
Carrying The Message

STEP 4 - “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

Nearly every serious emotional problem can be seen as a case of misdirected instinct. When that happens, our great natural assets, the instincts, have turned into physical and mental liabilities.

Step Four is our vigorous and painstaking effort to discover these liabilities in each of us have been and are. We want to find exactly when and where our natural desires have warped us. We wish to look squarely at the unhappiness this had caused others and ourselves. By discovering what our emotional deformities are, we can move toward their correction. Without a willing and persistent effort to do this, there can be little sobriety or contentment for us. Without a searching and fearless moral inventory, most of us have found that faith which really works in daily living is still out of reach. (Twelve and Twelve, pages 42-43)

“You are asking yourself, as all of us must: ‘Who am I?’ . . . ‘Where am I?’ . . . ‘Whence do I go?’ The process of enlightenment is usually slow. But, in the end, our seeking always brings a finding. These great mysteries are, after all, enshrined in complete simplicity.” (Bill W.)

Trustee Reflections

As I reflect back to my first fourth step I was in the mindset that I had to tell this stuff to another person which kept me from writing. As I sought help from my sponsor on this challenge she would remind me that step four is just an inventory, remove any thoughts of sharing these things with another. I was just to focus on writing the fourth step as outlined in the Big Book. If I found myself dwelling on the task I need to recite the 3rd step prayer to keep me focused. I would like to point out, once completed I experienced a feeling of elation that I followed through with competing the inventory task.

In hindsight completing step four has strengthened my trust in my relationship with my Higher Power, strengthened my sobriety and allowed me to move forward to mending relationships. *-Michele M.*

It’s hard to think about the Fourth Step without thinking about the Fifth, but all this step requires is writing and reflecting. I have worked these steps out of the Big Book and use the four column format suggested there. Even though the instructions were in the book, it was essential that I worked through this step with a sponsor. My sponsor was able to see things from a different perspective and this helped insure that my first column was complete. *-Jess N.*

When I first approached this step I remember thinking how much this was against my nature. There was no way that I wanted to look at all the things I had done in the past and really didn't want to know the kind of person I was. I told my sponsor I’m not sure I could do this and be as honest as I need to be. His response was typical for him “Craig before you start, why don’t you pray and ask God to help you put down what you need to say and not what you think you have to say”. I took his advice and prayed quite a lot about the step. I asked God to give me the courage to move forward and strength to do what had to be done. As I put pen to paper words began to flow, almost as if they had a mind of their own. Once I was done I looked closely at my words and I began to see a pattern of behavior that clearly was the product of an alcoholic life and alcoholic thinking. A pattern of not only who I was but who I was capable of becoming if I continued down that path. At that point my 4th Step became an incentive for change and a clear concept of the work that had to be done for me to be the kind of man God meant me to be. *-Craig S.*

If you have any comments or would like to provide your reflections on Step 4,

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