

Suggestions of a Way to Do the 12 Steps with a Sponsor

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STEPS ONE, TWO & THREE

For Steps One, Two and Three, we read by ourselves from the Big Book, starting with the “Preface”, and underscore or highlight any words or anything we may have questions about or that is pertinent to us in any way. We look up any words that we think there is even a slight possibility that we might not know the meaning of, and write that in the margin or in a notebook. We then meet with our sponsor each week, reading together, asking any questions we have, sharing with each other about what we have read or about what is pertinent to us. Once we have finished reading and sharing on Step Three, we kneel if possible, and say the Third Step Prayer together. Our sponsor may ask us if we are now willing to share about these steps after we have concluded with other people who are interested in doing this work. After completing Step Three, before we meet with our sponsors next, we will buy a lined spiral notebook, as we are about to start on Step Four, and are ready to begin writing our Resentment List of People, Institutions, and Principles.

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STEP FOUR

Resentment Inventory – “The List” (Step 4)

We make a list of the names of people, principles and institutions towards whom we held a resentment. We say the Third Step Prayer, asking our Higher Power to guide our thinking and our pen, and then we write the names of people that come to mind. When we can no longer think of any names, we move on to the Principles and Institutions and do the same. You can number them if you choose. Some people find it easier to go through one’s life chronologically. The object is to be thorough. One need not worry about being too petty. The time frame for this list ranges from one’s earliest memories to the present day. One definition of resentment is to re-feel. However, it is not necessary to name a person, principle or institution that evokes only unpleasant memories. Some of the feelings may be strong like anger, frustration, fear, shame, hurt, prejudice, hatred, violence, revenge, etc. Other feelings may be a little less intense such as embarrassment, insecurity, blame, avoidance, withdrawal, etc. Other feelings may seem minor such as petty jealousy or envy, impatience, dislike, not meshing with another, small annoyances, sadness, etc.

Begin by making a list of people that evoke resentments in you. It is possible a name may come up with a vague feeling of distrust or some indescribable sensation (not positive). Put that name down. It is not important at this time to explore the resentment. It is just a list, and you will go over it with your sponsor.

Some examples of people, principles and institutions

People: The obvious people are our immediate family and relatives, past and present friends, teachers, students, employers, co-workers, employees, associates in the program, spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriends or girlfriends, ministers, etc. You may also include people we have never met such as movie stars, politicians, models, leaders or personalities of other countries, etc.

May include groups of people of political, religious or ethnic groups such as Jews, Whites, Blacks, Koreans, Mexicans, Catholics, Nazis, Democrats, Republicans, Socialists, etc.

May include professional people such as lawyers or doctors, people that have successes in something we want or envy such as models, actors, musicians, artists, poets, computer whizzes, geniuses, explorers, Olympians, sports figures.

May include pets or animals.

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May include strangers whose name we don't know. Example: A person who I was behind on State St. and who drove so slowly I was late for work on Monday simply can be listed as "Driver on State Street, Monday".

Be sure to list yourself and God if applicable.

Principles: The rules and laws which govern our lives.

Legal Laws

Laws surrounding motor vehicles/driving: speed limits, yellow light, drunk driving laws, equipment regulations, inspection, emissions, tailgating, stopping for pedestrians and crosswalks.

Taxation Laws: Income tax, social security, property/sales/car registration taxes, gas taxes, cigarette taxes, phone tax, school tax.

Other laws such as divorce laws, draft registration, environmental laws, required school attendance laws, hunting/fishing laws, legal-holiday laws, minimum wage amounts, laws against drugs, drinking age, etc.

Natural Laws of Nature

Process of aging, change, time, gravity, overeating causing weight gain, less daylight in the winter, NH climate, black flies birth in the spring, sex and pregnancy being related, inevitability of illness, inevitability of death, childbirth being often painful, what goes around comes around, nature of alcoholism, the necessity of accepting God's will for us in order to be sane, etc.

Non-legal Laws of Society

Include rules of behavior in one's society and in others' societies, past or present, such as customs and manners, social taboos, social expectation, dress codes, grooming, codes.

Using the correct eating utensils in order to be proper, not dating or marrying a fairly distant relative, circumcision customs, men having to wear ties at work, women having to wear dresses or suits or hosiery, men's jackets or ties required in fine restaurants, women must wear makeup or not wear too much, or red nail polish, or whatever, not being able to wear large or any earrings at work, sending Thank You cards, Christmas cards, gifts at Christmas, visiting family on holidays, waiting in line, sexual double standards, Big Book Step Study "rules", such as not speaking at meeting till the process is done, introducing one's self with certain words, writing every day, giving it away.

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Resentments against certain prevailing cultural ideas which guide our behavior can be listed as certain sayings. Be sure these fall under widely accepted ideas.

Some Examples: "Boys will be boys." "Children should be seen and not heard." "Less pay for the same work." "Boys are superior in science and girls are superior in English."

Institutions: Can be historical institutions or present day, i.e. governments (foreign and local), church, certain religions, law enforcement agencies, schools, prisons, rehab, hospitals, Department of Motor Vehicles, IRS, insurance companies, 12 Step Programs such as Al-Anon, AA, NA, or OA, corporations, labor unions, banks, collection agencies, the AMA car companies, etc.

*It is suggested to leave a page in our notebook blank between each of the above three lists (**people**, **principles**, and **institutions**). This is in case forgotten names come up and need to be added.*

Helpful Hint: When unsure as to whether or not you have a resentment, consider that person, institution or principal and ask, "Is there something about he or she or it that I don't like or want to change? If so, put that name down.

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Resentment Inventory – “Cause” & “Affects” (Step 4)

Name: (a person, principle, or institution) **Example:** My father.

The Cause: *I’m hurt, angry, upset, resentful, etc. [...]*

Keep the resentment short, two to three lines is sufficient. It is important to be very specific as opposed to stating a “generalized grievance”, such as, “He ignores me”. It would be better to state an incident such as, “He turned and walked away from me Saturday when I tried to talk to him”. Another example of being specific rather than vague would be, “She raised her voice to a fevered pitch when I tried to explain my side of the story with Jeff”, rather than, “She always tries to intimidate me”. Avoid the use of the word never or always but rather list specific situations. In an effort to be specific, one might go overboard and repeat oneself unnecessarily: “She likes to interrupt me when I am talking about my kids and then starts talking about the achievements of hers” works better than stating each incident of the same behavior such as, “She interrupted me at the party when I was talking about my eldest daughter and talked about her daughter Jan”. “She interrupted me during our conversation at Pizza Hut when I talked about Billy and started to talk about her son instead”. When I was showing her pictures of Anna’s wedding, she began to talk about her daughter’s wedding instead”. In that case if it’s specific, repetitive behavior, it can be grouped up into one cause. Also, if for instance you have the same or similar resentments against ten different insurance agencies, you can group that all into one cause. If necessary, you can give a little explanation when you read it to your sponsor.

Example: *I’m angry at my father. He screamed at me and called me stupid in front of my friends because he found out we snuck into the movies and didn’t pay.*

Affects my: Personal Relations; Physical Security; Pride; Ambition; Financial Security; Sex Relations; Self-esteem; (fear).

Always put (fear) at the end. Fear is often the root cause of all of our resentments or problems.

Example: *Personal Relations; Pride; Self-esteem; (fear).*

Some definitions that may help you identify what was hurt or threatened in you:

Self-esteem: Our opinion of ourselves, how we feel about ourselves, self-respect, self-worth.

Pride: High or inordinate opinion of one’s own dignity or importance.

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Ambition: An eager desire for some achievement, power, recognition, wealth or personal gain, etc.

Financial security: Sense of security based on one's finances, assets or source of income.

Personal relations: Dealings between persons. Our relationships with others, how we feel about others or treat them.

Sex relations: Sex relations with that particular person, another person, or an effect on your sexuality in general.

(Fear): We always include the bracketed word fear with the effects because when the above are threatened or affected, fear (alarm, dread, terror and trepidation) will exist. (You'll go into fears more thoroughly on the Fear List Portion of the inventory later on.)

It is important to pray and keep writing on a regular basis each day if possible to keep flowing along with this. While it is important to give this part a lot of honest thought and never rush through it, it is good to not really overly focus on these resentments to the point of suffering or getting worked up again and getting stuck in the past. It is helpful to be more like an "observer to our thoughts and feelings". Sometimes it may be necessary to experience some pain while digging this stuff up. That's ok. Eventually, many things will be revealed to us by God...some humorous, some painful but it is a process and as we do this process we grow slowly each day towards understanding and healing, and we continue to become closer and closer to God and to trust and rely on God which brings us to a wonderful place.

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Resentment Inventory – Turn Arounds (Step 4)

Selfish: What did I want and why, or what didn't I want and why? (The **root** of the answer to this question is usually that we want some person, place, thing, situation, something to be different than what it is so that we will feel good about ourselves or about others or about some situation. **Example:** *I wanted my father to be different so I would feel good about myself and about him, and not be humiliated in front of my friends.*

Dishonest: What is the lie I tell or told myself or others? What is the truth regarding that lie? (*Example: Lie – It was ok to sneak into the movies and not pay. Truth – It was not ok to sneak into the movies and not pay.*) Was I insincere? Did I deny or omit? Don't know all the facts; Denial of reality; Is there something I'm missing here? Didn't take steps to protect myself; Not discussing the problem; Do I have unreasonable expectations of myself or others; Set myself up; My self-worth is dependent on others' opinions or behaviors; Did I express my true feelings? Did I assume? Do I expect people to read my mind? Need for validation; Is this my concern, any of my business? Did I see the situation as it really is? Am I playing God? What is my motive? Not doing my job; Used (fill in the blanks) to discredit others; Did I lie, steal or cheat? Did I steal things, money, time, emotions, energy? Did I cheat - games, studies, fooling around? Did I break the law, not report inappropriate behavior? Am I not being myself; Am I being hypocritical? (Is this something I myself did, or I do or want to do? etc.)

Self-Seeking: (What did I do to get what I wanted? What were my symptoms/behaviors?) Media addiction; Drinking; Drugging; Food, (or any other addictions); Silent treatment; Suspicions; Drop subtle hints, Crying; Retaliation; People pleasing; Obsessing; Isolation; Avoidance; Inwardly seething to a boil; To be violently agitated; Gave power to other's opinions or behaviors;

What did I do or try to do to control a person or situation? Examples: Intimidation; Verbal abuse; Physical abuse; Anger; Force; Property destruction.

What did I do, say, or think to make myself look right or good? Manipulation - Examples: Trying to get my way by plotting, sneaking, pressuring, lecturing, making people feel guilty, being falsely kind, etc., in order to get what I want; Negative attention; Disrespectful; An untruth; Slander; Lying; Putting others down; Critical; Beat self up; Character assassination; Indignant; Extreme contempt; Unkind behavior; Facial expressions (like sneering or disgust). Revenge; Ill will; Gossip; Angry; Agitated; Impatient; Blame; Retaliation; Revenge; Being the martyr; Self pitying; Judging; Unkind; Obsessing; Sulk, Sullen, Glum.

Fear: (What am I afraid of?) Fear of being alone; Abandonment; Rejection; Expressing my true feelings; Being different; Being ordinary, not important, boring; Others' opinions;

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Death; Illness; Failure; Success; Not being liked, loved, good enough; Not being in control; Being controlled; Being controlling; Powerlessness; Being overpowering; Not getting what I want, when I want it, keeping what I have, or losing what I have or had; Not giving enough; Not having enough; Not doing enough; Not being enough; Not being desirable; Not getting any attention; Financial insecurity; Wealth; Failure as a daughter, son, father, mother, etc. Being left out, not included; Of being “wrong”; Being defective; Of feeling “less than”; Not being respected; Fear of Bodily Harm; Of being taken advantage of; Of being fat; Of being vulnerable; Of Confrontation; Humiliation; Intimidation; Of being physically, verbally, sexually or emotionally abused or of abusing others in those ways; Of being neglected; Of neglecting others; Of not being responsible in some way; Of taking on too much responsibility; Of being criticized; Being critical; Being betrayed; Not knowing; Being stupid; Being intelligent; Being unlovable or unable to express love or show your feelings; Asking questions; Guilt; Not having friends; To be myself. **(After we have written our Turn Arounds for a while, we start to read Step Ten and Step Eleven every night or every morning.**

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Fear Inventory (Step 4)

- 1. What am I afraid of?** Example: *Going crazy.*
- 2. Where did I get this fear? Where did it originate from?** Example: *I visited my Aunt in a mental institution and I felt fearful because I felt out of control and was afraid mental illness was hereditary and I would go crazy.*
- 3. Why do I have this fear?** Answer by beginning the sentence with “I trust and rely on myself.” In a simple sentence state how self-reliance failed you in dealing with this fear. Examples: *I trust and rely on myself for my well being, always trying to project worst case scenarios so I can guard and protect myself by manipulating and controlling or I deny I have this fear and don't seek help or share this with anyone so it will go away, or I can pretend I'm above it, or strong.*
- 4. What should I have done instead?** The answer is always the same. *Trust and rely on God.*

That answer is sufficient. If however you would like to write out a little more, you can add. Example: “Trust and rely on God...for guidance, courage or for right understanding in dealing with this fear,” or... to play whatever role He assigns.” Whatever applies. Take care NOT to define what YOU think God's help specifically should be. Leave it to God to decide what the help is to be. An example of writing too much would be “Trust and rely on God to help me never develop mental problems and end up needing psychiatric help.” The idea is to practice turning the problem and the answer over to God's will for us. We are trying to learn to look to God, not ourselves (self reliance), for solutions.

- 5. What would my life be like without this fear?**

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Sex Conduct Inventory (Step 4)

In this portion of the Fourth Step Inventory, we will be reviewing one's own sex conduct.

Make a list of names. It is helpful to go through one's life chronologically. Names should include:

People, etc., that we had actual sex with or were physical with in a sexual way. Persons we deliberately lured with sex (enticing, taking hostage, keeping interested with the promise and lure of sex). Persons we fantasize about in obsessive ways. It is not necessary to list anyone you ever had a fleeting sexual thought about. A key word here might be "obsessive".

When we have completed our list, we then ask ourselves the following questions for each name listed:

1. Where had I been **selfish**?
2. Where had I been **dishonest**?
3. Where had I been **inconsiderate**?
4. Whom had I **hurt**?
5. Did I arouse **jealousy**?
6. Did I arouse **suspicion**?
7. Did I arouse **bitterness**?
8. Where was I **at fault**?
9. What should I have done **instead**?

You will be reviewing your sex conduct using the questions above to help identify what has motivated you sexually in the past, what harms you may have done to others, including yourself, and to ultimately conclude with the creation of a personal Sex Ideal by which you guide your actions in the future.

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STEP FIVE

We read everything we have written in Step 4 to our sponsor, trying as best we can to not leave anything out. As soon as possible after the reading of Step Five is concluded, we go on to Steps Six and Seven. We take an hour of quiet time with God to review the first five proposals and we ask ourselves if we have omitted anything, is our work solid so far? If not, we immediately call our sponsor and talk about it.

STEPS SIX and SEVEN

We take an hour of quiet time with God. We thank God, review the first 5 proposals, and we ask ourselves if we have omitted anything, is our work solid so far? If not, we immediately call our sponsor and talk about it. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all – every one? If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing. When ready, we say the Seventh Step Prayer.

STEPS EIGHT and NINE

We look over our Fourth Step List, and we list any people we have harmed, making sure we are not including any people who would be harmed by our amends. If unsure, put them on the list and talk it over with your sponsor. We are trying to clean our side of the street, so we put aside in our minds any harm that others have caused us. Some people we will write a letter to and send it; some people we will write a letter to and not send it; some people we will write what we call a graveside letter; some people we will make living amends to; some people we will make financial amends to. After you have written each letter, you will read it to your sponsor and make sure it is a clean amends. It is suggested to bring the letter and read it to the person when you make the amends. Before we make an amend, we take quiet time with God, and immediately before, we try to remember to ask for God's guidance. It can be helpful to call someone before making an amend.

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STEP TEN

Having made some amends, we are now on Step 10. This form of Step Ten can be a daily solution to our resentments, hurts, frustrations, disappointments, anger, etc., against others, or ourselves, or God, or the universe. Try to be mindful during the day, noting any resentments, fears, hurts, anger, discomfort, and do a Tenth Step as soon as possible, and then read it to your sponsor. BB, pp. 85, "If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-Conscious."

Cause & Affects (Step 10)

Name: A person, principle or institution. **Example:** *My father.*

The Cause: *I'm resentful, angry, hurt, upset at _____.* Keep the resentment short, two or three lines is sufficient. If necessary, you can give a little explanation when you read it to your sponsor. **Example:** *I'm angry at my father. He screamed at me and called me stupid in front of my friends because he found out we snuck into the movies and didn't pay.*

Affects my: (Always put *(fear)* at the end. Fear is often the root cause of all of our resentments or problems.) Personal Relations; Physical Security; Pride; Ambition; Financial Security; Sex Relations; Self-esteem (*fear*). **Example:** *Personal Relations; Pride; Self-esteem; (fear).*

Turn Arounds (Step 10)

Selfish: What did I want and why, or what didn't I want and why? (The root of the answer to this question is usually that we want some person, place, thing, situation, something to be different than what it is so that we will feel good about ourselves or about others or about some situation). **Example:** *I wanted my father to be different so I would feel good about myself and about him, and not be humiliated in front of my friends.*

Dishonest: What is the lie I tell or told myself or others? What is the truth regarding that lie? (Example: *Lie – It was ok to sneak into the movies and not pay. Truth – It was not ok to sneak into the movies and not pay.*) Was I insincere? Did I deny or omit? Don't know all the facts; Denial of reality; Is there something I'm missing here? Didn't take steps to protect myself; Not discussing the problem; Do I have unreasonable expectations of myself or others; Set myself up; My self-worth is dependent on others' opinions or behaviors; Did I express my true feelings? Did I assume? Do I expect people to read my mind? Need for validation; Is this my concern, any of my business?

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Did I see the situation as it really is? Am I playing God? What is my motive? Not doing my job; Used (fill in the blanks) to discredit others; Did I lie, steal or cheat? Did I steal things, money, time, emotions, energy? Did I cheat – games, studies, fooling around? Did I break the law, not report inappropriate behavior? Am I not being myself; Am I being hypocritical? (Is this something I myself did, or do or want to do? etc.)

Self-seeking: (What did I do to get what I wanted? What were my symptoms/behaviors?) Media addiction; Drinking; Drugging; Food, (or any other addictions); Silent treatment; Suspicions; Drop subtle hints, Crying; Retaliation; People pleasing; Obsessing; Isolation; Avoidance; Inward seething to a boil; To be violently agitated; Gave power to other's opinions or behaviors;

What did I do or try to do to control a person or situation? Examples: Intimidation; Verbal abuse; Physical abuse; Anger; Force; Property destruction.

What did I do, say, or think to make myself look right or good? Manipulation – Example: Trying to get my way by plotting, sneaking, pressuring, lecturing, making people feel guilty, being falsely kind, etc., in order to get what I want; Negative attention; Disrespectful; An untruth; Slander; Lying; Putting others down; Critical; Beat self up; Character assassination; Indignant; Extreme contempt; Unkind behavior; Facial expressions (like sneering or disgust). Revenge; Ill will; Gossip; Angry; Agitated; Impatient; Blame; Retaliation; Revenge; Being the martyr; Self pitying; Judging; Unkind; Obsessing; Sulk, Sullen, Glum.

Fear: (What am I afraid of?)

Fear of being alone; Abandonment; Rejection; Expressing my true feelings; Being different; Being ordinary, not important, boring; Others' opinions; Death; Illness; Failure; Success; Not being liked, loved, good enough; Not being in control; Being controlled; Being controlling; Powerlessness; Being overpowering; Not getting what I want, when I want it, keeping what I have, or losing what I have or had; Not giving enough; Not having enough; Not doing enough; Not being enough; Not being desirable; Not getting any attention; Financial insecurity; Wealth; Failure as a daughter, son, father, mother, etc. Being left out, not included; Of being "wrong"; Being defective; Of feeling "less than"; Not being respected; Fear of Bodily Harm; Of being taken advantage of; Of being fat; Of being vulnerable; Of Confrontation; Humiliation; Intimidation; Of being physically, verbally, sexually or emotionally abused or of abusing others in those ways; Of being neglected; Of neglecting others; Of not being responsible in some way; Of taking on too much responsibility; Of being criticized; Being critical; Being betrayed; Not knowing; Being stupid; Being intelligent; Being unlovable or unable to express love or show your feelings; Asking questions; Guilt; Not having friends; To be myself.

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Fear Inventory (Step 10)

Choose a fear from your Fears in the Turn Arounds.

- 1. What am I afraid of?** Example: *Being verbally abused.*
- 2. Where did I get this fear? Where did it originate from?** Example: *When I was a child, my father would scream at me, and sometimes in front of other people.*
- 3. Why do I have this fear?** Answer by beginning the sentence with “I trust and rely on myself.” In a simple sentence state how self-reliance failed you in dealing with this fear. Examples: *I trust and rely on myself for my well being, always trying to project worst case scenarios so I can guard and protect myself by manipulating and controlling or I deny I have this fear and don't seek help or share this with anyone so it will go away, or I can pretend I'm above it, or strong.*
- 4. What should I have done instead?** The answer is always the same. *Trust and rely on God.*

That answer is sufficient. If however you would like to write out a little more, you can add. Example: “Trust and rely on God...for guidance, courage or for right understanding in dealing with this fear,” or... to play whatever role He assigns.” Whatever applies. Take care NOT to define what YOU think God's help specifically should be. Leave it to God to decide what the help is to be. An example of writing too much would be “Trust and rely on God to help me never develop mental problems and end up needing psychiatric help.” The idea is to practice turning the problem and the answer over to God's will for us. We are trying to learn to look to God, not ourselves (self reliance), for solutions.

- 5. What would my life be like without this fear?**

Read this 10th Step to your sponsor or a trusted friend. Or having a Tenth Step Buddy is a wonderful way to encourage us to continue to do our Tenth Step work.

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STEP ELEVEN

We have a daily spiritual practice that works for us. We deepen our conscious contact with God through meditation and prayer. Take time to talk to God and get out into nature to experience great peace and joy. We read spiritual books, listen to spiritual audios, if that is possible for us. We write 2-way prayers or journals. The important goal is to be mindful of the presence of God in every aspect of our lives and to practice knowing God's will for us and asking God to help us to carry out His will.

STEP TWELVE

Once we have completed our prior steps, made some of our amends and are continuing to make our amends, we are then living in Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve. Carrying this message to others will come naturally to us and we will enjoy this experience and see it as an unmerited gift. Practicing these principles in all our affairs will bring us to a place of peace and serenity with an inner sense of well being and acceptance of ourselves and of others.

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