12 STEPPERS

Step 4 Worksheet

A Searching and Fearless Moral Inventory

A complete 4th step workbook with resentment, fear, sex conduct and harms inventory charts, a character defects and assets checklist, guided reflection questions and a Step 5 summary page. For AA, NA, Al-Anon, OA, CoDA and other 12 step programs.

What's inside

Part 1. Before You Begin: how to use this workbook, suggested reading and key terms

Part 2. The Resentment Inventory (with worked examples)

Part 3. The Fear Inventory

Part 4. The Sex Conduct Inventory

Part 5. Harms Done to Others

Part 6. Character Defects and Assets Checklist

Part 7. Guided Reflection Questions

Part 8. Patterns, Takeaways and Getting Ready for Step 5

Part 9. Resources and Sources

Updated November 2026. Free to print, copy and share. Please credit 12steppers.org. Not for resale. 12steppers.org is independent of Alcoholics Anonymous and every other fellowship, and this workbook is not official literature of any program.

PART 1

Before You Begin

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

Why Step 4 Matters

If there is one principle that holds this step together, it's unflinching honesty. Keep that in mind on every page of this workbook.

The word *inventory* is broad on purpose. It leaves us nowhere to hide. Addiction and compulsive behavior run on deceit, and the person we lie to most is usually ourselves. We shrink the damage, explain it away and tell a version of the story where we come out looking fine.

Think of your life as a room that hasn't been cleaned in years. Step 4 opens the curtains and lets the light in. You're not scrubbing anything yet. You're simply seeing the mess clearly enough to admit the room can't stay this way. And remembering it was clean once, and can be again.

The Voice That Says "Look Away"

As you write, a familiar voice will pipe up. *It wasn't that bad. That one wasn't your fault. Skip this one.* That's the same voice that kept the addiction going. Let it talk. Just don't take its advice.

You'll also feel pulled between two extremes: playing the victim or tearing yourself apart. Neither is honest. The goal is accuracy. Write what happened, what it touched in you and what your part was, then move on to the next line.

How to Use This Workbook

1. **Read, then write.** Each part opens with a short explanation. Read it, then fill in the chart that follows.
2. **Go one column at a time.** On each chart, 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 sprint through it and miss things, and don't let it drag on for months either.
5. **Make more copies.** Most people need more rows than any worksheet gives them. Print extra chart pages or use the Word version to add rows.
6. **Keep it private and safe.** Your inventory is personal. Store it somewhere secure and share it only with the person you choose for Step 5.

Suggested Reading

Before you start writing, read the Step 4 material in your fellowship's literature. In AA, that's the inventory section of Chapter 5, "How It Works," in *Alcoholics Anonymous* (pages 63 to 71) and the Step Four essay in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (starting on page 42). Both are free to read online at aa.org. Links are in Part 9.

Members of NA, Al-Anon, OA, CoDA and other fellowships can use the same charts alongside 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.
>
> If someone abused, assaulted or exploited you, **you do not have to find "your part" in what was done to you.** You can list it so it doesn't stay buried, then talk it through with your sponsor and a licensed counselor or therapist.
>
> 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 workbook is a recovery tool, not medical or mental health treatment.

Words to Know

A lot of confusion around Step 4 comes from the vocabulary. Here's what the key terms mean in plain language.

Moral inventory	An honest list of where your thinking and behavior line up with your values, and where they don't. It includes strengths as well as defects.
Searching	Thorough. Leaving no corner unchecked.
Fearless	Willing to look even when it's uncomfortable. Being afraid is fine; letting fear decide what you write is not.
Resentment	Anger or hurt we keep replaying. The word comes from roots meaning "to feel again."
Fear	Worry, dread or anxiety about losing something we have or not getting something we want.
Character defect	A habit of thinking or acting that causes harm to you or others. Also called a shortcoming.
Asset	A strength or good quality. Many defects are assets that got bent out of shape.
My part	The piece of a situation that belongs to you: what you did, said, avoided or expected. Not the other person's behavior.

The Seven Parts of Self (Column 3)

The Big Book asks whether our self-esteem, pocketbook, ambitions or personal and sex relations were hurt or threatened. Many sponsors break security into emotional and material security and add pride, giving the seven boxes used in this workbook.

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.

The Five Defects of Self (Column 4)

Selfish	Focused on what I want, with little thought for what others need.
Dishonest	Lying to others or myself, including half-truths and leaving things out.
Self-seeking	Acting to get something for myself: approval, control, advantage or revenge.
Frightened	Letting fear drive my choices instead of my values.
Inconsiderate	Not thinking about how my actions affect other people.

PART 2

The Resentment Inventory

The Big Book calls resentment the “number one” offender and says no other problem does more damage to alcoholics (page 64). Whatever your fellowship, resentments are the grudges we replay that keep us angry, stuck and looking for relief.

This inventory is where most people start, and it's usually the longest. Don't rush it. Big, small, recent or decades old, if it still stings, it belongs on the list.

How to Fill Out the Resentment Chart

Column 1: I'm resentful at	List every person, institution or principle you're angry at, hurt by or threatened by. Use the prompt list on the next page to jog your memory. Finish this whole column before moving on.
Column 2: The cause	For each name, write briefly what happened. Be specific. “She lied to me about the money” beats “She's a liar.”
Column 3: Affects my	Check every part of self that was hurt or threatened. Most resentments touch more than one.
Column 4: My part	Now set aside what they did. Ask where you were selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened or inconsiderate. Check the boxes, then describe your part in your own words. Use the My Part checklist for help.

Tip: the word “fault”

Column 4 isn't about deciding who was wrong. Often the other person did something genuinely hurtful. Your part might simply be that you held onto it for ten years, retaliated or set yourself up to be disappointed. Look for what you can actually change.

Resentment Prompt List

Check anything that stirs up anger, hurt or a sense of being wronged. Then carry those names into Column 1. Add your own; this list is only a starting point.

PEOPLE

- ☐ Mother
- ☐ Father
- ☐ Stepparents
- ☐ Siblings
- ☐ Grandparents
- ☐ My children
- ☐ Spouse or partner
- ☐ Ex-partners
- ☐ In-laws
- ☐ Extended family
- ☐ Childhood friends
- ☐ Best friends
- ☐ Former friends
- ☐ Roommates
- ☐ Neighbors
- ☐ Bosses
- ☐ Coworkers
- ☐ Teachers or coaches
- ☐ Clergy
- ☐ Doctors or therapists
- ☐ Police officers
- ☐ Judges or lawyers
- ☐ Probation or parole officers
- ☐ Landlords
- ☐ Creditors
- ☐ Sponsors
- ☐ People in the program
- ☐ Public figures
- ☐ Myself
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

INSTITUTIONS

- ☐ Government
- ☐ The legal system
- ☐ Jails and prisons
- ☐ Schools
- ☐ Churches or religious groups
- ☐ Employers
- ☐ Hospitals
- ☐ Treatment centers
- ☐ Insurance companies
- ☐ Banks
- ☐ The military
- ☐ Child protective services
- ☐ News media
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ 12 step fellowships
- ☐ Marriage
- ☐ Society
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

PRINCIPLES AND IDEAS

- ☐ God or a Higher Power
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Sin
- ☐ Heaven and hell
- ☐ Death
- ☐ Fairness and justice
- ☐ The Golden Rule
- ☐ Authority
- ☐ Rules and laws
- ☐ Marriage vows
- ☐ Gender roles
- ☐ Morality
- ☐ Karma
- ☐ Forgiveness
- ☐ Sobriety or abstinence
- ☐ The 12 steps
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

My Part Checklist (Column 4)

When you reach Column 4, read each resentment against this list. Check what fits, then write your part in plain words on the chart.

SELFISH

- ☐ I wanted things my way
- ☐ I ignored what they needed
- ☐ I expected special treatment
- ☐ I wanted credit, attention or approval
- ☐ I took more than my share
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

DISHONEST

- ☐ I lied or left things out
- ☐ I told the story so I looked like the victim
- ☐ I blamed them for something I also do
- ☐ I pretended I didn't care
- ☐ I didn't say what I really felt or needed
- ☐ I lied to myself about my motives
- ☐ _____

SELF-SEEKING

- ☐ I tried to control or manipulate the outcome
- ☐ I put them down to feel bigger
- ☐ I kept score
- ☐ I cared more about winning than repairing
- ☐ I got even, or wanted to
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

FRIGHTENED (OF...)

- ☐ Rejection or being left
- ☐ Looking foolish or weak
- ☐ Losing money, status or security
- ☐ Being controlled
- ☐ Being found out
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

INCONSIDERATE

- ☐ I didn't think about how my actions would land
- ☐ I broke commitments
- ☐ I was rude, cold or dismissive
- ☐ I made them carry my responsibilities
- ☐ I didn't really listen
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

OTHER DEFECTS I NOTICE

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

Reading the finished chart

Once all four columns are done, read each row from left to right: the resentment, the cause, the part of self that felt threatened and your part. Then read down Column 4. The defects that keep repeating are the patterns you'll carry into Part 8 and Step 5.

Resentment Inventory

Work down one column at a time and finish it before moving right. Shaded rows are examples. Check every box that applies in Columns 3 and 4.

		COLUMN 3: AFFECTS MY...							COLUMN 4: MY PART					
Col. 1 **I'm resentful at...**	Col. 2 **The cause (what happened?)**	Self-esteem	Pride	Emotional security	Material security	Ambitions	Personal relations	Sex relations	Selfish	Dishonest	Self-seeking	Frightened	Inconsiderate	**My part, in my own words**
My sister	Didn't invite me to Thanksgiving. Told Mom she thinks I'm still drinking.	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	I'd skipped the last two holidays and lied about why. I wanted her to act like nothing happened. Afraid of being judged by the family.
My manager	Gave the promotion to someone newer. Wrote me up for being late.	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		I was late six times in a month and blamed traffic. I expected to be rewarded for showing up. Afraid I'm falling behind.
The court system	Suspended my license and ordered classes after my DUI.		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		I chose to drive impaired and could have hurt someone. I want the consequences to disappear without changing my behavior.

Resentment Inventory (continued)

Work down one column at a time and finish it before moving right. Shaded rows are examples. Check every box that applies in Columns 3 and 4.

		COLUMN 3: AFFECTS MY...							COLUMN 4: MY PART					
Col. 1 I'm resentful at...	Col. 2 The cause (what happened?)	Self-esteem	Pride	Emotional security	Material security	Ambitions	Personal relations	Sex relations	Selfish	Dishonest	Self-seeking	Frightened	Inconsiderate	My part, in my own words

Resentment Inventory (continued)

Work down one column at a time and finish it before moving right. Shaded rows are examples. Check every box that applies in Columns 3 and 4.

		COLUMN 3: AFFECTS MY...							COLUMN 4: MY PART					
Col. 1 I'm resentful at...	Col. 2 The cause (what happened?)	Self-esteem	Pride	Emotional security	Material security	Ambitions	Personal relations	Sex relations	Selfish	Dishonest	Self-seeking	Frightened	Inconsiderate	My part, in my own words

PART 3

The Fear Inventory

Look back over your resentments and you'll notice fear hiding behind most of them. The Big Book describes fear as a thread running through nearly every part of our lives (pages 67 to 68).

In this inventory, you list your fears on paper even if they have no resentment attached. Then you ask why you have them. The Big Book's suggestion is that many fears grow where self-reliance has failed us, and that recovery offers a different footing: trust in a Higher Power, the group or the principles of the program, however you understand them.

How to Fill Out the Fear Chart

Column 1: I'm afraid of	List every fear you can name. Use the prompt list below. 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.

Fear Prompt List

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
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Fear Inventory

List your fears even if there's no resentment connected to them. 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)

List your fears even if there's no resentment connected to them. 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?

PART 4

The Sex Conduct Inventory

This is the section most people dread. It helps to know what it is and isn't. The Big Book is clear that it doesn't want to be anyone's judge on sex (page 69). This inventory isn't about your orientation, your identity or consensual choices that match your values.

It's about harm. The Big Book asks us to review our past conduct and ask where we were selfish, dishonest or inconsiderate, whom we hurt, whether we unjustifiably stirred up jealousy, suspicion or bitterness, where we were at fault and what we should have done instead (page 69). The goal is a sane and healthy ideal for the future, not shame.

How to Fill Out the Sex Conduct Chart

Column 1: Whom did I hurt?	List each person. You can include yourself.
Column 2: What happened?	A brief overview. You don't need graphic detail; your sponsor needs to understand what happened, not relive it.
Column 3: Was I...	Check selfish, dishonest or inconsiderate.
Column 4: Did I arouse...	Check if your actions unjustifiably caused jealousy, suspicion or bitterness.
Column 5: My fault	What was your part? What were you hoping to gain?
Column 6: Instead	What would a healthy, honest choice have looked like?

If you were the one harmed

Sexual abuse or assault done **to** you is not your sex conduct, and it is not your fault. Don't list it here as something you did. Please consider talking with a counselor who specializes in trauma, as well as your sponsor.

My Ideal for the Future

After your chart is done, the Big Book suggests shaping an ideal for your future sex life and testing each relationship by asking whether it is selfish or not. Use these prompts to put yours into words.

A. What does a healthy, honest relationship look like to me?

B. What values do I want to guide my romantic and sexual choices from now on?

C. What warning signs tell me I'm slipping back into selfish or dishonest patterns?

D. What will I do when I notice those warning signs? Who will I call?

Sex Conduct Inventory

Work down one column at a time and finish it before moving right. The shaded row is an example.

		COL. 3:			COL. 4: DID I				
Col. 1 **Whom did I hurt?**	Col. 2 **What happened?**	Selfish	Dishonest	Inconsiderate	Jealousy	Suspicion	Bitterness	Col. 5 **Where was I at fault?**	Col. 6 **What should I have done instead?**
My ex-partner	After an argument, I flirted openly with a coworker at a party to make her jealous.	✓		✓	✓		✓	I wanted to punish her and feel wanted. I made her feel humiliated in front of friends.	Left the party, cooled off and talked it through honestly the next day.

PART 5

Harms Done to Others

Your resentment and sex conduct charts will already show many of the people you've hurt. Many sponsors and workbooks add a separate harms list to catch everyone else: people you lied to, stole from, neglected, frightened or let down.

This list matters beyond Step 4. It becomes the foundation for Step 8, where you list everyone you've harmed and become willing to make amends, and Step 9, where you make those amends wherever doing so won't cause more harm.

Common Kinds of Harm

Use these to jog your memory. Some people will show up more than once, and that's okay.

WORDS

- ☐ Lied
- ☐ Insulted or belittled
- ☐ Gossiped
- ☐ Yelled or threatened
- ☐ Broke promises
- ☐ Manipulated
- ☐ _____

ACTIONS

- ☐ Stole or borrowed without repaying
- ☐ Cheated in business or a deal
- ☐ Damaged property
- ☐ Drove impaired
- ☐ Physical aggression
- ☐ Put someone at risk
- ☐ _____

NEGLECT

- ☐ Didn't show up
- ☐ Ignored my kids or family
- ☐ Skipped responsibilities
- ☐ Left others to clean up my mess
- ☐ Withheld support
- ☐ Disappeared
- ☐ _____

How to Fill Out the Harms Chart

Column 1: Who did I harm?	Name the person, group or organization.
Column 2: What did I do?	Describe the action briefly and specifically.
Column 3: Why did I do it?	What were you after? Money, approval, escape, control, protection?
Column 4: My part	Check the defects that drove the behavior.
Column 5: Instead	What would a better choice have looked like?

Harms Done to Others

Work down one column at a time and finish it before moving right. Shaded rows are examples. This list becomes the starting point for Step 8.

			COL. 4: MY PART					
Col. 1 **Who did I harm?**	Col. 2 **What did I do?**	Col. 3 **Why did I do it? (What was I after, or guarding?)**	Selfish	Dishonest	Self-seeking	Frightened	Inconsiderate	Col. 5 **What should I have done instead?**
My kids	Missed their school play and broke promises to show up. Came home after using.	I wanted to keep using without anyone stopping me. Protecting my image as a “good parent.”	✓	✓			✓	Kept my word or been honest about why I couldn't. Asked for help sooner.
Former employer	Padded expense reports and took supplies home.	Money for using. Felt like I was owed it.	✓	✓	✓			Lived within my means and been honest about needing help.

Harms Done to Others (continued)

Add extra pages as needed.

			COL. 4: MY PART					
Col. 1 **Who did I harm?**	Col. 2 **What did I do?**	Col. 3 **Why did I do it? (What was I after, or guarding?)**	**Selfish**	**Dishonest**	**Self-seeking**	**Frightened**	**Inconsiderate**	Col. 5 **What should I have done instead?**

PART 6

Character Defects and Assets

An honest inventory counts what's on the good shelves too. Many defects are simply assets that got bent out of shape: confidence that turned into arrogance, caring that turned into control.

How to Use This Checklist

1. Check the box on the left beside every defect that honestly fits you today.
2. Check the box on the right beside every asset you can see in yourself, even if it's still growing.
3. Aim to find at least as many assets as defects. If you can't, you may be beating yourself up, which isn't the same as being honest.
4. From your checked defects, pick the 12 creating the biggest problems in your life today and write them on the Review of Defects page. Do the same with your assets.

	Defect	Opposite asset			Defect	Opposite asset	
☐	Angry	Calm, forgiving	☐	☐	Lazy	Diligent	☐
☐	Argumentative	Agreeable	☐	☐	Lustful	Respectful of others	☐
☐	Arrogant	Modest	☐	☐	Manipulative	Direct	☐
☐	Avoidant	Faces problems	☐	☐	Overcommitting	Balanced	☐
☐	Blaming others	Owns my part	☐	☐	People-pleasing	Honest about my needs	☐
☐	Complaining	Appreciative	☐	☐	Perfectionistic	Accepts progress	☐
☐	Controlling	Lets go	☐	☐	Pessimistic	Optimistic	☐
☐	Critical	Accepting	☐	☐	Possessive	Secure	☐
☐	Cynical	Hopeful	☐	☐	Prideful	Humble	☐
☐	Defensive	Open to feedback	☐	☐	Procrastinating	Prompt	☐
☐	Dependent	Self-reliant	☐	☐	Rationalizing	Candid	☐
☐	Dishonest	Honest	☐	☐	Resentful	Forgiving	☐
☐	Enabling	Sets boundaries	☐	☐	Rude	Courteous	☐
☐	Envious	Happy for others	☐	☐	Sarcastic	Sincere	☐
☐	Exaggerating	Accurate	☐	☐	Secretive	Open	☐
☐	Fearful	Courageous	☐	☐	Self-centered	Caring	☐
☐	Gossiping	Discreet, kind	☐	☐	Self-hating	Self-accepting	☐
☐	Grandiose	Realistic about myself	☐	☐	Self-pitying	Grateful	☐
☐	Greedy	Generous	☐	☐	Self-righteous	Understanding	☐
☐	Hostile	Friendly	☐	☐	Self-seeking	Selfless	☐
☐	Impatient	Patient	☐	☐	Selfish	Giving	☐
☐	Impulsive	Thoughtful	☐	☐	Shame-driven	Self-respecting	☐
☐	Inconsiderate	Considerate	☐	☐	Stubborn	Willing, flexible	☐
☐	Indecisive	Decisive	☐	☐	Suspicious	Trusting	☐
☐	Insecure	Self-assured	☐	☐	Unforgiving	Merciful	☐
☐	Intolerant	Tolerant	☐	☐	Ungrateful	Thankful	☐
☐	Irresponsible	Responsible	☐	☐	Unreliable	Dependable	☐
☐	Isolating	Connected	☐	☐	Vengeful	Peaceable	☐
☐	Jealous	Trusting	☐	☐	Wasteful	Thrifty	☐
☐	Judgmental	Open-minded	☐	☐	Withdrawn	Engaged	☐

Review of Defects

Pick the 12 defects doing the most damage in your life right now. For each, write your clearest real example. Focus on these; you don't need to list every flaw you've ever had.

#	Defect	My clearest example	How it shows up today
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

Review of Assets

List your strengths and give one real example of each. Include assets that faded during active addiction and are coming back in recovery.

#	Asset	An example of me living this
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		

PART 7

Guided Reflection Questions

The charts show you *what* happened. These questions help you understand *why*. Answer them in your own words, as honestly as you can and without too much drama. Use extra paper if you need more room.

Anger and Resentment

1. What sets off anger in you that feels bigger than the situation? What do you think is underneath it?

2. Have you ever tried to get even with someone? What did you do? How did you feel afterward?

3. What behavior in other people bothers you most? Where do you see that same behavior in yourself?

4. Is there anyone you still blame for your addiction or compulsive behavior? What would it cost you to keep blaming them?

How You See Yourself

5. How often do you swing between feeling better than everyone and worse than everyone? What triggers each side?

6. When do you feel real self-loathing? What usually happens right before it?

7. Do you tend to judge yourself too harshly, too easily or about right? Has that changed in recovery?

8. Imagine watching a stranger live through your worst years. What would you think of them? Would you feel any compassion?

9. What do the people closest to you say is your best quality? Your worst? Do you agree?

Accountability and Apologies

10. Do you apologize when you're wrong? What decides whether you do?

11. Have you ever apologized without meaning it? Why?

12. What is the worst thing you did to another person during your addiction? Why does it stand out?

13. Do you feel responsible for the damage done during those years? Explain your answer honestly.

14. Is there something you've done that feels unforgivable? If someone else had done it and sincerely apologized, would you forgive them?

Roots and Family

15. Did your addiction or compulsive behavior take you by surprise, or were there early signs?

16. Which of your best traits came from your family? Which of your hardest ones?

17. Which traits do you think you were born with? Which were shaped by your environment?

18. Have you experienced trauma? How did it connect to your using or acting out? (Go gently here, and consider exploring this with a counselor.)

19. Did you lose the support of family or friends? Looking at it from their side, what do you understand now?

Decisions and Turning Points

20. What are the best decisions you've made? What did they have in common?

21. What is the worst decision you've made? Was there a pattern behind it?

22. If you could redo one moment in your life, what would it be? Why that one?

23. What was the most painful consequence of your addiction?

Relationships

24. Who was hurt most by your addiction? How do you feel when you think about what they went through?

25. What pattern of yours tends to damage relationships?

26. What do you do that tends to protect and strengthen relationships?

27. How did your circle of friends change during your addiction? Is your current circle helping you grow?

Secrets and Honesty

28. Is there anything you've never told anyone? What has keeping it secret cost you? Could you share it with your sponsor in Step 5?

29. How much control do you believe you had during active addiction? Where could you have chosen differently?

Looking Forward

30. What has addiction and recovery taught you that you never want to forget?

31. What is good about your life today? What still needs work?

32. Since starting recovery, what have you done well, and where have you slipped? Do you see a pattern?

PART 8

Patterns, Takeaways and Getting Ready for Step 5

Read back over your charts from left to right. Something interesting happens: the same few defects and fears keep showing up, no matter who or what the resentment is about. Those patterns are what Step 4 is really looking for.

Tally Your Patterns

Count how many times you checked each box on your charts and write the totals below.

Which parts of self are threatened most?

	Resentments	Fears	Total
Self-esteem			
Pride			
Emotional security			
Material security			
Ambitions			
Personal relations			
Sex relations			

Which defects drive my behavior most?

	Resentments	Sex conduct	Harms	Total
Selfish				
Dishonest				
Self-seeking				
Frightened				
Inconsiderate				

1. My top three recurring defects are:

2. People or institutions that appear on more than one list:

3. The fears that seem to sit underneath most of my resentments:

4. What I'm most afraid to share in Step 5, and why:

5. Assets I want to rely on and grow as I keep working the steps:

What Happens Next

Step 4 doesn't fix anything on its own, and it isn't supposed to. It's a fact-finding job. What you've written becomes raw material for the rest of the steps.

Step 5	You share this inventory with your Higher Power, yourself and another person, usually your sponsor. The Big Book discusses Step 5 in Chapter 6, “Into Action.”
Steps 6 and 7	Your recurring defects become the shortcomings you become willing to have removed and humbly ask for help with.
Steps 8 and 9	Your harms list becomes the starting point for your amends list.
Step 10	You keep taking inventory as a daily practice, so things don't pile up again.

Before your Step 5 conversation

- Set a time with your sponsor or chosen person soon after you finish. Many people find momentum fades if they wait too long.
- Bring every page, including the Patterns page and your Review of Defects and Assets.
- Plan for a quiet, private place and give yourselves plenty of time.
- Decide ahead of time how you'll store or dispose of your written inventory afterward.

> **You did something most people never do**
>
> If you've been thorough, you've written down a lot. You've looked at your resentments, faced your fears and named the people you've hurt. That takes courage.
>
> The point was never to wallow. It was to see clearly how addiction brought out the worst in you without destroying the good in you. From here, you get to build on the better parts of your nature, one day and one step at a time.

This Step 4 worksheet is brought to you by 12steppers.org and may be reprinted with credit. It may not be sold. For updates or suggestions, email info@12steppers.org.

Keep coming back. Get commitments. Stay in the middle of the herd. Be of service. Help a newcomer.

PART 9

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.
- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. "The Twelve Steps." *aa.org.*

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

Find worksheets for every step, meeting resources and recovery guides at **12steppers.org**.

Disclaimer: This worksheet 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, Narcotics Anonymous World Services or any other fellowship. Page references are to the Fourth Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous and to Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.