

First of all, make a written list of the 20 or 25 undeniably screwed-up things about your life, past or present. All the things you hate about your life or wish were different. The biggies. The worst things that EVER happened to you. All the worst ways that life & others have screwed you.

After putting the list together, I would like to offer an exercise that basically came from a prayer I heard Marianne Williamson say. Please keep in mind that the second word in this prayer can be replaced by ANY negative emotion that you are feeling. Marianne's prayer went like this: "I'm angry, but I'm willing not to be. Dear Lord, please show me what I am not seeing. Thank You." Paul Ferrini puts it this way: "Father, I am willing to change my mind about this situation. Please help me see this, not through the eyes of fear, but as You see it. Help me see this with equal love for myself and all others." This is a powerful and transformative prayer in and of itself, but it is NOT the exercise mentioned above.

The exercise is as follows: I would like to suggest that you do the following EVERY MORNING, in its entirety, for three months. I'm not necessarily asking you to agree with it, but I AM simply asking you to work with it. Its effectiveness doesn't lessen whether or not you agree with what it says. In the blank below, please put each individual event on the list that I asking you to compile above (the 20 or 25 worst things that EVER happened to you). Say the below prayer with each item one at a time, and then go on to the next one, saying the sentence again and again until you go through your list. So if you have 22 items on your list, you'll say the below prayer 22 times, each time with a different item in the blank space. If you have any questions or if this is unclear, please let me know. The prayer is as follows:

"Lord, thank you for the blessing of _____. Please show me what You would have me learn, for my own spiritual growth as well as the spiritual growth of others. May I be of service."

OR

LLewellyn Vaughan-Lee - When you perceive a tragedy or a difficulty say the following prayer: Thank You Beloved. You are really making an effort to reveal something for me. How can I live this experience to take me closer to You?

OR

Life's Terms Prayer (Stephen. K.): Dear God, please help me to accept the way things are, and to look for the good in any situation I face in life.

OR

- 1) Write down what you would consider as the WORST two things that has EVER happened to you.
- 2) Find the blessing.

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If you had enough money where you didn't have to work, what would you do & how would you spend you time?

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Gratitude Inventory

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Write an inventory of all the things that are good & right about the people that disturbed & "negatively" affected me in my life.

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Charles Fillmore - Here is a mental treatment guaranteed to cure every ill that flesh is heir to: sit for half an hour every night and mentally forgive everyone against whom you have any ill will (bad feeling) or antipathy (dislike).

OR

don Miguel Ruiz - Today, Creator, grant me the courage and the will to forgive the people I love the most. Help me to forgive every injustice I feel in my mind, and to love other people unconditionally. I know the only way to heal all the pain in my heart is through forgiveness.

Today, Creator, strengthen my will to forgive everyone who has hurt me, even if I believe the offense is unforgivable. I know that forgiveness is an act of self-love. Help me to love myself so much that I forgive every offense. Let me choose forgiveness because I don't want to suffer every time I remember the offense.

Today, Creator, help me to heal all the guilt in my heart by accepting the forgiveness of everyone I have hurt in my life. Help me to sincerely recognize the mistakes I have made out of ignorance, and give me the wisdom and determination to refrain from making the same mistakes. I know that love and forgiveness will transform every relationship in the most positive way.

Thank you, Creator, for giving me the capacity to love and forgive. Today I open my heart to love and forgiveness, so that I can share my love without fear. Today I will enjoy a reunion with the people I love the most. Amen.

OR

Paul Boese - Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future.

OR

Forgiveness is a process through which we free ourselves from the bondage to another person that is maintained for as long as we stand in judgment of them. Forgiveness is love in action.

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Doing this step I can write honestly, it made me realize why I had suffered, and what the cause of that suffering was!

Moral means; "A standard". So I had to look at my standards for myself, and the standards I had set other people (THE CAUSE OF SO MUCH RESENTMENT).

My sponsor suggested that I list all of my guilt's, resentments, fears and sexual conduct because between these I would find the cause of my emotional pain or spiritual dis-ease, call it what you will.

Why do this step?. Well, if you are a product of your past and you are unhappy now, then something has gone wrong in the past! If you have spent, drank, used drugs, eaten to get away from bad feelings, then it is suggested you look at the cause of these bad feelings.

There is a cliché that says, “The straw that broke the camels back”. Well, taking a fearless moral inventory takes straws off our backs; it makes life less of a burden. It lightens the load!

When you are full of resentment it is like farting, everyone close to you gets a whiff!

But when you are on a spiritual path it is like wearing a lovely perfume, everyone close to you gets a whiff!

The idea of a fearless moral inventory is to start to see what is in our character that causes triggers for resentment, guilt, and fear from other people to us or us to other people.

It is about learning not to over react! A word that flies off the tongue is like an arrow leaving a bow for a target!

If you are an angry or resentful person then the following list of defects of character are the cause of your pain! Without these defects you will have peace of mind!

Simple! Learn the cause and effect, and then learn to practice opposites, result peace of mind; and that is what it is all about. Practice opposites.

The following defects are the cause of resentment, anger and hatred. Anger is not a defect of character. If someone attacks you, you have to be angry to save your life! But if your anger is caused by one of the following defects of character, then that is self-righteous anger which means that we will always suffer, until we see the true cause of our Dis-ease.

THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING OR DEFECTS OF CHARACTER.

PRIDE – HIGH OPINION OF ONES OWN QUALITIES, MERITS OR CONDUCT.

Does pride stop you saying sorry, or asking for help?

Does your pride say “The best way not to fail, is not to try?”

A prisoner of peoples opinions that can lead us to overreact, or not to do anything because of “what will people will think”.

Healthy pride, makes us act in a way that is caring to ourselves and other people. It is a good sense of well being knowing that you have tried your best (you may of even failed, but you tried!).

IMPATIENCE – Not enduring! Wanting everything now.

HEALTHY IMPATIENCE – When your sick of being the way you are! And want to change now!

INTOLERANCE – Not able to endure opinions, beliefs, or actions.

HEALTHY INTOLERANCE – When your endurance of your habit, drinking, taking drugs or letting people walk all over you stops!

ENVY – Resentful of more fortunate people. Their health, looks, intelligence or ways.

HEALTHY ENVY – When it turns to admiration!

JEALOUSY – The fear of being out done, suspicious, dislike of someone who you see as better than you, wealthy, women, looks.

The fear of being replaced by another! Seeing people as rivals.

HEALTHY JEALOUSY - Makes you treat people well!, or they will go els ewhere.

SELFISHNESS - Doing your own desires or interests without caring how it effects other peoples emotions or life.

HEALTHY SELFISHNESS - Doing what’s best for you! Not being a prisoner of peoples opinions.

SELF-PITY - A feeling of being hard done by! Poor me.

HEALTHY SELF PITY - “People have hurt me, people have used me, people have stolen from me, people have abused me, but I am not going to resent, I am going to enjoy life and learn from the experience of the past”.

SELF-CENTEREDNESS - Pre-occupied with your own ways and actions, not caring about other people.

HEALTHY SELF

CENTEREDNESS - When you stop being a doormat, and stand up for what is right for you!

ARROGANCE - I am right and you are wrong! Tending never to listen, but to argue, and to believe that you are always right. What is an argument? A billion ways to say “I am right and you are wrong”.

HEALTHY ARROGANCE - What you think of me does not matter, humility when you think, “Does it matter?”.

SLOTH - Slow or absence of activity. When actions should be done.

HEALTHY SLOTH - Taking time out of the rat race and relaxing, meditating, contemplating!

DISHONESTY - DECEITFULNESS, FRAUDULENT, LACK OF HONOUR (before you resent, ask, “Have I ever done anything similar in my life for what I am going to resent that person for?”)

HEALTHY DISHONESTY - Is when a friend says “Do you think that I am fat and ugly?” and you say “No!”, even though you know different.

LUST - Animal desire for sexual indulgence! To want passionately.

HEALTHY LUST - I want peace of mind, I want to live a blameless life! Or a romantic weekend.

GREED - To want more than is needed.

HEALTHY GREED - To have peace of mind, and to then want more.

INTO ACTION

It is best to start with listing your resentments, my sponsor suggested to do it this way. List each resentment separately, never write the word "and" (between each resentment) because it is another resentment.

List Each Resentment:

WHO

WHY

DEFECTS (This after listing MY defects here I started to see how much power I had given people! I started to see that it is not the action of other people, but MY reaction is the cause of my resentment/emotional pain.)

Remember that "moral" means standards you have from yourself or other people. A FEW EXAMPLES OF TAKING A MORAL INVENTORY:

RESENTMENT #1

WHO – John

WHY – He chatted my wife up

DEFECTS - Self Pity (How could he do that to me?).

Jealousy (The fear of being replaced by another).

Dishonesty (Have I ever chatted anyone up? Have I ever been unfaithful?).

This resentment can be undone by thinking “Is my wife with me now?”

Or

“Well, to be honest, I have chatted up other men’s wives and girlfriends”.

RESENTMENT #2

Who – Fred

WHY - He came into work late, he is always doing it, I have to do more work and the boss gets angry

DEFECTS - Impatience, Self Pity, Dishonesty.

Impatience – I want him to be on time

Self Pity – Poor me

Dishonesty – Have I ever been late?

RESENTMENT #3

WHO – Mary

WHY – She dumped me for someone else

DEFECTS - Self Pity, Pride, Self-centeredness, Dishonesty.

Self Pity – Poor me, how could she do that to me?.

Pride – What will people think?.

Dishonesty – Have I ever finished with anyone?.

Self-Centeredness – You are only thinking of your happiness, in fact you want to take her prisoner!

If you look at this resentment you will see the cause of the reaction, I resented Mary because she finished with me, but had I ever finished a relationship?, Yes, would I have liked her to resent you? Would you have wanted her to put emotional handcuffs on you?, No. Then don’t do it to her!

Dishonesty is resenting someone for something that you have done yourself.

When you look at the right hand column you start to see the real problem and that peace of mind will not come if you hang on to your resentments. Practice the opposite of the defect box and peace and freedom will flow in!

In short, I may of had the worst childhood, or the worst parents/wife/girlfriend. They may have abused me psychologically or sexually by resenting, by hating them, they are still abusing me! We have to learn to accept our past. That does not mean I agree, but I stop hurting myself by making the mind spin around by wanting my life to be different! That is the cause of my emotion, wishing it had been different.

Again I had to learn that if I wanted peace of mind, acceptance is the key to the doorway that will lead me out of misery! I owe it to myself to let the past go.

If someone walked into the room now and hit you on the head with a hammer and then dropped the hammer on the floor and ran out, would you pick the hammer up and carry on hitting yourself, no, it would be madness, but with resentment we do carry on doing it to ourselves. Remember, resentment means to re-feel!! So we re-feel every time we hate them, resent them, despise them or want to get back at them. They have won! You are still suffering. Ask yourself how many weeks, months, years that you have had this resentment! Let it go.

If your hair went on fire now you would rush to water and put the fire out. But because of your instincts to survive or self preserve would kick in and take over. But with resentment we watch the fire and blame someone for lighting it! They are at fault, look what they did to me all those years ago.

FEARS

It was suggested to me that I should list all of my fears. Just like I did my resentments.

FEARS #1

FEAR – People

WHY - I think they will see me blush

DEFECTS - Pride – What people think of me?.

Self Pity – They will laugh at me and I will run away.
Arrogance - Who am I to be laughed at?.

FEARS #2

FEAR – Death

WHY - I don't want to die

DEFECTS - Self Pity – Poor me, I am going to die.

This is one of the biggest fears I have come across in my time whilst going through and doing the steps with people.

Self-Pity is the trigger!

Acceptance sets you free. Think that every time you become obsessed with death, you are killing your joy for life. Say to yourself, "Am I alive now?" - If you are, enjoy your life, help people, try and get out of self-obsession.

A Buddhist way of getting over the fear of death is by meditation on your own death. We will cover this in step 11.

I once said to a Buddhist monk, "I am scared of dying, what can I do?". He said "You are going to be very disappointed one day!"

That was my answer, ACCEPTANCE.

SEXUAL CONDUCT

It was suggested to me that I list all of my sexual exploits and see if my pursuit of sex had led me to be selfish, dishonest, had it caused resentment – had I taken chances where I could have caught some disease, had I effected my dignity or someone else's?.

The idea behind this is to look, and to see that a bit of hugging, puffing and a few squelching noises, I put a lot of effort into the pursuit of it.

In short list, your sexual exploits and weigh it up.

If you are frigid, talk about!

GUILT

It was suggested to me that I list all of my guilt's. When I wrote them down it seemed that I resented myself! I could write forever about guilt, but I will keep it very short.

I wrote my guilt's down. I soon learnt that "Guilty" was not a punishment from God, but a feeling that was telling me that what I did in the past was not my true character, if it had been, I would not be feeling guilty! So I became willing to make amends (See Steps 8 and 9) and that I did.

Guilt is alright before the event when the head thinks "If I do that I will not feel right because I will hurt someone". So that is what guilt is about, stopping you doing something that will cause harm. So look at your guilt's. Make amends, where needed and forget it! (I bet your thinking, "It's alright for you, but if you had my Catholic, Jewish, Muslim etc, guilt", you would be tormented). Well I was tortured by guilt but I am not now! Why, because I did what my sponsor said, and truly realized that guilt was not a punishment but a feeling telling me that what I did at that time was a combination of what was going on in my life at that time! It was telling me it was not my true character!

In short, drop your guilt as you would a ton weight on your shoulders, because the longer you carry it the more damage it does, and in the end you will buckle under the weight.

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Have you had any broken relationships? If so, describe them and how they hurt others or yourself. Describe any grudges, anger or resentment that you have over these relationships.

Have you ever felt self-righteous? Explain when and the circumstances. Was this justified? Elaborate.

What events or triggers have caused you to begin your addictive behaviors in the past? Describe situations, feelings, events, food or people that you seem to be a part of your life just before or during your addictive behaviors.

Have you ever held a grudge? Did you try to get revenge? If so, explain the situation and how it played out, including whether or not someone else was hurt.

Describe times that you have been oversensitive. Did this ever damage your relationship with others, or were you just trying to keep your own boundaries?

Describe the faults that you most detest in others. Do you have any of these traits yourself?

Put a checkmark beside any of the following traits that you despise in others. Also check whether you see these traits in yourself.

Traits that I Despise in Others					
Trait	In Others	In Myself	Trait	In Others	In Myself
Selfishness			Greedy		
Cowardice			Snobbish		
Dishonesty			Sarcastic		
Fearfulness			Hypercritical		
Controlling			Gossip		
Manipulative			Tightwad		
Intimidating			Harsh		
Power-hungry			Unforgiving		
Possessive			Verbally		

			abusive		
Prejudiced			Physically abusive		
Overly dependent			Sexually abusive		
Procrastinating			Impatient		
Judgmental			Adulterous		
Preoccupied			Sneakiness		
Lying			Ungrateful		
Cheating			Cynical		
Intolerant			Bitter		
Self-Pitying			Full of Rage		
Jealous			Envious		
Insecure					

Have you failed to do things that you KNOW that you should have done? If so, then explain in detail.

What are your fears? How have they caused you difficulty in your life?

Describe your relationship with your friends, co-workers or neighbors. Is there something that you wish that you could do over again?

If so, explain in detail.

Describe your relationships with your family of origin. Do you have conflicts with any siblings or with your parents? Are you avoiding these matters in your family?

Describe the earliest memories of your life. Did you share a similar personality with those in your family or were they very different than you? Do you think that these similarities or differences caused problems in your life? If so, explain.

If you were to describe your family's major themes, what would they be?

Describe your relationships with your nuclear family (spouse and children) if that is different now from your family of origin. Is there anything that you wish that you could erase from this part of your life?

Describe in detail any major experiences in your life that you believe changed your life forever afterwards (good or bad).

What decisions have you made in your life that made a significant impact on your life? How did you go about making those decisions?

How much of your life have you used up already? If you drew a time line of your life, where would you be now?

Put your major experiences and major decisions on a timeline. Is there a pattern of any kind?

What are you most ashamed of in your life?

Do you see any patterns in your addictive behaviors? If so, explain them in detail.

What have you done to cover and conceal your addictive behaviors? What other deceptions did this lead to?

What kind of personality do you exhibit at home? At school? At work? When no-one is around?

What is so shameful in your life that you would not want to tell anyone? Who would you hurt if you told this?

Write a summary of the highlights of your fourth step.

How would you like to share your fourth step summary? What details would you like to make sure that are known? Write these details down in your summary and prepare the summary for presentation in your fifth step.

Describe any celebrations or honoring activities that you have done to honor the completion of your 4th step.

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After prayerful consideration, write out the answers to the following questions:

- 1) What or who is my most irritating resentment?
- 2) Who am I in this resentment?
 - a) Who do I think I am?
 - b) ...believe I should be?
 - c) ...want to be seen as?
 - d) ...really believe I am?
- 3) Who am I really in this resentment? Where am I:
 - a) Selfish (thinking about myself?)
 - b) Self-seeking (acting on my behalf?)
 - c) Dishonest (misrepresenting myself?)
 - d) Fearful (concerned about not getting or losing?)
- 4) What is my most bothersome fear?
- 5) Where is my selfishness/self-centeredness most prominent in my personal relationship(s)?
- 6) What is my sex ideal? How and why do I fall short of that ideal? Am I really willing to grow toward it?
- 7) What is the one "big secret" I have not been willing to FULLY reveal?

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OK after you complete the four columns, you look over the whole thing and then take your name and put it in column 1. Then you take the column 4 stuff and put that in column 2. You then see what comes in the new columns 3&4. What it accomplishes is it removes a large part of whatever is left in the resentment toward the principle, institution or person.

A short example, I had IRS resentment, so.....Column 1 is John, Column 2 is dishonest, and how does being dishonest affect my seven areas of self, look again at being selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and afraid. You are to see what comes, it just goes deeper, and I don't think it is needed with the resentments that go away with the first 4 column, just the persistent or deep ones. If all goes well, you come to a full concession that your problems are *truly* of your own making. You go into step 6 with more willingness ect...

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Self-examination Prayer

(Adapted from St. Augustine's Prayer Book)

Before self-examination (inventory) say this prayer:

"O Holy Spirit, Source of all light, Spirit of wisdom, of understanding and of knowledge, Come to my assistance and enable me to make [my searching and fearless, moral inventory]. Enlighten me, and help me now to know my sins [my defects, shortcomings, and harms to others]. Bring to my mind the [wrongs], which I have done, and the good which I have neglected. Permit me not to be blinded by [self-will... or self-loathing or hatred]. Grant me, moreover, heartfelt sorrow for my transgressions, knowing how deeply they have wounded [my relationships with God and my fellow man]. [Help me to be free of all guilt and to be willing to right all the wrongs I have committed.] [Please help me see the Truth.] Amen."

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Who's that SOB?

Column 1: I get annoyed at Sue (*my wife*)...

Column 2: ...when she asks or insists that I should go to the doctor.

Column 3: "Who" gets annoyed?

- a) **The husband** - I know best and my wife shouldn't tell me what to do. I should tell her what to do.
- b) **"Physician heal thy-self"** - My body will heal on it's own. Time and rest are the best medicine. I know what's best for me.
- c) **"The man"** - Real men don't need doctors.
- d) **"The spiritual man"** - I'm so spiritually evolved I don't need medical help.
- e) **"Accountant"** - Doctor's visit = \$\$\$\$. Unneeded spending. Doctors / medication is over-rated / over-priced.
- f) **"The employee"** - I'm entitled to sick days. I'll only feel worse by going to work.

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What's the fear(s) behind the masks in column 3?

I fear what could be the result of a doctor's visit (fear of the unknown) I'm not current/educated with how my job's insurance works therefore I fear going to the doctor. I fear making an effort. I fear losing/spending money. I fear getting completely well because I'll be expected to go back to work. (Ha!)

Needless to say, once I saw this truth (even then I wasn't happy about it at first), I slept on it and the next morning I got the "corrective measures"... and had a blast reading this stuff to Sue.

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If you choose to do your Fourth Step in your head and don't write it down, that's fine, but please don't call it AA.

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The moment you start to resent a person, you become their slave. He / She controls your dreams, robs you of your peace of mind and good will, and takes away the pleasure of your work. He / She blocks your relationship with God and nullifies your prayers. You cannot take a vacation without this person going along! He / She destroys your freedom of mind and hounds you wherever you go. There is no way to escape the person you resent. He / She is with you when you are awake; invades your privacy when you sleep; is close beside you when you eat, when you drive your car, and when you are on the job. You lose neither efficiency nor happiness. He / She even influences the tone of your voice. He / She even steals your last moment of consciousness before you go to sleep. So, if you want to be a slave - harbor resentments.

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Am I SELFISH? If I am resentful, it is because someone did not do what I wanted them to do in the past. They did not do it my way. That is being SELFISH. If I am angry, it is because someone is not doing what I want them to do right now. They are not doing it my way. That is being SELFISH. If I am fearful it is because I know someone is not going to do what I want them to do in the future. They are not going to do it my way. That is being SELFISH. If I feel guilty or remorseful, it is because I got my own way at your expense. And that is being SELFISH. It seems that page 62 of the Big Book is correct when it says SELFISHNESS is the root of all my trouble.

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If you hate a person, you hate something in them that is part of yourself. What isn't part of ourselves doesn't disturb us. What I hate in another, is usually what I struggle with myself.

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In Step 4, we are not writing about an event, we write about our reaction to an event; we may not have any responsibility for what happened but we are responsible for our response.

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The 4th step isn't about finding out who you are, it's about finding out who you are not, so you can get rid of it & who you are will shine thru. That's why self-knowledge avails us nothing. We need to find out what GOD wants us to be.

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Hating destroys the hater.

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Nothing that you fear is as bad as the fear itself.

The man who fights life's battles without fear fights one enemy - the real thing confronting him. But the man who fights with fears within him fights three enemies - the real thing to fight, plus the imaginary things built up by fear, plus the fear itself. And the greatest of these is fear. Fear is what looses from within itself the enemies that capture us within before the real fight with the outward enemy begins.

So boiled down to its essence, the conclusion is that there is nothing to fear save fear, nothing to worry about except worry.

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I shall allow no man to belittle my soul by making me hate him.

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Fear is static that keeps us from hearing our intuition.

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The only thing that doubt never doubts is doubt.

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Resentment = wrong judgments, Fear = wrong believing, Harms = wrong actions.

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Debbie Ford - I firmly believe that uncovering our old resentments and saying goodbye to grudges is a quantum step that fuels the transformation of both our inner and outer worlds. Having spent the last decade coaching and training tens of thousands of people, I have come to see clearly that resenting someone is like having a steel cord connecting them to us. Everywhere we go, we take that person with us, and the mere mention of their name can ruin our mood and steal our joy. I have also come to understand that our resentments toward other people always reflect a resentment we are holding against ourselves, and conversely, the resentments we harbor toward ourselves are usually connected to a corresponding outer resentment. No matter how it plays out, it is easy to predict that if we live in a state of unresolved anger, pain, resentment and regret, our future will look like some version of our past.

To support you in softening and opening your heart today, I'm including a passage on emotional purification from Dr. Vasant Lad's beautiful new book, "Strands of Eternity":

The memory of an insult is lodged in your mind.

Bring complete awareness to it.

The flame of awareness will cook your anger

And like a dry leaf, it drops to the ground.

Stay near your feelings.

Stay near God.

Fast from food. Fast from talking.

Allow the emotion to ripen.

Allow your grief and anger to flower

And they will die their own natural death.

Suppress them and they will fight for existence.

To uncover your resentments and begin to make peace with the past requires taking the journey from your head to your heart. Within an internal atmosphere of compassion and forgiveness, ask yourself, "What am I still angry about? And what is the fear beneath the anger? What am I afraid will happen if I let go of my resentments?" The very human fear we all share is that we are going to get hurt again. And what I often tell people in my workshops and trainings is that if you're going to fully inhabit your life and really live in this world, you will get hurt again. But here is the point of transformation: When you know that you can take care of yourself during that hurt, you will feel safe to open your heart. And when your heart is open, that is when you'll be able to create the life of your dreams.

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That which we fear grows in proportion to our obsession with it. The more we fear a thing, the bigger it becomes, which in turn increases our fear. How lucky we are that our Higher Power awaits our call for the strength, the companionship that is guaranteed us! We are in partnership, all the way, every day, if we'd only recognize it. We can move toward and through anything. And the added benefit is that we come to trust our partnership. We soon know that all situations can be met. All experiences can be survived.

Avoidance is no longer our technique for survival. Tackling with God's help that which seems impossible, reduces it to manageable size. It also deflates the power our fears have given it.

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Ultimately we know deeply that the other side of every fear is freedom.

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Resentment is like taking poison and expecting the other person to get sick.

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Fear is the faith that something bad is going to happen.

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Thanks for your anger, because it reminds me when I'm angry what I do to myself.

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Fears usually revolve around three things: afraid of loosing what I have, afraid of not getting what I want, or afraid of someone finding out what I did.

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It is not that anything changes, it's just that we get a new pair of glasses that are in focus, and when we take a look at everything through the spiritual glasses, we realize everything has been fine all along. The problem was that our vision was distorted. It was distorted because we were looking at everything from a position of self-centeredness; we're looking at the universe with us at the center. From that perspective, everything was screwed up. As soon as we change to being more God-centered or love-centered or others-centered, peace of mind becomes our constant state.

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(A prayer to begin with each time you sit down to write your Fourth Step) God please help me with this; show me what I need to know. Please protect me, Thy Will not mine be done. Amen.

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Any person capable of angering you becomes your master; he can anger you only when you permit yourself to be disturbed by him.

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Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hate. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness.

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The things we are afraid of seem to be like high mountains to climb. When we have gone through them they were in fact small speed bumps.

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Dear God, it is I who have made my life a mess. I have done it, but I cannot undo it. I desperately need Your help. My mistakes are mine, and I will begin a searching and fearless truth-finding inventory. I will write down the exact NATURE of my wrongs. I pray for the strength to complete the task. Amen.

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The more anger towards the past you carry in your heart, the less capable you are of loving in the present.

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If I am trying to make myself "un-self-centered", isn't that still being self-centered?

*

"God, Please help me show those I resent the same Tolerance, Pity and Patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend. Help me to see that this is a spiritually block man. Father, please show me how I can be helpful to him and save me from being angry. Lord, help me to avoid retaliation or argument. I know I can't be helpful to all people, but at least show me how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one. Thy will be done."

*

Is it possible that fear is a conscious decision?

*

Frederick Buechner - Of the Seven Deadly Sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come, to savor to the last toothsome morsel both the pain you are given and the pain you are giving back -- in many ways it is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you.

*

Instead of going into the 4th Step as "cleaning your room by rearranging the same old stuff you've always been stuck with", think of it as "cleaning your room by throwing out the stuff you don't want so you can replace it with stuff you DO want".

*

The way you are is NOT the result of what has happened to you, it's the result of what you decide to KEEP INSIDE of you.

*

A scientist showed the Teacher a documentary film on the achievements of modern science. "Today we are able to irrigate a desert," he exulted, "harness the power of Niagara Falls, and detect the composition of a distant star and the makeup of an atom. Our conquest of nature will soon be complete." The Teacher was impressed but pensive.

Later he said, "Why conquer nature? Nature is our friend. Why not spend all that energy in overcoming the one single enemy of the human race: fear?"

*

At a certain point, we forgive because we decide to forgive. Healing occurs in the present, not the past. We are not held back by the love we didn't receive in the past, but by the love we're not giving in the present.

*

You don't wait to get better before you do a 4th Step; you do a 4th Step to begin get better.

*

FEAR - False Evidence Appearing Real or Frantic Efforts to Appear Recovered or Forget Everything And Run or Face Everything And Recover.

*

Fear is only an illusion. It is the illusion that creates the feeling of separateness, which is the false sense of isolation that exists only in your imagination.

*

An expectation is a premeditated resentment.

*

To be wronged is NOTHING unless you insist on remembering it.

*

If I totally, at the depth of my being, trusted God, I would never experience fear. So my fears, worries and anxieties reveal my current agnosticism.

*

It's not what's going on around me that makes me feel the way I'm feeling, it's what I'm thinking ABOUT what's going on around me that makes me feel the way I'm feeling. And when I change the way I'm thinking about what's going on around me, my feelings toward them also change. Every time I have a negative emotional reaction, I am always telling myself something about what's happening. And if I have a negative emotional reaction, whatever I'm telling myself is always a lie, and all I have to do to stop having these negative emotional reactions is to become aware that I am telling myself a lie, and the moment I know I'm telling myself a lie, I stop doing it. And then I stop having the negative emotional reaction. It sounds complicated but it isn't. Of all judgments that I can make about what's going on, they all can be boiled down to two. I'm always telling myself one or the other of two lies whenever I am angry, disappointed, annoyed, afraid; whatever. I'm either telling myself: 1) this should not happen, or 2) this is terrible/intolerable/unacceptable/I am unable to live with this (or however you want to put it). There is only one cure for resentment – detachment. The detachment that comes from attachment, whole-souled attachment, to the One Who loves even the “unlovable” and the “undeserving” of love. Our attachment needs to be on God and God alone. And since God is love, we get over resenting someone by loving them!

*

Non-consideration of our character defects is every bit as self-destructive as denial of them. Admission of them is what's called for. But non-sharing of them with another human being makes it impossible to experience the maximum experience of feeling ashamed of ourselves that gives the maximum hope of wanting to be rid of them all.

*

On the slope of Long's Peak in Colorado lies the ruin of a gigantic tree. Naturalists tell us that it stood for some four hundred years. It was a seedling when Columbus landed at San Salvador, and half grown when the Pilgrims settled at Plymouth. During the course of its long life it was struck by lightning fourteen times, and the innumerable avalanches and storms of four centuries thundered past it. It survived them all. In the end, however, an army of beetles attacked the tree and leveled it to the ground. The insects ate their way through the bark and gradually destroyed the inner strength of the tree by their tiny but incessant attacks. A forest giant, which age had not withered, not lightning blasted, nor storms subdued, fell at last before beetles so small that a man could crush them between his forefinger and his thumb. Aren't we like that battling giant of the forest? Don't we manage somehow to survive the rare storms and avalanches and lightning blasts of life, only to let our hearts be eaten out by resentments?

*

It is necessary that we extricate from an examination of our personal relations every bit of information about ourselves and our fundamental difficulties that we can. Since defective relations with other human beings have nearly always been the immediate cause of our woes, including our alcoholism, no field of investigation could yield more satisfying and valuable rewards than this one. Calm, thoughtful reflection upon personal relations can deepen our insight. We can go far beyond those things which were superficially wrong with us, to see those flaws which were basic, flaws which sometimes were responsible for the whole pattern of our lives. Thoroughness, we have found, will pay – and pay handsomely.

*

Most anger/resentment in relationships is supported by this sentence: If only you were more like me then I wouldn't have to be upset at you right now, so why don't you work at becoming more like I want you to be.

*

Victims don't stay sober.

*

Many people think that it's too much work to put a Fourth Step inventory in writing. They believe it's much easier to simply search their memories and identify the nature of their wrongs. However, time and again, experience has shown that the opposite is true. Our popcorn-machine minds shoot out so many random and unrelated thoughts that the central theme gets lost. Writing it all down, on the other hand, creates more order and focus, and enables us to discover the recurring patterns in our actions.

*

Those who have gone before us in the Twelve Step process discovered that only by making a deep and soul-searching examination could they begin to affect the kind of recovery that could withstand the stimuli that sparked their dysfunctional behavior. What we are searching out in our inventory is not only the behavior that we see as unproductive, but also the very nature of that behavior.

Does that behavior stem from fear, or from resentment, ignorance, defiance, or from a need to retaliate because others have treated us unfairly?

Those who have successfully completed Step Four report that the human tendency to generalize, skip or undervalue specifics results in an inventory that is, at best, a mediocre attempt. To truly rid ourselves of unproductive thinking and actions, we need to be detailed enough to detect the patterns that must be changed in order to create a more satisfying life.

*

Through the process of "uncover," "discover," "recover," we progress into deeper self-knowledge and acceptance. This process allows us to uncover long-forgotten incidents. In them, we discover the origins of earlier, carefully disguised characteristics that had become

recurring themes in our bag of coping tricks. The object of this search is not to make us feel more guilty or ashamed of ourselves, but to clearly point out how the mosaic of our life has been made up of tiny missteps.

*

I FEARED BEING ALONE...until I learned to like myself.

I FEARED FAILURE...until I realized that I only fail when I don't try.

I FEARED SUCCESS...until I realized that I had to try in order to be happy with myself.

I FEARED PEOPLE'S OPINIONS...until I learned that people would have opinions about me anyway.

I FEARED REJECTION...until I learned to have faith in myself.

I FEARED PAIN...until I learned that it's necessary for growth.

I FEARED THE TRUTH...until I saw the ugliness in lies.

I FEARED LIFE...until I experienced its beauty.

I FEARED DEATH...until I realized that it's not an end, but a beginning.

I FEARED MY DESTINY...until I realized that I had the power to change my life.

I FEARED HATE...until I saw that it was nothing more than ignorance.

I FEARED LOVE...until it touched my heart, making the darkness fade into endless sunny days.

I FEARED RIDICULE...until I learned how to laugh at myself.

I FEARED GROWING OLD...until I realized that I gained wisdom every day.

I FEARED THE FUTURE...until I realized that life just kept getting better.

I FEARED THE PAST...until I realized that it could no longer hurt me.

I FEARED THE DARK...until I saw the beauty of the starlight.

I FEARED THE LIGHT...until I learned that the truth would give me strength.

I FEARED CHANGE...until I saw that even the most beautiful butterfly had to undergo a metamorphosis before it could fly.

*

In his book, "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living" Dale Carnegie says: "When we hate our enemies, we give them power over us - power over our sleep, our appetites and our happiness. They would dance for joy if they knew how much they were upsetting us. Our hate doesn't harm them at all, but turns our days and nights into a hellish turmoil." No matter how much harm we feel has been done to us, and how much we feel our anger is justified, our job now is to take our eyes off the microscope and pick up the mirror. We are responsible for our own actions and reactions, we have no power over anyone else's actions or emotions, nor do we want them living rent-free in our heads. Lord knows, we have enough work to do on ourselves without muddying the water with other people's behavior. A woman told her sponsor a truly sad tale of disappointment and despair. She ended by saying: "You know, I feel I've really been betrayed." "That's because you have been betrayed," said her sponsor. "Now that your perception has been validated, and your very understandable pain has been acknowledged, it's up to you to accept that unpalatable truth, and get on with your business of making a new life." I must relinquish the gratification of justifiable anger.

*

Mark H. - I thought the 4th Step sex inventory was about sex. It's not, it's about my relationship with every one of God's kids. My prayer on a daily basis is that God show me how to bring these five things into every relationship that I have, with every human being on the planet. These came from coming up with & developing a future sex ideal:

1 - I bring to you my relationship to my loving Father

2 - I bring to you my willingness to live by spiritual principles

3 - I bring to you a sense of my oneness with the universe (what does that mean, that means that almost everything is sacred to me & I treat everything with respect & dignity & honor)

4 - I bring to you communication

5 - I bring to you humor

*

Sufi Resentment Prayer

Say the prayer three times: the first time for yourself, the second time for someone you love, and the third time for the person who has caused the upset. If saying the prayer for the person who has upset you makes you feel tense or unsettled, say the prayer again for yourself. For example, if Michael has upset you the prayer would look like this:

(for yourself)

Natalie, peace to your thoughts.

Natalie, peace to your feelings.

Natalie, peace to your body.

(for someone you love)

Daughter, peace to your thoughts.

Daughter, peace to your feelings.

Daughter, peace to your body.

(for someone who has upset you)

Michael, peace to your thoughts.

Michael, peace to your feelings.

Michael, peace to your body.

(for yourself again)

Natalie, peace to your thoughts.

Natalie, peace to your feelings.

Natalie, peace to your body.

*

The Rox - Resentments are like stray cats: if you don't feed them, they'll go away.

*

STEP 4

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

I drank to forget what it was that bothered me. Once sober I realized I had to face unpleasant memories. Once I wrote these resentments, these negative feelings down on paper, they did not appear to be so life threatening.

QUESTIONS

1. Are there any things in your family history that bother you?
What have you identified as old beliefs or feelings from the past?
2. Have you already done a Fourth Step? Did you find it difficult to do?
Do you feel up-to-date with your feelings and issues?
3. Do you feel you ought to do a Fourth Step in the near future?
You may want to set a reasonable goal for doing this Step.
You can write your goal down and give yourself as much time as you want.
For instance, "I want to do a Fourth Step in the next eighteen months." Or, "I want to do a Fourth Step in the next three weeks."
4. Do you feel blocked in any area of your life? Do you think it might be helpful to do a Fourth Step on that area?

*

Checklist for Resentments

Create a Master List of every person or institution that has ever wronged you.

Create a separate title page for each person/institution you have identified on the Master List and place the name of each person or institution on the top their own title page.

Place the stack of title pages in front of you and choose which person or institution to begin with.

On the title page, for the person or institution which you have chosen describe, in detail, one of the wrongs that the person/institution has done to you. (You can examine productive and unproductive examples in the box which appeared before Task 5)

The guide is designed to use your feeling memories to identify other similar life experiences. Your reflections on the following two questions will remind you of the other people or institutions you have been harmed by:

When else have I felt this way?

Who else has treated me this way?

Look at your Master List and identify the people or institutions that have harmed you in a similar fashion. If your reflections on the two questions in Task 5 brought new people to mind, add them to the Master List and give them their own page.

Pull out the pages for each of the people/institutions that came to mind in Task 5 and identify and describe the wrong that each person/institution did to you, just as you did in Tasks 4 & 5.

When you complete each of the additional people, place their pages back in the unfinished pile.

Pull the first page back out and continue with the next wrong for that person like you did in Tasks 4 & 5. Each time you add a new wrong for this person/institution complete Task 5, 6, & 7.

When you are finished moving back and forth between the various people and institutions you are finished with Component 1. Do not sit and dig for more material. All the information that God wants you to have for now is out. Do not ruminate over the past. Call someone and talk if you are stuck. When you are unstuck, continue with Component 2 in Chapter 6.

*

Make a list of your 10 biggest regrets. That means write down 20 or 25 regrets that you've had & then pick the top 10.

*

Bruce Schneider - When you judge others, you judge yourself. The next time you find yourself upset with another person's actions, try to see yourself in that person and his or her actions. If you are open to the possibility, you may actually find that, in many cases, what you see within that other person is a reflection of you. You see a part of yourself you do not like, and it is you that you are upset with. The other person is only a mirror for your own self-learning.

Once you are able to look within and not project your anger or other negative feelings onto another, you can take responsibility for those negative feelings and choose to let go of them.

*

When doing a Resentment Inventory please follow the Big Book's four-column inventory directions but also consider the following:

- 1) The essence of the word "resentment" in the Big Book can best be described by the definition of the word "grievance", which means "any real or imagined reason for complaint".
- 2) Be sure to list all of your regrets (a regret is a resentment toward yourself).

- 3) Who have you not forgiven?
- 4) Who do you feel "let you down" or slighted you (perceived injustice)?
- 5) Who or what do you find yourself complaining about more than once?
- 6) Who annoys you?
- 7) What in the world & in life "shouldn't" be the way it is, "shouldn't" have happened the way it did, "shouldn't" be happening, AND "shouldn't" have been said?
- 8) Who or what do you not have complete acceptance of?
- 9) Who are the people & things you most make judgments of?
- 10) In what ways are you arguing with what is, past or present?

*

Dear Higher Power: I choose to forgive _____. Please bless them with all the blessings I would like for myself. Forgive me for judging them and I ask You to remove this resentment from me. Thank You.

*

4th Step Writing Prayer:

Dear God, it is I who have made my life a mess. I have done it, but I cannot undo it. I desperately need Your help. My mistakes are mine, and I will begin a searching and fearless truth-finding inventory. I will write down the exact NATURE of my wrongs. I pray for the strength to complete the task. Amen.

*

D. Patrick Miller - It might seem a lot easier to forgive someone if only he or she would show signs of changing. The paradox is that we are unlikely to see signs of change in others UNTIL we have forgiven them. This is true for two reasons: First, resentment is blinding. It limits our perception of what is real (or changing) in the present and shuts down our capacity to envision a happier future. Second, a subtle but critical function of forgiveness is that it tacitly (which means "understood or implied without being stated") gives others PERMISSION to change. We are not nearly so separate from each other as we generally experience ourselves to be. We think that we grow and change only within ourselves, but we also grow and change partly within others, and they within us. Some people may find very little space within themselves to change, and need others to let them into a psychic territory of forgiveness, where they can feel free to try a new way of being.

Soon after I had begun forgiving my parents for all the wrongs I thought they had done to me - without saying anything to them about it - it seemed that they suddenly became more open and frank about their personal history, everything that had influenced them to become who they are. At certain moments the extent of their revelations was stunning to me, and I wasn't sure of exactly what was happening. Had I heard these things before but hadn't paid attention because of my resentments at the time? Or did my parents subconsciously feel permitted to tell me more about themselves because I was showing them subtle signs of greater acceptance than I ever had before?

Now I believe that both kinds of change were occurring, and this evolution continues. I'm no longer concerned about which is their change and which is mine. We all change together if we change at all. This overlapping of each other is easiest to experience in a couple, family, or other close relationship, but I suspect that it's true of the family of humanity as well. That's what makes forgiveness so powerful. Anyone can initiate the changes we all need by opening up new territories within his or her mind - our one mind, really - where others can find the room to take a deep breath, start telling the truth, and shake off the cloak of guilt they have so long mistaken for their own skins.

Begin not with the idea that you are doing a favor to someone who hurt you, but that you are being merciful to yourself. To carry an anger against anyone is to poison your own heart, administering more toxin every time you replay in your mind the injury done to you. If you decline to repeat someone's offense INWARDLY, your OUTWARD anger will dissipate. Then it becomes much easier to talk with them about what happened.

*

The Compassion/Forgiveness Exercise by Harry Palmer

This exercise can be done anywhere people congregate or with someone we resent. It should be done unobtrusively, from some distance. Try to do all five steps on the same person. With attention on the person, repeat to yourself:

- 1) "Just like me, this person is seeking some happiness for his/her life."
- 2) "Just like me, this person is trying to avoid suffering in his/her life."
- 3) "Just like me, this person has known sadness, loneliness and despair."
- 4) "Just like me, this person is seeking to fulfill his/her needs."
- 5) "Just like me, this person is learning about life."

AND

Facing Our Fear Directly (Paul Ferrini) - To forgive is not to do, but to undo. To undo a judgment, say to yourself "The judgment I made is untrue. It was made in ignorance. It says more about me than it does about you. But it is not even true about me. This judgment is a reflection of my fear. I would rather face my fear directly than judge you or myself."

*

A Course In Miracles, Lesson 105 - Begin today by thinking of those brothers or sisters who have been denied by you the peace and joy that are their right under the equal laws of God. Here you denied them to yourself. And here you must return to claim them as your own. To give and to receive are one in truth.

Think of your "enemies" a little while, and tell each one, as they occur to you:

My brother or sister, peace and joy I offer you,

that I may have God's peace and joy as mine.

Thus you prepare yourself to recognize God's gifts to you, and let your mind be free of all that would prevent success today. Now are you ready to accept the gift of peace and joy that God has given you. Now are you ready to experience the joy and peace you have denied yourself. Now can you say, "God's peace and joy are mine," for you have given what you have received.

Let all bars to peace and joy be lifted up, and what is yours can come to you at last. So tell yourself, "God's peace and joy are mine," and close your eyes a while, and let His Voice assure you that the words you speak are true.

Remember hourly to say the words which call to Him to give you what He wills to give, and wills you to receive. Determine not to interfere today with what He wills. And if a brother or sister seems to tempt you to deny God's gift to him or her as you go through your day, see it as but another chance to let yourself receive the gifts of God's as yours. Then bless your brother or sister thankfully, and say:

My brother or sister, peace and joy I offer you,
that I may have God's peace and joy as mine.

AND

Jesus the Christ - Forgive us our trespasses AS WE FORGIVE THOSE who trespass against us.

*

St. Francis - God, my efforts to make myself happy have yielded much unhappiness. My anxiety about my tomorrows steals the pleasure of my todays. My anger toward my neighbor strangles my Heart. Please release me from my preoccupation with myself and my troubles and begin awakening me to Your indescribable Joy. Amen.

*