Who I’m Angry At, and Why

Step Four, Columns 1 & 2 · every worked example in one place — plus a list a dad could have written

Column 1 is a name. Column 2 is why. That is the whole job. This packet is full of finished ones, so you can see what “done” looks like before you start yours.

> *“In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry. We asked ourselves why we were angry.”*
>
> — How It Works, p. 64

THE TWO COLUMNS, PLAIN

- **Column 1 is who.** A person. A place or a system — the Book calls these *institutions*. Or a belief — the Book calls these *principles*.
- **Column 2 is why.** What they did or what they said. One line each. Five reasons max for one name.
- **Number the names. Letter the reasons.** 1, 2, 3 and A, B, C. Columns 3 and 4 hang off these numbers later.
- **Old anger counts.** The Book says we *were* angry. Being a kid is on the list.
- **Nobody reads this** but you and your sponsor.

BEFORE YOU WRITE

1. Say the prayer below. Every time you sit down.
2. **Names first.** All of them. Don’t write why yet. If the name comes, it goes on.
3. **Then the reasons.** Short. Just enough to know why.
4. Both columns done? **Stop.** Bring the list to your sponsor. Don’t start Column 3.

“God please help me face and be rid of the things in myself which have been blocking me from You, other people and myself.”

THE BOOK’S OWN FOUR

How It Works · p. 65

COLUMN 1 — I’M RESENTFUL AT:	COLUMN 2 — THE CAUSE
1) Mr. Brown PERSON	A) His attention to my wife. B) Told my wife of my mistress. C) Brown may get my job at the office. IN ONE LINE *He’s after my wife and my job.*
2) Mrs. Jones PERSON	A) She’s a nut — she snubbed me. B) She committed her husband for drinking. He’s my friend. C) She’s a gossip. IN ONE LINE *She looks down on me for drinking with her husband, and told people.*
3) My Employer PERSON	A) Unreasonable — Unjust — Overbearing — Threatens to fire me for drinking and padding my expense account. IN ONE LINE *He controls me and doesn’t trust me.*
4) My Wife PERSON	A) Misunderstands and nags. Likes Brown. Wants house put in her name. IN ONE LINE *She doesn’t want to be with me anymore.*

The workbook writes Mr. Brown a second way, with A and B folded into one line: *“His attention to my wife. Told my wife about my mistress.”* Either way is fine. **Short is the rule, not the shape.**

Everything after this page is **ideas, not answers.** Your names will be your own. If the name comes, it goes on.

People, Then Places

Picking up where the Book's four left off. True to life, but nobody's file.

THE LIST, CONTINUED

first the people — then the institutions

COLUMN 1 — I'M RESENTFUL AT:	COLUMN 2 — THE CAUSE
5) Susie PERSON	A) She didn't respect that I loaned her money or care about paying me back. IN ONE LINE *She used me.*
6) My Father PERSON	A) He loves a woman who tormented me, and he talks down to me. IN ONE LINE *He picked her over me.*
7) My Sister PERSON	A) Pushes me around. Yells at me over the smallest things. B) Picks a fight when I'm in a good mood. C) Makes me feel like I'm still the loser brother. IN ONE LINE *She still sees the old me.*
8) My Mother PERSON	A) Never satisfied. Criticized me, compared me to my brother and sister, told me I was "too sensitive." B) Ignored what was happening in the house — Dad's drinking, the chaos — and acted like everything was fine. C) Guilt-trips me every time I set a boundary. "After everything I've done for you." IN ONE LINE *Nothing I do is ever enough, and I'm not allowed to feel what I feel.*
9) My Ex-Wife PERSON	A) Uses the kids against me. Tells them I'm the reason the family broke up. B) Took me to court for more child support when she knows I'm barely getting by. C) Won't let me have the kids on holidays unless I do it her way. IN ONE LINE *She wants to punish me and control everything, even after the divorce.*
10) My Sponsor PERSON	A) Told me I wasn't "working the Steps right" and dropped me after I missed a few calls. B) Shared something I told him in confidence. C) Always has time for his newer guys. I'm an afterthought. IN ONE LINE *He doesn't really care. I'm just a number to him.*
11) The Church INSTITUTION	A) Told me I was sinful and going to hell. B) Covered up abuse scandals. C) Controlled my family with guilt and fear. D) Took money my family couldn't afford. IN ONE LINE *They ran my family with fear.*
12) The Company INSTITUTION	A) Laid me off after 12 years with no warning. B) Promoted younger guys with less experience over me. C) Long hours expected, no thanks given. IN ONE LINE *Twelve years, and I was nothing to them.*

THE SMALL ONES COUNT TOO

same pen, same page

Big names aren't the whole list. The small, steady ones do damage too. **Who gets on your nerves every single day?**

- "The coworker who takes credit for my work in every meeting."
- "My neighbor — his dog barks all night, and I'm the bad guy for saying something."
- "The IRS — three letters, three different answers, and the penalty is still mine."
- "Drivers on the freeway. Every day. All of them."

Beliefs and Recovery Names

A principle is a belief you're angry at. No face needed. The belief itself goes in Column 1, in quotes. The names of early recovery go on too.

THE LIST, FINISHED

principles · recovery names

COLUMN 1 — I'M RESENTFUL AT:	COLUMN 2 — THE CAUSE
13) "God does not care about me" PRINCIPLE	A) If God cared, He wouldn't have let people abuse me. B) God ignores me and won't help. C) God doesn't protect me. IN ONE LINE *I'm alone in the world, and no one's there to help me.*
14) "I'll never be fulfilled if I'm not in a relationship" PRINCIPLE	A) They always leave me. It never works out. I can't stand to be alone. IN ONE LINE *Being alone means I will die.*
15) "I am unloveable" PRINCIPLE	A) Too many people have rejected me and failed me. I'm disposable and defective. IN ONE LINE *Everyone who mattered left.*
16) "I'll never be OK unless I have a lot of money" PRINCIPLE	A) It takes money to be happy. It takes money to have security, friends, and a good relationship. IN ONE LINE *Without money, I'm nothing.*
17) "Everyone on social media has a better life than me" PRINCIPLE	A) People I went to school with post promotions, vacations, happy families — and I'm in a sober house. B) My ex posted with someone new and everyone congratulated them. C) Old using friends post about having fun. They look fine without me. IN ONE LINE *I wasted my life, and everyone else figured it out except me.*
18) My Roommate in Sober Living PERSON	A) Eats my food and never pays me back. B) Leaves the place a mess and I get blamed at house meeting. C) Told the house manager I broke curfew. IN ONE LINE *I'm the one who gets blamed.*
19) My Probation Officer PERSON	A) Treats me like I'm still using no matter what I do. B) Tests me at the worst times and makes me miss work. C) One mistake and she can take my freedom. IN ONE LINE *She's waiting for me to fail.*
20) The Treatment Center INSTITUTION	A) Took my family's money and discharged me at 28 days, fixed or not. B) Staff talked down to us. C) Promised aftercare that never happened. IN ONE LINE *They wanted the money, not me.*
21) "I can't have fun sober" PRINCIPLE	A) Everything fun in my life had a drink or a drug in it. B) Sober people seem boring. C) The party moved on without me. IN ONE LINE *Sober means boring.*

NEW EXAMPLES · A DAD'S LIST

One Man's List

Mid-thirties. Married. Two kids. A drug addict. Made up — but every line here has been said out loud in a meeting. Yours will read different.

> *"We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty."*
>
> — How It Works, p. 65

THE PEOPLE AT HOME

usually the top of the list — and the hardest to write

COLUMN 1 — I'M RESENTFUL AT:	COLUMN 2 — THE CAUSE
22) My Wife PERSON	A) She checks my phone. B) She brings up my using in every fight. Even the ones about dishes. C) She tells her mom everything about us. D) She won't leave me alone with the kids. E) She said, "I'm the only adult in this house." IN ONE LINE *She treats me like a suspect in my own home.*
23) My Wife's Mother PERSON	A) Told my wife she could do better. More than once. B) Calls me "the junkie." My kids have heard it. C) Has a key to our house and walks in whenever she wants. D) Gave my wife money and told her not to tell me. IN ONE LINE *She wants me out of the picture.*
24) My Mother PERSON	A) Picked her boyfriends over us when I was a kid. B) Bailed me out, then brought it up every holiday. C) Told my sister I'll "never change." D) Missed my childhood, but wants to be Grandma of the Year now. IN ONE LINE *Nothing I do gets me back in.*
25) My Father PERSON	A) Left when I was seven. A card some years. Most years nothing. B) Showed up when my son was born like he'd been there all along. C) Drinks at my kids' birthdays and tells stories about "the old days." D) Has never once said he was sorry. IN ONE LINE *He skipped the hard part and still gets to be Grandpa.*
26) My Brother PERSON	A) He got the family's respect. I got the family's worry. B) Told the whole table at Thanksgiving that I stole from Grandma. C) Won't let his kids come to our house. D) Says "call me when you're serious," then doesn't pick up. IN ONE LINE *He's the good son, and he makes sure everybody knows it.*

Yes, your wife can go on the list. So can your mother. The list accuses no one — it just says where the heat is.

The Rest of the People, Then the Systems

Institutions have a name but no single face. They go on the list, same as a person.

THE REST OF THE PEOPLE

the street, the job, the kid

COLUMN 1 — I'M RESENTFUL AT:	COLUMN 2 — THE CAUSE
27) My Dealer PERSON	A) Fronted me when he knew I was trying to stop. B) Cut me off the day I was short, after years of buying. C) Still texts me "you good?" every few weeks. IN ONE LINE *He was my friend right up until I was worth nothing.*
28) My Old Running Buddy PERSON	A) Handed me the first one, back in high school. B) Came around high when my kids were home. C) Told my wife I was using again. D) Got clean before me and quit answering my calls. IN ONE LINE *He got me into it, then left me in it.*
29) My Boss PERSON	A) Fired me for one dirty test after six years. B) Drinks at lunch with the other managers. Nobody tests them. C) Told the new guy why I got let go. IN ONE LINE *One rule for me, another for them.*
30) My Oldest PERSON	A) Said "you're not even here" to my face. B) Takes his mom's side every time. C) Told his teacher about the night the cops came. IN ONE LINE *He already decided who I am.*

Yes, your own kid can go on the list. Writing it down is not the same as blaming him.

THE INSTITUTIONS

the ones that came for his family

COLUMN 1 — I'M RESENTFUL AT:	COLUMN 2 — THE CAUSE
31) CPS INSTITUTION	A) Opened a case on us over one phone call from the school. B) The caseworker looked around my kitchen like she smelled something. C) Made my wife cry in front of the kids. D) Closed the case and never said, "You're okay." IN ONE LINE *They came for my kids.*
32) The Courts INSTITUTION	A) The judge called me "a danger to your children" with my wife in the room. B) Made me pay for classes I couldn't afford, then fined me for paying late. C) The guy with a lawyer walked. I didn't have one. IN ONE LINE *Justice is for people who can pay for it.*
33) The ER INSTITUTION	A) Treated me like a junkie when I came in with a broken hand. B) Six hours in the waiting room. The drunk guy got a bed. C) Wrote "drug seeking" in my chart. It follows me to every doctor. IN ONE LINE *They decided what I was before they looked at me.*

Systems, Then Beliefs

A principle is a belief you're angry at. It goes in Column 1 in quotes — because he'd never say it out loud.

THE INSTITUTIONS, CONTINUED

the ones that came for his body and his money

COLUMN 1 — I'M RESENTFUL AT:	COLUMN 2 — THE CAUSE
34) The Pain Clinic INSTITUTION	A) Kept me on pills for two years, no questions asked. B) Cut me off cold the day the rules changed. C) Never picked up the phone when I got sick. IN ONE LINE *They made me this, then walked away.*
35) The Bank INSTITUTION	A) Charged me thirty-five dollars every time I was short. B) Calls my wife's phone about my debt. C) Took the truck out of the driveway in front of the neighbors. IN ONE LINE *I can't get ahead, and everybody can see it.*
36) The Meeting INSTITUTION	A) The old-timer said pills "aren't a real addiction." B) They hug you at the door and talk about you in the parking lot. C) "Keep coming back" — and nobody took my number. IN ONE LINE *Even the people who are supposed to get it don't.*

THE BELIEFS

#37 – #40

COLUMN 1 — I'M RESENTFUL AT:	COLUMN 2 — THE CAUSE
37) "Once a junkie, always a junkie" PRINCIPLE	A) It's what my brother thinks. It's what the court thinks. B) Every slip proves it. C) Some days I think it too. IN ONE LINE *I'll never get out from under this.*
38) "A real man handles it himself" PRINCIPLE	A) My dad never asked anybody for anything. B) Asking for help means I'm weak. C) Sitting in a meeting is admitting I can't run my own life. IN ONE LINE *If I need help, I'm not a man.*
39) "It's too late with my kids" PRINCIPLE	A) They saw too much. B) My oldest already hates me. C) You don't get the early years back. IN ONE LINE *I missed it, and it's gone.*
40) "My family would be better off without me" PRINCIPLE	A) All I do is cost them. B) My wife could find a normal guy. C) The kids could stop being embarrassed. IN ONE LINE *I'm the problem in this house.* **If this one is on your list, tell your sponsor today — not at the next meeting.**

The Beliefs That Run the Day

These are the ones a man carries to work and back without ever saying them. On the list, they lose some of their weight.

THE BELIEFS, CONTINUED

#41 – #43

COLUMN 1 — I'M RESENTFUL AT:	COLUMN 2 — THE CAUSE
41) "I'm only good for a paycheck" PRINCIPLE	A) Nobody asks how I'm doing. They ask if I got paid. B) When the money stopped, so did the respect. C) My wife's face when I say I'm not working this week. IN ONE LINE *I'm a wallet, not a person.*
42) "Nobody will ever trust me again" PRINCIPLE	A) My wife counts the pills in the cabinet. B) My mom hides her purse when I visit. C) My brother pats his pockets when I hug him. IN ONE LINE *I'll be paying for this forever.*
43) "God let my friend die and let me live" PRINCIPLE	A) Same stuff, same night. He died. I woke up. B) He had a little girl too. C) I prayed to stop for years and nothing happened. IN ONE LINE *If God is there, He isn't there for me.*

WHAT TO NOTICE

- **All three kinds are on it** — people, institutions, beliefs — in the order they came. Don't sort. Don't rank. Just catch them.
- **His wife and his kid are on it.** So are his dealer and the guy he used with. Nobody is off-limits. The list accuses no one.
- **Column 2 is a camera.** "She checks my phone" is a fact. "She treats me like a suspect" is the feeling — it sits underneath, in one line.
- **Old and new sit together.** Age seven (#25) sits on the same list as last week (#36). Both count.
- **#40 is on the list.** That is exactly where it belongs — on paper, in front of your sponsor, today.

TWO QUESTIONS MEN ASK

"CAN I PUT MY KIDS ON IT?"

Yes. If it burns, it goes on. Writing it down is not the same as blaming them. See #30.

"CAN I PUT GOD ON IT? OR MYSELF?"

Mad at God — write the belief, in quotes, like #13 or #43. Mad at yourself — write it down and keep going. Your sponsor will show you where it goes.

"WHAT IF IT WAS REALLY MY FAULT?"

Maybe. That is Column 4's question, weeks from now. Today is names and reasons only.

NOW YOURS

Where a Dad Finds His Names

Keeping Column 2 honest, and finding the names when the pen stalls.

A GOOD COLUMN 2, AND A WEAK ONE

be a camera, not a judge

GOOD — WHAT HE DID OR SAID

- "He gave me a dirty look in the hallway."
- "He told the boss I messed up the job."
- "He laughed when I got chewed out."

WEAK — WHAT I THINK IT MEANS

- ✗ "He doesn't like me."
- ✗ "He's got it in for me."
- ✗ "He thinks I'm stupid."

See it? The weak one isn't what happened. It's what you decided it means. **Write what they did or said.** The "in one line" note under each example is the feeling — keep it if it helps, but the lettered lines are the facts.

MEMORY JOGGERS

BY TIME

- being a kid
- school, the first jobs
- before the kids
- when the first one was born
- the using years
- the day it all came out
- rehab, jail, or the hospital
- since you got clean
- this week

BY PLACE

- the kitchen table at 6 p.m.
- the school pickup line
- the pharmacy counter
- the courtroom hallway
- the group chat
- the garage, the truck
- the meeting parking lot
- your mother's house
- work

BY TELL

- whose text do you leave on read?
- who do you brace for when the door opens?
- whose name makes you go quiet at dinner?
- what fight do you replay on the drive home?
- who got what you were supposed to get?
- who do you avoid at meetings?
- what "just true" thing has heat in it?

COMMON STALLS

and what to do with them

- ✗ **"I'm not angry anymore."** Did it ever burn? It goes on. The list covers your whole life, not just this week.
- ✗ **"I feel rotten writing down my wife. Or my mom."** The list accuses no one. It's a stock count, not a courtroom. Nobody reads it but you and your sponsor.
- ✗ **"They're dead." / "I'll never see them again."** List them. Paper doesn't need them in the room.
- ✗ **"I keep wanting to explain what I did too."** Park it. That's two meetings from now. Right now, only who and why.
- ✗ **"I can't stop adding."** You'll know when it's done. Bring what you have. We don't wait for perfect.

"God please help me face and be rid of the things in myself which have been blocking me from You, other people and myself."

say this each time before you sit down to write

Names first. Reasons second. **Both columns done? Stop.** Don't start Column 3 — bring the list to your sponsor.