

# Basic Recovery Assets and Liabilities Checklist

**Liabilities**  
Watch for—

Steps Four through Nine as described in the “Big Book”  
Step 4: pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-3)

**Assets**  
Strive for—

**Resentment**

**vs.**

**Forgiveness**

Who or what are you angry at?

**Fear**

**vs.**

**Love**

Who or what are you afraid of?

**Harms**

**vs.**

**Amends**

Whom have you hurt . . .

because of your selfishness?

**Unselfishness**

because of your dishonesty?

**Honesty**

# Basic Recovery A+ L Checklist

## Fourth Step Questions

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### Resentment Inventory

1. Who or what are you angry at? .....

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### Fear Inventory

2. Who or what are you afraid of? .....

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### Harms inventory

3. Toward whom have you been selfish? .....

4. Where have you been dishonest? .....

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## Steps Five Through Nine

5. What are you going to do about it? How are you going to “*set right the wrong?*”

During the discussion of each situation or event, ask your partner to “*resolutely look for (your) own mistakes. . . . Though a situation had not been entirely (your) fault, (you are) to disregard the other person entirely. Where were (you) to blame?*” (pg. 67: 2 (2-3, 4-7), edited).

Ask him or her, “Are you prepared to forgive those toward whom you feel resentment?” If not, then “*we ask God to help us (to) be willing.*” (pg. 76: 1 (6-7), edited).

Ask, “Are you ready to overcome your fear with faith?” Then, “*We ask (God) to remove our fear and direct our attention to what (God) would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear.*” (pg. 68: 3 (7-10), edited).

In terms of harms, ask your partner what he or she is “*willing (to do) to set these matters straight?*” (pg. 67: 2 (10-11), edited). Keep in mind there are four types of amends: Direct, Living, In-kind, and Letters. Together, decide what would be the most appropriate “*course of action*” for each incident or circumstance.

Conclude the sharing session with a prayer. (pg. 76: 2 (1-7), edited).

# Step Four–Anger Management

## How to replace “restlessness, irritability and discontentment” with peace and serenity

Anytime we become irritated, anxious, or afraid, we need to take specific actions to prevent these emotions from turning into rage or revenge. If we allow this “fight or flight” behavior to escalate, we may end up saying or doing something we later regret.

In the second and third paragraphs on page 66, the “Big Book” authors tell us we must overcome our anger:

**If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. . . . (It) may be the dubious luxury of normal men and women, but for (us anger is) poison.**

**. . . In that state (of anger), the wrong-doings of others, fancied or real, had (the) power to actually kill. How could we escape? We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? . . .**

**(“Big Book,” p. 66, para. 2, lines 1-4; para. 3, lines 4-7, edited)**

There is a simple technique consisting of two basic actions that can help us overcome anger. It also works anytime we become anxious or afraid.

These two actions are:

- 1. Redirect attention, and**
- 2. Take a deep breath.**

We redirect our attention by doing something as simple as touching the tip of one of our thumbs to an adjacent forefinger to form a circle. We can

think of this circle as a “stop sign,” because it **"stops"** us from getting angry. We emotionally turn away from the person or event that is irritating us and concentrate on the circle instead.

Next, we take a deep breath. When we are agitated or stressed, our breathing become rapid and shallow. We counter the negative effects of rapid, shallow breathing by breathing slowly and deeply. We inhale until our lungs are completely full, hold our breath momentarily, and then exhale until our lungs are completely empty. We repeat this several times. As a direct result, we begin to feel more relaxed and at peace with ourselves and those around us.

We must make the circle immediately after we become aroused. It is critically important to do this before the body starts producing adrenaline as part of the "fight or flight" response.

Time permitting, we can take this simple and very effective technique one step further. While practicing our deep breathing, we visualize the stop sign and say the following:

**Stop the anger.**  
**Stop the adrenaline.**  
**Stop the anxiety.**  
**Stop the addiction.**

Yes, adrenaline can be addictive. Some people actually enjoy the effects, which are described in the medical literature as well as in the "Big Book" as **"restless, irritable, and discontented."** Redirecting attention and deep breathing are integral parts of recovery from adrenaline addiction.

This two-step process can also be used to ease the cravings associated with chemical withdrawal. By practicing this simple technique regularly, throughout the day, we will be in much better position to **"relax and take it easy."**

# Step Five—Legal Privilege

**Step 5: Admitted to . . . another (person) the exact nature of our (liabilities).**

This Step helps ease the pain and suffering associated with hiding the worst parts of ourselves from others. On page 72, starting with the ninth line in the second paragraph, the “Big Book” authors tell us why we need to admit our shortcomings to another person:

**. . . The best reason first: If we skip this vital (Step), we may not overcome (our difficulties). Time after time (sharing partners) 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 (relapsed). . . .**

We share our liabilities because we are great at self deception. Aren't we the ones who used to say we didn't have a problem? Didn't we tell ourselves over and over that we were doing fine as we were sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss of self-destructive behavior?

The person or persons with whom we share the liabilities side of our Assets and Liabilities Checklist can be members of Twelve-step community, but they don't necessarily have to be. The “Big Book” authors provide us with other options.

Starting with the fourth paragraph on page 73, the authors state:

**We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. Rightly and naturally, (this person or persons must be able to keep a confidence). . . .**

**. . . (We need to share our liabilities with) a close-mouthed, understanding friend. Perhaps (a member of the clergy), our doctor, (an attorney), or a psychologist will be the person. . . .**

Of critical importance is confidentiality. The “Big Book” authors list some of the people who are legally bound to keep a secret. This “privilege” protects communications between certain individuals and insures that these communications will remain confidential. The people listed in the “Big Book” who

have this protection are religious, legal, medical, and mental health professionals. These privileges are:

### **Clergy / Parishioner Privilege**

### **Attorney / Client Privilege**

### **Doctor / Patient Privilege**

This “privilege” is not absolute—there are exceptions. This legal protection does not include Twelve-step sponsors or sharing partners. This is why we must be very careful about what is shared during a Fifth Step.

One way to avoid problems in this area is to tell your sharing partner that he or she is not to share anything with you that is criminal in nature. Make sure he or she is aware of who is and is not legally bound to keep a secret.

This “privilege” is not absolute—there are exceptions. In certain situations, “mandatory reporting” supercedes “legal privilege.” Make sure you know what constitutes “mandatory reporting” in your state.

Perhaps your sharing partner would rather share some portion of his or her checklist, with a person who has this “legal privilege.” If this is the case, have your partner make a commitment to you as to when, where, and with whom he or she will talk about those inventory items.

In the second paragraph on page 74, the “Big Book” authors explain the circumstances under which this Step may be temporarily postponed:

**Notwithstanding the great necessity for discussing ourselves with someone, (you may be) so situated that there is no suitable person available. If that is so, (you may temporarily postpone this Step), only . . . if (you hold yourself) in complete readiness to go through with it at the first opportunity. . . .**

So immediately after you and your sharing partner have completed the Fourth Step inventory, have him or her share it with you, and together come up with an Eighth Step amends list, or have your partner commit to you that by a specific date, he or she will share the “privileged” inventory items with someone who is legally protected to receive them.

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## Liabilities

Watch for—

Steps Four through Nine as described in the “Big

Step 4: pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-3)

### Resentment

vs.

Who or what are you angry at?

*Ex*

*Myself*

*Court*

### Fear

vs.

Who or what are you afraid of?

*Relapse*

*Health*

### Harms

vs.

Whom have you hurt . . .

because of your selfishness?

*Ex*

*Friend*

because of your dishonesty?

*Employer*

*Family  
Member*

# Explanation of Terms

## Fourth Step Assets and Liabilities Checklist

The Fourth Step Assets and Liabilities Checklist described on pages 64-69 of the “Big Book,” and referred to in Steps Seven, Ten and Eleven, consists of the four Liabilities of Resentment, Fear, Selfishness, and Dishonesty. The corresponding Assets are Forgiveness, Faith, Unselfishness, and Honesty.

To make these Assets and Liabilities easier to understand, and to use in “all our affairs,” we have provided you with definitions for these behaviors. These definitions are compilations of various dictionaries in use today:

### Liabilities

**RESENTMENT** is the consequence of being angry, bitter, or indignant toward someone for an extended period of time over some real or imagined insult or injury. It is a hostile or combative attitude in response to an alleged affront or offense.

**FEAR** is distress, dread or anxiety aroused by impending danger, crisis, or pain, whether the threat is genuine or imaginary.

**SELFISHNESS** is concern only for ourselves, our own welfare, interests, or pleasure, without regard for, or at the expense of, others.

**DISHONESTY** involves theft or deception. It includes taking things that don't belong to us, cheating people out of what is rightfully theirs, and lying to or withholding the truth from others. It is characterized by a propensity to lie, cheat, or steal.

### Assets

**FORGIVENESS** is the act of excusing a mistake or offense, as if the incident had not occurred, and absolving the offender without blame.

**FAITH** is a confident belief in and reliance upon the truth, value, and trustworthiness of a person, idea, or course of action.

**UNSELFISHNESS** is concern for the welfare of others: not putting ourselves first but being willing to give our time, resources, or effort for others.

**HONESTY** is the quality of being fair, sincere, and straightforward in conduct. It is a refusal to lie, steal, or deceive in any way.