

4th and 5th Step Guides

From the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Available at www.AAstepguides.com

I) Starting at this time (yes, now), the sponsee (person doing the inventory) begins reading aloud these instructions... The point of this 4th step guide is to facilitate anyone, regardless of how new, to be able to successfully, with understanding, get through and/or effectively take someone through the 4th and 5th steps. This guide simplifies the 4th step in that excluding the overview page and the first two columns, there is an explanation/instruction page for each column (it would be entirely impossible to successfully complete columns one & two separately). It is as simple as reading the instruction page for a column and then filling out the column, then reading the next instruction page and filling out the next column, etc. It is critical that the 4th step, like all others, be done with a sponsor, rather than alone - It's a "We" Program!

II) In some areas of the country/world sponsors say go home, get a pen, and start writing "something" – hence this elaboration on Bill W's instructions. In others, sponsors believe that a sponsee should work on their 4th step only in the physical presence of their sponsor. Opinions vary. These instructions to the 4th step will not infringe upon any view, from conservative to extreme. Regardless of length, a thorough inventory will likely require more than one session. Hardly anyone can purge their entire memory in a sitting or two. So, while circumstances vary, the 4th step generally spans from about one to four weeks at the least and most. Yet, there's no need to badger the sponsee if they're not setting up times to meet and follow through. Not everyone chooses to do the work and stay sober. Many balk during the 4th step despite their sponsor and their approach to it. We try to be assertive but, we don't push the program on others. It's a program of attraction, not promotion. If they are not doing the work, then they are still in self reliance and choosing to not treat their disease. The treatment for this disease is "God could and would if He were sought". The steps are how we seek. This "seeking" (not necessarily the "finding") is what brings us a daily reprieve from our disease.

III) During this first session, the sponsee is provided/sent home with only pages 1 through 4 of this guide, the three inventory lists (Resentments, Fears, & Sex Conduct), and a blank inventory form (the sponsee will need to make additional copies of blanks as needed).

IV) After we help them get started, we let the sponsee make as much progress as possible on the first two columns of each of the three lists. Folded over and stapled/taped, the rest of columns on each list are covered and remain undisclosed. Each time a column is finished on all three lists... **1)** the sponsee notifies the sponsor: **a)** who may still be there in his/her presence **b)** to schedules a sit-down or **c)** to confirm a prescheduled meeting **2)** the sponsor and sponsee check over the work done in the column just worked for each of the lists; if necessary, the sponsor respectfully assists. **3)** When satisfactorily completed, the instructions for the next column are provided to, read aloud by, and discussed with the sponsee. **4)** The new column (only) being worked on each of the three lists is then physically revealed **by the sponsor.** **5)** The sponsor entertains any and all questions regarding the column headings and instructions for the newly revealed column on all of the three lists before the process continues. **6)** Proceeding in this manner, the sponsee will have a complete set of the instructions for the 4th and the 5th steps by the beginning of the 5th step session.

Preparation: If you are not recently familiar with the first three steps then, that is where your preparation begins. Next, if you haven't read the 4th step in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous within the last week, re-read it now. Begin at the first paragraph after the three pertinent ideas at the end of Chapter 5's "How It Works". (Pg. 60 in the 3rd edition). Be sure to have also recently read the 4th Step in Bill W's. (Our co-founder) book the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Starting Point: Our fourth step "inventory" begins best with a review of the first three steps. Let's confirm that our "reliance" has shifted from self to a Higher Power, in the first three steps; this is crucial! Already having a working knowledge of them and having worked steps one through three, begin with a brief review of the "concepts" behind the first three steps, the three pertinent ideas (a, b, & c at the end of how it works), and the 3rd Step Prayer (Pg. 63 of 3rd Edition).

- 1) We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
 - (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.
- 2) Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
 - (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.
 - (c) That God could and would if He were sought.
- 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood him*.

3rd Step Prayer

"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.