Step Four — Column 3 (Intermediate)

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

You already have your resentment list from Columns 1 and 2. Column 3 is where you look at each resentment and ask: **which parts of me got hit?** — and then, in a sentence or two, **how.**

This is the step up from Column 3 (Simple). Simple just marks *which* of the 7 areas got hit. Here you do the readings, and you learn to actually **write** the third column — a short sentence for each area, with the **fear** bracketed next to it. For the full theory on any one area, go to The 7 Areas — Intermediate or the deep-dive files (e.g. self-esteem.md).

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1) Read First

Before you write, read the resentment passage in *How It Works*:

- ◆ BB p.64 ¶3 → ◆ p.66 ¶2 — from *"Resentment is the 'number one' offender"* down to *"...for alcoholics these things are poison."* This is the whole resentment teaching, including the **example table** on ◆ p.65.
- ◆ BB p.67 ¶3 — *"Notice that the word 'fear' is bracketed alongside the difficulties..."* This is why you bracket fears in Column 3.

The question that drives Column 3 is right here:

> *"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?"* — ◆ BB p.65 ¶1

Why 7 Areas

The Big Book names the areas in two places. The narrative on ◆ p.64 ¶3 lists *"our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships (including sex)."* The question on ◆ p.65 ¶1 lists *"self-esteem, security, ambitions, personal, or sex relations."* And the example table on ◆ p.65 marks **Pride** (in the "My wife" row). Put together, that is the **7 areas** used in this inventory:

Self-Esteem · Pride · Ambition · Security · Personal Relations · Sex Relations · Pocket Book

Every resentment is your reaction to one or more of these getting hit or threatened.

Prayer Before Writing

Say this each time before you sit down:

> *"God please help me see the truth about my resentments."*

The Actor on the Stage

This is the key idea that makes Column 3 click. In Step Three, Bill describes self-will like this:

> *"Each person is like an actor who wants to run the whole show; is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in his own way."* — ◆ BB p.60 ¶8

Column 3 is where you discover the *show you were trying to run.* Each of the 7 areas is a piece of that production:

Area	In the play, this is…	You write…
Self-Esteem	the character **I** play — the role I gave myself	*"I am…"*
Pride	how I demand the **audience** see me	*"Others should…" / "No one should…"*
Ambition	what I want this **scene** to give me	*"I want…"*
Security	what I need to walk **out of the scene** okay	*"I need… to be okay"*
Personal Relations	the **script** I wrote for the other players	*"Wives should…" / "Friends should…"*
Sex Relations	the standard for a **real man** / **real woman**	*"A real man…" / "A real woman…"*
Pocket Book	the **money** side of the scene	*"No one should…" (about finances)*

When the other person didn't follow my script, didn't give my scene the payoff, or threatened my role — I resented them. Column 3 makes that visible.

For the full write-up on each area (definition, how to tell it got hit, examples, common fears), keep **The 7 Areas — Intermediate** open next to you.

How to Do Column 3

1. **Take one resentment** from your list (start with #1). Re-read its Columns 1 and 2.
2. **Go area by area.** For each of the 7 areas, ask: *"Did this one get hit? If so, how?"* If yes, write **one short sentence** using that area's sentence-starter.
3. **Bracket the fear.** Next to each sentence, in parentheses, write the fear underneath — usually the *opposite* of what the sentence claims. *"I am a great guy to have around"* → *(not good enough)*.
4. **Skip what doesn't apply.** Not every resentment hits every area. Pocket Book especially is often *"No money involved here."*
5. **Move to the next resentment.** If you get stuck, circle it and bring it to your sponsor.

Two things that trip people up

- **Write the claim, not your opinion of it.** No *"I think I'm a good worker"* or *"I feel disrespected."* Just write the false notion straight: *"I am the best worker they have."* The third column is where the self-centeredness Bill names as *"the root of our troubles"* becomes visible on paper *(ref. ◆ BB p.62 ¶1)*.
- **Write Self-Esteem from *high* self-esteem.** If you truly thought little of yourself when they did the thing in Column 2, you wouldn't be resentful — you'd think you got what you deserved. The resentment is proof the inflated claim was there. Write the inflated version (*"I am…"*), and the fear bracketed beside it will show you the deflated truth.

A faster way through

Many people find it easier to do **Self-Esteem and Pride for every resentment first**, then go back through and do **Ambition and Security**, then finish with **Personal Relations, Sex Relations, and Pocket Book.** Working one area at a time across the whole list tends to be faster and clearer than doing all 7 areas on one resentment before moving on.

Worked Example — Written Out (Mr. Brown, #1)

This is resentment #1 from Columns 1 and 2, written out the way you'll write yours. Each area gets a sentence; the fear is bracketed beside it. (Not every line will apply to every resentment — here all seven happen to.)

> *Resentful at:* ***Mr. Brown*** *— His attention to my wife. Told my wife of my mistress. Brown may get my job at the office.*

Area	Third-column sentence	(Fear)
Self-Esteem	I am a great guy to have around.	(not good enough)
Pride	No one should want to take advantage of me.	(taken advantage of)
Ambition	I want the respect of others.	(not respected)
Security	I need to not be challenged to be okay.	(losing)
Personal Relations	Fellow workers can trust each other.	(unable to trust)
Sex Relations	A real man stands up for himself.	(weak)
Pocket Book	No one should interfere with my job security.	(fired)

Notice the pattern Bill points to on ◆ p.67 ¶3: **fear sits behind every line.** The inflated claim on the left and the fear on the right are two sides of the same thing.

Worked Examples — Columns 1, 2 & 3

Here are the resentments from Columns 1 and 2, now carried through to Column 3. The first four come straight from the Big Book table on ◆ p.65. Yours will look like this — a name, the cause, and the areas affected (with **(Fear)** where fear is the main feeling).

Big Book p.65

#	Resentment	The Cause (Col 2)	Areas Affected (Col 3)
1	**Mr. Brown**	His attention to my wife; told my wife of my mistress; may get my job.	Sex Relations, Self-Esteem (Fear), Security
2	**Mrs. Jones**	She snubbed me; committed my friend (her husband) for drinking; she's a gossip.	Personal Relations, Self-Esteem (Fear)
3	**My Employer**	Unreasonable, unjust, overbearing; threatens to fire me.	Self-Esteem (Fear), Security
4	**My Wife**	Misunderstands and nags; likes Brown; wants the house in her name.	Pride, Personal Relations, Sex Relations, Security (Fear)

People

#	Resentment	The Cause (Col 2)	Areas Affected (Col 3)
5	**Susie**	Didn’t respect that I loaned her money or care about paying me back.	Pocket Book (Fear), Personal Relations
6	**My Father**	Loves a woman who tormented me; talks down to me.	Self-Esteem, Personal Relations, Sex Relations
7	**My Sister**	Pushes me around, yells over small things, picks fights.	Self-Esteem, Pride, Personal Relations
8	**My Mother**	Never satisfied — criticized and compared me; ignored what was happening at home; guilt-trips my boundaries.	Self-Esteem (Fear), Personal Relations
9	**My Ex-Wife**	Turns the kids against me; took me to court for more support; controls holidays.	Pride, Personal Relations (Fear), Security, Pocket Book (Fear)
10	**My Sponsor**	Said I wasn’t working the Steps right and dropped me; shared a confidence; treats me as an afterthought.	Self-Esteem, Pride, Personal Relations

Institutions

#	Resentment	The Cause (Col 2)	Areas Affected (Col 3)
11	**The Church**	Told me I was sinful; covered up abuse; controlled my family with guilt; took money we couldn’t afford.	Self-Esteem, Personal Relations, Security, Pocket Book
12	**The Company**	Laid me off after 12 years; promoted less experienced people over me; toxic culture.	Self-Esteem, Pride, Ambition, Security (Fear), Pocket Book (Fear)

Principles (beliefs / ideas)

#	Resentment	The Cause (Col 2)	Areas Affected (Col 3)
13	**God does not care about me**	He let people abuse me; ignores me; doesn't protect me.	Self-Esteem, Security (Fear), Personal Relations
14	**I'll never be fulfilled if I'm not in a relationship**	They always leave; it never works out; I can't stand to be alone.	Self-Esteem (Fear), Personal Relations, Sex Relations
15	**I am unloveable**	Too many people have rejected me; I'm disposable and defective.	Self-Esteem (Fear), Personal Relations
16	**I'll never be OK unless I have a lot of money**	It takes money to be happy, secure, and have relationships.	Security (Fear), Pocket Book (Fear), Personal Relations
17	**Everyone on social media has a better life than me**	Old classmates post wins while I'm in a sober house.	Self-Esteem, Pride, Ambition

These are examples. Your own answers may be different — what matters is that they're honest for **you**. Most resentments hit **2–5 areas**; a few hit just one. That's normal.

Stop Here

When every resentment has its third column written — areas named, sentences written, fears bracketed — **stop.** Do not start Column 4 yet. Bring your list to your sponsor. Column 4 (where you were *selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, and afraid* — ◆ **BB p.67 ¶2**) is the next meeting.

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 sponsee/column-3-intermediate.md