

STEP 4 "STUFF"

We have called this "stuff" rather than a "guide" or "interpretation" or any number of other terms. Some of it is quoted from AA textbooks, some from other AA members, some from Step-working Alanon members, some from other Fellowship members and a lot from our own collective experience in Doing and HEARing numerous Step 5's.

Invariably there will be those that object and say: "This isn't AA." Others will ask: "What's all this childhood crap?" Another faction objects to so many questions about sex. We believe that most of these objections and arguments stem from "untreated alcoholism," and all we suggest is: "If it bothers you so much, why don't you write about why it pisses you off so much and share all that with God and another human being?" We are sharing our experience.

We alcoholics (and addicts too!) are naturally very rebellious at being "told" we must DO anything, yet some desire to experience **recovery** rather than mere "relief" has brought you thus far. We are not attempting to do anything but present this material in the form of HOW we have evolved into DOing it. It is our hope that the "suggestions" and questions presented here will not offend you and will help on your Journey.

Recovery involves experiencing not just the "12 promises" that are so often read at meetings, but all 147 that are described in the Big Book.

We will be urging you to do several things to help the inventory process along and help side-step the pitfalls of fear, delay, misinformation, and outright procrastination; but first, a check-up on prior Steps:

1. Have you a written "Step 1?" We encourage writing about (and saving) an emotional description of how you experienced defeat, the events that brought you to reach out for help. If you are a "retread" write your description about relapse. What makes this time different?
2. Have you a written "Step 2?" We suggest this as a written form of a future "vision." What would it be like to experience the majority of the 147 promises? What would have to happen to be "restored to sanity"? What would freedom from people and fear be like? Write about the "fourth dimension of existence" and having a "vital sixth sense." What would exist in the heart of one who could quietly and confidently introduce themselves as a "recovered alcoholic"? Conscious contact? A life that included prayer and meditation? What would it be like to *KNOW* that you were walking hand-in-hand with the "Spirit of the Universe?"
3. Have you "done" the 3rd Step with someone - out loud? As an integral part of this Step, we ask for a written list of about a dozen "commitments." Items such as: DO the Steps, join a group, get a sponsor, phone another person in recovery every day, attend two (or three or ??) meetings a week, DO the Steps twice a year, subscribe to (& read!) the *Grapevine*, initiate a reading program, read a Fellowship pamphlet a week, join the local club, and a commitment to review this material on a regular basis with someone else. Especially helpful is a commitment to help someone else DO the Steps as soon as the opportunity presents itself. ("Magic" happens in the HEARing of 5th Steps.)
4. Have you made an appointment for the 5th Step? This will give a "time frame" in which to DO the 4th Step. Anywhere from three or four days to a month at the most. Let's not make this into something it wasn't intended to be! Please see the first few lines of page 292 in the Big Book.

We believe it is a life-saver to "buy into" the idea of working and re-working the Steps on a regular basis. Just as it was impossible to stay drunk on yesterday's booze, nourished on yesterday's food, it is difficult at best to keep "spiritually fit" on some Steps that were done 2, 5, 10, or more years ago - unless they were done *perfectly!* We haven't come across that person

yet! This attitude of commitment to working and re-working the Steps helps us from having to do everything "perfectly" the first time, and reduces some of the pressure.

We are convinced that the "intention" of the *Big Book* was for alcoholics to hear the 5th Steps of other alcoholics. By doing so, we often can strip away some more layers of our "terminal uniqueness" and come closer to understanding that we are indeed "cut from the same cloth and tarred with the same brush." (See *Big Book* page 96, 2nd paragraph. and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 57, last 5 lines.) We also recommend a careful study of the AA pamphlet "A Member's Eye View."

Our experience has permitted us to witness much that falls into the sort of stuff the first paragraph on page 73 of the *Big Book* talks about ... "hanging on to some of the worst items in stock." The later book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, has a variety of general questions we can ask ourselves as we go about Step 4. In the material that follows, you will find repeated suggestions to study both textbooks, not just for this Step, but for all your recovery process. As the result of hearing many 5th Steps, it has been found very beneficial to ask more specific questions than those posed in the texts.

It is our opinion that all this material will help in the discovery of the "real you" by stripping away "who you ain't" and disclosing the four "building blocks" of the personality:

- (a) The ability to resist temptation
- (b) How we "process" guilt.
- (c) The internalization of a belief system.
- (d) Sexual role identity.

The following material is by Bill W. (one of AA's co-founders) and can be found in older copies of the *Public Information Workbook - Section VII - Presentations*, pages 60-62. (Underlining has been added.)

"There is considerable agreement among my professional colleagues, as well as among AA's about the emotional problems at the bottom of alcoholism. The taproots are variously described as insecurity or anxiety - some sense of inadequacy, inferiority, or unworthiness, some sense of threat to self-esteem. It is believed that these roots generally go back to childhood years."

"... As an adult the person will still be driven, unconsciously, to repeat patterns which seemed to give him reassurance in childhood years. ... The AA program works so well, I believe, because it puts the finger on the underlying personality patterns and calls for a willingness to change them ... the old patterns for obtaining a substitute sense of adequacy and worth are given up."

"... AA shows that by letting go of the old ego, a person is enabled to find his true self. (By losing self he finds self.) ... It is a way which requires no alcohol to make it work, because it attunes the person to life as he was meant to be attuned."

"... This ties in with Step Three ... As long as there is an unwillingness to give up the desire for gaining some glory through AA, the "letting go" process is obviously incomplete ... other values like power, money, and other symbols of "success" ... were poor, un-nourishing substitute goods. None of them satisfied the real hunger - the hunger of spirit for an outgoing, satisfying relationship to other people and to life. The AA solution is to set about satisfying the real hunger."

"... displace these substitute spiritual foods ... and replace them with a diet that's adequate. And the diet which meets our real needs - which truly satisfies our spirits - consists of whole-hearted, deep running, positive relationships to other persons, to our work, to life, and to God."

We suggest using some kind of a notebook for this step. The BIG BOOK says on eight different occasions that we WRITE OUT Step 4. Trust that there is some degree of release in getting all this material down on paper.

We have found no contradiction incorporating this material with the 4 or 5-column "inventory sheets" used in many Big Book Studies. Just open your notebook and use the two page width to create the columns. As you come up with a resentment, fear, sex issue, or harm done to an other person, add it to Column 1. - (See last 2 pages of these sheets.) When you are done with all the questions, "process" the material through the other columns. We are certain you will be better able to "swallow and digest some big chunks of truth about yourself." (*Big Book p. 71*)

When we stop drinking (and/or using), many of the more conspicuous problems that were caused by our actual drinking will disappear. But we are still left with the state of mind that had us pick up the first drink. We still have all the pains of the past - our fears, our guilts, our shames, our regrets, our emotional reactions to life, and our patterns. These were often felt so strongly by us that we needed something to relieve that pain, and nothing seemed to help as much as a few drinks. For a long time this answer to our pain worked, and, at times, our mind can have a great deal of difficulty remembering that it doesn't work the way it used to. THAT is the problem that this "treatment" addresses.

Many of us were often very capable at quitting drinking. We just couldn't stay quit! In taking the Steps, we are doing some new things which are designed to bring about what Dr. Silkworth called a "psychic change." When this change, also referred to as a "vital spiritual experience" happens, we no longer NEED to drink. The problem has been removed. Not by us through our will power or our "heroic" efforts at the Steps, but by some Power greater than human power. We are positive that your understanding of all this will unfold as you continue on the Path.

We've found that it isn't necessary to be of "purest intent" when you do Step 4, or what your ideas are as to what it will do for you and how that will be done. "Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings, which the process requires for its successful consummation." (*BB p. 25*)

WHAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU TAKE THE STEPS HONESTLY AND TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY. Please don't rationalize that "you'll take it better if you take it later ... or "after I've been in AA a little longer", or any of the other wonderful rationalizations that many of us who have gone before you have used or "bought into." Three "killers" - booze, "our" way, and misinformation!

As alcoholics or addicts, most of us wanted to excel - really excel - at some activity or other. May we suggest this: If you ever decided to get with it (not perfectly, but the BEST you can honestly do), this undertaking is a good time to express that yearning. Thorough 4th and 5th Steps will get you more relief and comfort than you have any way of knowing. This is the thing that can lead to a real joy in living ... the sort that you may not have experienced since early childhood (if then) ... something that you have been searching for in the BOTTLE but couldn't quite find. BUT, don't stop there, remember there are 12 Steps!

Step 2 does NOT say, "Came to believe IN a Power greater than ourselves", but, "Came to believe THAT a Power greater than ourselves..." could help us become sane, happy people. For instance, the group is greater than I am as an individual ... which would make it a greater power.

It is very hard to deny that there is "something" at work in the lives of those people you see living sober (& clean!), happy, contented, purposeful lives. What ever you look to as a HIGHER POWER, you must remember, that in Step 3 you made a DECISION, just a DECISION, nothing more, to go in search of that POWER, IN WHOM YOU COULD ENTRUST YOUR WILL AND

YOUR LIFE, which means your thinking and your actions. Whether or not you even believe IN a Higher Power at this point has nothing to do with it. Page 64 in the *BIG BOOK* says, "THOUGH OUR DECISION WAS A VITAL AND CRUCIAL STEP, IT COULD HAVE LITTLE PERMANENT EFFECT UNLESS AT ONCE FOLLOWED BY A STRENUOUS EFFORT TO FACE, AND TO BE RID OF, THE THINGS IN OURSELVES WHICH HAD BEEN BLOCKING US."

The *Big Book* suggests that we take Step 4 "at once" after Step 3. You're starting now to take step FOUR, so set up an appointment RIGHT AWAY to take your 5th STEP. Allow no more than a month to finish Step 4. (And don't put off starting Step 4 because you haven't found the person to take Step 5 with. If you can't find anyone, write one of us - that's WHY our email addresses are on the 1st page!)

Let us stress: you are NOT being graded on spelling, punctuation, or grammar. This 4th Step is for your eyes only. You're going to tell it to someone, but this is FOR YOU. If you want to erase or scratch through something, DON'T DO IT. It might be one of the keys that would unlock some part of your personality that is now hidden from you. And remember, you can't make a PERFECT inventory, but you CAN do your honest best.

The book, *TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS* states: "Creation gave us instincts for a purpose. Without them we wouldn't be complete human beings. If men and women didn't exert themselves to be secure in their persons, made no effort to harvest food or construct shelter, there would be no survival. If they didn't reproduce, the earth wouldn't be populated. If there were no social instinct, if men cared nothing for the society of one another, there would be no society. So these desires ... for the sex relation, for material and emotional security, and for companionship ... are perfectly necessary and right, and surely God-given." (p.43)

It is when these instincts are warped and bent out of shape that we get in trouble, for their distortion brings pain. That first drink helped to obliterate such pain. And this is what your inventory is about ... to help you recognize those instincts of yours that are warped and out of control, and develop awareness of yourself and your reactions.

You will be asked to write about all the resentments, fears, guilt's, hates, sex conduct / hang-ups, and harms done to others that you can remember. What you want to be aware of is your REACTION to what happened to you. A moral inventory deals with Truth; and feelings, both good and bad, are part of that Truth. The inventory process is designed to help us move beyond mere reflection about what we did or what was done to us, and come to *understand* that our reactions to those events and our current feelings about them are all ours. We attempt to see our part in all this. **This understanding will come more in the form of a Gift than the result of mere mental process, so please don't try to force comprehension.**

Questions will ask you to write down the things that you remember (and may still feel) about the pains of embarrassment, fear, or guilt. Where were you at fault and what is it about it that hurts you now. *TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS* (p.51) reads "Since STEP FOUR is but the beginning of a lifetime practice, it can be suggested that he first have a look at those personal flaws which are acutely troublesome and fairly obvious."

If you find that any question awakens some painful or distressing memory, write about it even if it is not an answer to that particular question.

SEARCH OUT AND FEARLESSLY PUT DOWN ON PAPER those things that are painful, embarrassing, fill you with fear, shame, or any other uncomfortable feelings (which could be guilt, rage, feelings of inferiority, etc.)

This is a long outline. Don't let it scare or dissuade you. Take each numbered question and in your own words write out YOUR numbered answer (let it ALL hang out!). Do not tear up any part of it. If you feel the statement you made is wrong, make a notation as to WHY it is wrong. Ask for Help to be honest and fearless. Trust us when we tell you that YOUR REWARDS WILL BE GREAT. Just do your best - your honest best. The same about memory. No one is capable of remembering every incident of their lives, so just deal with what you ARE capable of remembering.

Please keep in mind that the 4th Step is not dealing with CHANGING anything, although it is probably one of the oldest known "psychological facts" that a lot of material will lose some of its power over us when we get it down on paper. An inventory is only a list of our feelings and acts from the beginning until now. "We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty." *BIG BOOK* (p.65) (It's NOT the format, just honest and thorough!)

Many have found that it helps to carry around a pocket size notebook so that they could jot down everything that pops into their head. It will be useful to you in your inventory. It really doesn't matter if you write information down that could be slightly incorrect insofar as dates, places, et cetera. JUST GET IT DOWN. Arrange to have a safe place to put your 4th Step Inventory. Nothing should be left out because "someone might see it who isn't supposed to." Remember, in Step 4 we put down all the things that we wince at ... just remembering them, we screw our eyes closed and think "oh, no!" or "oh, damn, not that!" This is the stuff we fondly call "The Bag of Secrets". JUST WRITE IT DOWN. IT'S NOT HURTING ANYONE BUT YOU.

Read what the *BIG BOOK* has to say about the 4th Step (p. 64-71). And the *TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS*, (p. 43-55).

The *BIG BOOK* refers to the, "... wreckage of your past ..." and from this we are tempted to deal only with the problems left in the wake of our alcoholism. The problems outside of us. The problems that were created as the RESULT of our drinking, BUT Step 4 and Step 5 deal with HOW the past has affected our world WITHIN. How our negative and/or distorted feelings about ourselves and others have wrecked us spiritually, mentally, and physically. The *BIG BOOK* instructs us to WRITE about fears, resentments, sex and sex hang-ups, and harms done to others.

Most of our patterns are set up in childhood and early adolescence, consequently, there are a lot of questions in these areas. They are divided in three parts: (1.) Childhood (2.) Adolescence (3.) Adulthood. Feel free to go from (3) ? (2) ? (1) if it's easier, or you're concerned about abiding by the instruction "we went back through our lives."

Thoroughness ought to be the watchword when taking inventory. We write it out to try and get clear thinking and an honest appraisal. It is our first TANGIBLE evidence of our complete willingness to move forward.

SOME FINAL WORDS:

Please try and stop believing that you need to get in the right mood to take this Step; you're in the right mood to take this Step when you are ready to quit hurting and you want to get well. Most of us have repeatedly tried to "think our way into right action." Now, we are being asked to "act our way into right thinking." We who have taken the Steps can tell you that THEY WORK.

A lot of us spend a lot of time dwelling on HOW this works and WHY this works. All we know is: "the only things that have the capacity to eat us alive are the things we cannot or will not share." An old AA saying is: "analysis leads to paralysis!" We are certain that what you will "find" is not mere "relief" but **recovery with a real joy in living.**

Believe us, you can "get it", and a giant step toward getting there is to DUMP THE ACCUMULATED GARBAGE THAT YOU ARE NOW CARRYING AROUND. So, get your pen and paper ready to begin! If the load gets unbearably heavy part way through, DUMP IT, then carry on with the rest.

If a question is truly not applicable, answer so (i.e. N/A). If you honestly don't know the answer to a question, then just indicate that you don't know. BUT, try and answer each question the best way you can. And remember, if any question suggests an area of discomfort (trouble), then WRITE IT OUT - GET IT DOWN ON PAPER !!!!

To encourage you as you embark on this part of your Journey, we'd like to share a little four-part thing called "THE SECRET."

1. Start where you are at.
2. Do what you can do gracefully.
3. Step out in confidence.
4. EXPECT God's help.

O.K. SO FAR? WE HOPE SO! NOW PICK UP THE 800 POUND PEN!
That's where you're at!

CHILDHOOD (If this print is too small, buy some reading glasses!)

1. What kind of relationship did your mother have with her parents?
2. What kind of relationship did your father have with his parents?
3. Were you wanted at birth?
4. Write out the circumstances of your family at the time of your birth. Things such as: family size, age differences, financial status. Was there laughter? Arguing? Depression? Were other relatives or people living with you? In general describe what you think your family thought of you.
5. How old were you at the birth of brothers and sisters? How did you feel about the new arrivals? Were either of your parents sick enough to need hospitalization?
6. Were you separated from any important family member? Was there fear or guilt about this separation ... in other words, did YOU feel responsible?
7. Were you threatened if you misbehaved by the Bogey Man, or the Devil, or _____? If so, what were your fears in this regard? Are they still in your life today?
8. A child is made to feel guilty about his or her normal sexual curiosities. This comes about by his being caught and punished for touching himself, or being caught masturbating, or playing "doctor", or for participating in group masturbation. Many parents tell children that sexual feelings are evil and must be punished. With no sex education, and given this sort of teaching, a child will naturally distort what he knows about sex. When a child is exposed to fully developed nude persons (for instance in the bathroom at home, or in public), he or she may begin to feel inadequate because he has not yet developed. These feelings may carry over into feelings of inadequacy in adult life, even when the person is a thoroughly developed adult. Write down ANY of the above that makes you feel uneasy.
9. Were you afraid of the dark?
10. Were you afraid to fight? Or were you afraid NOT to fight because of pressure by father or older brothers or others?
11. How did your parents punish you? How did you react to punishment?
12. What kind of marriage do you THINK your parents had? If they fought, did you resent it? Did it scare you? Were you used to break up their fights? To take one side or the other? Or, were they so close you couldn't feel a part of them.
13. If your parents were from different religions, did you feel confused about it?
14. Were you afraid of storms?
15. List all the feelings of guilt, fear, resentments you had towards each person in your family, relatives, neighborhood friends etc.
16. List the first time you ever stole anything. Inventory all your thefts.
17. How old were you when you first masturbated? Were you ever caught and made to feel guilty? Did you feel guilty even though you weren't caught?
18. What other sexual activity were you involved in and not comfortable with? (Homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, animal, any other members of family, sodomy ... ANYTHING else)
19. If you were named after someone, what was that person like?
20. Did your family move often? If so, did you make friends and then have to break off the relationship so often that you became afraid to get too close?
21. Do you remember starting school? What were your feelings?
22. Try to remember each successive grade in school and as you do, write out the resentments you felt towards teachers, pupils, anyone. Any fights, slights, hurts, embarrassments ... PUT IT DOWN ON PAPER.
23. Did you resent church, police, stores or other "institutions"? If so, list them. No resentment is too small to mention. The BIG BOOK states, "Resentment is the number one offender..." (p. 64)

24. What kind of language did your parents use? Were you ashamed of them for this or anything else?
25. Did you ever see your parents in the nude? What were your feelings?
26. Did you ever see or hear your parents having sex? What were your feelings?
27. In every family, a child usually has certain chores assigned. What were yours? Were they fair? Did you do them because of fear, responsibility, or just to please your parents?
28. Did your parents seem to like your friends better than they did you? And did your friends seem to like your parents better than they did you? Did you resent this?
29. Any bad experiences at Sunday School? Or at a summer camp?
30. Were you an only child? Did you resent this or did you enjoy it? (brother John's experience with this: "As a single child, I learned a lot about 'take,' a little bit about 'give,' and absolutely nothing about 'share'.")
31. Did your parents want a child of the opposite sex when they had you? And did they name you, or dress you to match their sex choice?
32. Did your appearance, (looks, dress etc.) embarrass you?
33. Did you feel that you were "different" from your class mates?
34. Write down any other childhood memories that were/are painful.
35. Which of these questions about childhood were the toughest for you? Do you know why?

ADOLESCENCE:

Many of us have experienced sexual experiences abnormal to our identity. (Heterosexual identity having homosexual experiences, and, for gay people, the opposite.) Many people partially form their sexual role identity early in childhood and are later consumed with guilt and shame because they feel it is "abnormal," "weird," or "kinky." These events and feelings can often become the basis for the "bag of secrets" that we are so reluctant to share. Please bear in mind that the purpose of this is not to JUDGE or CONDEMN anything. It's a search for the Truth - what is IS and what ain't AIN'T! Also, a sexually immature person can rely on the misguided sex information obtained from peers. If you are bi-sexual or gay, keeping this to yourself only is not being in the "closet", but in a coffin. NOW is the time to prepare for sharing this with another human being.

36. What has been YOUR experience concerning the above?
37. What is your sexual identity.

Some girls are taught that men are interested in sex only, and some boys that they must be the greatest of all time. There is often an unspoken message that sex is dirty, bad, evil, sinful; therefore you should save it for the one you love! These attitudes are destructive and damaging to the total person.

38. Have you ever experienced these attitudes? Is there a pattern? How has it affected you?
39. Did you have friends? What kind of friend were you?
40. What interest or lack of interest did you have in school? How was your social life? Did you participate in sports? What were the reasons for your participation or lack of it?
41. Were you a trouble maker? If so, in what way? Did you destroy property?
42. Did you resent leaders - either physical or mental? Did you resent not being the most handsome or beautiful person at school?
43. Did you feel you were a coward because you didn't want to fight? Or did you like to fight? Were you a bully?
44. Did you feel embarrassed because others made fun of you and/or avoided you?

45. Were you exposed to other children in gym class or the restrooms who were older than you and more developed physically. Some people don't develop physically until late adolescence. Were you like that?
46. Some people feel inadequate as adults because they were at one time exposed to youngsters more developed than they were. If you feel uptight in this area, write about your feelings.
47. Did you resent not being part of a crowd? Or, not being a leader? Or not being "in"?
48. Were you shy or outgoing? How are you now? Does any particular type of person make you shy? Make you feel inadequate? Make you feel intimidated?
49. If you dropped out of school, explain your feelings and reasons. Would you really like to have more education? What have you done about it? If nothing, WHY?
50. Did anything happen to you in high school that was a continuing source of shame?
51. Did your parents compare you to other family members or friends? Did you resent them for wanting you to be like someone else?
52. How did you get the attention of your family? (Did you pout, sulk, be a good child, have temper tantrums, act like a dummy?)
53. Do you remember the kind of lies you told (if any)? How did you feel when you got caught lying?
54. What was the most embarrassing incident of adolescence? Were there any others that you really remember? Please write about them.
55. Were you jealous or envious of others? Why?

If any mention of sex, sexual attraction, or sexy feelings were discounted and put down in your family, there is a strong possibility that you will feel guilty about them. We "catch" attitudes. A boy who is pushed to always do better (be top dog), or is criticized no matter what he does, may find himself having trouble in his sexual performance. Or a girl who has been told that it's not OK to dress and / or feel attractive, may grow up to dislike her own body or distrust her feelings. These attitudes can create unnatural or uncomfortable sexual behavior. And any sexual thoughts / feelings / identity that we think of as "abnormal" will produce guilt and shame. It is not judgment here, but an attempt to access these feelings which are often hidden.

56. Did you "catch" any of these attitudes? Can you see it cropping up in your life now?
57. First sexual experience. What were your feelings? Did you feel guilty? Did you feel disappointed? Be as explicit about the feelings as you can.
58. List in detail any sexual experiences that you were and are NOT comfortable with; masturbation, fantasies; or any other sexual activity you particularly remember – keep in mind that we are not concerned about with whom or on what date, or how often, but rather how did you feel about the experience. No one is going to judge you on this.
59. If you got someone pregnant, or became pregnant yourself, what did you do and how did you feel about your actions?
60. Were you ashamed of your parents? Were they too old, too fat, too sloppy, too drunk, too whatever?
61. Did you have the kind of clothes that other kids wore?
62. Was there enough money for the things you needed, and if not, were you resentful of that? If there was, did you take it too much for granted? Did you feel any brothers or sisters got more than you did?
63. Write out your feelings about money as an adolescent.
64. Were you the kind of child you would want to have?
65. Were you a thief?
66. Did you ever skip a grade in school? If so, did you have trouble catching up emotionally? How did you act? How did you feel – did you feel uncomfortable because you were younger than the other students?

67. Were you undependable as a friend – breaking off relationships without any explanation when something or someone who seemed better came along?
68. Did you play one member of your family against another?
69. What was the best experience you had? The worst?
70. We've covered a lot of ground on these questions. Now, is there's ANYTHING that made you particularly uncomfortable, even when writing about it? Have you put down EVERYTHING that has bugged you, made you feel angry, guilty or ashamed (even the simplest, most nit-picking things are important if they trouble you). Put it **DOWN**.

ADULTHOOD

71. When, and how, and in just what instances did the selfish pursuit of sex relations damage other people and yourself? What people were hurt, and how badly?
72. Did you spoil a marriage(s) and/or injure your children?
73. Did you jeopardize your standing in the community? In business?
74. Just how did you react to those situations at the time? Did you burn with guilt that nothing could extinguish? Or, did you insist that you were the pursued and not the pursuer, and thus absolve yourself?
75. How have you reacted to frustration in sexual matters? When denied, did you become vengeful or depressed? Did you "take it out" on other people? If there was rejection or coldness at home, did you use this as a reason for promiscuity?
76. Many people who are lonely and don't really know how to love get involved senselessly in sexcapades. The temporary loss of loneliness makes one call sex "love". When the sex partner is gone, it makes for an even greater feeling of loneliness. Have you ever experienced this? Better to try to relate in other areas first, for a more permanent relationship. If you married a cold, unloving person, ask yourself why you chose that one to be your mate. Did you use it as an excuse to find new romances? Was your mother or father cold and unloving and is this your chance to get even with them through your spouse?
77. Why did you get married? Was it for the right reasons? Or why haven't you gotten married? Did you marry earlier than your peer group? Later?
78. Do you resent the responsibilities of marriage and family?
79. If married, do you allow your family to come between you and your spouse or partner?
80. Are you still a baby in your parents eyes and take advantage of this? Are you a baby in the eyes of your spouse or partner?
81. Did your parents "get you out of trouble" that you should have been able to handle yourself?
82. Do you gossip about others?
83. Are laws made for other people? Do you believe that you should have the right to make up your own laws as you go along?
84. If revenge were possible right now, who would be the top people on your list? Why?
85. What are your present feelings about sex, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, friends, your children, your spouse or partner, your intimate friends, your job, upon being an alcoholic, finances, divorce or marriage (depending upon your status), etc.
86. What are your hopes and goals?
87. Do you use sex as a punishment or reward?
88. How much time do you spend with your family? With AA?
89. What is your greatest fear?
90. What is your sex life like? Is it as mature as you might want it to be? Are you careless of your partner's feelings?
91. Write out your idea of a healthy sex life.

92. Write out ALL sexual experiences that are unsettling to YOU (same sex, opposite sex, members of your family, animals, fantasy, threesomes, bondage, inflicting pain, cross-dressing, etc.)
93. Do you engage in sex in order to build your own ego by feeling of conquest?
94. Are you afraid of being sexually rejected?
95. Are you ashamed of your body or the way you look? Write out what's wrong with you.
96. Write out your feelings of pride about any of these questions (the best things about you physically). Now write about the things about yourself that you are ashamed of.
97. Do you manipulate or "use" people to get what you want?
98. Do you gossip or perform character assassination on another in order to "make" it in the business or social world? Or do you do this in an effort to feel superior (to the one you gossiped about)?
99. If you are a thief, what have you stolen? Don't forget to include your employer's time and the good feelings others had and you destroyed.
100. Do you have a pattern of getting sick? Be honest. Do you use illness as an excuse to avoid responsibilities or get attention or sympathy - or to get out of a jam?
101. In business relationships, write out your resentments toward bosses and co-workers. Do you feel jealous of them? Are you concerned that others in your office will get more money or prestige than you will?
102. List all the negative feelings you have about the people involved in your work life.
103. Are you indifferent and careless of your job? (Do you maybe think you should be the boss?) Do you believe they shouldn't expect so much of you?
104. If you are separated or divorced, write out negative feelings about the situation and the people involved.
105. Write out resentments, fears, and guilts concerning your relationship with your spouse (including feelings about your children).
106. Have you set up a game where your children are forced to make a decision on which parent they love the best?
107. If married, write out EXACTLY how you feel about your wife and children. Are they living up to your expectations? What are your expectations? Are they unreasonable? How do you think you would be different if they were out of your life?
108. Do you feel that no one really understands you? (If they only knew what you had been through they wouldn't expect so much from you).
109. Do you still feel different from other AA members – apart from?
110. Do you feel superior or inferior? (Geoff felt "sideways"! He's really DIFFERENT!)
111. Do you avoid looking at yourself by statements such as, "at least I'm not that flaky"?
112. Do you judge or make fun of people who appear to be less fortunate mentally, physically, or morally than you THINK you are?
113. Do you compare yourself to others to make yourself suffer by picking people who are further along the program than you, or people who are talented in areas you are not? The only person you can adequately compare yourself to is yourself.
114. How were you five days ago, five weeks ago, five months ago, at your first AA meeting, and how are you now? Can you forget how other people are and work on yourself.
115. List every act you swore you would take to the grave, disclosing to no one. Be open and honest. Remember life gave you good and bad experiences. Usually the things you are the most ashamed of are the very acts that will make you try to grow into something better. If you want freedom, you have to let go of it all. "...We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it ... No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others." (BB P. 83-84) BB P. 83-84)If you want to help bring peace to lives of the people you will be dealing with later, you must find it in you own life first.

116. Are you afraid of getting too close to another person for the fear of being rejected? Do you reject others before they can reject you? (Just like a lot of us quit before getting fired!)
117. Define love. What do you feel it is?
118. In what ways are you a responsible person?
119. Are you a tightwad? What are your fears concerning money? Do you spend money with no thought of tomorrow?
120. Is your personal appearance particularly careless or prideful? On sight, do you judge people by their appearance? (Whether sloppy or neat)
121. What things make you feel greedy, envious, angry?
122. Are you scornful of ideas that weren't your own?
123. Do you tell others how bad you have been or are (this is pride in reverse - a good tool if you like self pity or depression)? Or do you go to the other extreme and tell people how great you are or were (a good way to give your ego a false sense of security; however, when the security topples, you are back in depression, loneliness, and not OK.)
124. Write your feelings for parents, brothers, sisters, other family members NOW. What resentments, hates, envies, jealousies, or other negative feelings do you still have?
125. What makes you feel guilty? What are you GUILTY of - NOW?
126. Do you pad your expense account or use food allowances to buy things just for yourself? If no expense account, do you spend inappropriately on yourself?
127. Do you feel resentful towards any other AA member(s)?
128. What kind of things do you lie about most?
129. Do you still need to play the "Big Shot"? In AA? At work? AT HOME?
130. Are you hurt when people turn away from you and won't play your games?
131. Do you resent not getting as much attention as you did when you were new in AA?
132. Do you help protect the new members? With new members, do you "take the lead" in developing and insisting on platonic relationships rather than something heavy that might get out of hand? Or do you use their weakness when new to indulge in your sexual gratification? Does just the consideration of this make you feel guilty for having such thoughts.
133. Are you aware of how much energy a "relationship" takes?
134. What kind of things do you spend most time worrying about – the future or the past?
135. Do you find yourself punishing your children the way your parents punished you?
136. Have you been so busy trying to make money that your family sees little of you? Do you say, "I give my family everything they want, but they aren't ever satisfied?"
137. Are you still working to build your own ego? (Prestige. Power, position, money)
138. When your spouse or partner turns cold, do you spend more time with him or her, or do you turn to someone else, someone more "understanding"?
139. Do you spend too much time at AA?
140. Do you take at least one night of the week for the family only?
141. Have communications with your family become so intolerable that you are depending on AA members to get your necessary strokes?
142. Do you feel that you somehow have to prove that you are worthy of love from others, either in AA or elsewhere? Elaborate on this.
143. Are you cold and indifferent to your family, friends, work, your own needs?
144. Are you loaded with a sense of guilt for putting people through so much hell?
145. Do you threaten others by saying that you can't stay sober if you don't get your family back, your own way, etc.?
146. Are you involved in a love affair that could bring yourself or others harm?
147. Do you argue with people? Is it important for you to be "right"? Do you become angry when people don't see things the way you do?
148. Do you pass along gossip or make up things about other people's behavior?
149. Do you worry about other people's Higher Power not being as good as yours, or maybe even better? Are you comparing yourself with others in spiritual growth? Do you feel superior spiritually? Inferior?

150. Do you still feel guilty about your sexual role identity, your fantasies, masturbation?
151. Do you feel superior because you have more education, money, brains, the right color skin, social background, vocation, or any other seeming advantages? List your feeling of superiority.
152. Do you feel inferior because you have less of all of the above? List your feeling of inferiority.
153. Do you think you are superior to the general run of people? Please list in what ways you are different.
154. Do you have a hard time getting places on time? Are you punctual?
155. Do you resent others who don't seem to have problems finding happiness? Are you still judging the outside of others by the inside of you? Have you bothered to ask the people who seem happy how they got that way?
156. Do you still envy people who can drink?
157. Are you hostile because you don't like the hand life has dealt you?
158. What are your present fears? List them. (Please see "FEAR" sheet)
159. How do you presently get people's attention: pouting, sulking, temper tantrums, being extra good (and letting them know it), playing stupid (dummy), frustrating others' activities, bitching, so that others will know how bad YOU feel.

AND NOW, SOME FINAL QUESTIONS

160. In addition to your drinking and/or drug problem, what character defects contribute(d) to your financial instability?
161. Did fear and inferiority about fitness for your job destroy your confidence and fill you with conflict?
162. Did you try to cover up feelings of inadequacy by bluffing, cheating, lying, or evading responsibility? Or by complaining that others failed to recognize your truly exceptional abilities?
163. Did (or do) you over value yourself?
164. Did (or do) you have such unprincipled ambition that you double-crossed and undercut your associates?
165. Were you extravagant? Did you recklessly borrow money, caring little whether it was repaid or not? How about reckless spending too?
166. Were you a pinchpenny refusing to support your family properly? Or were you dependent on someone else to support you financially? How did you feel about this?
167. Did you try to cut corners financially? What about the "quick money" deals – the long shot "sure thing" that would rocket you to riches? Business women in AA will naturally find that many of these questions apply to them too. But the alcoholic housewife can also make the family financially insecure. She can juggle charge accounts, manipulate the food budget, spend her afternoons gambling, and run her husband into debt by irresponsibility, waste and extravagance.

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 come from without. To take inventory in this respect we ought to consider carefully all personal relationships which bring continuous and recurring troubles. 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:

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

These are the sort of fundamental inquiries that may be able to alter our own conduct and so adjust yourself serenely to self discipline. Suppose that financial insecurity constantly arouses these same feelings, you can ask yourself to what extent have your own mistakes fed gnawing anxieties, and if the action of others are part of the cause, what can you do about that?

169. If you are unable to change the present state of affairs, are you willing to take the measures necessary to shape your life to conditions as they are?

170. What is your relationship with the TAX MAN? Do you FEAR the tax people? When did you last file a tax return? Do they say you owe them money? What ACTION have you taken? What ACTION are you prepared to take?

171. The final question? Is there anything that you KNOW about you or what you've thought or done that you are planning to "withhold." Remember, we are only as sick as our secrets, and it's NOT the deeds or thoughts but the fact that they ARE SECRETS that eats us and blocks us from "The Sunlight of the Spirit." Please ask for some Help and write it NOW.

May your Journey be filled with Peace

Topics to WRITE about - pick ones that have a "barb"
(i.e. - piss you off!)

1. Resentments
2. Fears (there's also a separate list)
3. Sex
4. Conflict/Relationship with God
5. Conflict/Relationship with AA
6. Conflict/Relationship with other AA members
7. Conflict/Relationship with AA home group
8. No home group - why?
9. Conflict/Relationship with AA Literature
10. Conflict/Relationship with AA Sponsor
11. No sponsor - why?
12. Conflict/Relationship with job
13. Conflict/Relationship with job - co-workers
14. Conflict/Relationship with job - employer
15. Conflict/Relationship with wife/girlfriend/partner
16. Conflict/Relationship with self-image
17. Conflict/Relationship with SEX - archives (old stuff)
18. Conflict/Relationship with SEX - current stuff
19. Conflict/Relationship with SEX IDEAL
20. Cash register honesty - Am I CLEAN?
21. Sacrificing Honesty for the APPROVAL of others?
22. Retrospective falsification - is my story REALLY the way I tell it?
23. Conflicts and old ideas with things mother told me
24. Conflicts and old ideas with things father told me

25. Conflicts and old ideas with things grandparents told me
26. Conflicts and old ideas with things teachers told me
27. Conflicts and old ideas with things preachers told me
28. Conflicts and old ideas with things friends or relatives told me
29. Am I comfortable in my own skin?
30. Can I tolerate solitude?
31. Deep down, do I believe I have a message to carry?
32. Do I feel that I am a member of AA, or just a "sober visitor"?
33. Do I project negativity a lot of the time?
34. Am I complacent with sobriety/AA/God/Life/THE GIFT OF GRACE?