Fear Example: Sharing In Meetings

Areas: Self-Esteem, Pride, Personal Relations, Security

References: Common Fears | Fear Inventory – Drill-Down | Fear Inventory – 4-Column | 4-Column Expanded

This fear is not about public speaking. It is about being known. The podium at a Toastmasters meeting is terrifying for different reasons than the chair at an AA meeting. At Toastmasters, you fear sounding foolish. At a recovery meeting, you fear being *seen*. The stakes are not competence – they are identity. If I share honestly, you will know who I really am. And who I really am might not be welcome here.

The NA Basic Text captures it: "We feared that if we ever revealed ourselves as we were, we would surely be rejected." (NA, Step Five). The fear of sharing in meetings is this sentence lived out, one silent meeting at a time.

The 4-column fear inventory already names a version of this fear as "Public Speaking" – *"I stay quiet, I don't talk or share at meetings."* But the deeper issue is not the speaking. It is the sharing. It is the vulnerability required to say something true in front of people who might judge it.

Drill-Down: Why Do I Have This Fear?

(a) I Fear...	(b) Why?	(c) Why?	(d) Why?	(e) Why?	(f) Why?
sharing in meetings	being judged	not good enough	unwanted	alone	emotional pain
sharing in meetings	being seen	exposed	rejected	~~alone~~	
sharing in meetings	saying something stupid	humiliated	~~not good enough~~		
sharing in meetings	being vulnerable	losing control	weak	~~not good enough~~	
sharing in meetings	not fitting in	different from everyone	~~unwanted~~		

> *sharing in meetings → judged/seen/vulnerable → not good enough → unwanted → alone → emotional pain → using → dying → unknown → no God → self-reliance fails me*

The trail: I fear sharing in meetings because I fear being judged. If I'm judged, I'll be exposed as not good enough. If I'm not good enough, I'll be unwanted. If I'm unwanted, I'll be alone. If I'm alone, I'll be in emotional pain. If I sit in pain long enough, I'll use. If I use, I'll die.

The convergence: every path through the drill-down passes through "not good enough" and "alone." The fear of sharing is, at bottom, the fear that who I really am is not enough – and that the people in the room will confirm it.

4-Column Brief

1. Fear of: Sharing honestly at recovery meetings. Not the act of speaking, but the act of being known. The fear that if I say what is actually happening – what I really think, what I really did, what I really feel – the room will reject me.

2. Why: Pride, insecurity, self-centeredness, dishonesty, perfectionism, people-pleasing, fear of judgment. I have made other people's opinions the measure of my worth. I believe I must appear together, spiritual, and recovered. Anything less risks exposure.

3. Self-Reliance: I stay quiet. I share "safe" things – gratitude, program slogans, things I know will get nods. I judge other people's shares to feel better about my own silence. I arrive late and leave early. I sit in the back. I say "I'm fine" when I'm not. I avoid meetings where I might be called on.

4. Better Way: "We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world." (◆ BB p.73-74). God would have me trust that the meeting is a safe place – not because the people are perfect, but because He is present. My job is to share honestly. The result is His.

4-Column Medium

1. The Fear

Sharing honestly in recovery meetings. Not reading from the book. Not quoting slogans. Not telling the version of the story that makes me sound strong and recovered. *Sharing honestly.* Saying: "I'm struggling." Saying: "I don't know if I believe in God today." Saying: "I thought about using." Saying: "I resent my sponsor." Saying: "I'm afraid."

The fear is not that I will speak poorly. The fear is that I will speak *truly* – and that the truth will cost me the only community I have left. Recovery meetings are, for many of us, the last place we belong. If the people in those rooms reject us, where do we go?

The 4-column fear inventory names this as "Public Speaking" and identifies the core self-reliance behavior: *"I stay quiet, I don't talk or share at meetings."* But staying quiet is only the visible part. Underneath, the fear generates an entire system of performance, avoidance, and judgment – all designed to protect the false self from exposure.

2. Why: Character Defects

Character defects at work: Pride, insecurity, self-centeredness, dishonesty, perfectionism, people-pleasing, fear of judgment, vanity, self-condemnation, comparison, isolation, intellectualization.

SDSF breakdown:

- **Selfish:** I make meetings about me. Instead of listening to help others, I sit in the audience evaluating my own performance. When someone else shares, I compare: "Was mine better? Was theirs more honest? Do people like them more?" The meeting becomes a mirror, not a fellowship. I am so consumed with how I appear that I cannot be present for anyone else.
- **Dishonest:** I share a curated version of my recovery. I tell the story that gets the laugh, the nod, the "keep coming back." I edit out the parts that are messy, embarrassing, or unresolved. I present a person who has it more together than I do. And then I resent the meeting for not knowing the real me – even though I never showed them.
- **Self-seeking:** I seek approval from the room the way I once sought approval from everyone else – by performing. A "good share" becomes my hit. When people come up to me afterward and say "that was great," I feel a rush. When they don't, I spiral. I have turned the meeting into another stage and the members into another audience.
- **Fearful:** Underneath it all, I am terrified that my honest experience is not enough. That my real thoughts are too dark, too confused, too unspiritual. That if I stop performing and start sharing, the room will go quiet and I will be alone again. The fear of sharing is, at bottom, the fear of being known and found wanting.

Areas of self affected:

- **Self-esteem:** "I should have something wise to say." I believe my worth in the room depends on the quality of my share. If I say something clumsy, confused, or emotional, I am diminished. My identity in recovery is tied to how I appear when I speak.
- **Pride:** "Others should see me as someone who has it together." I want the room to see a recovering person who is strong, insightful, and spiritual. I want newcomers to look at me and think "I want what they have." The gap between how I want to be seen and how I fear I really am generates the silence.

- **Personal relations:** "People in the rooms will accept me only if I share the right things." I have made the meeting a conditional relationship: you will love me if I perform well. You will reject me if I am honest. This turns fellowship into an audience and connection into a transaction.
- **Security:** "I need the meeting to feel safe, and sharing honestly feels dangerous." Meetings are my lifeline. If I share honestly and feel judged, I might stop coming. And if I stop coming, I might use. The fear of sharing threatens the very place I need to be.

3. Self-Reliance: The Self-Fulfilling Cycle

The cycle:

1. I fear being judged if I share honestly.
2. So I stay quiet, or I share something safe and rehearsed.
3. No one really knows me. I feel isolated in a room full of people.
4. The isolation confirms my belief: "I don't belong here."
5. I attend less frequently. Or I attend but check out.
6. My recovery weakens. The problems I was afraid to share about get worse.
7. Now I have even more to hide. The fear of sharing increases.
8. I isolate further. Eventually I stop going. Or I go but I'm a ghost.
9. The thing that could save me – honest sharing in a room full of people who understand – is the thing I won't do.

The cruelty: the fear of sharing creates the very isolation it is afraid of. I refuse to be known because I fear rejection. But by refusing to be known, I reject *myself* from the fellowship before anyone else has the chance. The Big Book saw this: "It set in motion trains of circumstances which brought us misfortune we felt we didn't deserve. But did not we, ourselves, set the ball rolling?" (◆ BB p.67)

Behavioral patterns:

- Staying silent at meetings, never raising my hand, avoiding eye contact with the chair
- Sharing only "safe" material: gratitude, program slogans, things I know the room will approve of
- Rehearsing what I'm going to say instead of listening to what others are saying

- Judging other people's shares – "that was a bad share," "they talked too long" – to feel better about my own silence
- Arriving late or leaving early to avoid the "how are you?" conversations before and after
- Sitting in the back, near the door, ready to escape
- Saying "I'm good" or "I'm grateful to be here" when I'm neither
- Going to meetings where I don't know anyone so the stakes feel lower
- Avoiding meetings where I might be called on unexpectedly
- Intellectualizing instead of feeling – talking about the steps abstractly rather than sharing what's actually happening
- Volunteering for service positions (making coffee, setting up chairs) to avoid having to sit and share
- Comparing my insides to other people's shares: "They're so honest. I could never be that open."

4. Better Way

> *"We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world." (◆ BB p.73-74)*

> *"We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past." (◆ BB p.75)*

> *"We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace." (◆ BB p.83)*

> *"We feared that if we ever revealed ourselves as we were, we would surely be rejected. Most addicts are uncomfortable about this" (NA, Step Five) – and the meeting room is where we begin to learn that the fear is a lie.*

The meeting room is not a stage. It is a hospital. Everyone in it is sick. Everyone in it is scared. The person who just shared something that sounded brave and honest? They were terrified. The old-timer who seems to have it all together? They came in shaking. The

newcomer in the back who won't make eye contact? That was all of us once. That is all of us still, in the moments we forget.

Prayer: God, remove my fear of sharing honestly in meetings. I have turned the fellowship into a performance and the members into an audience. I have hidden behind safe words and curated stories because I am afraid that my real experience is not acceptable. Teach me that the meeting is not a place to look good – it is a place to get well. Give me the courage to say what is true, even when my voice shakes. Remind me that the person who most needs to hear my honest share might be sitting in the back, as afraid as I am, waiting for someone to go first.

Cross-references: The fear of sharing in meetings connects directly to the fear of not being good enough (the belief that who I am is insufficient), being alone (the fear that honesty will cost me my place), being weak (the belief that vulnerability is weakness), and not being valued (the fear that my experience doesn't matter). In the 4-column fear inventory, it appears as Public Speaking – but the deeper issue is not speaking. It is being known.

4-Column Expanded

Why – Expanded

Character defects with manifestations:

- **Pride:** I want to be seen as a "good" recovering person. I want the room to admire me, to quote me, to seek me out. I would rather be impressive than honest. I would rather say something clever than something true. When I do share, I am performing – selecting the story, calibrating the emotion, watching for the reaction. The share is for the audience, not for my recovery.
- **Insecurity:** I don't believe my experience is worth hearing. I think other people have "real" problems and mine are petty. Or I think my problems are so dark that they would shock the room. Either way, the conclusion is the same: what I have to say doesn't belong here. I am not enough for this room.

- **Perfectionism:** I wait until I have the perfect thing to say. I rehearse in my head. I edit, revise, polish. By the time I've composed the perfect share, the meeting is over. Or I speak and it comes out differently than I planned, and I spend the drive home replaying it, cringing, rewriting it in my head.
- **Self-centeredness:** I am so focused on myself – how I appear, how I sound, whether people are impressed or bored – that I cannot actually participate in the meeting. I don't hear other people's shares because I'm rehearsing mine. I don't connect because I'm performing. The meeting is a fellowship, but I've turned it into a one-man show with me as the anxious lead actor.
- **Dishonesty:** The curated share is a lie. Not a malicious lie, but a lie of omission. I leave out the parts that scare me. I smooth the edges. I present the version of my recovery that I wish were true, and I hide the version that is. And then I wonder why I feel alone in a room full of people – I showed them someone who doesn't exist.
- **People-pleasing:** I share what I think the room wants to hear. If the meeting has a grateful tone, I share something grateful. If the tone is heavy, I match it. I am a chameleon, shaping my words to the crowd. I am so afraid of disappointing the room that I disappear into it.
- **Fear of judgment:** The master defect here. Every other defect on this list serves this one. The pride, the perfectionism, the dishonesty, the people-pleasing – all of it is armor against the one thing I cannot tolerate: being judged. Being looked at by the room and found lacking. Having my truth heard and met with silence.
- **Intellectualization:** I talk about recovery abstractly instead of personally. I quote the Big Book instead of sharing my experience. I analyze the steps instead of working them out loud. The intellect becomes a shield – as long as I stay in my head, I don't have to be in my heart.
- **Comparison:** I compare my shares to everyone else's. That person was more honest. That person was more articulate. That person had a better story. I measure my insides against their outsides and always come up short. And so I stay quiet, because my version of sharing can never measure up to the standard I've constructed from everyone else's best moments.
- **Self-condemnation:** After I do share, I punish myself. "That was stupid." "You talked too long." "Nobody cared." "You made it about you." The inner critic is merciless. And its

verdict is always the same: you shouldn't have shared. Which means: you shouldn't be known. Which means: you should be quiet. Which means: you should be alone.

- **Isolation:** The final defect. When the fear wins, I isolate. Not from meetings necessarily – I might still attend. But I isolate within the meeting. I build a glass wall between myself and the room. I am there but not present. I am sitting in the circle but outside of it. The most dangerous kind of isolation is the kind that happens in public.

Cognitive distortions:

- **Mind-reading:** "Everyone in this room is judging me." "They can tell I'm a fraud." "They think my problems are pathetic." I project my own self-judgment onto the room and then react to my own projections as though they are fact. I have no evidence that anyone is judging me. But I believe it absolutely.
- **Catastrophising:** "If I share this, everyone will know. They'll talk about me after the meeting. I'll lose my reputation. I'll never be able to come back here." One honest share becomes a permanent, irreversible disaster. The magnitude of the imagined consequence is absurdly disproportionate to the reality.
- **Filtering:** I remember every share that went badly and forget every share that went well. I remember the time someone looked at their phone while I was talking. I forget the time someone came up afterward and said, "Thank you – I needed to hear that." The filter selects for evidence of failure and discards evidence of connection.
- **Splitting:** "Either my share is perfect or it's terrible. Either I say exactly the right thing or I say nothing at all." No middle ground. No room for an imperfect, honest, stumbling attempt at connection. The all-or-nothing thinking guarantees nothing.
- **Personalisation:** "The room went quiet after I shared – it must have been bad." "The chairperson moved on quickly – they didn't like what I said." I interpret neutral events as personal rejection. The silence might have been contemplation. The chairperson might have been watching the clock. But I make it about me.
- **Labelling:** "I'm not a good sharer." I turn a behavior into an identity. Instead of "I had a hard time sharing today," it becomes "I am someone who can't share." The label becomes permanent and self-fulfilling.

Areas of self – detailed:

- **Self-esteem:** "My experience is not worth hearing." This is the core belief. I do not believe that who I am – unedited, unpolished, unperformed – is worth the room's time. My value in the meeting depends on the quality of my output. If I produce a good share, I have value. If I don't, I'm taking up space that someone more articulate, more honest, more recovered deserves. I have turned the meeting into a meritocracy of vulnerability – and I've already decided I don't merit.
- **Pride:** "Others should see me as someone who has it together." I have constructed a recovery image – the person who works the steps, who sponsors others, who shows up with wisdom and grace. Sharing honestly threatens that image. What if they see that I'm still afraid? What if they see that I still don't understand? What if the image collapses and they see the frightened person behind it? Pride demands that I protect the image. Honesty demands that I let it go.
- **Personal relations:** "The fellowship will accept me only if I share the right things." I have made the meeting a conditional relationship. I will be loved if I perform. I will be rejected if I am real. This is the same pattern that destroyed my relationships outside the rooms – presenting a false self to earn acceptance, then resenting the acceptance because it was given to someone who doesn't exist. The meeting becomes another place where I am known by everyone and known by no one.
- **Security:** "If I share honestly and feel judged, I might stop coming. And if I stop coming, I might use." This is the deepest fear. The meeting is my lifeline. If honesty costs me the meeting, honesty costs me my recovery. So I stay dishonest to stay safe. But the safety is an illusion – dishonest recovery is no recovery at all. Silence in meetings is a slow form of relapse.

Psychology:

Brene Brown's research on vulnerability provides the clearest framework for understanding this fear. Brown defines vulnerability as "uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure" and identifies it as the birthplace of belonging, creativity, and connection. Her key finding: the people who have the strongest sense of belonging are those who are willing to be vulnerable. They do not wait until they feel safe to share honestly – they share honestly and *create* the safety. Brown calls this "daring greatly." The person who stays silent in meetings, waiting to feel safe enough to share, has the equation backwards. Safety does not produce vulnerability. Vulnerability produces safety.

Irvin Yalom's research on group therapy identifies "universality" as one of the most powerful therapeutic factors in group settings. Universality is the experience of discovering that your thoughts and feelings are not unique – that others share them. Yalom found that this discovery is profoundly healing, particularly for people who carry shame. But universality can only happen when someone goes first. When someone shares honestly, they give the room permission to recognize themselves. The person who is afraid to share is also the person who most needs to hear someone else share the same fear. And that someone else is sitting in the room, equally afraid, waiting for the same permission.

James Pennebaker's research on expressive disclosure demonstrates that putting painful experiences into words – writing them, speaking them – produces measurable improvements in physical health, immune function, and psychological well-being. Pennebaker's studies show that the benefit comes not from catharsis (emotional release) but from *cognitive processing* – the act of organizing chaotic internal experience into a coherent narrative. Sharing at a meeting is a form of expressive disclosure. The act of speaking your experience aloud, in front of witnesses, transforms it from a private shame into a shared story. The story changes. You change with it.

Social identity theory explains why the fear of sharing in meetings feels existential rather than merely uncomfortable. For many people in recovery, the fellowship is their primary social group – sometimes their only one. The meeting room is where they belong. Sharing honestly risks social exclusion from the one group that accepts them. The brain processes social exclusion the same way it processes physical pain (Eisenberger et al., 2003). The fear of sharing is, neurologically, a pain response. The body is trying to protect itself from being hurt. The problem is that the protection – silence, dishonesty, withdrawal – is itself a form of self-exclusion. The brain is trying to prevent something that the behavior is already causing.

Self-Reliance – Expanded

The self-fulfilling cycle – full detail:

It begins with a belief: if they really knew me, they would reject me. This belief is not conscious. It is not examined. It operates beneath language, in the body – the tightening throat, the racing heart, the hands that grip the chair when the chairperson asks "who hasn't shared yet?"

Because I believe I will be rejected, I protect myself. I stay quiet. Or I speak, but I speak carefully – selecting the version of my experience that is acceptable, polished, safe. I share gratitude when I feel despair. I share progress when I feel stuck. I share what will get nods, not what will get silence.

The curated share is well received. People smile. Someone says "great share." I feel momentary relief. But the relief is hollow, because the person they're praising is not me. They are praising the performance. And the real person – the one who is struggling, confused, afraid – is still sitting inside, still unknown, still alone.

Over time, the gap between the public recovery and the private experience widens. In the meeting, I look like I have years of strong recovery. Inside, I have years of unspoken fear. I am lonely in a room full of people who think they know me. I resent them for not seeing through the act – even though the act is mine. I resent the meeting for not being safe enough – even though I've never tested it.

The loneliness grows. The shame of hiding grows. The problems I'm not talking about get worse. And now I have even more to hide. The fear of sharing increases in direct proportion to the amount of unsaid material piling up behind the wall. Eventually, the wall becomes the whole person. I attend meetings as a shell. I go through the motions. I might even sponsor someone – telling them to be honest while I can't be honest myself.

And then one of two things happens: I either stop going, or something breaks. The relapse, the crisis, the bottom within recovery. And the people in the room are shocked – "we had no idea" – because I never let them have an idea. I never let them in.

The cruelest irony: the meeting was always the place where the truth could be spoken. It was always the place where someone would have understood. The people I was afraid of judging me were, in many cases, feeling exactly the same fear. We were all sitting in the same room, all hiding the same thing, all waiting for someone else to go first.

SDSF – full detail:

- **Selfish:** I make the meeting about me. Not in the way that honest sharing makes a meeting about the sharer – that kind of "about me" serves everyone, because honest experience is universal. I make it about me in the worst way: I sit in the audience watching my own performance, evaluating my own worth, calculating my own safety. I

cannot hear your share because I am rehearsing mine. I cannot celebrate your breakthrough because I am comparing it to my stagnation. I cannot be present for the newcomer because I am too busy protecting the image I've built for the old-timer. My selfishness is invisible because it looks like silence. But silence in a room where sharing saves lives is not humility – it is hoarding.

- **Dishonest:** The most dangerous dishonesty in recovery is the kind that sounds like recovery. "I'm grateful to be here." "My Higher Power is working in my life." "I've been doing my steps." These might all be true. But if they're all I ever say, they become a screen. The dishonesty of omission – leaving out the struggle, the doubt, the darkness – is a lie by subtraction. I am not lying about what I share. I am lying about what I don't share. And the room, which could help me if it knew, cannot help what it cannot see.
- **Self-seeking:** I seek a specific response from the room: acceptance without vulnerability. I want belonging without exposure. I want the warmth of fellowship without the risk of honesty. This is the addict's bargain – maximum comfort, minimum cost. But fellowship doesn't work that way. The warmth is generated by honesty. The belonging is created by vulnerability. I cannot get what I seek without giving what I fear to give.
- **Fearful:** The fear is circular. I fear sharing because I fear judgment. I fear judgment because I fear not being good enough. I fear not being good enough because I fear being alone. I fear being alone because I fear pain. I fear pain because I fear using. I fear using because I fear dying. And underneath dying: I fear there is no God. And if there is no God, then this room is all I have. And if this room rejects me, I have nothing. The fear of sharing in meetings is, at its final layer, a fear of cosmic abandonment. If God is real and present, the room's opinion of my share doesn't matter. If God is not real, the room's opinion is all that matters. My silence tells me which one I really believe.

Better Way – Expanded

> *"We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear."* (◆ BB p.68)

> *"We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past." (◆ BB p.75)*

> *"We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace." (◆ BB p.83)*

> *"We never apologize to anyone for depending upon our Creator. We can laugh at those who think spirituality the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it is the way of strength." (◆ BB p.68)*

The spiritual dimension: performance vs. witness.

There are two ways to sit in a meeting. The first is as a performer. The performer evaluates the audience, selects the material, calibrates the delivery, and measures the response. The performer is always working. The performer is always afraid. The performer's question is: "How did I do?"

The second is as a witness. The witness shows up and tells the truth. Not the perfect truth, not the polished truth, not the truth that sounds good – just the truth as it is today. The witness's question is not "How did I do?" but "What happened?" And then: "What is God doing with it?"

The shift from performer to witness is the shift from self-reliance to God-reliance. The performer relies on the audience for their worth. The witness relies on God. The performer needs the room to approve. The witness needs only to be honest. The performer controls the narrative. The witness surrenders it.

The actor analogy connection: The Big Book's actor analogy (◆ BB p.61-62) describes us as actors trying to run the whole show – directing the lights, the script, the other players. The fear of sharing in meetings is the actor refusing to speak his lines because he's afraid the audience won't like the play. But the actor didn't write the play. God did. The actor's job is not to guarantee the audience's reaction. The actor's job is to play the role assigned to him – honestly, fully, without holding back. If the character struggles, the actor lets the character struggle. If the character is afraid, the actor lets the character be afraid. The actor who refuses to play his part because he fears the audience's judgment has forgotten something essential: it is not his play.

When I share honestly at a meeting, I am playing my part. When I stay silent, I am rewriting God's script. The fear of sharing says: "I know better than God what should be said in this room tonight." That is the actor trying to direct the play. And we know how that ends.

Prayer: God, remove my fear of sharing honestly in meetings. I have turned Your fellowship into a stage and Your people into an audience. I have measured my words by their potential for approval rather than their capacity for truth. I have hidden behind safe shares and comfortable silences while the real me – the struggling, confused, afraid me – sat locked in a room I built with my own pride.

Teach me that the meeting is not a place to perform. It is a place to heal. Teach me that my honest experience – even when it is messy, even when it is embarrassing, even when it is dark – is the very thing someone in that room needs to hear. Not because I am wise, but because I am real. And real is what this fellowship was built on.

Give me the courage to raise my hand when I am afraid. Give me the willingness to say "I don't know" when I don't know. Give me the humility to share imperfectly, knowing that my imperfect truth serves You better than my polished performance ever could.

And when the fear comes – when my throat tightens and my heart races and every part of me says "stay quiet, stay safe, don't let them see" – remind me of who I am doing this for. Not for the room. Not for applause. Not for approval. For You. And for the person in the back row who is as afraid as I am, who needs to hear someone go first, who needs to know that they are not the only one.

Let me be that someone. Amen.

Practical actions:

1. **Share once this week, honestly.** Not a rehearsed share. Not a safe share. One honest sentence about what is actually happening in your life. It can be short. "I'm struggling this week and I don't know why." That's enough. Start there.
2. **Stop rehearsing.** When you catch yourself composing your share during someone else's, stop. Listen to them. Pray: "God, if You want me to share, put the words there. If not, let me be present for this person." The share that comes from prayer is always better than the one that comes from rehearsal.

3. **Arrive on time and stay after.** The fellowship before and after the meeting is where the real connection happens. The conversations in the parking lot, over coffee, putting away chairs. If you arrive late and leave early, you are protecting yourself from connection. Stop protecting yourself from the thing that will save you.
4. **Talk to one person after the meeting.** Not about the weather. Not about sports. Ask them how they're really doing. Listen. The antidote to the fear of being known is the practice of knowing someone else. Start with one person. Start with one honest question.
5. **Pray the fear prayer before every meeting.** "God, remove my fear and direct my attention to what You would have me be." (◆ BB p.68). Say it in the car before you walk in. Say it when you sit down. Say it when the chairperson opens the floor. Let it become as automatic as the fear itself. Replace the old script – "don't share, stay safe, don't let them see" – with a new one: "Remove my fear. Direct my attention. What would You have me be?"

Sources: Alcoholics Anonymous ("Big Book") pp.60-68, 73-75, 83; Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Steps 4, 5 & 7; Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text, Chapters 3-5, Step Five; Brene Brown, Daring Greatly (vulnerability research); Irvin Yalom, The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy (universality, group therapeutic factors); James Pennebaker, Opening Up: The Healing Power of Expressing Emotions (expressive disclosure); Naomi Eisenberger et al., "Does Rejection Hurt?" (2003, social pain and neural processing); Sponsorship Workshop Packet 2024

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 examples/fear-sharing-in-meetings.md