Step Four with the Big Book Awakening workbook

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

Prayers

Use the Third Step Prayer morning and night. Before writing, pray:

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

(ref. p.64-top ¶-l4)

Printed sheet: ▤ Prayers for the Fourth Step (▤ pdf) — every prayer the inventory uses, on one page in the order the work goes, with a cut-out wallet strip. Wording verified against the workbook pages in pdf/step4.pdf.

Overview

The Fourth Step inventory is a structured, written process that moves from resentments to fears to sex conduct. Each phase builds on the last.

Process Flow

1. **List resentments** (Columns 1 & 2) — who and why *(read p.64-¶3 to p.65)*
2. **Examine how they affect you** (Column 3) — write how each resentment touches the seven areas of self, bracketing your fears as you go *(read p.64-¶3 to p.66-¶2)*
3. **Find your own mistakes** (Column 4) — Realization, then Self-Seeking → Selfish → Dishonest → Afraid → Harms *(read p.66-¶3 to p.67-¶3)*
4. **Consolidate fears** (Fear Inventory) — gather all fears from the resentment inventory into one list and trace each to its root *(read p.67-¶3 to p.68-¶3)*

5. **Review sex conduct** (Sex Inventory) — relationship history and the nine questions *(read p.68-¶4 to p.70-¶2)*

The Seven Areas of Self

Using Bill's actor metaphor from Step Three — I'm like an actor trying to run the show:

Area	What it means	Sentence starter
Self-Esteem	My stage character — the role I've assigned myself	*"I am…"*
Pride	How the rest of the players are supposed to see me	*"Others should…"*
Ambition	What I want out of this scene	*"I want…"*
Security	What I need out of this scene to be okay	*"I need…to be okay"*
Personal Relations	My deep-seated idea of what this relationship should look like	*"Wives trust…" / "Real friends…"*
Sex Relations	My deep-seated ideas of how a real man/woman would be	*"A real man…" / "A real woman…"*
Pocket Book	My finances	*"No one should…" / "Others should…"*

The Seven Areas of Self — Deep Dives

- Self-Esteem — How I see myself; the role I've assigned myself
- Pride — How I think others see me; the role I've assigned others
- Ambition — What I want out of this scene
- Security — What I need out of this scene to be okay
- Personal Relations — My deep-seated idea of what this relationship should look like
- Sex Relations — My deep-seated ideas of how a real man/woman would be
- Pocket Book — My finances

Column 4 — Deep Dives

- Bridge Passage — "We turned back to our list" — the turning point from Column 3 to Column 4 (p.65-67)
- Realization — "How have I done the same things?" — the bridge from blame to empathy

- Self-Seeking — My selfish actions; what I did — the visible link of the chain
- Selfish — My selfish attitudes; what I was thinking — the attitude behind the actions
- Dishonest — The delusions I was in; the lies I told myself — the self-deception that enabled everything
- Afraid — The fears driving everything; the root cause — what I was really afraid of
- Harm — "Do I see harm that I caused?" — the wreckage of my past
- The Chain — Fears → Delusions → Attitudes → Actions — the mechanism behind every resentment
- SDSF — Selfish, Dishonest, Self-Seeking, and Frightened — the four-part diagnostic framework from p.67
- Faults — Character defects revealed by the inventory — naming what you see in Steps 4-5 and preparing for Steps 6-7
- Faults Reference — Comprehensive checklist of character defects from multiple sources (BB, Tim M, St. Augustine, Al-Anon, RapidStep10)
- Ideal Word Bank by Role — The forward-looking companion to the Faults Reference: words for the conduct we want, organized by relationship role, for the 20-10-5 sane & sound ideal
- Stubborn Resentments — When the standard process doesn't resolve it: deeper chain work, forgiveness exercises, the acceptance fallacy

The Chain (Column 4) — Deep Dive

The core insight of the Fourth Column:

> ***The fears*** *that drive the* ***delusions****, that result in the* ***attitude*** *that are behind the* ***actions****.*
>
> *(ref. p.62-¶1 "driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking and self pity [my attitude]")*

Prayers by Stage

When	Prayer
Morning & night	Third Step Prayer
Before writing (Columns 1 & 2)	*"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 3 — each resentment	*"God please help me see the truth"*
Column 4 — after the Realization	*"This is a sick person like myself. How can I be helpful to them? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done."*
Sex Inventory	*"God please help me see the Truth about my conduct in relationships"*

Inventory Process

1. Columns 1 & 2 — List who you resent and why
2. Column 3 — How it affects you (seven areas of self) and your fears · print-ready examples: column-3-examples.handout.html
3. Column 4 — Your own mistakes: Realization, Self-Seeking, Selfish, Dishonest, Afraid, Harms · print-ready examples: column-4-examples.handout.html
4. Fear Inventory
    - Fear Inventory — Drill-Down — Consolidate and trace all fears to their root
    - Fear Inventory — 4-Column (Alternate) — Examine each fear: What / Why / Self-Reliance / Better Way
    - Fear Inventory — 4-Column Expanded — Deep examples with psychology, cognitive distortions, prayers, and practical actions
5. Sex Inventory — Review conduct in relationships
6. Sex Ideal — Shape a sane and sound ideal for future sex life (20-10-5 format)
    - Ideal Word Bank by Role — Vocabulary for the 20-10-5: 34 character clusters plus banks for 15 roles (partner, son/daughter, father/mother, sibling, friend, employer, employee, sponsor, sponsee, fellowship, ex/co-parent, money, neighbor, toward God, toward myself)

7. Supplemental Commentary — nonameyet.org — Practical perspectives on pacing, common resistance, and the "key to the future"
8. Principles & Self-Defeating Beliefs — The belief in Column 1: the workbook's original way (examples #9–#12) and BBA's 2024–2026 Self-Defeating Belief Inventory sheet and method, with the originals linked

Printed Handouts

Print-ready sheets for reading with a sponsee (`*.handout.html`, shared stylesheet `recovery/style/handout.css`):

- ▤ Prayers for the Fourth Step (▤ pdf) — one page: the prayer before writing, the Column 3 and 4 page-top prayers, the Fourth Step Prayer after the Realization, and the Book's own lines for fear (p.68), the sex inventory, and the sane and sound ideal (pp.69–70), each with when to say it; a wallet strip to cut out. The workbook's "Stop Set Aside Prayer. Use Third Step Prayer morning and night" sits at the top.
- ▤ Third Step Decision (▤ pdf) — ◆ BB pp.60–64 line by line in plain words: a-b-c, the actor, "the root of our troubles," the decision and prayer, and the "at once" launch into Columns 1 & 2. Written for the sponsee who doesn't think he's selfish.
- Bridge Passage — ◆ BB pp.65–67 line by line: the turn from "what they did" to "where was I wrong" (companion deep dive: bridge-passage.md)
- Common Fear Words (▤ pdf) — putting words on what you're afraid of
- ▤ Sane & Sound Ideal Word Bank (▤ pdf) — the forward-looking companion: 34 character clusters, word banks for 15 relationship roles, the 20-10-5 worksheets, the role sweep, and a closing sponsor page on running the ideal so it lands (companion reference: ideal-words-reference.md)
- ▤ Columns 1 & 2 — Worked Examples (▤ pdf) — all 43 worked examples in one print, 8 pages: the Book's four, the workbook's #5–#21, and a "dad's list" (#22–#43) written in plain words for a man in his mid-thirties with a wife and kids; a one-line gloss under each, a good-vs-weak Column 2 comparison, and dad-specific memory joggers. The same #22–#43 live in sponsee/columns-1-and-2.md so Column 3 and 4 work can hang off the numbers.
- Column 3 — Worked Examples (▤ pdf ; source column-3-examples.md, built by `scripts/build-handout.py`) — 14 pages: how to write the third column in plain words,

the seven parts on one page, then all 43 names from the Columns 1 & 2 packet with one line per part and the fear in brackets — the Book's four, the workbook's #5–#17 from its sample sheets, and #18–#43 written in the same form — with notes inline and a blank card to copy.

- Column 4 — Worked Examples (▤ pdf ; source column-4-examples.md, built by `scripts/build-handout.py`) — 18 pages: how to write the fourth column in plain words, the four questions and the Realization on one page, then all 43 names from the Columns 1 & 2 and Column 3 packets — one card each with the fears Column 3 bracketed, the Realization, Self-seeking, Selfish, Dishonest, Afraid, and the harm — the workbook's own sheets for #1–#7 and #13–#16, the rest written in the same form, with notes inline and a blank card to copy.
- Sponsee quick references: ▤ Columns 1 & 2 · ▤ Column 3 · ▤ Column 4 · ▤ Faults · ▤ Fear — the four questions (▤ pdf) · ▤ Sex & relationships

What Comes Next — Step 5

The inventory prepares directly for Step 5: *"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."* (◆ BB p.72-75) The written inventory is the material that is shared in Step 5. The 12&12 notes that self-delusion cannot be fully overcome alone — *"If all our lives we had more or less fooled ourselves, how could we now be so sure that we weren't still self-deceived?" (12&12, Step 5)* — which is why the inventory must be shared with another person.

Worked Examples

Resentment Inventory

- Mr. Brown — Resentment example #1
- Mrs. Jones — Resentment example #2
- My Employer — Resentment example #3
- My Wife — Resentment example #4
- Susie — Resentment example #5
- Mr. Brown (Alternate) — Same resentment, different Column 3 & 4 interpretation

- My Father — Resentment example #7
- My Sister — Resentment example #8
- The Church — Institution inventory #13 (resentment against an institution)
- The Company — Institution inventory #14 (resentment against an employer)
- God Does Not Care About Me — Resentment example #9 (Column 1 is not a person)
- Not Fulfilled Without a Relationship — Principle inventory #10 (not a person)
- I Am Unloveable — Principle inventory #11 (not a person)
- Not OK Without Money — Principle inventory #12 (not a person)
- My Ex-Wife — Co-parenting resentment #15 (modern: custody, divorce, recovery forums)
- Social Media — Principle inventory #16 (modern: comparison, self-pity, social comparison theory)
- My Sponsor — Resentment example #17 (resentment within the fellowship, transference)
- My Mother — Resentment example #18 (emotional unavailability, attachment theory, inner critic)

Fear Inventory

- Fear Inventory Example — Fear drill-down table
- Fear Inventory Example #2 — Detailed fear drill-down (8 columns, 13 fears)
- Fear: Not Good Enough — Drill-down + 4-column (brief, medium, expanded)
- Fear: Not Respected — Drill-down + 4-column (brief, medium, expanded)
- Fear: Unwanted — Drill-down + 4-column (brief, medium, expanded)
- Fear: Alone — Drill-down + 4-column (brief, medium, expanded)
- Fear: Not Valued — Drill-down + 4-column (brief, medium, expanded)
- Fear: Unloved — Drill-down + 4-column (brief, medium, expanded)
- Fear: Weak — Drill-down + 4-column (brief, medium, expanded)
- Fear: Worthless — Drill-down + 4-column (brief, medium, expanded)
- Fear: Sharing In Meetings — Drill-down + 4-column (brief, medium, expanded)

- Fear: Rejection — Drill-down + 4-column (brief, medium, expanded) — sociometer theory, ostracism research

Sex Inventory & Sexual Ideal

- Sex Inventory — “Bill” — Friend’s husband
- Sex Inventory — “Anna” — Lesbian affair
- Sex Inventory — “David” — 15-year marriage: emotional absence, neglect, hidden drinking
- Sex Inventory — “Rachel” — 8-month dating relationship: people-pleasing, dishonesty, using others
- Sex Inventory — “Mark” — Emotional affair with co-worker: non-physical betrayal, gaslighting
- Sex Inventory — “Jess” — Online dating: validation-seeking, dishonesty, avoidance of intimacy
- Sexual Ideal Examples — Prayer examples and 20-10-5 worked examples

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Recommended Workflow

Some people find it easier and more focused to write the Third Columns in this order:

1. **First pass** — Self-Esteem and Pride only, for all resentments
2. **Second pass** — Ambition and Security for all resentments
3. **Third pass** — Personal Relations, Sex Relations, and Pocket Book for all resentments

This has proven to help more people finish faster with a better understanding of the inventory process.

Source: 4th Step guide pages from the Big Book Awakening 12 Step workbook (August 2006) — www.bigbookawakening.com. Every original, where it is published today, and what BBA has added since (the Self-Defeating Belief Inventory, the Areas of Self cheat sheet, the fear grids, the extended relationship worksheet) is in Originals & Sources.

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 README.md