# Column One and Two — Step Four Instructions

> *"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves"*

## A) Prayer

Stop the Set Aside Prayer (see below). Use Third Step Prayer morning and night. Ask for help with inventory and truth in the morning, night, and before writing with a prayer like this one taken from the Big Book *(ref. p.64-top ¶-l4)*:

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

**Printed sheet:** ▤ Prayers for the Fourth Step — all the Step Four prayers on one page, in order.

## Why Resentment Matters

> *"Resentment is the 'number one' offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically."* (◆ BB p.64-¶4)

This passage sets the stakes for the entire inventory. The resentment inventory is not busywork — it is the primary diagnostic tool for a spiritual disease that is fatal if untreated. See the Bridge Passage for a deeper treatment of why this matters and how the Big Book motivates the shift from Column 3 to Column 4.

## B) Column One — Make a List

*(p.64-¶3-l7 "We listed people, institutions and principles with whom we were angry")*

Pray and write down every name that comes to you that needs to be on the list. Don't worry about why you were angry till the next column. Don't go on till the list is finished. You will know when the list is done.

### People, Institutions, and Principles

The Big Book says to list all three. Most resentments are against people, but don't overlook:

- **Institutions** — the church, the government, a company, AA itself, the legal system, the school system, the military. Write the institution's name in Column 1. In Column 2, list what the institution did (policies, actions, culture, decisions). Columns 3 and 4 work the same way — the seven areas of self still apply. The Realization is modified: you don't pray for the institution as a "sick person," but you still ask "Where have I done the same things?" See Example #13 — The Church and Example #14 — The Company.
- **Principles** — beliefs, rules, ideas, expectations (e.g., "God does not care about me," "I'm unloveable," "I can't be OK without money"). These are not resentments against a person or institution but against a belief or condition. The Realization does not apply. See examples #9–#12.

## C) Column Two — List the Resentments

Make another list like the example below. Next to each name we list every resentment we have towards each name in the first list.

*(ref. p.64-¶3-l9 "We asked ourselves why we were angry")*

Number each name and letter each resentment. Be as specific and brief as possible. It's only necessary to write enough so you know why you were angry. In this list you can consider if some resentments should be consolidated. Also consider if some aren't really resentments — mark them to come back to later.

# Example

*(ref. p.65 Big Book example)*

| Column 1 | Column 2 |
|---|---|
| **1) Mr. Brown** | A) His attention to my wife. |
| | B) Told my wife of my mistress. |
| | C) Brown may get my job at the office. |
| **2) Mrs. Jones** | A) She’s a nut — she snubbed me. |
| | B) She committed my friend, her husband, for drinking. |
| | C) She’s a gossip. |
| **3) My Employer** | A) Unreasonable — Unjust — Overbearing — Threatens to fire me for drinking and padding my expense account. |
| **4) My Wife** | A) Misunderstands and nags. Likes Brown. Wants house put in her name. |

**Print-ready examples:** ▤ Columns 1 & 2: 43 examples — these four plus #5–#43 (people, institutions, principles; a modern “dad’s list” from #22), one line each, a gloss under each. Hand it to a sponsee who cannot picture what “done” looks like.

From the Big Book Awakening Step Four guide at bigbook.it/step-4/ · a page of the guide, not the workbook itself: the workbook's own pages are linked from “Originals & sources.” · source 01-columns-1-and-2.md