

# Sexaholics Anonymous Beginners Meeting

## Session #2 - Steps 4 & 5

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a recovered sexaholic. Before we begin, let's have a moment of "quiet time" to ask God for an open mind and the willingness to have a new experience, followed by the "Serenity Prayer."

As a group, we're taking the Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous in four 1-hour classes as they were taken in the mid-1940's in Aa. During this session we will begin Step 4 and provide you with guidelines for completing a step 4 inventory. During the next week, each person taking the steps should discuss his or her inventory with a "sponsor", or spiritual advisor.

Last week we took steps 1, 2, & 3 together in class.

[OPTIONAL]

Is there anyone here this morning who didn't have the opportunity to take the first three steps last week and would like to do so now? If so, would you please stand.

[Ask the First Step question:] **Do you concede to your innermost self that you are sexaholic?** Please answer, yes or no.

[Ask the Second Step question:] **Do you now believe, or are you even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than yourself?** Please answer, yes or no.

[Ask the Third Step question:] **Have you made a decision to turn your thinking and your actions over to the care of God as you understand Him – in other words: Have you decided to go through with the remaining steps in the Program of Recovery.** Please answer, yes or no.

Thank you, please be seated. If you answered yes to these questions, you have completed Steps One, Two, and Three.

[END OPTIONAL]

Let's say the Third Step Prayer TOGETHER, as we did last week, to reconfirm our Third Step decision:

"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!"

Now we can move on to Step 4.

[Step 4]

**Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

At the bottom of page 63, the “Big Book” tells us what we need to do now that we’ve made our decision to proceed:

“Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision was vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions.” (page 63, ¶ 4, lines 1-2; page 64, lines 1-7)

Please note the book says **at once**. This means we take the Fourth Step immediately after Step Three. We have to get rid of those things which have been blocking us off from God or else our initial contact with our Creator won’t last. The inventory is a process of learning about yourself, and finally facing the problems inside.

What are these “causes and conditions”? Well, the “Big Book” uses a lot of different words meaning the same thing: “damaged or unsalable goods”, “flaws in our make-up”, “defects of character”, shortcomings, and even wrongs. All these have the same effect: they block us off from God.

Maybe this seems like a bait-and-switch. Perhaps you came thinking that you just needed to deal with your sexual acting out, and here we are talking about inventorying defects of character and our flaws. The problems of the addict are many, and cannot be dealt with in isolation. Trying merely to correct sexual acting out will do nothing to conquer lust. Eventually the acting out will return. Even dealing only with lust will only take you so far. Eventually your other defects will return lust to control, even stronger than before. Only by removing all defects can you be assured that you will get peace and health.

The Big Book starts by comparing a moral inventory to a business inventory. In the first full paragraph of page 64, they write:

“Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. This was Step Four. A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking commercial inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, to get rid of them promptly and without regret. If the owner of the business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values.” (page 64, ¶ 1)

So, we are going to conduct an inventory on our lives. We are going to discover what had blocked us off from the “Sunlight of the Spirit.” The authors tell us exactly what we have to do to conduct a Fourth Step inventory:

“We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly. First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations.” (page 64, ¶ 2)

We are going to inventory or, “take stock” if you will, of three manifestations of self-will: our resentments, our fears, and our conduct with emphasis on our sex lives. We have provided you with a few copies of a Step 4 Inventory page. Basic instructions are on the page, and we will go through a few examples together so that you can see how it works.

There are various step 4 inventory types that have been used in 12-step circles. One of them is described in the Big Book on page 65 and following. That inventory can be confusing and take a long while to do, so we will go through a simpler, alternative inventory form that you have been provided. This is a type of inventory that is known to have been in use in the 1940s, and is a nice alternative to the version found on page 65 of the Big Book because it can be completed quickly. There is not a lot of writing in this step 4 inventory. That’s ok. Remember that the goal isn’t to produce a lot of writing, but rather to share what God is helping you to uncover with another in the 5th step. The emphasis here is on the sharing in the 5th step, not writing in the 4th.

The White Book, on page 109, paragraph 2 says:

“No one has ever taken the perfect or complete Fourth. Many have found great value in doing it again in later stages of growth and awareness. A well-organized or well-written inventory may be no true inventory at all. The Fourth is the *person*, and in the emotional area, people are not computers. Human emotions don’t travel in straight lines, they zigzag all over. It is not necessary to slavishly follow someone else’s outline, format, or procedure. We write about ourselves as best we can.”

When we have completed going through the steps you are encouraged to do periodic larger inventories again to make sure that you are not accruing liabilities in your life again. You can re-use these forms, or make your own, as much as you want. This is YOUR inventory.

Take a look at the Step 4 Inventory form. The directions on the top will help you to remember how to do the inventory in the future if you wish to repeat it. Under that is a grid where you will mark down liabilities as they come up. Along the top are empty boxes where you will write the names of people, principles, or institutions related to a liability. You are welcome to write the names in short form or even code words to preserve secrecy if you would prefer. Along the left is a list of liabilities that the Big Book has identified for us. As we go please place a mark under the name of the person, principle, or institution associated with that liability. At the bottom is a list of questions to ask yourself that will guide you in thinking through each liability.

Now that you've got a quick idea of how the inventory will work, let's begin with a short prayer:

**“God, please give us the honesty we need to see the truth about ourselves, setting aside any thought of harms done to us, and focusing only on the defects we need to find in ourselves.”**

Now, let's ask the first question at the bottom of the page, which corresponds to the first liability, resentment:

**“Who, or what, am I angry with?”**

As soon as any name comes to you write it in an empty, upper box on the form. Remember that this isn't just persons. It can be institutions, such as church or government, or even principles such as “judgment.” These resentments may have occurred at any time in your life. If they still cause you to feel anger, list them.

In the third paragraph on page 64, the Big Book says:

“Resentment is the ‘number one’ offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.”

Resentment basically means to “re-feel” or “feel again.” The “Little Big Book Dictionary” gives the following definition for resentment: “a persistent feeling of ill will and suppressed anger caused by a sense of an injustice, injury, offense, or wrong done.”

## **PEOPLE**

To help you think of some names I'm going to list off some common people who are sources of anger. If you hear a person that is a source of anger or ill will to you, write their name down.

Father (Step)	Doctors
Mother (Step)	Employers
Sisters (Step)	Employees
Brothers (Step)	Co-Workers
Grandmother	Creditors
Grandfather	Childhood Friends
In-Laws	School Friends
Husbands	Best Friends
Wives	Teachers
Aunts	Acquaintances
Uncles	Girl Friends
Cousins	Boy Friends

Clergy Police Lawyers Judges	Parole Officers Probation Officers SA Friends
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## INSTITUTIONS

Now I'm going to list some institutions that are common sources of anger:

Marriage Bible Church Religion Races Law Authority Government	Education System Correctional System Mental Health System Nationality Political Party Rehabs Hospitals
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## PRINCIPLES

Finally, here are some principles that are common sources of anger:

God Limits Sickness Retribution Ten Commandments Jesus Christ Satan	Death Life After Death Heaven Hell Sin Adultery Golden Rule
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Great! You should now have a list of names above the columns indicating resentments you are holding. Make sure you've placed a mark under each name in the row marked "Resentment." It's ok if you don't have every resentment listed. You don't need to complete this inventory in class. You can add names later as they occur to you.

However, it is important that you do your best to be thorough when you do sit down to complete the inventory later. On page 65, third paragraph, it says: "We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty."

## Fear

Now, let's move on to the second liability, "Fear." Let's read the fear question:

## **“Who, or what, am I afraid of?”**

As soon as a name occurs to you write it down on your inventory. If it happens to already be listed as a resentment, just use the column you already have. Don't list it twice.

The fear liability is a little different than the resentment liability. Old resentments tend to fester, where fears come and go over time. We are interested in what you fear **now**, not what you used to fear. Don't list an old fear unless you still fear it!

The last paragraph on page 67 of the Big Book says:

“This short word [fear] somehow touches about every aspect of our lives. It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it. It set in motion trains of circumstances which brought us misfortune we felt we didn't deserve. But did not we, ourselves, set the ball rolling?” (page 67, ¶ 3, lines 1-8)

On the top of page 68, the Big Book tells us that: "...fear ought to be classed with stealing. It seems to cause more trouble." Fear is a thief! It robs me from my relationship with God. In the first paragraph on page 68 it says:

“We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them. Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? Self-reliance was good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough. Some of us once had great self-confidence, but it didn't fully solve the fear problem, or any other. When it made us cocky, it was worse.”  
(page 68, ¶ 1, lines 1-8)

Again, I'm going to read some possible sources of fear to help you fill out the sheet. As I read, if you hear something that is a source of fear write it down on your sheet.

God, Dying, Insanity, Insecurity, Rejection, Loneliness, Diseases, Relapse, Sex, Being Found Out, Sin, Self-Expression, Authority, Heights, Unemployment, Parents, Losing a Wife/Husband, Losing a Child, Animals, Insects, Police, Jail, Doctors, Creditors, Homosexuals, Failure, Responsibility, Physical Pain, Drowning, Men, Women, Being Alone, Show Emotion, Poverty, Races, the Unknown, Abandonment, Intimacy, Disapproval, Rejection, Confrontation, Sobriety, Loss of Control, Hospitals, Getting Old, Hurting Others, Violence, Writing Inventory, Government, Gangs, Gossip, Wealthy People, Guns, Change

Hopefully you've been able to add some fears to the inventory while I've been talking. Again, if you haven't listed all your fears, don't worry. You can complete the list later. For now let's continue one.

The next section of liabilities are collectively connected with harms. They are the liabilities which often determine how we act to harm others, directly or indirectly. The Big Book on page 69, paragraph 1, says:

“We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? Where were we at fault, what should we have done instead? We got this all down on paper and looked at it.

Each one of these liabilities deserve some special attention. We are going to go down the row for the next liabilities and spend one minute on each. I’ll read the liability question aloud, and then give you a minute to jot down any names that occur to you. Again, if you’ve already listed a person for another liability, just use the same column for the new liability as well.

**“Toward whom have I been selfish?”**

[Pause 1 minute]

**“Where have I been dishonest?”**

[Pause 1 minute]

**“Who do I feel better than or less than?”**

[Pause 1 minute]

**“Am I jealous of any relationship? Have I caused jealousy?”**

[Pause 1 minute]

**“Do I envy anyone’s possessions? Have I stolen?”**

A possession can be something intangible too, such as a job, or prestige.

[Pause 1 minute]

**“Where have I been lazy?”**

[Pause 1 minute]

**“Who have I lusted for?”**

This can be individuals or classes of people, such as “porn stars” or “prostitutes.”

[Pause 1 minute]

You’ll notice that there is a line with no liability listed beside it. This is additional space for you to list any other liability you would like to include. This is your inventory. If you feel that there is something else that should be listed and inventoried, please do so after class.

With that we are done with our in-class inventory work. Take the inventory pages home and continue to fill it out until no more names come to you. Be thorough, but don’t take too long. You don’t need to write any explanations out. That will all be covered in the next step.

Looking back at what we've written, the book says very clearly, if we continue to hold on to resentments we will act out again. How do we get "free of anger", as the book suggests we do? First, the "Big Book" asks us to "turn back to our list because it holds the key to our future." They tell us to look at it from an entirely different angle.

On the bottom of page 66, the book states:

"This was our course: We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. Though we did not like their symptoms and the way these disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too." (page 66, ¶ 4, lines 1 & 2; page 67, lines 1 & 2)

The next few lines at the top of page 67 give us a prayer to rid our resentments.

"We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended we said to ourselves, 'This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.'" (page 67, lines 3-8)

Your task during the next week for resentments is to pray every day for those people, institutions, and principles that you have identified as resentments. If you are having trouble letting go of anger, continue praying, but ask God just for the willingness to forgive.

OK, now let's look at our fears. How do we get rid of fear? That's right, through prayer!

Page 68, paragraph three, sixth line:

"We never apologize for God. Instead we let Him demonstrate, through us, what He can do. We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be." (page 68, ¶ 3, lines 6 -9)

The results are in the next sentence: "At once, we **commence** to outgrow fear." (page 68, ¶ 3, lines 9 & 10) "Commence" indicates that we are beginning a process of outgrowing fear. This may take a while, but soonest started is soonest finished.

Notice the book doesn't say fear goes away and never comes back again. It states that we outgrow fear. We outgrow fear because through prayer, we're asking God to direct us toward his will - to do his work - to do his bidding. When we live in that fashion, fear has no place.

It's that simple! And the miracle is it works!

In the "Big Book" inventory on page 68, after fear it addresses sex. It suggests that "many of us needed an overhauling" in this area of our lives. For us in SA that is a massive understatement. They say on page 69 that "we all have sex problems and we'd hardly be human if we didn't." Also true. The question is "What can we do about them?"

We are following the Big Book lead and the early AA inventory method, which didn't include lust, but for our purpose in SA we have included it in the liability list. Remember that lust is an attitude that drives us to misuse natural desires. That attitude is often driven by other things that we have already inventoried, such as anger and fear. Dealing with the underlying causes cuts the problem off at the source, in many cases. However you may find that there are people that need to be inventoried for lust that do not fit under other liabilities.

If there are any episodes of your past that you know should be on your inventory, but for some reason do not fit under the liabilities as they are currently listed, add a new liability. If there is any person you have harmed that isn't already listed, go ahead and list them and ask yourself what liability was involved.

Congratulations, we are done with Step 4 for now.

## [Step 5]

### **Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

Yes, now that you've done all this inventory work, you must now share it with another person. Working through Step 4 has allowed you to see where the obstacles are that keep you separated from God. To get rid of them you must first get them into the open. It is not sufficient to merely have identified them in your own mind.

It says on the first page of Chapter 6 of the Big Book, "Into Action":

"This is perhaps difficult—especially discussing our defects with another person. We think we have done well enough in admitting these things to ourselves. There is doubt about that. In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient. Many of us thought it necessary to go much further. We will be more reconciled to discussing ourselves with another person when we see good reasons why we should do so. The best reason first: **If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking.** Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to **easier** methods. Almost invariably they got drunk. Having persevered with the rest of the program, they wondered why they fell. We think the reason is that they never completed their housecleaning. They took inventory all right, but hung on to some of the worst items in stock. They only thought they had lost their egoism and fear; they only thought they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else all their life story." (page 72, ¶ 2 - page 73)

Remember, this disclosure is not optional. Experience demonstrates this. The Big Book says, "We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world." In taking the third step you decided to turn your will and life over to the care of God. This is how it begins. Don't shrink back now.

On page 111 of the White Book, the first paragraph says:

"It takes a moment of courage. Whenever we're ready to give up the wrongs revealed in our Fourth Step, we take the leap and give it away to another. Clinging to that which is killing us is clinging to the curse. When we admit the exact nature of our wrongs to another, we are finally admitting the truth to ourselves and to God. Without this principle active in our lives, we have no hope for lasting sobriety, serenity, and freedom.

*'I took Step Five with my sponsor and experienced freedom from the burden of my past guilt. No big deal, just a quiet realization that I was part of the human race. I belonged.'*

"Thus, the Fifth Step is another surrender. We give up the right to continue practicing the diseased attitudes and actions revealed therein and give up our sick isolation. Surrendering in this way brings us out into the light. It is the acid test of our ability to be honest about ourselves. If we cannot do this with another, how can we ever hope to have an honest confession or relation with our God?"

(Page 111, paragraph 1)

Sharing with another person has the effect of lessening the weight and attraction of the liabilities you have determined. It allows you to be open and honest with others, and it helps you to be humble. As a sexaholic you are in the habit of acting for the outer world. This gives you the chance to be yourself with at least one other person. If you are unwilling to discuss your faults with another, you will find yourself unwilling to let them go.

As a special concern in SA we must be particularly careful with who hears our fifth step. As a result of our addictions many of us have engaged in illegal activities. Some of those activities may carry more consequences than others. While a sponsor in SA will be very understanding and keep confidence with you, there are certain implications of discussing illegal activities that can cause unforeseen problems. For instance, if you disclosed a sexual offense against a minor, certain people are obligated by law due to their profession to report the offense to the authorities. They are called "mandated reporters", and they have no option, unless they choose to also break the law. That would be an unfair position to put them in. For others who are not mandated reporters there may still be complications, as most people have no legal protection should they be subpoenaed to testify in court. They may be compelled to testify against you.

If you believe that something you need to disclose may have legal ramifications, you still need to disclose it to another person, or you will never be healed of it. You will not be able to process through the steps otherwise. Here is a suggestion if you are in that situation. In the United States, most states provide legal protections for anything disclosed to a religious clergy member, such as a priest, in a faith tradition that normally affords confidential confession, such as Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox traditions. These confessions are protected by law and are not subject to mandatory reporting, nor may those priests disclose the contents of a confession in a trial. If necessary you should consult with a local priest about the possibility of hearing your fifth step under the seal of confession. Note that not all clergy may be covered in these protections. If necessary you may need to discuss this with a lawyer.

In any case, if you belong to a faith tradition that requires confession, you must include that as part of your fifth step. Even if you do a fifth step with a non-clergy member, you must in addition go through the proper process of confession as your faith tradition requires. This is discussed on page 74 of the Big Book.

Last week you were paired with a sharing partner who can hear your 5th step. If for some reason you would prefer to use someone else to hear your 5th step that is fine, but you should make arrangements to talk to them this week, so that you have completed your fifth step before our next session. Make sure that whoever you use understands our 12-step process, and can help you to navigate the next 4 steps as well. It is highly discouraged to use a spouse or family member. Many things you will disclose will be unknown to them, and will damage them to know. Look for someone who can understand your story, yet be unaffected.

Once you have determined who will hear your 4th step inventory, make arrangements to discuss this with your partner as soon as possible. On page 75 of the Big Book it says: “When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time. We have a written inventory and we are prepared for a long talk.” (page 75, ¶ 1)

In your 5th step discussion you will bring your 4th step inventory, and you should talk through every name you have mentioned, including every liability that has been marked for that column. Make sure you leave your schedule as open as possible. This may take a long time. Make sure that you discuss any harm you have done, wherever you’ve marked the “harm” row. Your sharing partner will need to know about the context of the harms you have done in order to help you properly make amends.

On page 114 the White Book has a particularly important warning that might apply to you. In the third paragraph it says:

“We caution the person working through the Fifth about a possible letdown afterward. Putting off the old self with all its wrongs can leave us exposed and vulnerable and with the feeling that there is nothing of substance left. This is where the sponsor comes in, helping turn such negative feelings into forgiveness, hope, healing, and love.”

Finally, after the 5th Step discussion is complete, your sponsor should direct you to page 75 of the Big Book which gives us directions for what to do immediately afterwards:

“Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done. We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better. Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand?”  
(page 75, ¶ 3)

If you can answer “yes” to these questions, then you will have completed your fifth step! Please try your best to do that this week if at all possible, so you can be ready to work through the next steps when we meet again.

If your sponsor does not take you through the 6th & 7th Steps after you’ve completed your 5th and answered the questions on the bottom of page 75, don’t worry. We’ll be taking Steps 6 & 7 in class next week.

[If time permits, read the last two paragraphs of Chapter 5, page 70. If short on time, skip it...]

We’ll conclude this meeting with the last two paragraphs of the chapter 5:

“If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot. We have listed and analyzed our resentments. We have begun to comprehend their futility and their fatality. We have commenced to see their terrible destructiveness. We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all men, even our enemies, for we look on them as sick people. We have listed the people we have hurt by our conduct, and are willing to straighten out the past if we can.

“In this book you read again and again that faith did for us what we could not do for ourselves. We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him. If you have already made a decision [Step 3], and an inventory of your grosser handicaps [Step 4], you have made a good beginning. That being so you have swallowed and digested some big chunks of truth about yourself.”

Make sure that you bring your inventory paperwork back for the next session. We’ll need it for steps 6, 7, 8, and 9. If you have time at home please read through “Step 4” and “Step 5” in the White Book, pg 105-114. We wish you the very best as you leave here to complete your inventory and share it with your "sponsor" during the next week.

May God bless you and keep you until then. Let’s close in the Lord’s prayer.

## LORDS PRAYER

“Our father, who art in heaven hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever, Amen.”