

For those of you who don't know, I am a major promoter of the Big Book's design for living and the clear-cut directions therein. It changed EVERY aspect of my life for the better and continues to do so. I also believe that the Steps are to be worked and reworked as time goes by, going back and starting again with the First Step, but I always try to use different 4th Step guides so as to get a different perspective at how my ego (self-will) is negatively effecting me and blocking me off from God and the people around me. In an attempt to stay within AA material, I have found a few powerful 4th Step techniques in the Big Book. I have no plans for changing the Big Book as my tool for working with others and deepening and broadening my own conscious contact, but recently I started to see four inventory categories in the 12 & 12. So let me ask you this: Has anyone else ever seen a 12 & 12 4th Step inventory? I've heard people talk about "doing a 4th Step out of the 12 & 12" but no one has EVER been able to show me how they did it, so I always figured that there was no such thing.

Just Love,
Barefoot Bill

As I see it, it starts on page 48 by saying:

But all who are in the least reasonable will agree upon one point: that there is PLENTY wrong with us alcoholics about which PLENTY will HAVE to be done IF we are to expect sobriety, progress, and any REAL ability to cope with life.

To avoid falling into confusion over the names these defects should be called, let's take a universally recognized list of major human failings - the Seven Deadly Sins of pride, greed, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth.

Then on page 50 it says:

By now the newcomer has probably arrived at the following conclusions: that his character defects, representing instincts gone astray, have been the PRIMARY CAUSE of his drinking AND his failure at life; that unless he is NOW willing to WORK HARD at the ELIMINATION of the WORST of these defects, BOTH sobriety and peace of mind will still ELUDE him; that ALL the faulty foundation of his life WILL HAVE TO BE TORN OUT and built ANEW on bedrock.

Then the inventories begin:

1 - Looking back over his life, he can readily get under way by consideration of questions such as these:

- a) When, and how, and in just what instances did my selfish pursuit of the sex relation damage other people and me?
- b) What people were hurt, and how badly?
- c) Did I spoil my marriage and injure my children?
- d) Did I jeopardize my standing in the community?
- e) Just how did I react to these situations at the time?
- f) Did I burn with a guilt that nothing could extinguish?
- g) Or did I insist that I was the pursued and not the pursuer, and thus absolve myself?
- h) How have I reacted to frustration in sexual matters?
- i) When denied, did I become vengeful or depressed?
- j) Did I take it out on other people?
- k) If there was rejection or coldness at home, did I use this as a reason for promiscuity?

2 - Surveying his business or employment record, almost any alcoholic can ask questions like these:

- a) In addition to my drinking problem, what character defects contributed to my financial instability?
- b) Did fear and inferiority about my fitness for my job destroy my confidence and fill me with conflict?
- c) Did I try to cover up those feelings of inadequacy by bluffing, cheating, lying, or evading responsibility?

- d) Or by griping that others failed to recognize my TRULY EXCEPTIONAL abilities?
- e) Did I overvalue myself and play the big shot?
- f) Did I have such unprincipled ambition that I double-crossed and undercut my associates?
- g) Was I extravagant?
- h) Did I recklessly borrow money, caring little whether it was repaid or not?
- i) Was I a pinchpenny, refusing to support my family properly?
- j) Did I cut corners financially?
- k) What about the "quick money" deals, the stock market, and the races?

3 - The most common symptoms of emotional insecurity are worry, anger, self-pity, and depression. These stem from causes which sometimes seem to be within us, and at other times to come from without. To take inventory in this respect we ought to consider carefully ALL personal relationships which bring CONTINUOUS OR RECURRING trouble. It should be remembered that this kind of insecurity may arise in any area where instincts are threatened. Questioning directed to this end might run like this:

- a) Looking at both past and present, what sex situations have caused me anxiety, bitterness, frustration, or depression?
- b) Appraising each situation fairly, can I see where I have been at fault?
- c) Did these perplexities beset me because of selfishness or unreasonable demands?
- d) Or, if my disturbance was seemingly caused by the behavior of others, why do I lack the ability to accept conditions I cannot change?

These are the sort of fundamental inquiries that can disclose the source of my discomfort and indicate whether I may be able to alter my own conduct and so adjust myself serenely to self-discipline.

4 - Suppose that financial insecurity constantly arouses these same feelings. I can ask myself:

- a) To what extent have my own mistakes fed my gnawing anxieties.
- b) If the actions of others are part of the cause, what can I do about that?
- c) If I am unable to change the present state of affairs, am I willing to take the measures necessary to shape my life to conditions as they are?

Questions like these, more of which will come to mind easily in each individual case, will help turn up the root cause.

Then it closes with:

Therefore, THOROUGHNESS ought to be the watchword when taking inventory. In this connection, it is wise to WRITE out our questions and answers. It will be an aid to clear thinking and honest appraisal. It will be the first TANGIBLE evidence of our COMPLETE willingness to move forward.

I can't help but wonder what the results were if Bill Wilson did this inventory!