

# A Searching, Fearless, Moral, Inventory

## 4th Step Guide

### INTRODUCTION

The history of this 4th Step Guide is vague but it has been attributed to anonymous members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Various versions could be found on early recovery computer bulletin boards (BBS). One version was dubbed "The California 4th Step Guide" as it was believed that the originators were located in California. Another version "suggested" that a person should have at least 5 years of recovery before using this guide.

In any event this guide has well over 300 questions for a person to answer starting with your childhood years, through adolescence, and into your adult life. The guide works for all 12 step programs as the guide is not specific to any particular program. The guide has a very good set of general directions for doing a 4th step.

Happy 4th Stepping!

### **FOURTH STEP INVENTORY - GENERAL DIRECTIONS**

Buy paper and pen and start writing. The AA Big Book says on eight different occasions that we write out this step. It's the writing it down that helps trigger the release.

It has been our experience that we all have compulsive behavior which needs to be controlled, thereby the problems that were actually caused by the compulsive behavior will disappear. Which leaves us with the problems that caused us to become compulsive. And these, as you are perhaps beginning to find out, are the ones that stay painfully with us unless we do something about it. (In the past, they were so painfully with us that we needed an escape to relieve the pain).

We seemed to always be able to quit a compulsion. We just couldn't stay quit. In taking Step Four through Nine, we are doing certain things which we find will bring us to a point in life-enjoyment and comfort whereby we no longer need to be compulsive. We don't need compulsive means to escape because the problem has been bled off.

It has been our experience that it really does not matter particularly what your intent is when you take Step Four. Or what your attitude is. Or what your ideas are as to what it will do for you and how. What matters is that you take the step honestly and to the best of your ability. Quit rationalizing that you'll take it better if you take it later...or after you have been in the program longer...or any of the other lame excuses that all of us who have gone before you have used.

As compulsive human beings, we all wanted to excel-really excel-at some activity or other. May we suggest this: if you ever decided to get with it (not perfectly, but the best you can honestly do) right here and now is good time to get with it. A thorough Fourth and Fifth Step will give you more relief and comfort than you have any way of knowing. This is the action that can lead to a real joy in living...the sort that you may not have experienced since early childhood (if then)...something that you have been searching for but couldn't quite find.

Step Two does not say, "Came to believe IN a Power greater than ourselves," but "Came to believe THAT a Power greater than ourselves..." could help us become sane, happy people. For instance, the Group is greater than I am as an individual...which would make it a Greater Power. Whatever you look to as a Higher Power, you must remember that in Step Three you turn...not just your compulsive behavior, but your will and your life...over to that Higher Power. So that whatever is uncovered in the process of taking Steps Four and Five...whatever your difficulty...you must remember that you have turned it over...and then keep on ploughing ahead.

Alcoholics Anonymous is an organization of people helping each other to recover from the disease of alcoholism. The Twelve Steps were written by the founders of the AA fellowship as guidelines to aid alcoholics find a better way of life without the use of alcohol. We who have become aware of their philosophy of life have found these Steps invaluable in our "Search for Serenity."

We have found that most of us have created needless mental, physical, and spiritual problems for ourselves because of our own compulsive behavior. The dictionary gives us a psychological definition of compulsion as being; "An irresistible repeated irrational impulse." The AA Big Book refers to "self will run riot." We may also think of compulsion in terms of "excessive wants that dominate our normal needs."

The purpose of this outline is to help any person become aware of the actions and reactions involved in their daily living which have caused them to become compulsive.

The guide for AA's Fourth Step was written by AA's-we have adapted the original to fit any person involved in a Twelve Step Program so that they might become better aware of their own compulsive behavior.

The AA Big Book suggest that we take Steps Four and Five immediately after Step Three. You're starting now to take Step Four so set up an appointment right away to take your Fifth Step. Select your sponsor, or a minister (being sure it is one who understands the problem, not one who will "moralize" at you), or a doctor, or a close-mouthed friend in the program. Give yourself about a month to finish Step Four. And don't put off starting Step Four because you can't find anyone "suitable" to take Step Five with.

Let us stress that you are not being graded on spelling, punctuation, or grammar. This Fourth Step is for you eyes only. You're going to tell it to someone, but this is for you. If you decide to erase or scratch through something, don't do it. It might be one of the keys that would unlock some part of your personality that is now hidden from you. And remember, you can't take a perfect inventory, but you can do your

honest best. And let us assure you that your honest best certainly will be very, very good.

The book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* states: "Creation gave us instincts for a purpose. Without them we wouldn't be complete human beings. If men and women didn't exert themselves to be secure in their person, made no effort to harvest food or construct shelter, there would be no survival. If they didn't reproduce, the earth wouldn't be populated. If there were no social instinct, if men cared nothing for the society of one another, there would be no society. So these desires...for the sex relation, for material and emotional security, and for companionship...are perfectly necessary and right, are surely God-given." (pg. 43)

It is when these instincts are warped and bent out of shape that we get in trouble, for their distortion brings pain. The compulsive behavior helped to escape from such pain. And this is what your inventory is about...to help you recognize those instincts of yours that are warped and out of control, and develop awareness of yourself and your reactions.

You will want to write out the resentments, fears, guilts, hates, and sexual hang-ups that you can remember. What you want to be aware of is your reaction to what happened to you. A moral inventory deals with feelings-both good and bad. Don't get into what was done to you (i.e. "I resented my mother because she favored my sister and didn't love me" or "I hated my father for whipping me in front of my friends"). Or what you did to someone (i.e. "I used to tell on my brother so I'd look good to my parents," or "I felt superior to my brothers and sister because my parents favored me").

Put down the things that you remember and feel the pain of embarrassment, fear, or guilt. Where were you at fault and what is it about it that hurt you now. The *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* reads, "Since Step Four is but the beginning of a lifetime practice, it can be suggested that we first have a look at those personal flaws which are acutely troublesome and fairly obvious. Work on getting to the root of the big problems now. Dig in and let the pressure begin to ease off." (pg 51)

If you find that any question awakens some painful or distressing memory, write it down (even though it is not an answer to that particular question). Search out and fearlessly put down on paper those things that are painful, embarrassing, fill you with fear, shame, or any other uncomfortable feelings (which could be guilt, rage, etc.).

This is a long outline. Don't let it scare or dissuade you. Take each question and in your own words write out your answer-let it all hang out!

Do not tear up any part of it. If you feel the statement you made was wrong, make a notation as to why it is wrong. Promise yourself to be honest and fearless. Trust us when we tell you that your rewards will be great. Some people have been discouraged in taking an inventory because they don't feel they have become honest enough, or can remember everything that happened to them. Just do your best-your honest best. The same about memory. We-no one-is capable of remembering every incident of their lives, so deal with what you are capable of remembering. Now.

Please keep in mind that the Fourth Step is not dealing with changing anything. An inventory doesn't change things, it simply lists things. Your inventory is only a story of your feelings and acts from the beginning until now. "We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty." (AA Big Book. pg 65)

Many have found that it helps to carry around a pocket size notebook so that they could jot down anything that pops into their head. It will be useful to you in your inventory. It really doesn't matter if you write information down that could be slightly incorrect insofar as dates, places, etc. Just get it down! Arrange to have a safe place to put your Fourth Step inventory. Nothing should be left out "because someone might see it who isn't supposed to." Once it is transferred to the main inventory you can throw it (the pocket notations) away. Remember, in Step Four we put down all the things that we wince at...just remembering them we screw our eyes closed and think "Oh no!" or "Damn!" "Not that!" Just write it down. It is not hurting anyone but you.

Read what the AA Big Book has to say about the Fourth Step (pg 64-71). And The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (pg 43-55). The AA Big Book refers to the "...wreckage of your past..." and from this we are tempted to deal only with the problems left in the wake of our compulsive behavior...the problems outside of us. The problems that were created as the result of our compulsive behavior. But...Steps Four and Five deal with how the past has affected our world within. How our negative feelings about ourselves and others have wrecked us spiritually, mentally, and physically. The AA Big Book instructs us to write about fears (hates), resentments (guilts), or our sexual hang-ups. Breaking these instructions down into three parts helps to hurry things along. Most of our patterns are set up in childhood and early adolescence. Therefore, your inventory will be divided into three parts:

1. Childhood
2. Adolescence
3. Adulthood

At birth, we are exposed to our parent's behavior, beliefs, expectations and attitudes. These were based on their parent's behavior, beliefs, attitudes, etc...back through the generations. So, since we can't really pin the blame, let's instead get about the job of finding the remedy.

Problems begin if parents were too young, too old, too poor, too rich, too many children, only one child, want a boy and got a girl, wanted a girl and got a boy, parents didn't get to finish high school, parents had to get married parents couldn't cope with responsibility, had to give up a career, had a lack of financial security, were sick either emotionally or physically, threatened "not to love" children as they didn't "measure up", death of a parent, divorce, etc., etc., etc.

Sometimes mothers make their children feel guilty because they have to work. (They usually appear as a "good woman" who has sacrificed her life working and depriving herself for her children). This attitude automatically puts the child in a never ending debt of guilt for being alive and so much of a problem. Or fathers play the same game by such statements as, "if I hadn't had such a large family I could have been a great man..." some neurotic mothers try and make their children feel

guilty by telling them what a hard time they had giving birth. There are parents who make excuses for your bad behavior...teaching you how to excuse anything you want to do; or parents who would not punish you and taught you how to put things off; or who overprotected you; or who gave you no tools to face life as it really is; or alcoholic parents; or parents who were too strict, forcing a child to act like an adult which then forces the adult to act like a child to be perfect in all things, or gives them a model (sister, brother, friend etc.) and constantly compares the child with the other persons, etc., etc., etc.

But remember, if you have gotten smart enough to figure out that your parents were your big problem, then you must go one step further and figure out what you can and will do about it. This is the purpose of the Fourth Step. The purpose is not your parents inventory, if the above paragraph sounded like it. Your parents did the best job they knew how, sometimes it was good job and other times it was a bad job. It is to help you become aware of your attitudes, emotions, inappropriate behavior (and notice, please, that this is behavior inappropriate for you), so that you may begin life anew.

## **SUMMARY**

Some of you will object to many of the questions posed, because you think your own character defects have not been so glaring. To these it can be suggested that a conscientious examination is likely to reveal the very defect the objectionable questions are concerned with. One can get a mind that is so "closed" that it doesn't realize it is closed. Because the surface record hasn't looked too bad, many of us have been abashed to find that this is so simply because we have buried these defects so deep under thick layers of self-justification. Sick justifications that rationalize anything, whatever the defects, have finally ambushed us into compulsive behavior and misery.

Therefore, thoroughness ought to be the watchword when taking inventory. In this connection we write it out to get clear thinking and an honest appraisal. It is our first tangible evidence of our complete willingness to move forward.

## **AND A FINAL WORD...**

Please try and quit conning yourself that you need to get into the "right mood" to take this step. You're in the right mood to take this step when you are ready to quit hurting and get well. All of our lives, we have tried to "think our way into action." This time, we must, "act our way into right thinking." We who have taken this step can tell you that it works.

We didn't know how it worked before we took it, and we can't tell you how it works after we took it...so quite worrying about that. What you are seeking is not mere "relief"...you'll get that, don't worry. What will come will be real joy in living.

Believe us, you can get it, and a giant step toward getting it is to dump the accumulated garbage that you are now carrying around.

So get your pen and paper and begin!

Final words before you start: if you honestly don't know the answer to a question, then just indicate that you don't know. But try and answer each question in the best way that you can.

And remember...if any question suggests an area of discomfort (trouble), then write it out...get it down on paper...get rid of it!

*WE STRIVE FOR PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION*

### CHILDHOOD

1. What kind of relationship did your mother have with her parents?
2. What kind of relationship did your father have with his parents?
3. Were you wanted at birth?
4. Write out the circumstances of your family at the time of your birth. Things such as:
  - a. Family size
  - b. Age differences (Your parents, brothers & sisters)
  - c. Financial status
  - d. Was there laughter?
  - e. Arguing?
  - f. Depression?
  - g. Were other relatives living with you?
  - h. Other circumstances?
5. In general, describe what you think your family thought of you.
  - a. Did you feel your parents' attitude toward you was different than other parents toward their children?
  - b. How old were you at the birth of brothers and sisters?
  - c. How did you feel about the new arrivals?
  - d. Were either of your parents sick enough to need hospitalizations?
  - e. Were you separated from any important family member?
  - f. Was there fear or guilt about this separation...in other words, did you feel responsible?
6. Were you threatened by the Boogey Man or the Devil if you misbehaved?
  - a. If so, what were your fears in this regard?
7. A child is made to feel guilty about his/her normal sexual curiosity. This comes about by his/her being caught and punished for touching himself/herself, or being caught masturbating, or playing "Doctor", or for participating in group masturbation. Many parents tell children that sexual feelings are evil and must be punished. With no sex education, and given this sort of teaching, a child will naturally distort what he/she knows about sex. When a child is exposed to fully developed nude persons

(for instance in the bathroom at home, or in public), he/she may begin to feel inadequacy in adult life, even after the person is a thoroughly developed adult.

a. Write down any of the above experiences that you have had or make you feel uneasy.

8. Did you have a difficult time pleasing one or both of your parents?
  - a. Were you constantly directed and redirected by your parents?
  - b. Did you obey docilely?
  - c. Did you have feelings of distress and boredom?
  - d. Were you afraid of the dark?
  - e. Were you afraid to fight?
  - f. Or were you afraid not to fight because of pressure from your mother or father or older brothers or sisters or others?
  
9. Did your parents submit to your whims and immature demands most of the time?
  - a. Did you have temper tantrums?
  - b. How did your parents punish you? By trying to reason, or was it physical?
  - c. How did you react to punishment?
  
10. What kind of marriage do you think your parents had?
  - a. If they fought, did you resent it?
  - b. Did it scare you?
  - c. Were you used to breaking up their fights?
  - d. Did you take one side or the other?
  - e. Were your parents preoccupied with themselves?
  - f. Did they lack awareness of your needs?
  - g. Was there an absence of affection, concern, or loving attention in your home?
  
11. If your parents were from different religions, did you feel confused about it?
  - a. What particular idea of "God" was impressed upon you?
  - b. Did you reject this concept because it seemed inadequate?
  - c. If you did reject this idea, did you imagine you had abandoned the God idea entirely?
  - d. Did your parents teach you that God was a loving God or a punishing God?
  
12. Were you afraid of storms?
  
13. List all the feelings of guilt, fear, resentments, you had toward each person in your life as a child (not your feelings now).
  
14. Did you feel you were "bad"?
  - a. Did you put yourself into situations that caused others to punish you?
  
15. List the first time that you ever stole anything?
  - a. Inventory all your childhood thefts.
  
16. How old were you when you first masturbated?
  - a. Were you ever caught and made to feel guilty?
  - b. Did you feel guilty even though you weren't caught?

c. What other kinds of sexual curiosity were you involved in (homosexual, animal, with any other members of the family, anything else)?

17. If you were named after someone, what was that person like?

18. Did your family move often?

a. If so, did you make friends and then have to break off the relationship so often that you became afraid to become close?

19. Do you remember starting school?

a. What were your feelings?

b. Try to remember each successive grade in school and as you do, write out the resentments you felt toward teachers, pupils, anyone.

c. Any fights?

d. Sights?

e. Hurts?

f. Embarrassments?

20. Did you resent your relatives, friends, or parents? If so, list them. No resentment is too small to mention. The AA Big Book states, "Resentment is the number one offender." (pg 64)

21. What kind of language did your parents use?

a. Were you ashamed of them for this or anything else?

b. Did you ever see your parents in the nude?

c. What were your feelings?

d. Did you ever see or hear your parents having sex?

e. What were your feelings?

22. In every family, a child usually has certain "chores" assigned.

a. What were yours?

b. Were they fair?

c. Could you do them in ways that would please your parents?

d. Do you remember longing for a carefree childhood because of the absence of play?

23. Did your parents seem to like your friends better than they did you?

a. Did your friends seem to like your parents better than they did you?

b. If so, did you resent this?

24. Any bad experiences at Sunday school?

a. Or at summer camp?

25. Were you an only child?

a. Did you resent this or enjoy it?

26. Did your parents want a child of the opposite sex when they had you?

a. Did they name you, or dress you, to match their sex choice?

b. Did your appearance (looks, dress, etc.) embarrass you?

c. Did you feel you were "different" from your class mates?

27. Were you treated as a nuisance or a burden?

28. Did you treat possible friends with hostility or obnoxious behavior?

a. Did you force friends to abandon friendly behavior?

29. Did you feel your parents attitude toward you was different than other parents toward their children?

Write down any other childhood memories that were painful.

Which of the above questions about childhood was the toughest for you to answer?

Do you know why?

## ADOLESCENCE

Often an adolescent relies on the misguided sex information obtained from his peers. This can produce a number of severe problems (i.e. never outgrowing the desire to have sex with the opposite parent, brother, sister...sometimes the desire for sexual activities with the parent of the same sex.) Although these are unconscious desires, they bring on conscious guilts that have to be dealt with. Distortion may come when a person is too young emotionally to handle adult sex. There is involvement because of peer pressure or the desire to please another. Not being in touch with adult feelings, pretenses set up which then leads to anger, disappointment, and guilt. These feelings, in turn, can have a tendency to prevent normal sexual and emotional growth. The guilt prevents the person from talking the feelings out with a mature adult, which may result in a need to repeat the same pattern over and over again.

1. Write down your experience concerning the above, both heterosexual and homosexual.

2. Some girls are taught that men are interested in sex only, and some boys are taught that they must be "the greatest of all time." These attitudes are destructive and damaging to the total person.

a. Have you experienced either of these attitudes?

b. Is there a pattern?

c. How has it affected you?

3. Did you have friends when you were an adolescent?

4. Did you consider friendly overtures a possible trick?

5. Did you have feelings of complete worthlessness?

6. What kind of friend were you?

7. What interest or lack of interest did you have in school?

8. How was your social life?
9. Did you participate in sports or creative activities such as music, art, etc.?
10. What were the reasons for your participation or non-participation in these activities?
11. Were you a trouble maker? If so, in what way?
  - a. Did you destroy property?
  - b. Did you resent leaders-either physical or mental?
  - c. Did what seemed to satisfy others provide no satisfaction for you?
  - d. Did you tend to drift, lack initiative, be short on persistence?
  - e. Did you feel passive discontent?
  - f. Did you resent not being the most handsome or beautiful person at school?
12. Did you feel you were a coward because you didn't want to fight?
  - a. Of did you like to fight?
  - b. Were you a bully?
  - c. If you are a boy, did you feel embarrassed because boys made fun of you or girls avoided you?
  - d. If you are a girl, did you feel embarrassed because girls made fun of you or boys avoided you?
  - e. Were you very sensitive to rebuff and almost automatically hostile?
13. Did you have a difficult time pleasing yourself?
  - a. Did it bother you if you made mistakes?
  - b. Were you overly concerned with every detail?
14. Some people feel inadequate as adults because they were at one time exposed to youngsters more developed at that time. Were you exposed to other children in gym class or the restrooms who were older than you and more developed physically?
  - a. How did you feel then?
  - b. How do you feel now?
15. Did you drift in and out of relationships?
16. Did you suffer intensely from insecurities and tend to keep people at a distance?
17. Did you feel that deep down you lacked an identity of your own?
18. Did you resent not being part of a crowd?
  - a. Or not being a leader?
  - b. Or not being "in"?
19. Were you shy or outgoing?
  - a. How are you now?
20. Does any particular type of person make you shy?

21. If you dropped out of school explain your feelings and reasons?
22. Anything happen to you in high school that was a continuing source of shame?
23. Did your parents compare you to other family members or friends?
  - a. Did you resent them for wanting you to be like someone else?
24. How did you get the attention of your family?
25. Did you have great longings for someone to care for you?
  - a. Did you make an effort to appear self-sufficient, independent of others, detached, aloof?
  - b. Did you pout, sulk, be a good child, have temper tantrums, act like a dummy?
26. Do you remember the kind of lies you told (if any)?
  - a. How did you feel when you got caught lying?
27. What was the most embarrassing incident of your adolescence?
  - a. Are there any others that you remember?
28. Did you have great difficulty in giving or receiving love and affection?
29. If sexual feeling were discounted and "put down" in your family, there is a strong possibility that you will feel guilty about them. We "catch" attitudes. A boy who's pushed to always do better, or is criticized no matter what he does, may find himself having trouble in his sexual performance as an adult. Or a girl who has been told that it is not-okay to feel sexy may grow up to dislike her own body and distrust her feelings. These attitudes create unnatural or uncomfortable sexual behavior.
  - a. Did you "catch" any of these attitudes?
  - b. Can you see such attitudes cropping up in your life now?
  - c. First sexual intercourse:
    1. What were your feelings?
    2. Did you feel guilty?
    3. Did you feel disappointed?
    4. Be as explicit about the feelings as you can.
30. List in detail any homosexual experience, masturbation fantasy, or other sexual activity that you remember from this time. Keep in mind that we are not concerned about "with whom" or "on what date" or "how often"...rather, we are concerned about how you felt about the experience.
31. Did you get someone pregnant?
  - a. Or become pregnant yourself?
  - b. What did you do and how did you feel about your actions?
32. Were you ashamed of your parents?
  - a. Were they too old, too fat, too sloppy, too drunk, etc.?
  - b. Too whatever?
33. Did you have the kind of clothes that other kids wore?

34. Did you give the spiritual side of life a fair hearing?
  - a. Did you choose to believe that your human intelligence is the last word?
35. Was there enough money for the things that you needed?
  - a. If not, were you resentful that there wasn't?
  - b. If there was, did you take it too much for granted?
  - c. Did you feel any brothers or sisters got more than you did?
  - d. Write out your feelings about money as an adolescent.
  - e. Did you tend to be impulsive?
36. Did you tend to dominate some or many aspects of your life?
37. Were you the kind of child you would want to have?
38. Were you a thief?
39. Were you ever double-promoted (skipped a grade)?
  - a. If so, did you have trouble catching-up emotionally?
  - b. Were you held back a grade?
  - c. How did you act?
  - d. How did you feel...did you feel uncomfortable because you were younger, older, than the other students?
40. Were you undependable as a friend...breaking off relationships without any explanation when someone or something who seemed better came along?
41. Did you pit one member of your family against another?
42. What was the best experience you had during this period of your life?
  - a. The worst?

We've covered a lot of ground on these questions. Now, is there anything that made you particularly uncomfortable when writing about it? Have you put down everything that you can remember now that bugged you then? Even the simplest, most nit-picking things are important if they trouble you. Put them down now.

## ADULTHOOD

1. Are you afraid of getting too close to another person for fear of being rejected?
2. Do you test your relationships repeatedly, looking for slights or any indifference in order to find some ground for complaint?
3. Do you reject others before they can reject you?
4. Are you so thin-skinned that you have trouble admitting any human weaknesses?
  - a. List some of your weaknesses that you are able to accept.

- b. How well do you accept yourself in your own humanness?
  - c. Are you able to be less defensive about these weaknesses?
5. Define Love.
- a. What do you feel it is?
  - b. Do you drift in and out of relationships?
  - c. Does it seem that people mean little to you?
  - d. Do you feel the desire for mothering/fathering?
  - e. For active caring?
  - f. For unlimited acceptance?
6. If you are married or have been married... list the things you and your mate had in common and what your goals were at the onset of your marriage.
- a. If you have been married more than once, do this with each marriage.
  - b. Now list the things that were different between you.
7. If you married a cold, unloving person, ask yourself why you chose that one to be your mate?
- a. Did you use it as an excuse to find new romances?
  - b. Was your mother or father cold and unloving...and is this your chance to get even with them through your spouse?
8. Why did you get married?
- a. Or...why haven't you gotten married?
  - b. Was the marriage for the right reasons?
  - c. Did you marry earlier than your peer group?
  - d. Later?
  - e. Do you accept or resent the responsibilities of marriage and family?
  - f. Do you share in the responsibilities for the families' problems?
9. Are you able to be cheerful when everything seems to be leading to despair?
10. Do you resist the impulse to complain to others about your situation?
- a. Are you able to forgive those who have injured you?
11. Do you continue to assume excessive responsibility if there is no longer a financial need?
12. Do you allow your family to come between you and your spouse?
13. Do you make excessive demands and expectations of your spouse?
14. Are you able to admit that you have no authority or power over any other human being?
15. Do you create a pleasant, cheerful environment?
- a. Do you try to?
16. Do you feel all human beings are basically good and sensitive?
17. Are you still a baby in your parent's eyes and take advantage of it?

- a. Do you resent it?
18. Are you a baby in the eyes of your spouse?
- a. Do you resent it?
19. Do you infringe on the rights and dignity of others?
20. Have your parents gotten you out of trouble you should have been able to handle by yourself?
21. Do you gossip about others?
22. Are you comfortable with someone who is less fortunate than you?
23. Do you know how to respond to the needs of others?
- a. To give of yourself?
24. When, and how, and in just what instances did your selfish pursuit of sex relations damage other people and yourself?
- a. What people were hurt?
  - b. How badly?
  - c. Did you spoil your marriage and injure your children?
  - d. Did you jeopardize your job or your standing in the community?
  - e. Just how did you react to these situations at the time?
  - f. Did you burn with guilt that nothing could extinguish?
  - g. Did you have bouts of depression?
  - h. Or did you insist that you were the pursued and not the pursuer...and thus absolve yourself?
25. How have you reacted to frustration in sexual matters?
- a. When denied, have you become vengeful or depressed?
  - b. Did you "take it out" on other people?
  - c. If there was rejection or coldness in your home, did you use this as a reason for promiscuity?
  - d. Did you tend to be promiscuous with little or no lasting satisfaction or emotional interchange?
26. Many people who are lonely and don't really know how to love get involved senselessly in "sexcapades." The temporary loss of loneliness makes one call sex "love," but when the sexual partner is gone, it makes for an even greater feeling of loneliness.
- a. Have you ever experienced this?
27. Are laws made for other people?
- a. Do you make up your own laws as you go along?
28. If revenge were possible right now, who would be the top people on your list?
- a. Why?
29. What are your present feelings about sex, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents,

friends, your children, your mate, your intimate friends, your job, on being a compulsive person, finances, divorce or marriage (depending on your present status).

30. What are your hopes and goals?

31. Does diversion and distraction interfere with your adult goals?

- a. Do you believe that your situation is not really hopeless and that you are capable of improving it?
- b. Are you able to feel that tomorrow will be brighter if you've had a bad day?

32. Do you use sex as a punishment or a reward?

33. How much time do you spend with your family?

- a. With the program?

34. What is your greatest fear?

35. What is your sex life like?

- a. Is it as mature as you might want it to be?
- b. Are you disappointed in your mate for not fulfilling your sexual needs?
- c. Are you careless of your partner's feelings?
- d. Write out your ideal of a healthy sex life.

36. Do you engage in sex in order to build your own ego by a feeling of conquest?

37. Are you afraid of being sexually rejected?

38. Are you ashamed of your body or the way you look?

- a. Write out what's wrong with the physical you.
- b. Write out the best things about you physically.
- c. Now write out the things about yourself that you are ashamed of.

39. Do you feel you are still trying to please your parents?

40. Do you drive yourself to the point of exhaustion?

41. Do you accept that you can only do your best?

42. Do you use people to get what you want?

43. Do you expect others to pour out love, affection, and services?

44. Do you gossip or perform "character assassination" on others in order to "make it" in the business or social world?

- a. Or do you do this in an effort to feel superior (to the one gossiped about)?

45. If you are a thief, what have you stolen?

- a. Don't forget to include employer's time and the good feelings others had and you destroyed.
- b. Have you used your employer's facilities, supplies or equipment for your personal use without permission?

46. Do you have a pattern of getting sick?
- Do you go to doctors repeatedly without finding anything organically wrong?
  - Do you use illness as an excuse to avoid responsibilities or to get attention or sympathy?
47. In business relationships, write out your resentments toward bosses and co-workers.
- Do you feel jealous of them?
  - Are you concerned that others in your office will get more money or prestige than you will?
  - Do you try to prove you can "take it" on a job that is rough and tough?
  - Do you complain about how hard you must work?
  - List all the negative feelings you have about the people involved in your work life.
  - Are you indifferent and/or careless on your job?
  - Do you think you should be the boss?
  - Do you use the excuse that your boss, or your family or friends, shouldn't expect so much of you?
  - Are you able to laugh at yourself for sometimes trying to be other than that which you are?
  - Do you feel good about yourself when you complete a job because you want to finish it?
48. If you are divorced, or getting one, write out your negative feelings about the situation and the people involved. Resentments, fears, guilts, etc., concerning your relationship with your mate, including feelings about your children.
- Do you expect the children to make a decision on which parent they love the best?
  - How well are you able to accept situations you cannot change?
  - Are you able to back away from conflict and confusion?
49. If married, write out exactly how you feel about your spouse and children.
- Are they living up to your expectations?
  - What are your expectations?
50. Do you feel that no one really understands you?
51. Is your need for affection so intense that the demands for it may be exhausting in a sexual relationship?
52. Are your expectations unreasonable?
53. How do you think you would be different if "they" were out of your life?
54. Are you uncomfortable in social situations?
- Do you have trouble introducing people to each other?
  - Are you able to relax or do you find relaxing difficult?

55. Do you still feel different from other members of the program or apart from them?
- Do you feel superior or inferior?
  - Do you avoid looking at yourself by making statements such as, "Oh well, some of us are sicker than others?"
56. Do you judge or make fun of people who appear to be less fortunate mentally, physically, or morally than you think you are?
57. Do you compare yourself to others to make yourself suffer by picking people who are further along in the program than you, or people who are talented in areas you are not?
58. Are you able to accept the facts of a situation, thereby deciding what to do about it?
59. The only person you can adequately compare yourself to is yourself:
- How were you five days ago?
  - Five weeks ago?
  - Five months ago?
  - At your first meeting?
  - How are you now?
60. List every act you swore you would take to the grave, disclosing to no one. Be open and honest. (Remember, life gave us all good and bad experiences. Usually the things you are most ashamed of are the very acts that made you try to grow into something of someone better. If you want freedom, you have to let go of it all. The AA Big Book states..."We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it...No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others..." (pg. 83-84) If you want to help bring peace into the lives of the people you will be dealing with later, you must find it in your own life first.
61. In what ways are you the responsible person?
62. Are you a tightwad?
- What are your fears concerning money?
  - Do you spend money with no thought of tomorrow?
  - Are you heavily in debt?
63. Do you try to fill your life with the gratification of impulses?
64. Is your personal appearance particularly careless or prideful?
- On sight, do you judge people by their appearance (whether sloppy or neat)?
  - Are you never satisfied with yourself or others?
65. What things make you feel greedy, envious, angry?
66. Do you strive for wealth or reputation, or both, to the exclusion of other values in life?

67. Are you scornful of ideas that weren't your own?
68. Do you tell others how bad you have been or are, or do you go to the other extreme and tell people how great you are or were? (The first communication can be pride in reserves; the second can be a way to give your ego a false sense of security).
69. Write your feelings for parents, brothers, sisters, and other family members.
- What resentments or hates do you still have?
  - What still makes you feel guilty about them?
70. Do you pad your expense account or use household money to buy things for yourself?
71. Do you feel a resentment toward another member of the program?
72. What kinds of things do you lie about the most?
73. Do you still need to play the Big Shot?
74. Do you strive for success in a desperate effort to deny inner needs, to repel the feelings of emptiness?
75. Are you hurt when people turn away and won't play your games?
76. Do you resent not getting as much attention as you did when you were brand new in the program?
77. Do you worry about other people's Higher Power not being as good as yours?
- Or maybe even better?
  - How do you feel about people who claim to be Godly?
78. What is your conception of "God as you understand Him"?
79. Are you comparing yourself with others in spiritual growth?
- Have you known someone who had a spiritual approach you wish you had?
  - Do you feel superior or inferior spiritually?
80. Do you still feel guilty about masturbation?
81. Do you feel superior because you have more education, money, brains, the "right color skin", social background, vocation, or any other seeming advantages?
- List your feelings of superiority.
82. Do you feel inferior because you have less of the above?
- List your feelings of inferiority.
83. Do you think you are superior to the general run of people?
- List all the ways in which you are different.

84. Do you think you are inferior to the general run of people?
  - a. List all the ways in which you are different.
85. Do you have a hard time getting to places on time?
86. Do you resent others who don't seem to have problems finding happiness?
87. Are you aware of any clear adult goals?
88. Do you seek enjoyment or entertainment of one kind or another but are rarely capable of thorough enjoyment?
89. Do you turn play into work? (i.e. games, sports, hobbies that are not fun or relaxing).
90. Are you still judging the outside of others by the inside of you?
91. Have you bothered to ask the people who seem happy how they got that way?
92. How much time do you spend with the welfare and happiness of others?
  - a. Have you learned how to hear other people, to see them, to know them?
93. Do you still envy people who do not appear to be compulsive?
94. Are you hostile because you don't like the hand life has dealt to you?
95. What are your present fears? List them.
96. How do you presently get other people's attention?
  - a. Pouting?
  - b. Sulking?
  - c. Temper tantrums?
  - d. Being extra good (and letting them know it)?
  - e. Playing stupid?
  - f. Frustrating others' activities?
  - g. Bitching?
  - h. Other ways?

### **SOME MORE QUESTIONS - HERE & NOW**

1. In addition to your compulsive behavior, what character defects contribute to your financial instability?
  - a. Do you tend to be impulsive about spending money?
2. Did fear and inferiority about fitness for your job destroy your confidence and fill you with conflict?
  - a. Did you try to cover up these feelings or inadequacy by bluffing, cheating, lying, or evading responsibility?

- b. Or by griping that others failed to recognize your truly exceptional abilities?
3. Are your standards for yourself unduly high?
  4. Did you overvalue yourself and play the "big shot"?
    - a. Did you have such unprincipled ambition that you double-crossed and undercut your associates?
  5. Are you extravagant?
    - a. Do you recklessly borrow money, caring little whether it is repaid or not?
  6. Are you a penny-pincher, refusing to support your family properly?
    - a. Did you try to cut corners financially?
    - b. What about "quick" money deals?

The most common symptoms of emotional insecurity are worry, anger, self-pity and depression. These stem from causes which sometimes seem to be within us, and at other times without. To take inventory in this respect we ought to consider carefully all personal relationships which bring continuous and recurring troubles. It should be remembered that this kind of insecurity may arise in any area where instincts are threatened. Questioning directed to this end might run like this: Looking at both past and present, what sex situations have caused me anxiety, bitterness, frustration or depression? Appraising each situation carefully and fairly, can you see where you have been at fault?

Did these perplexities beset you because of selfishness or unreasonable demands? Or, if your disturbance was seemingly caused by the behavior of others, why do you lack the ability to accept conditions you cannot change?

Do you feel that faith and dependency on a Higher Power is somewhat weak, even cowardly? Has your inability to accept much on faith been handicapped by obstinacy, sensitiveness, and unreasonable prejudice? Do you dissect spiritual beliefs and practices of spiritually-minded persons as a basis of wholesale condemnation? What would your choice be if you fearlessly had to face the proposition that God either is or He isn't?

These are the sort of fundamental inquiries that can disclose the source of your discomfort and indicate whether you are able to alter your own conduct and so adjust yourself to self-discipline. Suppose a particular insecurity constantly arouses the same feelings again and again. You can ask to what extent your own mistakes have fed your gnawing anxieties, and if the actions of others are part of the cause, what can you do about that? If you are unable to change the present state of affairs, are you willing to take the measures necessary to shape your life conditions as they are?

## **ACCEPTANCE OF SELF**

Am I really willing to forgive myself? It takes a great deal of humility to be ready for the final phase of your inventory. If we accept ourselves as we are, with all our shortcomings as revealed in our inventory, we can go to another human being with our inventory and reveal all there is to know about ourselves. If we are truly humble

in the sense that we are beginning to rely increasingly on our Higher Power in more of our affairs, then we are ready for the last phase.

If you made your appointment you need only to keep that appointment and verbally discuss every portion of your inventory.

Difficulties commonly experienced are:

1. Will the other person keep my inventory in confidence?
2. Will the other person laugh at me?
3. Will the other person think me silly?
4. Will the other person think me ridiculous?
5. Will the other person think me weird?
6. Will the other person think me despicable?
7. Will the other person think me base?
8. Will the other person become disgusted with me?
9. Will the other person reject me?

In taking your inventory you wrote down all these fears realizing they stem from our need to present a "good" image of ourselves to everyone. We fear that if we don't, they will have nothing to do with us. We will be isolated and outcast and, therefore, worthless. On closer examination, it is the need to "doctor" or distort our image which has been the real barrier between us and the rest of the world, which in fact do isolate us in spite-or because-of the false front we present. Nothing draws us to others, and others to us like honesty and humility. They represent true humanity and that is what really attracts us to each other.

### **REWARDS INCLUDE**

1. Feeling more a part of the human race.
2. Closer to our fellows.
3. Self worth increases.
4. A sense of well-being comes over us as never before.
5. We get an inkling of what serenity can be.

"A friend is someone who knows everything there is to know about you, and loves you in spite of it."

### **HELPFUL WEBSITES FOR RECOVERY**

#### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org>

#### **Christians in Recovery**

<http://christians-in-recovery.org>