

These Fourth Step worksheets use the wording from Alcoholics Anonymous (the Big Book) pages 63-71. Text in quotes is from the Big Book. When the word "optional" is used in the worksheets, it means that the Big Book suggests doing this but does not suggest writing anything down. However, many people who have used these worksheets found it helpful to write down their flaws and their specific defect of character.

Remember, these worksheets are meant to be helpful, not restrictive.

handouts provided by

**GAY & SOBER**

[www.gayandsober.org](http://www.gayandsober.org)

Gay & Sober Inc. is a 501c3 nonprofit.

These worksheets are not officially produced, approved, or endorsed by Alcoholics Anonymous. They have been circulating unofficially amongst 12 Step members for at least 35 years in various versions.

Their origin is unknown to the producer of this version.

## HELPFUL HINTS

**PREPARATION:** before you start this written Fourth Step, please read pages 63-71 in the Big Book and the Fourth Step in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. It will also help if your sponsor or mentor has taken you through and properly explained the first 3 steps.

1. This inventory is not an exercise in beating yourself up. Be scrupulously honest but be fair to yourself. Inventory your strengths as well as your weaknesses or defects.
2. The following checklist merely suggests what some people consider flaws. You must decide how they fit with your own moral code. Do not be limited by this list—add your other flaws and assets. It is in this Fourth Step that you begin to discover your values— what you consider right and wrong, functional and dysfunctional behavior—and how you live up to your personally defined standards.
3. This inventory is about who you are now, not who you were when you were drinking and taking drugs. Be careful, however, not to blame all past bad behavior on drinking and drugs if the root cause of that bad behavior still exists in you.
4. Don't be discouraged when your character defects are not immediately lifted after you have completed your 5th Step— that is the work of the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th Steps.
5. Prioritize! Spend most of your time on the 20% of your flaws that cause 80% of the trouble in your life. You can initially check off as many flaws as you want on the checklist but then prioritize to the 12 that cause the most trouble. If you list more than 12 flaws, you are probably beating yourself up! You must check at least twice as many assets as you check flaws or you really are beating yourself up.

**INTO ACTION:** On the following list, check all of your defects and all of your assets. This is an inventory of both bad and good characteristics. Then discuss your defects (with your best example of each) on the *Review of Flaws* form.

GLOSSARY OF WORDS USED IN STEPS 4 & 5

- Moral Inventory: A list of personality defects, violations of moral principles, defects in character, maladjustments, and dysfunctional behavior.
- Character: Moral vigor or firmness, especially as acquired through self-discipline.
- Defect: Lack of something necessary for completeness; flaw; weakness, fault; same as Shortcoming.
- Dishonest: The act or practice of telling a lie, or of cheating, deceiving, stealing, etc.
- Exact: Precise, detailed.
- Fault: Something done wrongly, an error or mistake.
- Fear: Painful emotion marked by alarm, dread, anxiety, agitation, uneasiness, apprehension, etc.
- Frightened: A temporary or continual state of Fear. Anxious.
- Inconsiderate: Without thought or consideration of others.
- Nature: The essential characteristic of a thing.
- Self-centered: Occupying or concerned only with one's own affairs (same as Selfish).
- Self-seeker: A person who seeks only or mainly to further his own interests.
- Selfish: Too much concerned with one's own welfare or interests and having little or no concern for others (same as self-centered).
- Shortcoming.....Falling short of what is expected or required (same as Defect).
- Wrong ..... Immoral, improper; not suitable or appropriate.

CHECKLIST OF FLAWS AND ASSETS:

Character Defect	Opposite Asset	Character Defect	Opposite Asset	Character Defect	Opposite Asset
aggressive, belligerent	good natured, gentle	forgetful	responsible	sarcastic	praising, tolerant
angry	forgiving, calm, generous	gluttonous, excessive	moderate	self-important	humble, modest
apathetic	interested, concerned, alert	gossiping	closed-mouthed, kind, praising	self-centered	caring of others
apprehensive, afraid	calm, courageous	greedy	moderate, generous, sharing	self-destructive, self-defeating	self-fulfilling
argumentative, quarrelsome	agreeable	hateful	forgiving, loving, concerned for others	self-hating	self-accepting, loving
arrogant, insolent	unassuming, humble	hypersensitive	tolerant, doesn't personalize	self-justifying	admitting wrongs, humble
attacking, critical	fair, self-restrained	ill-tempered, bitchy	good-tempered, calm	self-pitying	grateful, realistic, accepting
avoidant	faces problems, acts	impatient	patient	self-righteous	humble, understanding
blocking	honest, intuitive	impulsive, reckless	consistent, considered actions	self-seeking	selfless, concerned for others
boastful	modest, humble	indecisive, timid	firm, decisive	selfish	altruistic, concerned with others
careless	careful, painstaking, concerned	indifferent, apathetic, aloof	caring	shy	outgoing
cheating	honest	inflexible, stubborn	open-minded, flexible	slothful (lazy)	industrious, taking action
competitive (socially)	cooperative	insecure, anxious	self-confident, secure	spiteful, malicious	forgiving
compulsive	free	insincere, hypocritical	sincere, honest	stealing	honest
conceited, self-important	humble, modest	intolerant	tolerant, understanding, patient	stubborn	open-minded, willing
contradictory, oppositional	reasonable, agreeable	irresponsible, reckless	responsible	sullen	cheerful
contrary, intractable, pigheaded	reasonable	isolating	sociable, outgoing	superior, grandiose, pretentious	humble
controlling	lets go, esp of other's lives	jealous	trusting, generous, admiring	superstitious	realistic, no magical thinking
cowardly	brave	judgemental	broadminded, tolerant	suspicious	trusting
critical	non-judgemental, praising, tolerant	justifying (own actions)	honest, frank, candid	tense	calm, serene
cynical	open-minded	lack of purpose	purposeful	thinking negatively	being positive
deceitful	guileless, honest	lazy, indolent	industrious, conscientious	treacherous	trustworthy
defensive	open to criticism	loud	tasteful, quiet	undisciplined, self-indulgent	disciplined
defiant, contemptuous	respectful	lustful	healthy sexuality	unfair	fair
denying	honest, accepting	lying	honest	unfriendly, hostile, bitchy	friendly
dependent	accepts help but is self-reliant	manipulative	candid, honest, non-controlling	ungrateful	thankful, grateful
depressed, morose	hopeful, optimistic, cheerful	masked, closed	honest, open, candid	unkind, mean, malicious, spiteful	kind
dirty, poor hygiene	clean	nagging	supportive	unsupportive of others	supportive
dishonest	honest	narrow minded	open minded	untrustworthy, unreliable, dishonest	trustworthy
disloyal, treacherous	faithful, loyal	obscene, crude	modest, courteous	useless, destructive	helpful
disobedient	obedient	over emotional	emotionally stable	vain	modest, humble
disrespectful, insolent	respectful, reverent	perfectionistic	realistic goals	vindictive	forgiving
enabling	setting boundaries, tough love	pessimistic	realistic, hopeful, optimistic, trusting	violent	gentle
envying	empathetic, generous, admiring	possessive	generous	vulgar	polite
evasive, deceitful	candid, straightforward	prejudiced	open-minded	wasteful	thrifty
exaggerating	honest, realistic	procrastinates	disciplined, acts promptly	willful	accepting of the inevitable
faithless, disloyal	reliable faithful	projecting(negative)	clear sighted, optimistic	withdrawn	outgoing
falsely, modest	honest, has self-esteem	rationalizing	candid, honest	wordy, verbose	frank, to the point, succinct
falsely prideful	modest, humble	resentful, bitter, hateful	forgiving	Other dysfunctional ways of acting, feeling or thinking which cause others or me pain (specify in the following <i>Review of Flaws</i> )	
fantasizing, unrealistic	practical, realistic	resisting growing	willing to grow		
fearful	confidant, courageous	rude, discourteous	polite, courteous		

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION:**

"First, we search out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure."

**REVIEW OF FLAWS**

(optional)

	Flaw	Give an example of this specific flaw in your life.
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

(You may need to use more paper.) Remember, please don't beat yourself up.

STEP FOUR LIST OF RESENTMENTS:

Do not be restricted by this list. It is just to help you get started. List your resentments on the next pages.

- PEOPLE:
- Father
  - Mother
  - Boyfriends/ Lovers
  - Brothers
  - Sisters
  - Sponsors
  - Employers
  - Fellows in the Fellowship
  - Acquaintances
  - Aunts
  - Best Friends
  - Childhood Friends
  - Clergy
  - Co-Workers
  - Cousins
  - Creditors
  - Doctors
  - Employees
  - Former Friends
  - Girl Friends
  - Husbands
  - In-Laws
  - Judges
  - Lawyers
  - Life-Ling Friends
  - Parole Officers
  - Police
  - Probation Officers
  - School Friends
  - Teachers
  - Uncles
  - Wives

- INSTITUTIONS:
- Authority
  - The Bible/The Talmud/The Quran
  - Child Protection
  - The Church
  - The Correctional System
  - Divorce
  - The Economic System
  - The Educational System
  - Employment
  - The Federal Bureau of Investigation
  - The Food Industry
  - "Gay" Culture
  - Government
  - Government Welfare/Public Assistance
  - The Internal Revenue Service
  - The Insurance Industry
  - Law
  - The Institution of Marriage
  - Health/Mental Health System
  - The Media
  - Nationalism
  - Philosophy
  - Politics
  - Public Transit Entities
  - Races
  - Religion
  - Religious Holidays...  
(Christmas, Chanukah, etc)
  - Society
  - Social Media
  - "Straight" Culture
  - Treatment Centers

- PRINCIPLES:
- Abstinence
  - Adultery
  - Community
  - Death
  - The Devil
  - Fidelity
  - Forgiveness
  - God-Diety
  - The Golden Rule
  - Health & Wellness
  - Heaven
  - Hell
  - Honesty
  - Homophobia
  - Humility
  - Jesus Christ
  - Life After Death
  - Long-Term Sobriety
  - Love
  - Open Relationships
  - Original Sin
  - Perfection
  - Promiscuity
  - Relapse
  - Retribution
  - Santa Clause
  - Seven Deadly Sins
  - Sin
  - Sobriety
  - Suicide
  - The Ten Commandments
  - Transphobia

STEP FOUR RESENTMENTS CHECKLIST (THE FOURTH COLUMN):

“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?” - pg. 67, The Big Book

SELFISH

- Too concerned about me
- Not trying to be a friend
- Wanting to look good or be liked
- Concerned only with my needs
- Wanting what others have
- Wanting to control–dominance
- Thinking I'm better–grandiosity
- Wanting to be the best
- Thinking others are jealous
- Wanting others to be like me
- Being miserly, possessive
- Wanting more than my share
- Reacting from self loathing, self righteousness
- Wanting things my way
- Wanting special treatment
- Wanting others to meet my needs - dependence
- Not seeing others point of view, problems or needs

DISHONEST

- Having a superior attitude–thinking I'm better
- Not expressing feelings or ideas
- Not being clear about motives
- Lying, cheating, stealing
- Hiding reality–not facing facts
- Stubbornly holding on to inaccurate beliefs
- Blaming others for my problems
- Not admitting I've done the same thing
- Not seeing or admitting where I was at fault
- Breaking rules
- Lying to myself
- Exaggerating, minimalizing
- Setting myself up to be "wronged"
- Expecting others to be what they are not
- Being perfectionistic

SELF-SEEKING

- Manipulating others to do my will
- Putting others down internally or externally to build me up
- Engaging in character assassination
- Acting superior
- Acting to fill a void
- Engaging in gluttony or lusting at the expense of another person

- Ignoring others' needs
- Trying to control others
- Getting revenge when I don't get what I want
- Holding a resentment
- Acting to make me feel good

FRIGHTENED (OF)

- Peoples' opinions
- Rejection, abandonment
- Not being successful
- Loneliness
- Physical injury, abuse
- Heartbreak
- Not being able to control or change something
- Not being able to maintain sobriety
- My inferiority, inadequacy
- Sex
- Criticism
- Expressing ideas or feelings
- Being found out (fraudulent mentality)
- Getting trapped
- Exposure, embarrassment
- Death (your own or someone you care about, like a parent)
- Making financial reparations
- The holidays, like New Year's Eve or Pride Weekend
- Getting sick
- Being vulnerable/ being honest

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION**

Review of Resentments
-----------------------

Complete each column top to bottom before proceeding to the next column. Thus, for instance, fill in all the names of those you are resentful at before filling in the column for the cause of each resentment. List real resentments, not imaginary or theoretical resentments. Is the resentment a problem for you, does it cause you pain?

The Self part of Step 4:

- Column 1: In dealing with resentments we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry.
- Column 2: We asked ourselves why we were angry.
- Column 3: 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?
- Column 4: 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?
- Column 5: This Column is optional. List specific other defects to show your participation in the resentments.

Reading from left to right we now see the resentment (Col. 1), the cause (Col. 2), the part of self that had been affected (Col. 3), and the exact nature of the defect within us that allowed the resentment to surface and block us off from God's will (Cols 4 and 5).

Column 3		Column 4				Column 5				
Affects my		My own mistakes				Specific defects (optional)				
Self Esteem	Security	Ambitions	Personal Relationships	Sex Relations	Selfish	Dishonest	Self-Seeking	Frightened		

	Column 1	Column 2
	I'm resentful at:	The Cause:
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

You're definitely going to need more room than what we have provided above. So make some copies of this sample guideline. "Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty." pg. 65 "If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot." pg. 70

STEP FOUR FEAR LIST:

Do not be restricted by this list. It is just to help you get started. List your fears on the next pages.

Abandonment  
Aging  
Anger  
Authority Figures  
Being Alone  
Being Deceived  
Being Found Out  
Being Myself  
Change  
Compliments  
Confrontation  
Creditors  
Death  
My Denial  
Disapproval  
Disease  
Divorce  
Embarrassment  
Employment  
Facing Myself  
Failure  
Fear  
Feelings  
Financial Insecurity  
Flying  
Fourth & Fifth Steps  
The Future  
Getting Fat or Thin  
God  
Going out on a "whym"  
Having Children  
Homelessness

Homosexuality  
Honesty  
Humiliation  
Hurting Others  
"I'm a fraud and others will find out"  
Incarceration  
Intimacy  
The IRS  
Letting Go  
Living  
Loneliness  
Losing Hope  
Love  
Mediocrity  
Money  
Needing Anyone  
Not Being Good Enough  
Not Being Liked  
Not Being Perfect  
People (*which people?*)  
The Police  
Poverty  
Pride Weekend and  
other holidays *like* New Year's Eve  
Procrastination  
Rape  
Rejection  
Relationships  
My Resentments  
Responsibility  
Risks  
Saying that "I can't do Something."

Sex  
My Sponsor  
Success  
Unemployment  
The Unknown  
Violence  
Work

*Search your own experience  
for other fears and list them...*

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION**

Complete column 1 from top to bottom before proceeding to the next column. Ask yourself whether the fear is a problem in your life. Be realistic. Discuss significant fears, not theoretical or imaginary fears.

Column 1 We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them.

Column 2 We asked ourselves why we had them.

	Column 1	Column 2
	I'm fearful of:	Why do I have this fear?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

*You're probably going to need more room than what we have provided above. So make some copies of this sample guideline.*  
 "Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty." pg. 65 "If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot." pg. 70

STEP FOUR SEX CONDUCT CHECKLIST:

Try to not be intimidated or go into shame mode when doing this. The sexual part of this step is a critical part of the process.

Column 1 checklist

(We reviewed our sex conduct over the tears past. Whom had we hurt?)

- Him, her, family, friends, co-workers, fellows, etc.
- Me with guilt or shame
- Infecting him/her with a sexually transmitted disease.
- Involving him or her in legal proceedings
- Embarrassing him or her.
- Impregnating someone.
- How did I cause the hurt?

Column 2 checklist

(Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate?)

SELFISH

- Using him/her to meet my needs for sex, attention, approval, mothering, or fathering
- Not seeing him/her needs or problems
- Wanting to look good or be liked
- Taking out my emotions on him/her (anger, sadness, etc)
- Wanting to control him/her
- Wanting special treatment
- Wanting him/her to take care of me
- Wanting more than my share
- Not trying to be a friend

DISHONEST (to me or others)

- Leading someone on—saying I care for him/her more than I do because I want sex
- Not admitting my sexual orientation
- Thinking I'm better (grandiosity)
- Being perfectionistic
- Not being clear about my motive (wanting, fathering, mothering, approval, or sex)
- Wanting to vent my emotions on or control him or her.
- Cheating on him or her
- Lying about being on the apps

INCONSIDERATE

- To him, her, family, friends, co-workers, etc.
- Putting others or myself at risk of disease, legal involvement, and embarrassment
- How was I inconsiderate?

Column 3 checklist

(Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness?)

JEALOUSY:

- Of him, her, family, friends, co-workers, etc.
- How did I cause jealousy (tricking, flirting, also see *Suspicion*)?

SUSPICION:

- Of him, her, family, co-workers, etc.
- How did I cause suspicion (lying, flirting, tricking, coming home late, app activity, etc.)

BITTERNESS:

- About him, her, family, friends, co-workers, etc.
- About me (guilt, shame)
- How did I cause bitterness?

Column 4

(Where was I at fault?)

- Was I selfish, self-seeking, dishonest, or fearful, thoughtless, uncaring?

Column 5

(What should I have done instead?)

- Not used the person
- Respected him/her
- Tried to be a friend
- Been candid and open
- Cared about him/her
- Treated him/her as I would have wanted to be treated

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION**

Review of our own Sex Conduct

Complete each column top to bottom before proceeding to the next column.

- Column 1 We reviewed our sex conduct over the years past. Whom had we hurt?
- Column 2 Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate?
- Column 3 Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness?
- Column 4 Where were we at fault?
- Column 5 What should we have done instead?

		Col 2	Col 3					
Column 1	Selfish	Dishonest	Inconsiderate	Jealousy	Suspicion	Bitterness	Column 4	Column 5
Whom did I harm?							Where was I at fault?	What should I have done instead?
1								
2								
3								
4								
4								
5								

*You may need more room than what we have provided above. So make some copies of this sample guideline.*  
 "Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty." pg. 65 "If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot." pg. 70