

# OA Desert Recovery

April 2022 – Step Four

“MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS  
MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES.”

[Spiritual Principle: Courage]

I do an inventory about once every five years whether I think I need one or not. Like it says in the *Big Book*, (I'm paraphrasing here) a business that fails to take regular inventory usually goes broke. I have to repeatedly turn inward to progress my growth. When I do multiple inventories, one of two things ALWAYS happens (1) I discover new resentments and fears that have come up OR (2) I rediscover things I thought I had gotten rid of but have crept back into my life. Like it says in Step 10 of the *OA 12 and 12*, "Practicing this Principle in all our affairs today means that we continue to do the things that have brought us healing, even though we sometimes wonder if we need to, or during times we may not want to. Perseverance brings us the reward of continuing permanent recovery."  
~Randi F.

I came into OA hating myself. In my mind I was the worst wife, mother, sister, daughter, friend ever created. Unaware of the false pride and ego involved, my first inventory reflected all of that. Thank HP for sponsors and friends in recovery who pointed out the best in me and insisted that it belonged on my inventory as well. It was hard at first to accept that they might be right. Today I can work to strengthen my strengths and talents as well as to change my negative attitudes and behaviors. I'm grateful for the willingness and guidance of HP and the love and support of my fellows for this growth. ~Neva

I have done fourth steps using the *Big Book*, the *OA Step Workbook*, using a list of questions from an unknown source, and in the 12N12 sessions. In each case, even before I knew what I was doing, there occurred an "aha." There was a sense of finally finding the problem, discovering what my problem had been all along. Yes, it began with courage. But it ended with awestruck relief. ~Becki B.

On my last 4th Step, I was procrastinating, doing it hit-or-miss. Finally, my sponsor, God love him, said, "I suggest you write for ten minutes every single day." I couldn't honestly say I didn't have 10 minutes a day for this critical program work, so I got busy. Now, our 4th Step inventory is extensive: there are 157 questions (I counted them!). If you do a "fearless and thorough" inventory, it does take time. But I did one question on Monday, another on Tuesdays, and so on and on. And eventually, like the tortoise overtaking the hare, I was done. ~Michael A.

This Step is like a recipe. I must start with the first three columns – BUT they are only the start. I then have to add the 4th column to put the first three columns in perspective. And in order for the first four columns to be effective, I must then proceed to the 5th column. I must have the first three columns complete. Only then can I proceed to the 4th. When that is done, I can start the 5th column because they each build on one another, My 4th Step is most effective when I follow these instructions. ~Roni B.

The best thing about step 4 for me is the clarity it brings, and the miraculous relief I feel when I share my Step 4 with my sponsor in Step 5. I get to see where I was wrong, which somehow allows me to forgive others. All the steps are transformative, but Steps 5 and 9 changed me. That's why I continue to clean house and admit my wrongs. ~Anonymous