many fears play out.
Harms list	Your fear-driven behaviors in Column 4 may point to people you've hurt.
Step 5	You share your finished inventory with your Higher Power, yourself and another person, usually your sponsor.

SECTION 6

Resources and Sources

Read the Step 4 Literature Free Online

- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. "The Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition)." *aa.org.* Read, listen or watch in ASL.
- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. "Chapter 5: How It Works." *Alcoholics Anonymous (PDF).* The Step 4 inventory instructions appear on pages 63 to 71.
- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. "Step Four." *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (PDF).* Begins on page 42.

If You Need Support Right Now

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

More From 12steppers.org

- 12steppers.org. "Step 4 Worksheet: The Complete 4th Step Inventory Workbook." *12steppers.org.* All four inventories, a defects and assets checklist and guided questions in one free download.

You'll also find standalone Resentment, Fear, Sex Conduct and Harms Done worksheets, plus worksheets for every step, at **12steppers.org**.

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