Step Four — Sex & Relationships Inventory (Simple)

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

You have finished the resentment inventory (Columns 1 & 2, Column 3, Column 4) and the fear inventory. This is the last list: your **relationships**.

Read this first. It matters. **This is not about whether sex is good or bad. It is not about who you love.** It is about **how you treated people** in your close relationships. Same idea as the resentment inventory — you look at your own conduct. You just do it for the people you were romantic or sexual with.

What This Is — and What It Isn't

The Big Book is clear and kind here. It is **not** here to judge your love life:

> *"We do not want to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct. We all have sex problems. We'd hardly be human if we didn't."* — ◆ BB p.69

"Arbiter" means judge. The program does not play judge over your sex life, and neither does your sponsor.

> *"God alone can judge our sex situation."* — ◆ BB p.69

So set the shame down. This list is about **conduct** — what you did, said, hid, and how it landed on other people. Nothing else.

Prayer Before Writing

Say this each time before you sit down:

> *"God, please help me see the truth about my conduct in relationships."*

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1) Read

Read the short sex section in the Big Book — ◆ BB p.68 ¶4 *"Now about sex"* through ◆ BB p.70 ¶2 *"would mean heartache."* It's only a page or two. Read it slow.

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2) Make Your List

Pray, then write down the relationships across your whole life — romantic, sexual, or both. Partners, boyfriends, husbands, dates, flings — anyone there was a real connection or a real tangle with, no matter their gender. If there were relationships with women in years you weren't out, they belong here too. This is about your conduct, not about who you are.

- Don't rank them. Just get the names down.
- Use a name, initials, or a short label — whatever helps you remember who.
- **Don't leave one off because you're ashamed of it.** The ones you most want to skip usually hold the most freedom.

Keep going until the list feels finished. **You'll know when it's done.**

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3) Work One Relationship at a Time

Take the first name. Put it at the top of a page. Then do two things: write a short history, and answer nine questions.

Part A — A Short History

A few honest lines on each:

- **Why did I get into it?** What was I really after? (Lonely? Wanted to be wanted? Looks? Money? Bored? Running from something?)

- **How did I act in it?** Not the bedroom details — how did I *treat* him? (Honest or hiding? Showing up or checked out? Using him for something?)
- **What were the big moments?** The turns, the fights, the patterns.
- **How did it end — or where is it now?**

Part B — The Nine Questions

These come straight from the Big Book — ◆ BB p.69. Answer each in a few honest sentences.

1. **Where was I selfish?** — Where did I put what I wanted ahead of him?
2. **Where was I dishonest?** — Where did I lie, hide, pretend, or play a part?
3. **Where was I inconsiderate?** — Where did I not stop to think about him at all?
4. **Who did I hurt?** — Look around the whole thing. Not just him — his family, my family, other partners, kids, friends, and me.
5. **Did I make him jealous?** — On purpose, or just by how I acted?
6. **Did I make him suspicious?**
7. **Did I make him bitter?**
8. **Where was I at fault?**
9. **What should I have done instead?**

About Question 9 — read this twice. Do **not** answer "I never should have gotten involved." That's a dodge. Answer how you should have *acted* in the relationship — honest, present, kind, clear. Be specific. You will use these answers later to build your Sex Ideal, so make them good.

Then — Harm

At the bottom, write any specific harm that comes to you while writing — who you hurt and how. You'll use this later for your amends list.

Worked Examples

These are made-up examples to show you the shape. Yours will look different — what matters is that they're honest for **you**.

Example 1 — "The App Guy"

Name: "Danny" — met on an app, talked about 3 months

Short history:

- *Why I got in:* I was lonely and bored. I liked the attention. I wanted to feel wanted again.
- *How I acted:* Showed him a fake version of me — funnier, more together, better off than I really am. Left out that I was new in recovery. Moved fast to keep him hooked. When he asked real questions, I changed the subject or lied.
- *Big moments:* He started to actually care. That scared me. I went cold for days, then came back like nothing happened. I stayed on the app the whole time.
- *How it ended:* He called it off — said he didn't know who I really was. I was back on the app that night.

Nine questions:

1. *Selfish:* The whole thing was about me — my loneliness, my ego. He was a fix, not a person.
2. *Dishonest:* Hid my recovery, my money, my real self. Stayed on the app and lied about it.
3. *Inconsiderate:* Disappeared on him with no warning. Never thought about how that felt.
4. *Who I hurt:* Danny. And myself — I made early recovery harder.
5. *Jealous:* Yes — I stayed vague about other guys to keep him guessing.
6. *Suspicious:* Yes — the hiding and the disappearing made him check up on me.
7. *Bitter:* Yes — he told me he felt played.
8. *At fault:* All of it. Wrong reasons, lies, using him, running when it got real.
9. *Should have done:* Waited until I was steadier. Been honest about recovery from day one. Moved slow. Told the truth when he asked, even though it scared me.

Harm: Lied to Danny and used him. Made him feel like a fool. Set my own recovery back.

Example 2 — "The Long One I Took for Granted"

Name: "Marcus" — partner of 6 years

Short history:

- *Why I got in:* I loved him — and I also liked feeling settled and safe.
- *How I acted:* The first years were good. Then I checked out. Stopped really listening. Picked at him. Kept parts of my life secret — spending, who I texted, how much I was using. Let him carry the home while I coasted.
- *Big moments:* He kept asking what was wrong. I said "nothing" and got annoyed he asked. The distance grew. I started looking elsewhere instead of fixing it.
- *Where it is now:* We broke up. We barely talk. I haven't made it right.

Nine questions:

1. *Selfish:* Took the safety of the relationship and gave less and less back.
2. *Dishonest:* Kept secrets about money, texts, and using. Said "nothing's wrong" when plenty was.
3. *Inconsiderate:* Left him to do the emotional work alone. Stopped showing up.
4. *Who I hurt:* Marcus, his family who took me in, and friends caught in the split.
5. *Jealous:* Yes — when I pulled away, he wondered if there was someone else. There almost was.
6. *Suspicious:* Yes — the secrets made him doubt everything.
7. *Bitter:* Yes — he gave six years and felt thrown away.
8. *At fault:* I quit the relationship long before I left it, and never said so.
9. *Should have done:* Told the truth when he asked. Brought my secrets into the light. Done my share. Gotten help instead of going cold.

Harm: Checked out and lied for years. Wasted his time and trust. Hurt people who loved us both.

A Few Tips

- **Short and honest beats long and polished.** A line or two per question is plenty.
- **Write the conduct, not the bedroom.** This list cares how you *treated* people, not the physical details.
- **Don't skip the painful ones.** Those hold the most freedom.
- **If you get stuck, circle it and keep going.** Bring it to your sponsor.

> ***Ready for more?*** *The full instructions and a blank worksheet are in 05-sex-inventory.md. More worked examples are in the examples folder.*

Stop Here

When every relationship on your list has its short history and nine questions, **stop**. Bring it to your sponsor. The next part is the **Sex Ideal** — where you turn your Question 9 answers into how you want to love going forward.

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/sex-inventory-simple.md