

# My Fourth Step

(In the tradition of the Big Book of AA)

*“In dealing with resentments on paper, we set them on paper. We listed the people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry.”*

*“We asked ourselves, why we were angry?”*

*“On our grudge list we set opposite each name our injuries. Was it our self-esteem, our security, our ambitions, our personal or sex relations which had been interfered with?”*

*“Referring to our list again. Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, and frightened and inconsiderate?”*

There are various forms of doing a 4<sup>th</sup> step. It is always written down on paper. It seems to get clearer that way. There is the spread sheet format and the questions in a paragraph form. Let's start with the paragraph form.

## **“Who am I angry with?”**

We start by writing the name of the person, principle or institution we are angry with. Examples: “Tom,” (person) “my mother,”(person) “the church,” (institution) “marriage” (institution) “letting go” (principle) “honesty” (principle) “being faithful” (principle)

More often than not most sponsors have people start with their family members growing up, i.e. mother, father, step-fathers, brothers, sisters, cousins. Childhood friends, teachers, coaches, clergy can also be included. Anybody you have a grudge against. Be thorough but not anal. This is about major grudges. But being thorough means that we need to look deep enough to see if we aren't harboring any resentment we are not aware of.

We then deal with people in our present live--Our spouse, our children, friends, sponsor, group members.

## **Why am I angry?**

Answering this question involves writing out the situation and why you are angry. We are to pour our complaint, our frustration, the whole thing down. We don't filter, sift or make it presentable. It is embarrassing for us to admit how mad we

are. We used to stuff this resentment with our “drug.” So uncovering is often difficult. We also write it as though no one where ever going to read it.

**“How does did it affect my self-esteem, security, ambition, personal relations and sexual relations?”**

Believe it or not these words are right in the Big Book written over 50 years ago. It still applies today. Not every category could have been affected so it fine to skip it if it doesn’t fit. In the spreadsheet they are just usually checked off. But I think it is nice in the paragraph form to explain how it was affected.

**How I have been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened and inconsiderate? (What character flaw is at work) What part did I have in it?**

This part of the 4<sup>th</sup> step shifts our thinking, our mindset about how bad the world is treating me to what part did we play in it. More often than not we were part of the resentment and we are not focused on what we did wrong. The “moral inventory” is our resentments and our fears that we are holding on to. It also includes the character flaws that we discover in the 4 step process.

After we have done the 4<sup>th</sup> step, we walk away with an understanding what our major character flaws are. There is a list included at the end of this worksheet.

**Let us consider an example:**

**Who am I angry with?** *“my mother”*

**Why was I angry?** *“she was always so controlling. She called me names like “little brat” and “good for nothing.” She came between me and my brother which made things worse for me. etc.*

**“How does did it affect my self-esteem, security, ambition, personal relations and sexual relations?”** It struggle with self esteem because of this. I couldn’t do things for myself and I was afraid to try new things. [self-esteem] It made me very insecure. [security] It made me lack ambition in some ways and too ambitious in others. [ambition] [sexual relations]: wasn’t affected.

**How I have been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened and inconsiderate? (What character flaw is at work) What part did I have in it?**

Continuing from the above example: *“there is not a character flaw operating, but to let it go.”* Holding onto is would be the character flaw of stubbornness or “resentment” itself. In a lot of childhood situations we

weren't responsible because we were children. So our basic flaw is that we are still holding on to it or we really haven't grieved enough to let go of it yet.

Let us consider another example.

**Who am I angry with?** *"my husband."*

**Why was I angry?** *"he is controlling and abusive. He doesn't help me around the house. He just sits around and watches TV. He avoids me."*

**"How does it affect my self-esteem, security, ambition, personal relations and sexual relations?"**

[self-esteem]: I don't feel like he cares about me. I feel less than and unloved.

[security]: It made me very insecure.

[ambition]: It made me too ambitious in some ways, to work on our marriage to fix it. In others, it makes me want to give up.

[sexual relations]: It affects my wasn't affected.

**How I have been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened and inconsiderate? (What character flaw is at work) What part did I have in it?**

Continuing from the above example: *"there is not a character flaw operating, but to let it go."* Holding onto it would be the character flaw of stubbornness or "resentment" itself.

Example if we were older and did have a part in it: *"lying, selfish"*

Maybe we lied to the person so much it made them controlling.

Here is a list of possible character flaws to help you in creating your inventory.

### **List of Character traits**

False pride  
Vanity  
Arrogance

humility  
modesty  
acceptance

Perfectionism  
Conceit  
Egotism  
Grandiosity  
taking for granted  
self-centered

unselfishness  
fairness  
gratitude

Envy  
Jealousy  
Suspiciousness  
doubting others  
Dissatisfaction  
self-rejection  
Distrust

happiness  
goodwill  
kindness  
graciousness  
sincerity  
generosity  
trust

Dishonesty  
Rationalizing  
Minimizing  
Cheating  
Stealing  
Manipulating  
being phony  
people-pleasing

honesty  
genuine  
authenticity  
sincerity  
being real  
ruthfulness  
integrity

self-pity  
Frigidity  
Pessimism  
Despair  
over-sensitivity  
Acceptance  
self-hatred  
Helplessness  
lack of confidence  
Greed  
over-indulgence  
Intemperance  
Selfishness  
Gluttony  
Excessiveness  
self-centered

courage  
strength  
optimism  
Hope  
insensitivity  
  
faith  
self-reliance  
confidence  
generosity  
hospitality  
bigheartedness  
unselfishness  
kindness  
moderation  
Caring

Hostility

compassion

Vengefulness

peacefulness

Unforgiving

forgiving

Indignation

openness

Controlling

freeing

sexually abusive

respectful

Indecency

decency

Uncaring

considerate

self-gratifying

restraint

Infidelity

fidelity

Promiscuity

sincerity

Sloth

energy

Procrastination

vivacity

Avoidance

enterprise

Stalling

liveliness

putting off

spirit