

RECOVERY & ME

Step Four: More Action

Anonymous

“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 is a 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”

(Alcoholics Anonymous, Pgs. 63 – 64)

About ten days into my treatment experience, I was instructed to begin a course of self-examination; one that I continue daily. I was instructed to create a written list of resentments, fears and harms done to others and explore what part of self drove me to these actions. Over the years, I have had the privilege of helping many alcoholics create their Fourth Step inventory list. The one thing that I have always done when helping someone build a list is to remind them of the purpose for the list. I believe that the inventory process is not included in the Program of AA to ridicule or condemn the alcoholic, but rather to help them to identify those things that are blocking the alcoholic from being of maximum use and service to God and others. It also is designed to help the alcoholic begin to clear out self-centeredness and make room for the Spirit. Both in my life, and lives of other alcoholics, that as long as the alcoholic is full of self, there is no room for God. And the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous is a God centered program, designed to allow the alcoholic to grow in the love and fellowship so that they can be of maximum service to God and others.

P.S. Step Four – Described on pages 63 – 71 (The directions for taking Step 4 are on page 64, paragraph 1, lines 1 – 9 & paragraph 2, lines 1 – 6)

I welcome your questions, your ideas for recovery topics or perhaps a personal story or two. Don't forget, a dose of good humor about recovery or addiction is always welcomed...it has certainly helped me and many others through some tough times! Please send your submissions to: Council on Chemical Abuse, Attn: Recovery & Me, 601 Penn St., Ste. 600, Reading, PA 19601. You may choose to remain anonymous by including only your first name with your submission, as it may in part be reprinted in a future article.