

# Inventory:

This format is based on the "searching and fearless moral inventory" Bill W. describes in the "first draft" of "Bill's Story" (which was written prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Big Book and the "Original Manuscript"... sometime during 1938). The portion of the "first draft" of "Bill's Story" that explains the inventory process is on page 3 of this document.

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

Note: Statements below in *italicized* quotes (" ") are from the "first draft" of "Bill's Story".

## KEYS TO WRITING INVENTORY

- *"Where have I failed - is the prime question."*
- *"Go over your life from the beginning and ascertain... where you failed as a completely moral (truthful, Real) person."*
- *"...use pencil and paper."*

## What to Inventory and how to do it:

Each of the following 12 inventories can be written in column or paragraph format, whichever you prefer.

*"Where, how and with whom had I ever been **dishonest**?" "...I was to ruthlessly tear out of the past all of my dishonesty and list them in writing."*

### **A. Dishonesty:**

1. I was (am) dishonest with: (including yourself)?
2. Why was (am) I dishonest? What was (am) I afraid of?
3. Which of the seven areas of self are affected, hurt, threatened, or interfered with because of this? (Write about the "seven areas of self" which we find in the Big Book on pages 64 & 65: self-esteem, pocket-book, ambitions, personal relations, emotional security, ambitions, and pride.)
4. Where was (am) I selfish, dishonest (by commission, omission, or self-delusion), self-seeking, and frightened in connection with this dishonesty?
5. Whom did I hurt and in what ways?

*"Examine... **sex conduct** since infancy and rigorously compare it with what I thought that conduct should have been."*

### **B. Sex Conduct**

Review your own conduct over the years past. When finished, subject each relation to this test -was it selfish or not? (See Big Book, pages 68-70.)

- List all persons you've had relations with, starting with your earliest memories.
- List the person's name, how you met, your motives for getting involved, how the relationship ended, or where it's at today.
- Then answer the following questions from the Big Book.
  1. Where had we been selfish?
  2. Where had we been dishonest?
  3. Where had we been inconsiderate?
  4. Whom had we hurt?
  5. Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy?
  6. Did we unjustifiably arouse suspicion?
  7. Did we unjustifiably arouse bitterness?
  8. Where were we at fault?
  9. What should we have done instead?

Get this all down on paper and look at it so you can consider an ideal for your future sex life and relationships. (Use your answers to question #9 as a basis for your "sex ideal".)

*"How far and in what connection had I strayed and was I straying..." in regards to **greed, selfishness, and thoughtlessness**? "...make a good long list... be honest and vigorous."*

### **C. Greed**

1. I am greedy in regards to:
2. Why? What's the fear that's perpetuating greed?
3. Other defects stemming from this greed:
4. Who did I hurt? (Whom am I hurting?)

### **D. Selfishness**

1. I am selfish in this area of my life / with this person(s):
2. Why? Is this selfishness (self-reliance) failing me? How so?
3. Other defects caused by this selfishness:
4. Who am I harming and how?

### **E. Thoughtlessness**

1. Who have I been thoughtless toward or in what situations or life-happenings? Who/what have I neglected?
2. Why?
3. Other defects:
4. Whom did I harm and how?

*"Had I been completely **loving** toward all...": "all my fellows including my family, my friends, and my enemies."*

**F. Unloving**

1. Who have I not been completely loving toward?
2. Why am I not able to show them love through my actions?
3. What are the defects?
4. Whom did I harm (am harming) and how?

*"Examine myself critically... and write down my conclusions" [in respect to **resentments, self-pity, fear, inferiority, pride, and egotism.**]*

**G. Resentment**

1. I am resentful at: (Name persons, institutions, and principles with whom you are resentful, angry, burnt-up, or sore at. See Big Book, pages 64-67.)
2. The cause: (What do I think they did to cause my resentment?)
3. Which of the seven areas of self are affected, hurt, threatened, or interfered with because of this? (Write about the "seven areas of self" which we find in the Big Book on pages 64 & 65: self-esteem, pocket-book, ambitions, personal relations, emotional security, ambitions, and pride.)
4. Where am I at fault? What did I do? Where am I selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, and afraid? Where am I to blame?

**H. Self-Pity**

1. I have (or have had) self-pity when:
2. Do I start the ball rolling? (Do I "play a part" in whatever I think causes my self-pity?) How? What do I do?
3. List other defects, including fear: Whom did I harm (am harming) and how?

**I. Fear**

1. List your fears:
2. Why do you have each fear? (Hint: List the underlying fear. i.e.: I'm afraid of heights because I'll fall. I'm afraid of falling because I'll hurt myself. I'm afraid of pain...)
3. Where / how has reliance on my own self-will failed me?
4. Perhaps there's a better way. What would God have me **be** (instead of afraid)?

**J. Inferiority**

1. What areas of my life do I feel inferior?
2. Which of the "seven areas of self" are hurt, threatened, or interfered with because of this inferiority?
3. Where was / am I selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened, inconsiderate, and thoughtless? List any other defects that contribute to feeling inferior (which is a "mind-made false sense of self").
4. Whom did I hurt and how?

**K. Pride**

1. Pride is dominant in the following areas of my life:
2. What "areas of self" does this pride affect?
3. Where was (am) I selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened, inconsiderate, and thoughtless? (Keep your main focus on "What am I really afraid of?")
4. Who do (did) I hurt by my pride and how?

**L. Egotism**

1. My ego is blocking me from God consciousness in the following areas of my life:
2. "Who" (what "state-of-being" do I think I am? What characters [mind-made actors] am I portraying? What "ego-masks" am I wearing? [i.e.: "The Husband", "The Employee", "Mr. AA", "Spiritual Mystic", etc.]
3. What is (are) the above "character(s)" ("states-of-being") afraid of? What other defects were caused by this fear(s)?
4. Whom am I hurting and how?

After writing is complete... *"Carefully go over your personal inventory and definitely arrive at the conclusion that you are now willing to be rid of all these defects; moreover... understand that this would not be accomplished by yourself alone, therefore... humbly ask God to take these handicaps away."*

The following is a portion of the “first draft” of “Bill’s Story”. It describes how Ebby T. explained to Bill W., in 1934, to write his “searching and fearless moral inventory” (what we now know to be Step 4 in our 12-Step Program of Recovery). The numbers to the left are the line-numbers of the original draft.

NOTE: Words were not in boldface font in the “original draft”. The editor has done that so the reader can easily pick out the twelve areas that Ebby told Bill to inventory.

995. ...I should  
996. next prepare myself for Gods Company by taking a thorough and ruth-  
997. less inventory of my moral defects and derelictions. This I should  
998. do without any reference to other people and their real or fancied  
999. part in my shortcomings should be rigorously excluded-" Where have I  
1000. failed" is the prime question. I was to go over my life from the  
1001. beginning and ascertain in the light of my own present understanding  
1002. where I had failed as a completely moral person. Above all things in  
1003. making this appraisal I must be entirely honest with myself. As an  
1004. aid to thoroughness and as something to look at when I got through  
1005. I might use pencil and paper. First take the question of honesty.  
1006. Where, how and with whom had I ever been **dishonest**? With respect to  
1007. anything. What attitudes and actions did I still have which were not  
1008. completely honest with God with myself or with the other fellow. I  
1009. was warned that no one can say that he is a completely honest  
1010. person. That would be superhuman and people aren't that way.  
1011. Nor should I be misled by the thought of how honest I am in  
1012. some particulars. I was too ruthlessly tear out of the past all  
1013. of my dishonesty and list them in writing. Next I was to explore  
1014. another area somewhat related to the first and commonly a very  
1015. defective one in most people. I was to examine my **sex conduct**  
1016. since infancy and rigorously compare it with what I thought that  
1017. conduct should have been. My friend explained to me that peoples  
1018. ideas throughout the world on what constitutes perfect sex conduct  
1019. vary greatly Consequently, I was not to measure my defects in this  
1020. particular by adopting any standard of easy virtue as a measuring  
1021. stick, I was merely to ask God to show me the difference between  
1022. right and wrong in this regard and ask for help and strength and  
1023. honesty in cataloguing my defects according to the true dictates  
1024. of my own conscience. Then I might take up the related questions  
1025. of **greed** and **selfishness** and **thoughtlessness**. How far and in what  
1026. connection had I strayed and was I straying in these particulars?  
1027. I was assured I could make a good long list if I got honest enough  
1028. and vigorous enough. Then there was the question of real **love** for  
1029. all of my fellows including my family, my friends and my enemies  
1030. Had I been completely loving toward all of these at all times  
1031. and places. If not, down in the book it must go and of course  
1032. everyone could put plenty down along that line.  
1033. my friend pointed out that **resentment**, **self-pity**, **fear**,  
1034. **inferiority**, **pride** and **egotism**, were attitudes which  
1035. distorted ones perspective and usefulness to entertain such  
1036. sentiments and attitudes was to shut oneself off from God and  
1037. people about us. Therefore it would be necessary for me to  
1038. examine myself critically in this respect and write down my  
1039. conclusions.