



THE 4TH STEP: EMOTIONAL HEALING AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Made a searching and fearless moral
inventory of ourselves

Our Purpose

is to understand how the 4th Step inventory is a positive process – emotionally and spiritually.

As we work on the 4th step, we are using spiritual principles like honesty and willingness to transform ourselves into women who “face the world with the grace of a woman, not the grief of a child”. We heal emotionally and we grow spiritually.

Why Make an Inventory

Step Four offers us an opportunity for self-exploration, perhaps our first opportunity. The more we know about ourselves—our personal history, feelings, motivations, behaviors, and attitudes—the less likely we are to go back to drinking or using (or overspending, bingeing, or other compulsive behaviors).

Think of this Step as turning on a light in a pitch-dark room: If you continue to walk around in the dark, you’ll probably keep tripping over the furniture and bruising yourself. But when you turn on the light, you can see where you’re going.

In the same way, the Step Four inventory sheds light on the obstacles in your path. By taking an inventory you’ll be able to see what stands in the way of your recovery.

You might also think of an inventory as a ritual housecleaning. You sort through your life, looking for the unwanted, outdated clutter that’s taking up space. You decide what’s worth keeping and throw the rest away. Only then can you make room for something new. When your inner house is clean and clear, a Higher Power can guide your thoughts and actions.



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Emotional Healing

Those of us who have completed Step Four have found that taking this searching and fearless moral inventory was one of the most loving things we have ever done for ourselves. As we took an honest look at the past, we began to understand ourselves better. That understanding was the beginning of emotional healing.

OA 12/12

Insanity - the Opposite of Emotional Healing

Insanity is doing the same thing over and over, expecting different results.

Our past problems have been controlling our actions and feeling for years, often in ways of which we are not aware. What do I do over and over again, expecting different results even though it causes me pain and unhappiness? Am I willing to consider that something in my past could be influencing how I act in those situations?

The goal of this self-questioning is to better understand the role that you and others have played in shaping your life. You might summarize Step Four by asking yourself these two questions: What has contributed to how my life has evolved? How am I responsible for the way my life has evolved? **When you actively face yourself and your past, you begin to take charge of your life.**

As we face our problems by looking at them honestly, we uncover injuries, mistakes, motives, and unhealthy ways of coping. The 4th Step helps us to face what has happened so we can find a healthier way to live.

Covington, Stephanie. *A Woman's Way through the Twelve Steps* (p. 61). Hazelden Publishing. Kindle Edition.



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Spiritual Growth

Step 4 is where the "boots hit the ground". The first three steps occur in our minds, hearts and souls. The 4th step inventory requires **ACTION**.

"The 4th Step is about many things: It's about becoming completely **HONEST** with ourselves regarding our own attitudes and behavior, past and present. It's about **ACCEPTING FULL RESPONSIBILITY** for who we are today, as well as for what we've done in the past. It's about **taking ownership of our lives** and ceasing to play the victim.

In other words, the 4th Step is about making a commitment to ourselves to grow up. And the spiritual principle most essential to this step is the principle of **COURAGE**."

Courage and the 4th Step | Serenity Web

We then make a commitment to ourselves, our HP and our sponsors to work on the inventory regularly until it is completed.... Any action no matter how small, can help us **OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION**.

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The 12 steps are a process for change. This inventory and the rest of the steps are the implementation of our Step 3 **COMMITMENT**.

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FEARLESSNESS What does it mean to be fearless about our inventories? In truth, probably none of us does an inventory fearlessly. If we waited until we felt no fear, we'd probably never get started! Rather than wait for fearlessness, we can refuse to let the fear stop us.

We can move ahead, even if it's scary, even if we feel overwhelmed or ashamed. Remember, courage doesn't mean the absence of fear, it means acting in the face of fear. And we can ask for help to get us through.

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