

## A 4th Step - By the Book of "Alcoholics Anonymous"

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The best method and directions for a complete and thorough 4th. Step inventory may very well be found in the basic text of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Of course I must add that this is only suggested by me. (It was "suggested" to me by my sponsor, Jim R., in 1984 ) At that point in my sobriety (about 15 months - I had already attempted and completed not One, but Two, 4th. and 5th. Steps under the well intentioned advisories of some other folks. Use this guide - and that one - and this one is good too - and soon after, there I sat alone with my kitchen table piled high with guides, pamphlets, papers, and books. I managed to get some stuff written - both times - and followed with the 5th. Step. Didn't hurt - didn't feel like it did much good either. Then my newly found sponsor came to ask if I had completed a 4th. Step - my answer being YES! of course! - TWICE even! Then he inquired what I used as a guide to which I explained about all those guidebooks and pamphlets. He then suggested (well...) that I try doing it by the "Big Book" only. As instructed by him - which seemed far too simple to have life changing results - HA! I was to learn otherwise. And so here it is folks! - the simplest method I know - and I've not found it necessary to do another 4th. Step nor pick up a drink in many years :) Perhaps it may work for you too.

If you are under professional supervision or care - please consult them before attempting the 4th. Step inventory.

Please consult with your sponsor or counselor before doing this.

(Suggest you commit to a specific start and completion time and date - write it down - sign it - like a legal contract - just suggested - not part of the inventory - at the time - my sponsor also suggested... No incoming or outgoing phone calls during the specified time frame. If you work - go to work - go home - and back to the task at hand - a 'recovery' meeting between OK. Keep your focus only on completing this step. )

Get your "BIG BOOK" - plenty of blank white paper (lined is OK) and something to write with - that writes "black". (that's what it says..."We placed them before us in black and white.")

### START

Open your "Big Book" to page 64.

Start reading at the second paragraph... Therefore, we started...

Read only one sentence at a time.

Stop after reading each sentence. Ask yourself this question:

Did the sentence ask anything of me?

If it does - Do it! and don't add to it.

No extra points for creativity here!

For example: Do I honestly agree with or accept what has just been said? Did it suggest a prayer? Write something down? Make a list? Think? Consider? Seek out something within myself? There are sentences where nothing is really 'asked' of you though the vast majority do ask or infer some mental and/or written activity - even if only acceptance of an idea or ideal.

Continue this process:

Reading 'One Sentence At A Time' and doing what it says (and not doing what it doesn't say) through to the end of the chapter.

If you've done all that the sentences ask or infer - that's it - you're finished - congratulations!

"Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully."

You should have 4 lists made:

Resentments - pg. 64, Faults - (see note below) pg. 67, Fears - pg. 68, Sex conduct ("Whom had we hurt?" see note below) - pg. 69

NOTE: I would also call your and your sponsor's/counselor's attention to the line on page 76 - third paragraph - "Eight and Nine. We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory. "

Refer back to page 67 - 3rd. Paragraph - Last line...

"We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight."

and to:

Page 69 - 2nd. Paragraph - "Whom had we hurt?" ...  
...We got this all down on paper and looked at it. (End of Paragraph)

Often people get to this place on page 76 and wonder when they made this list.

There is in the line further down the page:

"We must be willing to make amends where we have done harm, provided that we do not bring about still more harm in so doing."

### Helpful Hints

Keep a Dictionary at hand - use it - perhaps begin by looking up the word 'definite' as used on page 65 - sentence above the 3 columns.

At the bottom of page 65 it says, "We went back through our lives."  
So... START at today and go 'back through [your life]'.

Don't let the 3 column thing scare you.

It's simply identifying who, why, and how or what it affected in your life. Avoid thinking it more complicated.

Keep it simple. It really is!

You can even use the 'multiple choice' like examples above and beside the columns for the "Affects my:"

It's best if you have come to some true understanding and appreciation of these examples.

Don't write something just for the sake of putting something down.

Be prepared, if it were to be called upon, to talk to someone in more detail about whatever you write down in your 'Affects my: column.

Consider: "When we saw our faults we listed them."

If you don't see them - yet - perhaps they're not there.

Don't get creative.

No need to make things any worse for impression and approval points.

Just the facts - is just fine.

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