

An Unofficial Guide to the Twelve Steps

Written by A.A. Members in Texas Edited by Dr. Paul O., author of the famous "Acceptance Story" on page 449 of the third edition of the Big Book.

Foreword

The following is a suggested format for a Big Book Step Study Meeting with emphasis on the Fourth Step. Quotations from Alcoholics Anonymous and The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc. This does not imply either approval of or endorsement by this organization which, I understand, feels that alcoholics should find their own way in their spiritual quest.

The material is presented here in a form which has been used by both individuals and groups of recovering alcoholics in Texas to study the first 164 pages of the Big Book while actually doing the Steps. Their words have been modified somewhat by the Editor who assumes full responsibility for all errors, inaccuracies and misinterpretations.

A Message from the Editor

Welcome to The Land of Beginning Again! If you aren't satisfied with the way your life has been going and you'd like to chuck the whole thing and start all over again, then you hold in your hand a tool for doing just that and for doing it right this time. Beginning again, in the opinion of the editor, is what the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous are all about.

The only authority on the Twelve Steps is the book Alcoholics Anonymous referred to on the dust cover as "the Big Book, the Basic Text for Alcoholics Anonymous".

The third and most recent edition of the Big Book contains 575 pages. Personal stories, some of which change with each new edition, make up two-thirds of the book. Only 164 pages, the first third of the book, specifically outline the AA way of life. These pages never change. They are divided into eleven chapters, only seven of which are devoted to an explanation of specific Steps. Each chapter has a title appropriate to the Step(s) covered:

Ch.1 Bill's StoryStep 1
Ch.2 There Is a SolutionStep 1
Ch.3 More About AlcoholismStep 1
Ch.4 We AgnosticsStep 2
Ch.5 How It WorksSteps 3 and 4
Ch.6 Into ActionSteps 5 thru 11
Ch.7 Working With OthersStep 12

It's these 12 Steps, these seven chapters, a mere 103 pages which, when we allow them, change the course of our lives.

Before You Begin

While the Fourth Step Guide on pages 18 through 24 can be used by individuals working alone, the remainder of The Unofficial Guide to the Twelve Step was developed for use by a Step Study Team.

Experience has shown that Teams are most successful when:

The first one or two meetings are organizational only. This gives people an opportunity to either drop out or to make a commitment to stay until the end.

The size of the Team is whatever is convenient. People are asked to not join once the meetings get started. (This is a meeting of a Step Study Team, not an AA Group.)

The Team extends the time spent on any one Step if necessary, but frequent or frivolous delays tend to kill everyone's enthusiasm.

Each member makes a commitment to read the assignment and answer the questions before the meeting.

Each member accepts a "Buddy" to contact regularly between meetings.
Each member attends every meeting and actually DOES each Step as it is encountered.
(Fifth Steps are NOT shared at the meeting.)

You may find it advisable to start the meetings on time and end them when they are over.

1st MEETING- Preface & Foreword

On Your Own:

Read the Preface and the Foreword to the First, Second and Third Editions.

Note that in the Foreword to the First Edition, the Big Book states:

"To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book." On page 29 at the end of Chapter 2 it says, "Further on, clear-cut directions are given showing how we recovered." These statements point out the task the team is about to undertake.

With the Group:

Discuss the purpose, plan and meeting format of the Step Study Team. It is important that each member understand he or she is expected to do each of the Steps and, if possible, to attend every meeting of the team. This is a commitment, a team effort.

Frequent progress reports and mutual support via the telephone during the week are important.

At the first meeting read and discuss The Doctor's Opinion.

Are you aware that your illness affected both your mind and your body?

Do you believe or can you accept the concept of an allergic reaction to alcohol?

What is an allergy?

Do you agree with the idea of hospitalization?

Have you ever experienced the phenomenon of craving? (page XXV)

Did you like the effect of alcohol?

Did you reach the point where you could not differentiate "the true from the false"?

Did your alcoholic life seem normal?

The doctor seems to say that a "psychic change" must occur. What is a psychic change?

Can you accept the fact that alcoholism "has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated?"

These and many other questions will occur to the group and each should be discussed in depth.

2nd MEETING - Dr's Opinion; Bill's Story

On Your Own:

Buy a stenographer's notebook and begin to note your reactions to the matters set forth in the Doctor's Opinion. Begin to write "How I was powerless over alcohol." It is important that you write out any reservations you still have that you are, indeed, powerless over alcohol.

Read Chapter 1, Bill's Story, and be prepared to discuss at next week's meeting how it applies to your life.

With the Group:

Read Chapter 1, Bill's Story.

Did you ever wonder if you were crazy? (page 5)

Did you ever feel the remorse, horror and hopelessness of the next morning? (page 6)

Did your mind ever race uncontrollably? (page 6)

Did you ever seek oblivion? (page 6)

Did you feel lonely? (page 6)

Did you feel fear? (page 6)

What was your reaction to religion, the church and God? (page 10)

Note what happened to Bill's prejudice against "their God" when he began to use his own concept of God. (page 12)

Did you know that "nothing more was required...to make my beginning" than a willingness to believe?

Notice how Bill was instructed to find God's will and to pray. (page 13)

Isn't it true that Bill essentially takes the First through Eleventh Steps at this time while still in the hospital? (page 13)

These are just samples of the sort of questions to be asked or points to be raised. What was of particular significance to you in this chapter? What did you find that you can't agree with or that you can't accept?

3rd MEETING- There is a Solution

On Your Own:

Read Chapter 2, There is a Solution, and be prepared to discuss your reaction to this chapter next week.

Continue to write how you are powerless over alcohol and begin to consider what in your life you can truly manage. As thoughts occur to you about whether or not you can manage your life, write them down in your notebook.

With the Group:

Read Chapter 2, There is a Solution.

Having read this chapter, what parts apply to your life?

What is your reaction to the members of Alcoholics Anonymous?

Did your alcoholism engulf "all whose lives touch the sufferer's"? (page 18) What was their reaction?

Do you see how you can reach another alcoholic? (page 18)

Note on page 20 the Book answers the question, "What do I have to do?" Have you been asked the questions on page 20 by yourself or others? What were your answers?

From your examination of yourself and your reading of this chapter, are you a "real alcoholic?" (page 21)

If not, why not? Discuss this with the team.

Did you have control over alcohol?

Did you do absurd and incredible and tragic things while drinking?

Were you a Jekyll and Hyde type of person?

These questions and the observations on page 21 may help you in answering the questions you've been writing about having to do with your powerlessness over alcohol.

Why did we drink the way we did? (page 22)

Why do we take that first drink?

Why can't we stay on the wagon?

What has become of the common sense and will power that the alcoholic still sometimes displays with respect to other matters?

Have you lost the power of choice as described on page 24?

Have you ever asked, "What's the use anyhow?"

Re-read the first paragraph on page 25 starting with "There is a Solution" and the second one which says, "The great fact is this and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life..." The rest of this paragraph is an outstanding summary of what happens in this program.

In conjunction with the above two paragraphs, read, discuss and understand Appendix II, Spiritual Experience, page 569.

4th MEETING - More About Alcoholism

On Your Own:

Read Chapter 3, More About Alcoholism, and determine how it applies to your life.

With the Group:

Read Chapter 3, More About Alcoholism.

Did you have "the great obsession?" (page 30)

Did you realize it was an illusion?

Did you try to control your drinking?

Were you able to diagnose your disease?

In your notebook, have you listed those things which you attempted and which failed to control your drinking?

Do you have a reservation of any kind or any lurking notions that you will someday be immune to alcohol? (page 33)

Do you identify with the mental states that precede a relapse into drinking, and do you understand that these mental states are "the crux of the (drinking) problem"?

Do you understand why an alcoholic or potential alcoholic will be absolutely unable to stop drinking on the basis of self-knowledge? (page 39)

Note, on page 43, the doctors' reaction to these conclusions about alcoholism. At the bottom of the page and at the end of the chapter, once again note the only defence against the first drink.

5th MEETING- We Agnostics

On Your Own:

Read and be prepared to discuss Chapter 4 next week. By now you should have finished writing most of your memories about why you are powerless over alcohol and why your life is unmanageable.

With the Group:

Read Chapter 4, We Agnostics.

Do you accept the fact that if you are an alcoholic, you have only two alternatives: either die an alcoholic death or live life on a spiritual basis? (page 44)

Have you lacked the power to manage your life? (page 45)

Note: The main object of this book is to enable you to find a power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.

Have you had honest doubts and prejudices about God? (page 45)

What was your reaction to the word "God"? (What will He look like; what will it be like when you find Him?) Where did you get these ideas?

Had you abandoned the idea of God completely? (page 45)

Are you willing to lay aside your previous beliefs and prejudices and have merely a willingness to believe in a power greater than yourself?.

What is your current concept of God? (page 45)

Do you now believe or are you at least willing to believe there is a power greater than yourself?. (page 47)

Do you recognize that when you say "yes" to this question you are "on your way"? (page 47)

Note that the Book at this point again refers you to Appendix II, Spiritual Experience. What is it about Appendix II, Spiritual Experience that is indispensable?

Have you been open-minded, or have you been obstinate, sensitive and unreasonably prejudiced about discussions about God?

Did your idea work? Will the God idea work? (page 57)

Are you ready to "fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or He is nothing. God either is or He isn't." What is your choice to be? (page 57)

Recall what was said on page 28: If what we have learned and felt and seen means anything at all, it means all of us, whatever our race, creed or colour, are the children of a living Creator with whom we may form a relationship upon simple and understandable terms as soon as we are willing and honest enough to try.

6th MEETING- How it Works

On Your Own:

Read and be prepared to discuss Chapter 5, "How it Works". In your notebook write those things about God which you cannot believe. On another page, write what you do believe about God. As you go forward from this point it's those things which you do believe or which fit into your concept of God which you will be using, and you can be comforted in knowing that "Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with Him." (page 46)

List in your notebook examples of how you have been self-centered in the past.

With the Group:

Read Chapter 5, "How it Works."

Discuss the material from the beginning of the chapter to the end of page 63; i.e., to the end of the Third Step.

Do you question whether or not you are capable of being honest with yourself?. (If you do, you are not.)

Note the state of mind you are asked to have when you start the Steps - honesty, fearlessness, thoroughness and a willingness to go to any length.

What is the value of half measures?

Are you convinced a life run on self-will can hardly be successful?

Can you see the effects of self-centeredness in your life?

How have you been self-centered? Discuss with the group.

Did you know that you cannot significantly reduce self-centeredness by wishing or by trying on your will-power? (page 62)

Are you willing to make the decision that is set forth at the bottom of page 62?

Note the promises on page 63 that follow the Third Step.

Are you sincerely willing to take this Step?

At this point many teams witness each other's Third Step decision by reciting the Third Step Prayer together.

7th MEETING-Step 4, Instructions I&2

On Your Own:

In your notebook, continue to list instances where you have been self-centered.

Start to work on Step 4 using the FOURTH STEP GUIDE starting on page 18. Follow instructions 1 and 2 and write your Grudge List.

With the Group:

Read and discuss the FOURTH STEP GUIDE: Instruction 1 Resentments, and Instruction 2 - Grudge List.

Hereafter, follow the FOURTH STEP GUIDE while continuing the meeting assignments'

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8th MEETING - Step 4; Instructions 3-5

On Your Own:

Follow Fourth Step Guide Instructions 3 through 5.

With the Group:

Read Instruction 3 through 5 (see below) and discuss any problems you are having.

9th MEETING - Step 4; Instructions 1-6

On Your Own:

Complete your work on Instructions 1 through 5 (see below). Then follow Instruction 6.

With the Group:

Discuss the work you have done so far and any problems you are having with Instructions 1 through 6.

Assist those team members who are having problems with their Inventory. This may include spending time with them during the week.

10th MEETING - Step 4; Instructions 7-9

On Your Own:

Follow Instructions 7, 8 and 9.

With the Group:

Review the writing you have done for Instructions 7, 8 and 9, and discuss any problems you or other team members are having.

11th MEETING-Step 4; Instructions 10&11

On Your Own:

Complete Instructions 10 and 11.

With the Group:

Review and discuss in general what you have written on sex. Do not give specifics or tell "war stories". These are not appropriate for this meeting.

12th MEETING- "Into Action"

On Your Own:

Find someone with whom to take your Fifth Step.

Make a specific appointment and take this Step.

Read Chapter 6, "Into Action."

With the Group:

Read and discuss Chapter 6, especially pages 72 through 75 having to do with the Fifth Step.

Has everyone had a good experience with this Step thus far?

Are there any reservations about doing this Step? What are they?

Have you skimmed on any portion of the Program to this point?

13 MEETING- Step 5; Step 6

On Your Own:

If you haven't taken your Fifth Step, do so this week.

[Don't worry too much who that person will be. Anyone is better than no one, but because it is a spiritual experience you might want to share it with someone on the program rather than with an outsider. - Ed.]

Read Chapter 6 in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

With the Group:

Discuss this chapter and the Sixth Step.

What is the significance of the sentence, "This is the step that separates the men from the boys....?"

Discuss those defects of character which you recognize in yourself which you believe stand in the way of your usefulness to your fellows.

Consider also those defects which you feel do not stand in the way of your usefulness to others.

Notice how relatively few defects (column 4 in your inventory) caused such a long list of resentments (column 1).

What are you asked to do about these defects?

Is will-power and trying harder a part of this Step?

14th MEETING- Step 7

On Your Own:

Read the first two paragraphs on page 76 in The Big Book and Chapter 7 in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

With the Group:

Read and discuss the assignment.

Define and discuss humility and what it means to you.

How does one acquire humility?

Why are 'defects of character' in Step 6 called 'shortcomings' in Step 7?

Does the Step 7 method of removing defects of character differ from what you had been taught previously? In what way?

15th MEETING-Step 8

On Your Own:

Read from the middle of page 76 to the middle of page 77 in The Big Book and Chapter 8 in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Note that The Big Book assumes you made a list of persons you had harmed when you wrote your inventory. If you didn't, complete such a list now. Don't concern yourself at this time with whether or not you should, or will be able to, actually make the amends.

With the Group:

Read and discuss the assignment.

Discuss amends and amends lists.

16th MEETING- Step 9

On Your Own:

Read and discuss pages 76 through 84 in The Big Book and Chapter 9 in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

With the Group:

Read and discuss the assignment.

Do you have misgivings (page 76) and feel diffident about making amends?

What is your real purpose in doing this Step? (page 77)

Is timing important?

Can you approach the people in your Eighth Step list in a helpful and forgiving spirit? (page 77, pages 66-67)

Do you recognize that nothing worthwhile can be accomplished until you clean your side of the street? (page 78)

How important is it that you be praised for your Ninth Step efforts? (page 78)

Do you understand the importance of losing your fear of creditors? (page 78)

Have you discussed with your sponsor any criminal offenses you may have committed and which are still open? If not, you should do so. (page 79)

Do you recognize that your Ninth Step can harm others? (page 79)

Do you see the importance of not doing further harm by creating more jealousy/resentment in a 'tell all' session? (page 81)

What is meant by the statement that the spiritual life is not a theory; we have to live it? (page 83)

Do you agree that in taking your Ninth Step you should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping? (page 83)

17th MEETING-Step 10

On Your Own:

Read Chapter 10 in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and from the bottom of page 83 to the bottom of page 85 in The Big Book.

With the Group:

Read and discuss the assignment.

What are the specific instructions for the Tenth Step?

What do we watch for?

Why is it important to admit a wrong "promptly"?

Note that "We have ceased fighting anything and anyone...by this time sanity will have returned...we will seldom be interested in alcohol."

Is this the sanity referred to in the Second Step?

What is the proper use of will-power? (page 85)

18th MEETING-Step 11

On Your Own:

Read bottom of page 85 to end of the chapter.
Read Chapter 11 in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

With the Group:

Read and discuss the assignment.

What is the suggestion for taking the Eleventh Step every night?

What do we watch for?

Do you plan to practice this Step on a daily basis?

Discuss in detail the procedure suggested on page 86 regarding daily morning meditation.

What is the precise technique outlined on pages 86 & 87 for finding answers to problems?

Has your attitude about a Power greater than yourself changed since studying The Big Book thus far?

Do you have reason to believe "It works - it really does?"

19th MEETING- Step 12

On Your Own:

Read Chapter 7, "Working With Others"

With the Group:

Discuss Chapter 7.

What are the step-by-step requirements for a Twelfth Step.

Share with the team any experiences you have had in this regard.

Have you ever worked with the family in cases where the alcoholic has not responded?
What was the result?

Do you agree that "every man...can get well regardless of anyone. The only condition is that he trust God and clean house."?

Is this the basis for the statement that this is a selfish Program? Is the program literally selfish?

20th MEETING - Chapters 8 thru 11

On Your Own:

Read Chapter 8, "To Wives"; Chapter 9, "The Family Afterwards"; chapter 10, " To Employers" and Chapter 11, "A Vision for You". These chapters are designed to teach you how to practice these principles in all your affairs. They contain spiritual truths which apply to all of us.

With the Group:

The team should decide whether or not to discuss one or more of these chapters to conclude your Step Study.

A reading of the last portion of "A Vision for You" is a fitting way to end the Step Study program.

Do you have the feeling of having had contact with those who wrote The Big Book?

Fourth Step Guide

Many people find the Big Book instructions for taking the Fourth Step confusing.

The following outline represents the experience of certain members of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in analyzing and utilizing this portion of the Big Book. In general, those who have followed these suggestions in taking this Step including the inventory, the analysis and the suggested prayer, have found it to be a most rewarding and exciting spiritual experience.

This same experience may be shared by anyone who completes each of the following instructions and assignments to the best of his or her ability in the order in which they are presented. Perfection is not required. What is required is honesty, open-mindedness and willingness and a sense of having given it one's best effort.

[Don't concern yourself with the question of who is going to hear your Fifth Step. Your Higher Power will let you know in plenty of time. Your Fifth Step is not today's problem. - Ed.]

Do not skip any instruction and complete every instruction before proceeding to the next.

INSTRUCTION 1- Resentments

Read the following and come to understand what we are doing.

WHEN TO DO STEP FOUR AND WHY

Perhaps the greatest of the promises of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous is that God, as we understand Him, will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Once we've made the decision to let Him do that, as required by Step Three, the Big Book warns us, "Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us (from God)So we had to get down to causes and conditions. Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory."

WHAT WE SEEK

The inventory is described as "a fact-finding and fact-facing process." We seek the truth about ourselves and honestly take stock of our lives. We search out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure. The Big Book states repeatedly that self, selfishness, self-centeredness are the root of our trouble. Convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we consider its common manifestations and group them into three categories: (1) Resentments, (2) Fear, (3) Sex.

We then treat each category separately in the inventory.

RESENTMENTS "The Number One Offender"

From resentments "stem all form of spiritual disease." We are instructed to list all the people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry or had resentments. What's a resentment?

(a) Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary defines "resentment" as "a feeling of displeasure or indignation, from a sense of being injured or offended." Suggested synonyms include anger, wrath, ire, indignation.

(b) Anger can be strong, intense, explosive, brief. Resentments often are more suppressed, longer-lasting and chronic - the "slow burn". A resentment has been described as the feeling I have when I think someone else ought to feel guilty.

(c) We are dealing with a destructive, negative, unpleasant action or inaction of a person, institution or principle.

The "person" may be oneself. Our actions, or our failures to do what we think we should have, can generate the resentment referred to as "guilt". "Institutions" may be authorities, companies, governments, government agencies, groups of people or various organizations. "Principles" are truths, some of which offend us; e.g.,

Alcoholism is an incurable disease.

Honesty is the best policy

As you give so shall you receive

When you are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there's something wrong with you.

The specific instructions for taking Step Four are found on pages 64 to 71 in the book Alcoholics Anonymous and should be read carefully at this time.

INSTRUCTION 2-Grudge List

Prepare your Grudge List. List the people, institutions and principles which have caused you to have a resentment as defined above.

Go back over your life. "Nothing counts but thoroughness and honesty." If you can remember the resentment, list it even though you think you have gotten over it.

Some people choose to write a short autobiography to jog their memory. Reviewing diaries, school annuals, family albums and the like may help.

Avoid moral judgment of your feelings. Do NOT concern yourself with whether or not you should have felt the way you did. Just proceed with making your list and NOTHING MORE now.

While completing Step Four and perhaps for some time thereafter, you will recall other people and situations which caused you to have these negative feelings. You can add

to your list at any time, but do not spend a great deal of time now worrying about how complete your list is. Simply do the best you can over a reasonable period of time - perhaps a week. (end of assignment)

INSTRUCTION 3 - Resentment Analysis

DO NOT BEGIN THIS ANALYSIS UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR LIST

Then analyze each resentment separately. The Fourth Step will mean very little unless we come to understand and learn from our individual resentments. The following procedure has proved helpful to others:

(a) Purchase a spiral notebook and open it so that you have a blank page on each side of the spiral in the centre. With a ruler, draw a vertical line down the centre of each blank page dividing it into two halves; you now have four columns. Turn the page and repeat this procedure until several pages have been divided in this manner.

(b) Label each of the four columns:

Column 1 - "Name"

Column 2 - "Cause"

Column 3 - "Affect"

Column 4 - (Leave this column unlabeled)

INSTRUCTION 4- Who did what

Take one resentment at a time from your grudge list and enter it in Column 1. Then complete Columns 2 and 3 as described below. Complete the analysis of each resentment before going on to the next one on the grudge list:

(a) Take the first name from your grudge list and write it on the first page under Column 1.

(b) In Column 2, write a few words to describe each and every event or circumstance you can recall which caused you to resent the person named in Column 1. This is a very important part of the analysis. We learn from specific events, not from general complaints. For example, we learn little from the complaint "He lied a lot," but we learn much from "He told me he wasn't married."

INSTRUCTION 5 - The result

In column 3, opposite each of the events listed in Column 2, write the reason the event or circumstance bothered you.

Ask yourself:

(a) Having decided who was at fault, did I go further in my study of this event?

(b) Did I try to retaliate, fight back or run? What was the result? Did it help?

(c) Is it clear to me that a life which includes one of these resentments leads only to futility and unhappiness?

(d) Has the resentment ever benefited me in any way, or have I squandered hours thinking about it?

(e) Do I understand that these thoughts separate me from "the Sunlight of the Spirit" (God)?

(f) Do I realize that these resentful thoughts lead to the insanity of the first drink and that for me to drink is to die?

(g) Do I understand that through our thoughts and our reactions to people, places and things the world and its people dominate us?

(h) Do I understand that until I pass beyond the point of blaming myself or others, there can be no growth or solution?

(i) Can I forgive?

Realize that many people have the same problem with life that you have and that many of them are spiritually sick.

Honestly pray the Fourth Step prayer: "God, help me show ___(Name)___ the same tolerance, pity and patience I would cheerfully grant a sick friend. ___(Name)___ is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? Save me from being angry. Thy Will be done."

From this point forward we try to avoid retaliation or argument. (end of assignment)

INSTRUCTION 6 - What I Did

As noted earlier, it is a spiritual axiom that when I am disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something the matter with me. Now that you have listed the resentment and understand how it affected you, and having stopped blaming others by "putting out of your mind the wrongs others have done," you can look at your own actions and reactions. In the past we went no further than to declare that someone else was wrong. Isn't it true that we acted or reacted during each event or circumstance? Didn't we become angry; depressed; filled with self-pity, envy, jealousy, etc.? Didn't this affect our lives and the lives of those close to us?

At the top of the fourth column on each page insert the words "My Faults or Mistakes." Then complete Column 4 as follows:

(a) For each person, institution or principle AND for each event, ask yourself:

Where have I been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened?

Where was I to blame?

How did I react?

How did this affect me and those close to me?

(b) Write down your faults (as revealed by the above questions) in the fourth column opposite each person, institution or principle AND each event. (end of assignment)

Congratulations! If you've completed all the instructions to this point you have finished the "Resentments" portion of your Inventory. You are ready to go to "Fear." But do NOT proceed further at this time if any preceding portion remains incomplete.

FEAR "...touches every aspect of our lives."

Webster's Dictionary defines "fear" as a feeling of alarm or disquiet caused by the expectation of danger, pain, disaster or the like. For example, being found out, being recognized for who we are. The Big Book says the driving force in the life of most alcoholics is the self-centered fear that we will lose something we have or that we will not get something we think we need or want.

INSTRUCTION 7 - List of fears

Read the last paragraph on page 67 in the Big Book and the first three paragraphs on page 68.

Then list your fears. On a page following the section on resentments, write a short description of every fear you have experienced. You already asked yourself in the previous section about the impact of fear on your resentments. Now complete the list of times, places and circumstances which evoked this feeling (authority figures, women, men, heights, snakes, bugs, etc., etc.).

INSTRUCTION 8 - Analysis of fears

Write a short analysis of each fear in an effort to understand it. It is said that each of these fears set in motion chains of circumstances which brought about or caused misfortune.

Can you site examples where this occurred?

Why did or do you have each fear? Is it because of the failure of self-reliance?

Were you about to be harmed in some way by something you could not control or avoid?

Can you run away from fear?

Did your fear affect others?

What can you now rely upon if not yourself?

INSTRUCTION 9- In place of fear

Your fears have been listed and the above questions answered. Now read the solution to fear in the Big Book in the second and third paragraphs of page 68. "We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. At once," the Book says, "we commence to outgrow fear."

Direct this solution toward each one of your fears.
(end of assignment)

"Now About Sex"

INSTRUCTION 10 - Sex situations

Read the last paragraph on page 68 to the end of Chapter 5.

List the people and situations wherein sex and sexual relationships have been a problem for you.

With respect to each person on your list, write a short paragraph answering the following questions while remembering to deal with specific events:

In this relationship, was I selfish, dishonest, inconsiderate?

Whom did I hurt?

Did I arouse suspicion?

Did I arouse bitterness?

Where was I at fault?

What should I have done instead?

Become willing to make amends for past wrongs -provided you will not bring about still more harm in so doing.

Consider your future sex life and relationships. Through study and prayer, seek to shape a sane and sound ideal for the future. Whatever your ideal turns out to be, you must be willing to grow toward it.

In the second paragraph on page 70, we are given instructions on how to proceed. We are told: "Pray for the right ideal, for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity and for the strength to do the right thing. If sex is very troublesome, we throw ourselves the harder into helping others. We think of their needs and work for them. This takes us out of ourselves. It quiets the imperious urge, when to yield would mean heartache."

INSTRUCTION 11-Step 5

Review your inventory. Have you left anything out? Have you failed to list any event or subject because the memory and the thought of revealing it to another person made you too uncomfortable? If so, write it down now.

Read page 72 through page 75.

Take the Fifth Step.

[Don't procrastinate while looking for the "right" person. Get it over with! You've already turned your will and life over to the care of God; nothing is going to happen to you that God can't take care of. - Ed.]

Congratulations!! You have now completed Steps Four and Five.

You may wish to symbolically erase your past by burning or otherwise destroying your fourth Step Inventory. Before doing this make a list of your defects of character for use in your Sixth and Seventh Steps, and a list of persons you have harmed for your Eighth Step.

Here is a good way to start and to periodically redirect each day:

The Serenity Prayer

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

The Third Step Prayer (page 63)

"God, I offer myself to Thee, to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!"

The Seventh Step Prayer (page 76)

"My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character that stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength as I go out from here to do your bidding. Amen."

Here are the "principles" we practice in all our affairs all day, every day:

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

(Pages 59 - 60)

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to Believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another individual the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

A Final Message from the Editor

Congratulations! Most alcoholics who return to drinking have never completed all the Steps of the A.A. program.

You've now done them all at least once. Finding other members of Alcoholics Anonymous who might benefit from this outline and sharing your experience with them is one way of continuing to practice the Twelfth Step.

And finally, always remember, in precisely the middle of page 132 our Big Book states:

"We absolutely insist on enjoying Life."