Step Four — Columns 1 & 2

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

This is the first written part of Step Four. You are making a **resentment list.** Do Columns 1 and 2 only — nothing else — until the list is finished.

Printed sheet: ▤ Columns 1 & 2 quick reference — two-sided: how to write the list, plus the three kinds of names and memory joggers.

Examples packet: ▤ .../columns-1-and-2-examples.handout.html — all 43 worked examples below in one print, a one-line gloss under each, and a dad's list (#22–#43) for a man with a wife and kids.

Why Resentment

> *"Resentment is the 'number one' offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease..."* (◆ BB p.64)

Prayer Before Writing

Say this each time before you sit down to write:

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

Column 1 — Who / What You Resent

> *"We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry."* (◆ BB p.64)

Pray and write down every name that comes to you. Three categories:

- **People** — anyone you are angry at, past or present.
- **Institutions** — the church, a company, a school, the government, AA itself.
- **Principles** — beliefs or ideas you are angry at (e.g., "God does not care about me," "I'll never be OK without money").

Don't go on till the list is finished. You will know when the list is done.

Column 2 — Why You Are Angry

> *"We asked ourselves why we were angry."* (◆ BB p.64)

Next to each name, write every specific reason you are resentful. Be brief — just enough that you know why you were angry. Number each name; letter each resentment.

You may consolidate similar resentments. If one isn't really a resentment, mark it to come back to.

Worked Example — Big Book p.65

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.

More Worked Examples

People

5) Susie

- A) She didn't respect that I loaned her money or care about paying me back.

6) My Father

- A) He loves a woman who tormented me and he talks down to me.

7) My Sister

- A) She always tried to push me around, yells at me for the smallest things, tries to pick a fight usually when I'm in a great mood.

8) My Mother

- A) She was never satisfied with anything I did — always criticized me, compared me to my siblings.
- B) She ignored what was happening in the house and pretended everything was fine.
- C) She guilt-trips me every time I set a boundary.

9) My Ex-Wife

- A) Uses the kids against me — tells them I'm the reason the family broke apart.
- B) Took me to court for more child support even though she knows I'm barely getting by.
- C) Won't let me have the kids on holidays unless I do things her way.

10) My Sponsor

- A) He told me I wasn't "working the Steps right" and dropped me after I missed a few calls.
- B) He shared something I told him in confidence with other people in the program.
- C) He always has time for his newer sponsees but makes me feel like an afterthought.

Institutions

11) The Church

- 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.

12) The Company *(previous employer)*

- A) Laid me off after 12 years with no warning.
- B) Promoted younger, less experienced people over me.
- C) Had a toxic culture — long hours expected, no recognition.

Principles (beliefs / ideas)

When Column 1 is not a person or institution, it is a belief you are angry at.

13) God does not care about me

- A) If God cared about me, He wouldn't have let people abuse me.
- B) God ignores me and won't help.
- C) God doesn't protect me.

14) I'll never be fulfilled if I am not in a relationship

- A) They always leave me. It will never work out for me. I can't stand to be alone.

15) I am unloveable

- A) Too many people have rejected me and failed me. I am disposable, irrelevant and defective.

16) I'll never be OK unless I have a lot of money

- A) It takes money to be happy. It takes money to have security, friends, and successful relationships.

17) Everyone on social media has a better life than me

- A) People I went to school with are posting about promotions, vacations, and happy families — and I'm in a sober house.
- B) My ex posted pictures with someone new and everyone congratulated them.

Newer Examples

Four newer examples — two people, an institution, and a principle. Same numbers on the Column 3 sheet, the Column 4 sheet, and the printed ▤ Column 4 quick reference (pages 13–14).

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.

19) My Probation Officer *(person)*

- A) Treats me like I'm still using no matter what I do.
- B) Drug tests me at the worst times and makes me miss work.
- C) One mistake and she can take my freedom.

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.

21) I can't have fun sober *(principle — a belief)*

- 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.

A Dad's List (#22–#43)

Twenty-two newer examples written for a man in his mid-thirties — married, two kids, a drug addict. Plain words, short lines, five reasons max.
▤ .../columns-1-and-2-examples.handout.html (pages 4–7), which also carries #1–#21 above with a one-line "in one line" gloss under each — the *feeling* under the facts. The gloss is optional; the lettered lines are the Column 2. **The Column 3 and Column 4 sheets do not carry these numbers yet.**

PEOPLE

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.

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 — yes, your own kid can go on the list)*

- 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.

INSTITUTIONS

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.

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 — AA, NA, DAA itself)*

- 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.

PRINCIPLES (BELIEFS)

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.

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.

Stop Here

When your list is finished, stop. **Do not start Column 3 yet.** Bring the list to your sponsor first. Column 3 (how each resentment affects you) 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/columns-1-and-2.md