



Willamette Valley Central Office

687 Cottage Street NE

Monday - Friday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

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April, The 4th Month

Step 4

"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Tradition 4

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole."

Step 4 is considered to be the big written inventory step. And we have seen many, many ways in which it is recommended to be taken. A variant in the 12&12 uses the "seven deadly sins" as its basis. An early member of AA used a list of 20 defects of character as his outline. Many sponsors propose a life history be written. And, of course, the Hazelden people have a variety of guidance systems. There is even a PC computer approach that asks all sorts of revealing questions about one's sex and family life. If you are reluctant to take this step,



then you may want to procrastinate further by exploring all these alternatives in depth before you start—at some future date. If, on the other hand, you want to get on with the sober life, then let's get on with the tried and true method in the Big Book. It consists of five lists. The words that follow here will then assist you, but don't forget that your reading, discussing and understanding the Big Book in depth is essential. Do not rely solely upon the document in hand.

A written inventory. Between pages 64 and 71 you will discover at least 10 clear statements that your inventory is to be *written*. Please look them up now. Unless you are physically handicapped, there are no exceptions to a *written* inventory. Put aside your tape recorder, and get out your pen and paper. If you type with a high level of expertise and think freely at a keyboard, your sponsor, however, might allow a typewriter or PC.

But, remember that you are not writing the great American novel here. To do so would be a gross imposition upon the person with whom you will take your fifth step. Moreover, the thought of setting forth your life history completely misses the point. You are to write an inventory—not a narrative. And, what is an inventory? In 1939 Webster said it was, "...an itemized list of goods and valuables [stock or a person's qualities], with their estimated worth;..." The preferred synonym is LIST, and that's exactly what you are to do—write the list(s) outlined by the Big Book

And then there's this

LAST week someone asked the question, "Why an inventory? Why is Step Four suggested?" That's a good question and I wish I had a fast answer for it. Certainly I couldn't even try in the short time of this meeting. I'd have to attempt a story centuries old--of philosophies and religions ancient, medieval and modern; of the present day views in psychoanalysis and psychiatry. That's a history of aid to mankind which is a bit beyond my scope.

It occurs to me though, that if we think about how an inventory is

taken in AA we may then realize why it is suggested and why it is an aid to sober living. I think all of us take it but you will meet with some in AA, sober for years, who will tell you that they never took an inventory. Well, maybe so, but I can't help but think they are probably kin to those people who tell you they never said a prayer--maybe so.

First of all, be sure we don't let this Step Four scare us. Don't let us read into it any demand for an examination of life going back to childhood. Don't let us think that this is an attempt at self-analysis; nor should we let it become an enumeration or rehash of old transgressions that should long be buried. I suggest it is an inventory of our present day self, an attempt to find the mistakes we are now making. We want to find the things we are doing that are wrong, unwise or improper. For our purpose here the word moral means what is right or what is wrong. Are we conducting ourselves properly or improperly? It is as simple as that.

So let's see how it is done. Sometimes it is done backwards and maybe a bit too late. Let's suppose that you or I, in our first months in AA, determined to stay away from that first drink; yet we stop at our favorite bar each night after work just for a coke. Comes the night we stay for two cokes, just to be friendly with the old crowd, maybe even to talk about the good old days when we could drink and had so much fun. We can keep this up for quite a while and get to like it real well. One night we might get the idea we could try a beer--just one. Maybe at this point we take an inventory, or maybe we are not so lucky. Then the inventory is taken after the beer or after the binge, but the inventory is taken. Now we learn that the tavern visits, old barroom friends and reliving the old days were a mistake, and this behavior was not too wise.

Or let's imagine another situation: you or I--we are in AA for awhile. Some things straightened out, others not. Then for an extended period of time we allow our innermost thoughts to concentrate on those circumstances in our lives that make for sadness or regret. There can be one big regret or many small ones. This makes for gloom in everything around us. We don't allow ourselves ever to think of the many other things for which we could be grateful. Finally comes a bitter resentment against those we hold responsible for this great sadness of the past and present. What happens? We feel self-pity--a sense of being abused or imposed upon; then we experience the desire for relief and escape or just stay down in the dumps. The thought of drink has its appeal. Maybe it is even taken. But for those of us who are sober today an inventory is taken somewhere along the line--maybe early, maybe later, maybe too late. Eventually we learn that living in our dreadful past, feeling self-pity, ingratitude and resentment are all mistakes--

mistakes that we eliminate if we wish to live soberly and with ease.

You've heard of the situation where someone we know carries on a constant warfare with the boss at work or the spouse at home. Constant bickering--we find fault, they find fault, they use tough language, we answer with tougher replies; they dig up the past, we reply with something worse--results in utter frustration, unhappiness, bitterness. We must break out of this situation somehow. Sooner or later an inventory of ourselves is taken; then we know that these explosions are not for us. If we've had any practice with Step Four the inventory comes sooner rather than later.

These are rather glaring and obvious examples of how an inventory is taken. I've been through each one of these episodes and lots more. Maybe they point up that all of us have taken a moral inventory of ourselves, in one form or another, many times in recent weeks. We neglected to do so in our drinking days when everyone else was wrong and only we were right.

Of course there are other instances where our mistakes may not be quite as glaring and obvious as those just mentioned. Sometimes our mistakes may be more subtle, down deeper, hidden even from us. Perhaps that is why AA has suggested a searching and fearless inventory. Many mistakes must be searched out and faced fearlessly. It's not easy to admit mistakes, nor is it easy to acknowledge that some of the habitual behavior that has long supported our ego is a mistake.

Fortunately not all of us delay taking inventory until real trouble engulfs us. When we recognize the difficulties of other alcoholics and accept the experience of AAs some of us will check ourselves. We frequently find that we are making the same mistakes which trapped others. Because we have the same illness that others in AA have, we may see that our errors and mistakes are also probably similar and that continued gratification of emotional whims is not the wisest procedure.

We have mentioned a few instances which indicate how some of us have taken our inventory--some before we encounter new trouble, some while in the throes of dangerous emotions and some, unfortunately, after we have slipped. I don't see how we can avoid taking inventory if continued sobriety is to be attained.

This is another short account of how a part of AA works. We read in the literature that inventory is suggested and we see how other alcoholics do it. We try it for ourselves and then we realize why it is a part of the AA program.

TRADITION FOUR

TRUE freedom is not doing what we want, but doing as we ought. There is no government in Alcoholics Anonymous, no rules or regulations. Each group may do as its members wish; they are autonomous. But to live in true freedom they ought to take every care that their actions do not interfere with other groups or contravene AA principles lest we lose our freedom. Our freedom only lives by our willingness to give to others that same right.

Tradition Four Checklist

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.

- 1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in AA?**
- 2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? Of nearby groups? Of Loners in Alaska? Of Internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?**
- 3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?**
- 4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?**
- 5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths-his lengths, not mine-to stay sober?**
- 6. Do I share my knowledge of AA tools with other members who may not have heard of them?**

Autonomy

WHENEVER I read Tradition Four, "Each group should be autonomous. . .," the word that leaps to my mind is "spontaneity." As I grow older in the Fellowship, it seems to me that what I value most is the healthy and spontaneous expression of sincere feeling from my fellow AAs. We are accustomed to the unstudied behavior of pets and children, but adults often bear unusual and unnecessary burdens

of inhibition that hamper the free communication of ideas and attitudes. In AA, we begin to find ourselves. We begin to discover that we truly are like others, but that each of us is unique. It is the same world we share, but our perspectives are various, and the lenses through which we view it are not all alike.

And what could be more spontaneous than the determination of one or more persons to start a new meeting? Even after much reflection, there comes a moment when we feel, "Yes, it's the thing to do." One day, I was walking along in front of a local church. I was only casually acquainted with the pastor, but something about "responsibility" on the bulletin board caught my attention. I immediately turned in, entered his study, and said, "I want to start an AA meeting here." He seemed only mildly astonished, thought it might be a good idea, and said he would bring it before the trustees. Thirty days later, we had our first meeting. Our meeting is now three years old and going strong. Only the higher power we discuss so often could have caused me to turn in that day, for I have never been a joiner, and certainly not a starter.

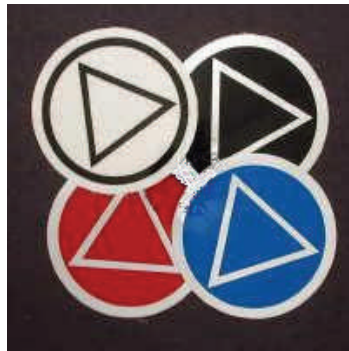
I believe that each meeting should, and does, have a special character of its own. Most of us have learned that while we enjoy any meeting, we are more comfortable in some than in others. A few meetings are very spiritual, tending almost to the religious. Others concentrate on basic AA and the specific alcoholic problems we all share. In our group, we tend to be rather philosophical, concerned with the day-to-day problems we have as we see them against the background of our alcoholic illness. Our basic format differs in no way from that used in other meetings in this area and if there is a new person at the meeting, we become very basic. Nevertheless, I think we have the special character I spoke of. I think we should cherish these differences in the same way we affectionately accept the quirks and peculiarities of our friends--the very quirks that are a part of their special charm or wisdom.

P. C. Lafayette, California

[October 1979](#)

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How It Works

Once upon a time an alcoholic awoke to find himself lying in a deep pit. Try as he may, he could not climb out of the pit. After a time, his wife and children came to the edge of the pit and begged him to climb out, but alas, he could not. Finally, in tears, the wife said, "Fine!! I'm taking the children and going home to mother!"

After a time, a doctor came along and peering into the pit said, "What seems to be the problem?" The alcoholic explained his plight, and the doctor quickly wrote a prescription, tossed it into the pit, and proceeded on his way. The alcoholic looked at the prescription and wondered how this would help get the alcoholic out of the pit.

Just then a priest happened along and seeing the alcoholic's dilemma, began to pray. The priest called upon God to deliver the alcoholic from the pit, said a blessing and disappeared. As the alcoholic stood waiting to be lifted from the pit by God, another alcoholic happened along and looking down into the pit, said "I think I can help you."

At this point the second alcoholic jumped into the pit!! "Are you crazy??" cried the first alcoholic. "No," replied the second, "now I'm going to show you how I got out."

Circle Your Character Defects

pride greed lust anger gluttony envy sloth

alibis excuses arrogance bad attitude blaming
cheating controlling critical defiant dishonesty fear
grandiosity hateful hypocritical impatient inconsiderate
insensitive intolerant irresponsible jealous judgmental
know it all lazy lying manipulative need to be right
negative thinking perfectionism pettiness physically abusive
procrastination gossip punishing pushy rationalization
regretful rude self-deception self-righteous self-pitying
selfish stealing stubborn suspicious talk too much tardy
thoughtless uncooperative unrealistic unteachable
unwilling vain verbally abusive withdrawn

SOBERFEST LOGO CONTEST

Time once again to put your creative hat on and get the juices flowing..... The Soberfest logo contest is underway! If your logo is picked, you will receive a Soberfest package for 2010. When submitting your logo complete with colors and picture, be sure and furnish the committee with the page and A.A. recovery material you are using.

Example:

New and Wonderful
Ties (Logo) on Page
XX of the Big Book,
Name, and phone number



2010 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

The 2010 International Convention of AA will be held July 1-4 in San Antonio, Texas with the theme A Vision for You A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.s 75th year at this event with big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Alamo dome. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the San Antonio Convention Center and local hotels. Start your planning now!!

Have something you'd like to see in the Eye Opener?
Send all suggestions and/or information to:

Roger.L@comcast.net

April 2009 Calendar

Grapevine Speakers Meeting

When Sat, April 4, 7:30pm – 9:30pm **Where** First Congregational Church,
700 Marion St. NE, **Description** Monthly AA Speaker Meeting

District 4 GSR's Meeting

When Thu April 9, 7pm – 8pm **Where** St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

TTCO Speakers Meeting

When Sat April 11, 7pm – 9pm **Where** St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

Description Take The Cotton Out Speakers Meeting.
AA, Al-Anon Speakers Meeting.

H&I Committee Meeting

When Mon, April 13, 7pm – 8pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

KIS-S Committee Meeting

When Thurs, April 16, 5:30pm – 6:30pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

WVI Committee Meeting

When Mon, April 20 7pm – 8pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR, 97301

Soberfest Committee

When Fri, April 24, 7pm – 8pm **Where** St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

KIS-S Speakers Meeting

When Sat, April 25, 7:00pm – 9:30pm
Where Morningside Methodist Church, Salem, OR
Description Keep It Simple Speakers Meeting.
AA, Al-Anon Speakers Meeting.

TTCO Committee

When Tue, April 28, 7pm – 8pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR



Responsibility Declaration

"I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

The watermark logo on page one represents one alcoholic helping another alcoholic. As stated in the Responsibility Declaration.

Happy Birthday !!!

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Billy M. | 4-23 | Barry B | 4-30 |
| Eileen | 4-21 | Ken R | 4-23 |
| Bernard A | 4-11 | Bruce C | 4-29 |
| Diana W | 4-21 | Frank O | 4-28 |
| Gary P | 4-1 | Harold N | 4-8 |
| James B | 4-22 | Jessie T | 4-13 |
| Larry S | 4-19 | Maggie S | 4-27 |
| Sherrill B | 4-9 | Will P | 4-7 |
| Karen E | 4-5 | Marvin s | 4-21 |

Attention Motorcycle Riders!!

Weather permitting, we would like to get a group of riders together on a Saturday or Sunday for a "day ride" and some "throttle therapy".

Spend a great day in the wind and have some fun with us.

For Info Call:

Ben 503 375 0382 or Woody 208 634 6462

NEW MEETINGS

SALVATION ARMY CANDLE LIGHT

TIME: 10- 11 PM

DAYS: Friday, Saturday

PLACE: FRONT STREET IN WAREHOUSE
Wednesday and Sunday meetings CANCELLED!!

AA WORKSHOP GROUP

Tuesday, 7PM—8:30 PM

SOS Club 1797 Center St NE
Salem, OR

MEN ON A MISSION

(Men Only)

Wednesday, 1PM—2PM

ROCC 1144 Madison ST NE
Salem, OR

ONE DAY AT A TIME

Look to this day, for it is life, the very life of life.

In it's brief course lies all the realities
and verities of existence,
The bliss of growth, the splendor of
action, the glory of power.

For yesterday is but a dream, and
tomorrow is only a vision.
But today, well lived, makes every
yesterday a dream of happiness,
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to this day.

Sanskrit Proverb



William Duncan Silkworth, M.D.
(1873-1951)

was an American Medical Doctor and specialist in the treatment of alcoholism. He was Director of the Charles B. Towns Hospital for Drug and Alcohol Addictions in New York City in the 1930s, during which time Bill Wilson, a future co-founder of the mutual-help movement Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.), was admitted on three separate occasions for alcoholism. Silk-

worth had a profound influence on Wilson and encouraged him to realize that alcoholism was more than just an issue of moral weakness. He introduced Wilson to the idea that alcoholism had a pathological, disease-like basis. William Silkworth wrote the letters in the chapter titled "The Doctor's Opinion" in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Dr. William Duncan Silkworth died of a heart attack in his home in New York, Thursday morning, March 22 1951. Thus we of A.A. have lost the physical presence of the great doctor who was our first friend. He gave deep understanding and great encouragement to an infant society in the days when a lack of understanding or a word of discouragement might easily have killed it. He freely risked his professional reputation to champion an unprecedented spiritual answer to the medical enigma and the human tragedy of alcoholism. Without his blessing, our faith might well have died in its birth. He was a luminous exception to the rule that only an alcoholic understands an alcoholic. He knew us better than we knew ourselves... better than we know each other. Many of us felt that his medical skill, great as that was, was not at all the full measure of his stature. Dr. Silkworth was something that it is difficult even to mention in these days. He was a saintly man. He stood in an unusual relationship to truth. He was able to see the truth of a man, when that truth was deeply hidden from the man himself and from everyone else. He was able to save lives that were otherwise beyond help of any kind. Such a man cannot really die. Our friend has only left us...for a while.

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