Sex Inventory Example — "Jess" (Online Dating)

> *"God please help me see the Truth about my conduct in relationships"*

This is a modern sex inventory involving dating apps and online relationships — one of the most commonly discussed relationship patterns in contemporary recovery meetings and forums. The speed, anonymity, and volume of online dating amplify many of the patterns the sex inventory is designed to reveal: dishonesty, self-seeking, using others, and running from intimacy.

Name: "Jess" **Relationship:** Dating app — 4-month relationship

---

Brief History of the Relationship

My motives for getting involved were…

Loneliness. Boredom. Validation. I was six months sober and my sponsor told me to wait a year before dating. I didn't listen. I wanted to feel wanted. I was swiping within a week of the conversation.

My specific conduct in the relationship has been…

Matched with Jess on a dating app. We texted constantly for two weeks before meeting. I presented a curated version of myself — left out the addiction, the job loss, the sober house. When we met in person, I kept performing. I was whoever Jess wanted me to be. I moved fast — stayed over within the first week. Used physical intimacy to avoid real conversation. When Jess started asking real questions ("What happened at your last job?" "Why don't you drink?") I deflected, lied, or changed the subject.

The major points that came up in the relationship are…

Jess found out I was in recovery through a mutual acquaintance about two months in. Felt betrayed that I'd hidden it. I got defensive: "It's none of your business." We fought. I disappeared for three days — didn't answer texts. Came back acting like nothing

happened. The pattern repeated: get close, get scared, disappear, come back. Jess got confused, then hurt, then angry. Meanwhile, I was still on the dating app — "just looking," I told myself. Jess found out. Another fight. I said things I can't take back.

How it ended...? or how it is now...

Jess ended it by text. "I don't know who you are and I don't think you do either." I was devastated — not because I lost Jess, but because I was alone again. Within 48 hours I was back on the app. My sponsor asked me to put the phone down and write a sex inventory instead.

Nine Questions

1) Where had I been selfish?

The entire relationship was about my needs. I needed to feel wanted. I needed to feel attractive. I needed to not be alone. Jess was not a person to me — Jess was a solution to my loneliness. When Jess had needs (honesty, consistency, stability), I resented them because they interfered with my agenda.

2) Where had I been dishonest?

Everywhere. I hid my addiction. I hid my living situation. I hid my financial reality. I lied about my past. I presented a version of myself that didn't exist. I told Jess I was "taking a break from drinking" instead of saying I was in recovery. I said my job situation was "transitional" instead of admitting I was unemployed. I was on the dating app while in the relationship and lied about it.

3) Where had I been inconsiderate?

I disappeared without explanation for days at a time. I ignored texts when I didn't feel like dealing with conflict. I moved physically fast but emotionally slow — creating an illusion of intimacy without actually offering it. I wasn't thinking about how my disappearing acts affected someone who was beginning to trust me. I didn't consider what it would feel like for Jess to find out the truth from someone else.

4) Whom did I hurt? (Look around the relationship)

Jess — led them on with a false version of me, then punished them for wanting the real one. My sponsor — ignored clear direction and then resented the program when it went wrong. My fellowship friends who tried to warn me — dismissed their concern as jealousy. Myself — retraumatized myself with another failed relationship in early recovery.

5) Did I arouse jealousy?

Yes. I was on the dating app while in the relationship. I was vague about my past relationships. I flirted with others in front of Jess under the guise of "being friendly."

6) Did I arouse suspicion?

Yes. The hiding. The inconsistency. The disappearing. Jess started checking my phone, asking where I'd been, questioning my stories. I had made Jess suspicious by being fundamentally dishonest from day one.

7) Did I arouse bitterness?

Yes. Jess became bitter about the lies — "I don't know what's real and what isn't." The bitterness was earned. I made promises I didn't keep and presented a person who didn't exist.

8) Where was I at fault?

In every aspect. I entered the relationship for the wrong reasons (escape, validation). I lied about who I was. I used physical intimacy to avoid emotional honesty. I fled at the first sign of real vulnerability. I stayed on the dating app as an insurance policy. I treated another human being as a means to an end.

9) What should I have done instead?

Listened to my sponsor and waited. Not because dating in recovery is wrong, but because I wasn't ready — I didn't even know who I was yet. If I was going to date, I should have been honest from the start about my recovery. I should have moved slowly. I should have brought concerns to my sponsor instead of handling them alone. When Jess wanted honest answers, I should have given them — or admitted I wasn't ready to.

HARM:

- **Jess** — lied, manipulated, withheld the truth, created instability, aroused suspicion and bitterness, used physical intimacy as a substitute for honesty.
- **My sponsor** — ignored direct guidance, then blamed the program when it went wrong.
- **My fellowship** — dismissed the concern of people who cared about me; used the failed relationship as evidence that "relationships don't work in recovery" instead of examining my own conduct.
- **Myself** — deepened the shame cycle; reinforced the belief that the real me is unacceptable; set myself up for relapse by creating emotional chaos in early recovery.
- **Future partners** — carried the unexamined patterns forward. Without this inventory, I would have done the same thing to the next person.

Sources & Attribution

Direct Big Book text: p.68-¶4 to p.70-¶2 (sex inventory instructions), p.69-¶1 ("We reviewed our own conduct over the years past"), p.69-¶2 (the nine questions)

BBA workshop methodology: Sex inventory format — brief history, nine questions, harms

Recovery literature & psychology: Online dating in recovery is one of the most frequently discussed topics on recovery forums (r/stopdrinking, r/REDDITORSINRECOVERY, SoberRecovery.com). The speed and volume of dating apps amplify the addictive patterns the sex inventory targets: novelty-seeking, validation-chasing, avoidance of intimacy, and dishonesty. Esther Perel's research on modern relationships (*Mating in Captivity*, 2006) identifies the tension between security and novelty as central to relational conflict — a tension that dating apps exploit by offering infinite novelty with zero vulnerability. The recovering person, already accustomed to seeking relief through external means, finds in the dating app a behavioral analog of the substance: a quick hit of validation, a temporary escape from discomfort, and a guaranteed crash when reality sets in. The sex inventory asks us to examine not just what we did, but why — and the "why" in online dating is

almost always the same fears the resentment inventory already uncovered: fear of being alone, fear of being unlovable, fear of being seen.

Note: This is a constructed example created for this guide. All names and details are fictional.

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/sex-inventory-example-online-dating.md