



AA 4th Step Worksheets

The fourth step is a very special step in the 12-step program. We have admitted our problem and handed our lives over to the God of our understanding and now we are told to make

a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

It is the first step where we actively begin to focus on changing what we are. This article looks at the fourth step inventory and presents some 4th step inventory worksheets.

The Inventory

The personal inventory we take during this step is comprehensive and must be done without holding anything back. **It is an honest look at ourselves and from this, we start to gain a new perspective** on who we were and what we need to work on. It allows us to explore all our character defects.

It is an inventory process that must be marked by rigorous honesty for it to be effective. We expose ourselves to ourselves with all our negative feelings and character flaws and we do that by fearless means. **This step aims to set us on the path to emotional sobriety.** The other alternative is being a so-called “dry drunk” which is someone who is sober but whose attitudes and actions remain those of their drinking past.

In the fifth step, **we will become willing to have God take all of this away** and we all ask for that in the sixth. In the eighth, we **made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.** When we finish the ninth, **we have made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**

This shows how deeply fundamental the fourth step is to the whole program of recovery.

Here is a brief 4th step guide **using the four charts contained in the worksheet.** Each of them contains a brief introduction, an example, and then details the idea behind each column.

Resentment



The Big Book says

Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease

Resentment creates the negative thoughts that are so dangerous for us. They fester like a sore and then erupt as anger, bitterness, or melancholy. **They are more likely than anything else to cause a relapse.**

What Resentment Do I Have?	Who Or What Do I Resent?	Why Do I Resent It?	What Effect Does The Resentment Have?
Authority	The management style where I work.	It is condescending and belittles me. It makes me fear I am inadequate.	It makes me rebellious and shirk work. It reduces my sense of self-worth.

What Resentment Do I Have?

Here we name a resentment. It does not have to be one word. It could be "Not having the final word."

Who Or What Do I Resent?

This can be anything. It can be a person an organization or a company. **Think deeply about this.** Some objects of resentments are surprising and very unpleasant to admit to like resenting our children for forcing too much responsibility on us.

Why Do I Resent It?

There are so many reasons we can resent things, and many will touch on the fears we deal with later.

What Effect Does The Resentment Have?

Resentments are expressed in attitudes and actions. Here we make the effect clear. Often an effect will trigger a memory of a harm that we can list. It is safe to say that **these four charts do not exist in isolation** but feed into each other.

Fears

The way fear affects us is described as follow:

This short word somehow touches about every aspect of our lives. It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it



What Do I Fear?	Why do I fear it?	What Effect Does It Have on Me?	How Does it Affect Others?
Being alone	Because it makes me feel as though I have no value	I become morose and demand attention.	They try to avoid me which reinforces the loneliness. They become resentful.

What do I fear?

As alcoholics, fear was a constant companion. Many an AA member began their path to addiction by drinking to dispel fear. Here we list each fear we have.

Why Do I fear it?

This column states the underlying cause or causes of the fear.

What Effect Does It Have on Me?

What does this fear do to us? How do we react to it? *How does it affect our daily living?*

How Does it affect others?

We are not the only ones affected by our responses to things. The way we respond to our fears affects others as well. Here we state how others react to the effect it has on us. In the example, the reaction to the way the recovering addict used to become depressed ensured that others steered clear of them.

Harms

We are told that

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.

This part of the fourth step inventory will be used in the 8th step which is

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

And in the 9th when we make

direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Dealing with these harms is vital to our spiritual growth. It is also vital to achieving ongoing sobriety.



What Harm Did I Do?	Who Did I Harm?	Why Did I Do This?	What Defect Made Me Do It?
Lied about my drinking	My family, My friends	I did this to "protect" myself.	Selfishness because I wanted to carry on drinking. Pride and not wanting to admit to a problem.

What Harm Did I Do?

This may be the hardest part of this step. Here we list memories of people we have hurt.

Who Did I Harm?

This can range even to what did we hurt if we injured an animal. Generally, though this refers to people and **some people will appear on this list many times** and often for different reasons.

Why Did I Do This?

Something spurs us to do harm. This is the immediate fight or flight response we are noting here. S

What Defect Made Me Do It?

This is the deeper level of "Why Did I Do This?" What triggered the negative feelings that caused us to harm another. **Each harm stem in some way from negative thoughts.**

Sexual Conduct

The Big Book tells us to evaluate our sexual activity in this way:

We subjected each relation to this test - was it selfish or not?

We tend to balk at this portion of the 4th step. **The sex conduct worksheet deals with matters that society considers too intimate to discuss.** The Big Book responds by establishing that

we treat sex as we would any other problem.

With Whom?	What Happened?	How Did We Hurt If We Did?	Who Was Hurt?	What Defect(s) Affected This?



I don't know her name.	One night stand after drinking. I bragged to my wife afterward.	By being vengeful	My sex partner and my wife.	Anger at my wife for commenting about my performance when I was drunk. Insecurity about being adequate
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With Whom?

Who else was involved in the encounter?

What Happened?

Obviously not all the sordid parts, but **an overview of how the event transpired.**

How Did We Hurt If We Did?

Not all sexual encounters were necessarily bad, but **if we did hurt someone, we need to state the harm we did.**

Who Was Hurt?

List the names of the people who were harmed. **This might include yourself more often than you realize.**

What Defect(s) Affected This?

W/we didn't harm people for no reason. So, **what underlying flaw prompted this action?**

Summing Up

Be warned right now that this step can take a long time. **Do not let that put you off.** This step can be hellish, but you need to focus on the words of the 9th step promises

We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

With each step, we take we need to recall that the step we are on is part of a program and a process. Because of this steps are related, and the fourth step is foundational to so many others. **It takes a great deal of courage to do this step.** That is because it involves a fact-facing process.

We will revisit this process daily for the rest of our lives when we are directed to continue taking a personal inventory. In this way, the 4th step inventory is like a training event that is harder than the final event. **Do not treat it as a sprint and miss things** and do not treat it as a marathon when which is so long that we balked at continuing.



The Big Book puts what we have achieved by completing this step very plainly when it says:

you have swallowed and digested some big chunks of truth about yourself.

At the end of the day though **we have already started to be honest with ourselves when back at step one** we admitted we were powerless over alcohol. That was the scariest step of all.

Welcome to the world of honesty.

Note: All quotes are from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.



The 4th Step Worksheets

Resentment

Authority

Responsibility

Lack of money

Humiliation (Real or imagined)

Work

Lack of promotion at work

Absence of alcohol

Death of parents.

Criticism

What Resentment Do I Have?	Who or What Do I Resent?	Why Do I Resent It?	What Effect Does the Resentment Have?



Harm

Assault Disrespected or disparaged. Lied

Abused Humiliated someone Stole

Cheated on a deal Broke Promises Insult

What Harm Did I Do?	Who Did I Harm?	Why Did I do This?	What Made Me Do It?

