Security — what I need here to be okay

Start sentences with — *"I need…to be okay"*

Example: *I need to know she'll never leave me to be okay. → (abandoned)*

References: Column 3 Instructions | Common Fears | Examples

How to Identify This Area

If I need something I've not got, might not get, or might lose because of the event in Column 2, my **security** is affected. *(ref. 02-column-3.md)*

Using Bill's actor metaphor from Step Three — Security is **what I need out of this scene to be okay.** It is the conditions I require to feel safe, stable, or at peace. It is the minimum I believe I must have — without it, I am not okay.

How to Write It

Start each sentence with "**I need…**" and end with "**…to be okay**" — write what you believe you must have to feel safe or stable in this situation. Then bracket the fear — what happens if you don't get it.

The need reveals the dependency. *"I need to know she'll never leave me to be okay"* reveals: *(abandoned)*. Every security statement exposes a condition on my okayness — something outside myself that I've made essential.

Template:

- I need _____ to be okay. *(_____)*
- I need _____ to be okay. *(_____)*

Tips:

- Security is about **what I need** — if it's about what I *want*, that's Ambition
- The key test: "To be OK, I need..." — if it fits that sentence, it's Security
- Security covers many kinds of wellbeing: physical, emotional, social, financial, developmental
- Security is specifically about **basic human needs**: food, shelter, occupation, friendship, physical safety
- No *"I think..."* or *"I feel..."* statements *(ref. p.62-¶1)*

Examples from the Inventory

- *"I need to not be challenged to be okay." (losing)* — #1 Mr. Brown
- *"I need others to see my value as a person to be okay." (not valued, worthless)* — #2 Mrs. Jones
- *"I need to know I'm valued at work to be okay." (not valued)* — #3 My Employer
- *"I need to know she'll never leave me to be okay." (abandoned)* — #4 My Wife
- *"I need to know that people won't hurt me and that I can trust my friends to be okay." (being hurt, being betrayed)* — #5 Susie
- *"I need a raise in pay and acknowledgement to be okay." (not good enough)* — #6 Mr. Brown Alternate
- *"I need to know people close to me will be fair to be okay." (mistreated)* — #7 My Father
- *"I need her to leave me alone. I need her to start acting more like a friend and communicate in a normal fashion. I need to feel safe to be okay." (bossed around, taken advantage of)* — #8 My Sister
- *"I need to be strong and self reliant to be OK." (weak, powerless, alone)* — #9 God Does Not Care About Me
- *"I need to be loved by someone, to be OK." (love isn't real, broken, defective, alone)* — #10 Not Fulfilled Without a Relationship
- *"I need to be loved by others to be OK." (never be loved)* — #11 I Am Unloveable

- *"I need MORE to be OK. I need to know I matter more than my money to be OK." (money won't last, money can't buy love)* — #12 Not OK Without Money

Additional Examples

These additional examples show the range of security entries across different dimensions of wellbeing.

Physical wellbeing:

- *"To be OK, I need somewhere to live."*
- *"Physical safety when I run past."* — People on corner (with aggressive dog)

Emotional wellbeing:

- *"To be OK, I need my other half to be happy."*
- *"Constructive encouragement."* — Andrew (teacher who shouted at me)

Mental/developmental wellbeing:

- *"To be OK, I need the AA group to remain stable."*
- *"To be OK, I need a sponsor to provide guidance."*

Social wellbeing:

- *"To be OK, I need to spend time with my best friend."*
- *"I need social interaction to be OK. I need to feel part of the team at work."* — Peter (colleague who ignored me)
- *"Pleasant, non-hierarchical homegroup."* — Milford (secretary who polices service)

Material wellbeing:

- *"Material needs (paying bills). Occupation."* — Gillian (client's employee)
- *"I need income to live."* — Susan (company director)
- *"(Not) be allowed in."* — Immigration system at airport (a fear)

Societal wellbeing:

- *"To be OK, I need free speech to be maintained."*

Notice how security entries range from the concrete (*"somewhere to live," "paying bills"*) to the abstract (*"I need to be strong and self reliant to be OK," "I need to be loved by someone, to be OK"*). The more abstract the need, the more likely it reveals a deeper spiritual dependency.

Common Fears Under Security

These fears commonly appear under Security in the inventory. Each one is what I'm afraid will happen if the need isn't met.

- **abandoned** — *"I need to know she'll never leave me to be okay."* — #4, #7
- **alone** — *"Wives stick by their husbands no matter what."* — #4, #9, #10, #12 | fear example
- **being betrayed** — *"I need to know that people won't hurt me and that I can trust my friends to be okay."* — #5
- **being hurt** — *"I need to know that people won't hurt me and that I can trust my friends to be okay."* — #5
- **bossed around** — *"I need her to leave me alone. I need to feel safe to be okay."* — #8
- **broken** — *"I am important. I matter! I am loved."* — #10, #11
- **defective** — *"A real woman would get on with her life and not let the past bother her."* — #7, #10
- **losing** — *"I need to not be challenged to be okay."* — #1
- **love isn't real** — *"I need to be loved by someone, to be OK."* — #10
- **mistreated** — *"I need to know people close to me will be fair to be okay."* — #7
- **money can't buy love** — *"I need to know I matter more than my money to be OK."* — #12
- **money won't last** — *"I need MORE to be OK."* — #12
- **never be loved** — *"I need to be loved by others to be OK."* — #11
- **not good enough** — *"I am a great guy to have around."* — #1, #3, #5, #6, #7, #8 | fear example
- **not valued** — *"I need others to see my value as a person to be okay."* — #2, #3, #5, #6 | fear example

- **powerless** — *"I'm worth caring for and protecting. I am valuable."* — #9
- **taken advantage of** — *"No one should want to take advantage of me."* — #1, #5, #8
- **weak** — *"A real man stands up for himself."* — #1, #7, #9, #12 | fear example

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Deeper Understanding

Security is the area where I declare the conditions on my okayness. Every entry follows the same structure: *"I need [something outside myself] to be okay."* The fears are what I believe will happen if that condition isn't met.

Legitimate Needs vs. Egoic Demands

Not all security entries are the same. Some are **legitimate needs** — food, shelter, physical safety, basic human connection. The person who needs somewhere to live or needs income to pay bills has a genuine need. The person who needs to feel safe when running past an aggressive dog has a genuine need.

But many security entries reveal **egoic demands disguised as needs:**

- *"I need to not be challenged to be okay"* (#1) — is not being challenged a genuine need?
- *"I need others to see my value as a person to be okay"* (#2) — is external validation a basic need?
- *"I need to be strong and self reliant to be OK"* (#9) — is self-reliance a need, or a demand?

The inventory doesn't ask us to judge which needs are legitimate. It asks us to see them clearly. But later, with a sponsor, the distinction matters: legitimate needs can be acted on; egoic demands need to be dropped or downgraded to preferences.

The Six Dimensions of Security

The additional examples reveal that security touches every aspect of wellbeing:

1. **Physical** — somewhere to live, physical safety, food
2. **Emotional** — my other half to be happy, constructive encouragement

3. **Mental** — the AA group to remain stable
4. **Developmental** — a sponsor to provide guidance
5. **Social** — to spend time with my best friend, to feel part of the team
6. **Societal** — free speech to be maintained

When writing Column 3, consider whether the resentment threatens any of these. The answer may surprise you — a workplace resentment might threaten your social wellbeing more than your financial security.

The Progression from Concrete to Existential

In the **person-based resentments** (#1–8), security tends to be about specific conditions: not being challenged (#1), being valued (#2, #3), not being abandoned (#4), not being hurt (#5), being treated fairly (#7), feeling safe (#8). These are concrete needs tied to specific relationships.

In the **principle inventories** (#9–12), security becomes more existential: *"I need to be strong and self reliant to be OK," "I need to be loved by someone, to be OK," "I need MORE to be OK."* These reveal the deeper belief that okayness depends on something external — strength, love, money — rather than on a relationship with God or a spiritual condition.

What Security Reveals About "My Way"

The key pattern: every security statement puts a condition on peace. *"I need X to be okay"* means *"without X, I am not okay."* The more conditions I have, the more fragile my peace becomes — because I cannot control whether those conditions are met.

Security and pocketbooks do matter — but they are rarely well managed directly. The experience of recovery suggests that when we serve God and do the next right thing, these tend to take care of themselves. The paradox is that obsessively guarding my security makes me less secure, because I am living in constant fear of losing what I've got. When I let go and trust that God will provide what I need (not necessarily what I want), the fear lifts — and with it, many of the resentments.

This list is not exhaustive — your inventory will reveal security patterns unique to you. Use this as a starting point to help identify what you believe you need to be okay in each situation.

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 security.md