

Overeaters Anonymuos Big Book Study – Session Three

Session #3 – Step 4

(*****Please note: if there are two leaders, the leader explaining the Fourth Step Inventory Sheets, giving examples and taking questions (later), SHOULD begin here*****)

WELCOME to session number three of the Back To Basics "Here Are The Steps We Took" Beginner Meetings. Together, we are taking the Twelve Steps based on the directions found in the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous and the personal experiences of our A.A. pioneers. During this session, we will provide all the information for Step Four out of the Big Book. During the next week, each newcomer and those working the Steps with us, will be expected to continue writing their Fourth Step inventory.

Our names are _____ and _____ and we are members of Overeaters Anonymous. We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in our own recovery by leading these sessions. This is one way we can be of service to others and, at the same time, grow in the "fellowship of the Spirit."

Many older members have told us that the best way to understand the "Big Book" is to try to explain it to someone else. They were right. We didn't realize how little we knew about our text for recovery until we started leading these meetings and taking others through this book.

So, we want to thank you for providing us the opportunity to learn more about our spiritual program of recovery by once again helping others through the Steps of Overeaters Anonymous. As we have learned right here in these Beginners' Meetings, each time we take the Steps, we grow spiritually.

If you are here for the first time, we have unfortunately gone over too much material up to this point to try to do a review of what was already covered. After this meeting is over, if you are interested in knowing when we will be doing these sessions again, please see one of the leaders or a group member.

Before we begin this session, we need to make sure each newcomer and those who are taking the Steps with us have someone to "sponsor" them through the Steps. In order for this process to work, it is essential that "sponsors" and newcomers attend the sessions together.

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Is anyone here who HAS been through the first two sessions and wish to go through the Steps with us that do NOT have someone working with them? If so, please stand.

(*****Please pause to see if anyone needs a “temporary Step sponsor”. If so, ask for volunteers who have been through the Steps out of the “Big Book” to assure that there is someone working with them*****)

Thank you. Please be seated.

As was explained last week, the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous contains step-by-step, clear-cut directions on how to recover from food addiction, by finding a Power greater than ourselves. This Power will eliminate our obsession to compulsively eat, and lead us to a "new freedom and a new happiness, and a way of life that is incredibly more wonderful as time passes."

*****NEXT LEADER*****

In the last two weeks, we completed the first three Steps and began the Fourth Step in the OA program of recovery: In Step One, we conceded (or admitted) to our innermost selves that we are food addicts, and that we had no reservations or lingering ideas that one day we will be UNAFFECTED by compulsive eating. Then, in Step Two, through a simple conception (no matter how limited it was) we found we could come to believe in a Power greater than ourselves, which WILL solve our problem. Then, in Step Three, we made a decision to take the actions necessary (which are Steps Four through Nine) to move in the direction of turning our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him. The Big Book then told us that just DECIDING to turn our will and life over has LITTLE PERMANENT EFFECT unless we AT ONCE face and get rid of what BLOCKS US from actually turning our will and life over on a consistent basis. And the way we begin facing these things that block us from turning our will and lives over to the care of God, is by first taking a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves and then moving on with the rest of the program.

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

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Please turn in your Big Book to page 64. The authors start by comparing a personal 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 a 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."

So, we are going to conduct the equivalent of a commercial inventory on our lives. We are going to discover what had blocked us off from the Sunlight of the Spirit.

In the next paragraph, 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 (not alcohol but self), manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations."

If you remember, this is a reference back to what was discussed in Step Three that self-will (or "my life run on my will") is the root of our troubles. We are now going to inventory or, "take stock" if you will, of three manifestations of self-will: our resentments, our fears, and our sex conduct and harms toward others. The Fourth Step commentary in A.A.'s 12 & 12 goes into much greater detail about this, but we humans have three basic instincts of life which create self: the social instinct, the security instinct, and the sex instinct. These are needed in order for the human race to survive. All humans have them and they are God-given so they are good, but when we use them selfishly or incorrectly, they cause problems for others and ourselves. When the social instinct is used incorrectly, it brings about resentments. When the security instinct is used incorrectly, it brings about fears. And when the sex instinct is used incorrectly, it brings about harms to others. Left to our own resources, we will invariably overdo in these areas. In our selfish attempt to fulfill these desires, we are in constant conflict with

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others. That is why, coincidentally, the Big Book's Fourth Step process focuses directly on resentments, fears, and harms; so it gets down to our misdirected instincts and the root of our problems. Nearly every serious emotional problem can be seen as a case of misdirected instinct. All self-centered people have difficulties in these three areas whether they are food addicts or not.

We have provided inventory sheets for you to do this, and we will read the "clear-cut", simple directions that the "Big Book" authors have documented for us. Let us reassure you, the Fourth Step is not difficult nor should it be a tedious process. Within seven pages of text, the "Big Book" authors give us precise instructions on how to make a good beginning on facing and getting rid of the obstacles in our path to the Power greater than ourselves.

*****NEXT LEADER*****

The first manifestation of "self" (that we started to look at last week) is our resentments.

Since Bill Wilson liked using different words that mean the same thing, the book uses a few different expressions when describing who and what to write down. People, institutions or principles with whom we have resentment, with whom we were angry, with whom we were hurt or threatened or interfered with, with whom we felt had wronged us, with whom we stayed sore at, with whom we felt "burned up" toward, and with whom we held a grudge. Also included in this list should be people, institutions or principles with whom we were annoyed with, agitated by, or let down by; and also include your regrets because regret is resentment toward yourself. Needless to say, this is usually a long list.

Like we said last week, the word resentment comes from the Latin word "sentire" which means "to feel", and when you put "re" in front of any word, it means "again", so the word resent means "to feel again". After we experience what we perceive as being wronged by someone, the first response usually is anger or frustration. But then after a while, after we have reviewed in our mind what happened, and have felt the anger or anxiety again and again, we move to the next stage, which is resentment. Over a short period of time, as I playback the suspected harm in my head, I become less and less involved in what happened and the other person becomes more and more to blame. Sometimes we are able to let the incident go without

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moving past anger, but if you are a self-centered food addict, that is usually a difficult thing to do since we tend to keep score of these things so we can at some point get back at them. I'm sure no one here can relate.

In the third paragraph on page 64, the authors write:

"Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more food addicts 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."

Please notice the equation in that last sentence, "When the SPIRITUAL malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically." It describes the Program and the ONLY three relationships we all have – our relationship with God, our relationship with ourselves, and our relationship with others (which includes the physical world around us). In the first three Steps, we get headed in the right direction with our relationship with God. In Steps Four through Seven, we get headed in the right direction with our relationship with ourselves. And in Steps Eight and Nine, we get headed in the right direction with our relationship with others. Then in Step 10, we deepen and broaden our relationship with ourselves. In Step 11, we deepen and broaden our relationship with God. And in Step 12, we deepen and broaden our relationship with others. So the Steps are not some random, fluke process. They are a specific, focused and deeply effective set of tools that bring about a transformation or personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from food addiction.

Please turn to the sheet entitled "Resentment Inventory" in the packet provided for you. You can clearly see that the first three columns of this sheet resemble the example found on page 65, with the exception of an added fourth column. Don't worry! The directions for the fourth column are found on page 67 and we'll be getting to that in a few minutes.

*****NEXT LEADER*****

Let's first look at the simple step-by-step, column-by-column procedure the "Big Book" authors give us for writing the resentment inventory. Six lines from the bottom of page 64, the authors tell us:

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"In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper."

So in the first column, "I'm resentful at", it says to put the following:

"We listed people, institutions or principle with whom we were angry."

We continue writing the names in the first column until we are finished. How do you know when you are finished? Well, when you think you are finished and no more names come to mind, stop. Ask God for Guidance. If more names come, write them down. If not, you are finished with the first column unless you think of something later. Please note that there is a Resentment Inventory Prompt Sheet just before the Resentment Inventory that will give you some other ideas as well.

Second column, second instruction - 3 lines up from the bottom of page 64:

"We asked ourselves why we were angry."

In our example on page 65 and on our sheets, the second column is entitled, "The cause".

Why am I resentful, "burned up" or sore at whatever is written in each of the boxes in the first column? What did they do to make me angry? List all the resentments you have for each name. Keep in mind that you may have more than one resentment toward any one person, place or thing.

In the third column, third instruction - page 64, last three lines and page 65, first two lines:

"In most cases it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships, (including sex) were hurt or threatened."

In the first paragraph on page 65, the "Big Book" authors repeat themselves and add a few more ways self can be affected:

"On our grudge list we set opposite each name our injuries. Was it our self-esteem, our security, our ambitions, our personal, or sex relations, which had been interfered with?"

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Please remember to use the Step Four Word Definitions found in your handout packet on page 8 when doing the third column.

Then, at the bottom right of the example given on page 65, the “Big Book” includes the word “pride”. Pride can be defined as an exaggerated opinion of ourselves. That makes up the seven ways mentioned, that self can be affected in column three. Also provided for you is a list of definitions for words used in the Fourth Step and these definitions should be handy as you are writing this.

*****NEXT LEADER*****

(*****Review what was done in the previous session with ONLY the first three columns of the Resentment Inventory Sheets.*****)

*****NEXT LEADER*****

When the first three columns are complete, the "Big Book" takes a very important, two-page break from the Resentment Inventory so we can soften our heart toward these people, institutions and principles. The authors tell us to pray for OURSELVES (that we may have a better attitude toward them), & to pray for THEM as well. Why? Because we need to rid ourselves of these resentments. Why would we want to be free of resentments? Shouldn't we justifiably be angry with these people? Don't we have a right to be angry? The Big Book doesn't paint a pretty picture about holding a resentment. It points out in no uncertain terms that resentment could be a food addict's worst enemy. Please listen as I read what the Big Book says about resentment:

The chapter “How It Works” says - “Resentment is the “NUMBER ONE” offender. It destroys more food addicts than ANYTHING else, from it stem ALL forms of spiritual disease. Resentment leads ONLY to futility and unhappiness; to the precise extent that we permit resentment do we squander the hours that might have been worth while; this business of resentment is INFINITELY grave; it is FATAL; when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit; the insanity of food addiction returns and we compulsively eat again; these things are poison; because of it the world and its people really dominated us; the wrong-doing of others FANCIED OR REAL had power to actually kill. After writing a 4th Step, we begin to comprehend the futility and fatality of our resentments; we commence to see its terrible destructiveness.”

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In Chapter 8 “To Wives” it says this about resentments – “never forget that resentment is a deadly hazard to a food addict.” Two chapters later it says – “the GREATEST enemies of us food addicts include resentment.” In the Big Book story “Fear of Fear” it says – “I can’t afford resentments against ANYONE because they are the build-up of another compulsive bite.” And finally, in the story “Freedom From Bondage” it says – “I realized I had to get rid of my last resentment for my reprieve was running out and if I didn’t get rid of it I was going to compulsively eat.”

Most of us usually think resentments are kinda fun and acceptable. We have a problem with most people so resentment becomes a way of life for us. Now it was saying that even if I felt that a resentment was JUSTIFIED (which I ALWAYS did), it was the BIGGEST CAUSE for leading an food addict back to compulsive eating, and I desperately do NOT want to move in that direction.

Well, that's very simple, isn't it? The book says very clearly, if we continue to hold on to resentments we WILL compulsively eat again. That’s because resentment is like taking poison and expecting the other person to get sick.

How do we get free of ongoing anger and frustration, as the book suggests we do? The top of page 67 deals with prayer.

Before we go there, the "Big Book" authors ask 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 (which is a new perspective, and will become column four in our inventory).

On the bottom of page 66 in paragraph 4, the book states:

“This was our course: We realized that the people who wronged us (column 1) were perhaps spiritually sick (also called spiritually unconscious or spiritually blocked off). Though we did not like their symptoms (column 2) and the way these disturbed us (column 3), they, LIKE OURSELVES, were sick too.”

The next few lines are prayers for getting rid of 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

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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.’”

*****NEXT LEADER*****

Please turn to page 552. The Big Book gives us another powerful example of how to use prayer to soften our heart toward the people we resent. In the middle of page 552, this is what it says:

“He said, in effect: ‘If you have a resentment you want to be free of, if you will pray for the person or the thing that you resent, you will be free. If you will ask in prayer for everything you want for yourself to be given to them, you will be free. Ask for their health, their prosperity, their happiness, and you will be free. Even when you don’t really want it for them, and your prayers are only words and you don’t mean it, go ahead and do it anyway. Do it every day for two weeks (or more) and you will find you have come to mean it and to want it for them, and you will realize that where you used to feel bitterness and resentment and hatred, you now feel compassionate understanding and love.’”

So the Big Book tells us that the way to get over a resentment is by seeing that the person we resent was spiritually blocked off, just like WE are when WE harm others; and to pray that we show them tolerance, pity, and patience, so that we can get a better attitude toward them. It also suggests that we pray for the person we resent that they get the good things in life that we want for ourselves. This softens our heart toward them and allows us to look at the situation around the resentment with more truth, and this truth will bring about more freedom.

Let’s turn back to page 67 and look at the fourth column on our resentment inventory sheets. In the second paragraph on page 67, the directions read:

“Referring to our list again. Putting OUT of our minds the wrongs OTHERS had done, we resolutely looked for OUR OWN mistakes. Where had WE been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved ENTIRELY. Where were WE to blame? The inventory was OURS, not the other man's. When we saw OUR faults we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight.”

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What's the EXACT NATURE of OUR wrongs that the Fifth Step talks about? Let's take a second to study this paragraph. It's important that we see OUR mistakes in the resentment. Let's see how WE got the proverbial ball rolling in the first place.

Would someone like to take a shot at the fourth column? Remember: let's look at it from an ENTIRELY different angle. What did WE do? What are OUR mistakes - disregarding the other person ENTIRELY.

(*****Continue with the examples using the Resentment Inventory Sheets, this time doing the fourth column*****)

*****NEXT LEADER*****

(*****If appropriate, please pass the collection baskets*****)

By completing a searching, fearless, honest, and thorough Resentment Inventory we are examining the four dimensions of our existence: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Column 1 of this inventory deals with the physical - Who or what we're mad at. Column 2 deals with the mental - What we THINK they did to us. Column 3 deals with the emotional - What we FELT when they supposedly wronged us. And finally, Column 4 rockets us into the spiritual dimension, revealing the “exact nature of our wrongs” - the truth about what really happened. It usually reveals to me how my faulty thinking caused me to take actions, which got the "ball rolling" in the first place. With nearly ALL resentment, our view of the first 3 columns can be transformed into a new and peaceful perspective when the truth of the fourth column is revealed.

Let's look at the next inventory mentioned in Step 4 beginning on page 67 and please turn in your packet to the Fear Inventory. In the Big Book, this inventory starts with the last paragraph on page 67 where it says:

“Notice that the word "fear" is bracketed alongside the difficulties with Mr. Brown, Mrs. Jones, the employer, and the wife. This short word somehow touches about every aspect of our lives. It was an evil and corrodng 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.” (In the Fear Inventory, this next line is part of column 3. The book continues)

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“But did not we, ourselves, set the ball rolling? Sometimes we think fear ought to be classed with stealing. It seems to cause more trouble.”

So fear is a thief! It robs us of our relationship with God and others, and prevents us from reaching our full potential. Fears can usually be classified into three categories – afraid of losing what I have, afraid of not getting what I want, and afraid of being found out. Fear in and of itself is NOT necessarily a bad thing. When right-sized and not controlling, fear brings about caution and prevents us from being hurt. In other words, if I am by the ledge on the roof of a tall building and I experience some fear, it is a good thing because it is letting me know that I am in a dangerous position. The fear around this situation will bring about caution and will prevent me from being hurt. However, if going near a sealed window on the twenty-ninth floor of an office building freezes me in panic and fear, this is NOT right-sized and IS controlling, and I need to analyze and seek truth about this fear so I can move toward being free of it.

Two really great acronyms for the word fear is “false evidence appearing real” and “forgot everything’s all right”. Another acronym, perhaps on the humorous side, is “frantic efforts to appear recovered”. Just like with the Resentment Inventory, we have provided in your packet a Fear Inventory Prompt Sheet to help you with identifying your fears.

The book continues with the first paragraph on page 68:

“We reviewed our fears thoroughly (column 1). We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. (It says this because we have ALREADY identified the fears associated with resentment when we did the fourth column in the Resentment Inventory, so now we are just looking for OTHER fears not associated with our resentments. Remember to also put the fears found in the Resentment Inventory onto the Fears Inventory. The book continues.) We asked ourselves why we had them (column 2). Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? (Also column 3.) 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.

Perhaps there is a better way (column 4) - we think so. For we are now on a different basis of trusting and relying upon God. We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves. We are in the world to play the role HE assigns (those are three references back to the decision we made in the Third Step to

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allow God to be our Director, our Employer, our Principle and our Father. Here's another Third Step reference). Just to the extent that we do as we think HE would have us, AND humbly rely on Him, (then) does He enable us to match calamity with serenity.

We never apologize to anyone for depending upon our Creator. We can laugh at those who think spirituality the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it is the way of strength. The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. ALL men of faith have courage. They trust their God. We never apologize for God. Instead we let HIM demonstrate, through us, what He can do. (Now here's a prayer) We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us BE. AT ONCE, we commence to outgrow fear.”

*****NEXT LEADER*****

(*****Give a few examples using the Fear Inventory Sheets, doing all four columns*****)

*****NEXT LEADER*****

How do we get rid of fear? I'm sure some of you know already. 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. (Again, here's the prayer) We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us BE. (The results of doing this are in the next sentence.) At once, we commence to outgrow fear.”

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. And notice what the last part of the prayer says, “...what HE would have us BE.” Not what He would have us DO, but what He would have us BE. We must go deeper than just changing out actions, because like we've said before, who we are and what motivates us will drive our thoughts and actions.

It's that simple! And the miracle is it works! That's all the information for the Fear Inventory so let's go on to the Sex and Harms Inventory.

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The "Big Book" authors continue on the bottom of page 68.

"Now about sex. Many of needed an overhauling there (not just a simple tune-up but an OVERHAULING). But ABOVE ALL, we tried to be sensible on this question. It's so easy to get way off the track. Here we find human opinions running to extremes - absurd extremes, perhaps. One set of voices cry that sex is a lust of our lower nature, a base necessity of procreation. Then we have the voices who cry for sex and more sex; who bewail (which means express sorrow over) the institution of marriage; who think that most of the troubles of the race are traceable to sex causes. They think we do not have enough of it, or that it isn't the right kind. They see its significance everywhere. One school would allow man no flavor for his fare and the other would have us all on a straight pepper diet. We want to stay out of this controversy. We do not want to be the arbiter (or judge) of anyone's sex conduct. We all have sex problems. We'd hardly be human if we didn't. What can we do about them?"

The "Big Book" authors go on to tell us to review our own conduct over the past years. Therefore, we will begin our third and final inventory. Your "sponsor" will help you with this as well as with the completion of the Resentment and Fear Inventories during the next week. The book continues.

"We reviewed OUR OWN conduct over the years past. Where had WE been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? (Column 3) Whom had WE hurt? (Column 1) Did WE unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? (Column 2) Where were WE at fault (also Column 3), what should WE have done instead? (Column 4) We got this all down on paper and looked at it.

So we need to include on this inventory both a harms review around our sex conduct over the years, and also look for ways we harmed others in the past NOT associated with our sex life. Needless to say, this is ALSO sometimes a long list. As you start writing this harms list, you may want to read Step 8 in the 12 & 12, which gives us OTHER ideas on how we can harm people in ways that we may not have thought of.

*****NEXT LEADER*****

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(****Give a few examples using the Sex and Harms Inventory Sheets, doing all four columns, giving examples and answering questions****)

*****NEXT LEADER*****

The book continues in the middle of page 69 by mentioning that we need to develop an ideal for our future sex life and even gives us a way of testing future relations. Middle of page 69.

“In this way we tried to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life. We subjected each relation to this test - was it selfish or not? (Now here’s a prayer.) We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them. We remembered always that our sex powers were God-given and therefore good, neither to be used lightly or selfishly nor to be despised and loathed. Whatever our ideal turns out to be, we MUST be willing to grow toward it. We MUST be willing to make amends where we have done harm, provided that we do not bring about still more harm in so doing. In other words, we treat sex as we would ANY OTHER PROBLEM (so the book is going to tell us how to deal with EVERY problem, and here’s another prayer). In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer WILL come, IF we want it. (That’s another promise.) God alone can judge our sex situation. Counsel with persons is often desirable, but we let God be the final judge. We realize that some people are as fanatical about sex as others are loose. We avoid hysterical thinking or advice.

Suppose we fall short of the chosen ideal and stumble? Does this mean we are going to compulsively eat? Some people tell us so. But this is only a half-truth. It depends on us and on our motives. IF we are sorry for what we have done, and have the HONEST desire to let God take us to better things, we believe we will be forgiven and will have learned our lesson. (Now here’s a warning.) IF we are NOT sorry, and our conduct CONTINUES to harm others, we are quite SURE to compulsively eat. We are not theorizing. These are FACTS out of our experience.

To sum up about sex: 1- We earnestly pray for the right ideal, 2- we pray for guidance in each questionable situation, 3- we pray for sanity (which is seeing the truth), and 4- we pray for the strength to do the right thing. If sex is very troublesome, we 5- throw ourselves the harder into helping others. We think of THEIR needs and work for them. This takes us out of ourselves. It quiets the imperious (which means “urgent”) urge, when to yield would mean heartache.”

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So the last part of the Fourth Step out of the Big Book is to come up with a future sex/relationship ideal and praying that we move toward it. In your packet, right after the Sex and Harms Inventory guide, is a sheet that can be used to develop your ideal. This form opens with all the references the Big Book gives for coming up with a future sex ideal, and then has blank space for writing your ideal.

This ideal usually includes three aspects of a relationship:

- 1) Ideal attributes and behaviors in OURSELVES that we would like to bring to a relationship.
- 2) If you are NOT currently in a relationship, include ideal attributes and behaviors that we would look for in SOMEONE ELSE that we might consider having a relationship with. But if you ARE currently in a relationship, include positive attributes and behaviors that your partner already has that you can appreciate and notice more.
- 3) Attributes and behaviors that would describe what an ideal relationship would generally look like.

We'll conclude Step Four with the last two paragraphs of the chapter, which has a little bit of a review and contain some more promises associated with doing the work up to this point. Last full paragraph on page 70:

“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. (If we have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward our enemies, and we did this through prayer and forgiveness during the Resentment Inventory, we certainly ARE beginning to experience that psychic change that Dr. Silkworth mentioned in the Doctor’s Opinion. The book continues.) 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 (Step 2). 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.”

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So the Fourth Step is NOT about finding out who we ARE, it's about finding out who we are NOT, so we can get rid of it and who we ARE (the God within us) will then shine through. That's another reason why "self-knowledge avails us nothing", we need to find out what GOD wants us to be.

Some people think that the Fourth Step is like cleaning your room by rearranging the same old stuff you've always been stuck with. This is absolutely not true. The Fourth Step is more like cleaning your room by throwing out all the things you do NOT want anymore, so that it can be replaced with the NEW things you DO want. In looking at it THAT way, we should be EXCITED about doing a Fourth Step.

In our Fourth Step inventories we will discover, for the most part, that our troubles were of our OWN making. We will see how we played a part in every resentment and fear we've ever had and how our conduct has harmed others. By taking stock of ourselves and sharing our inventories with another person, we will gather a list of things about ourselves that we view as objectionable. These are the very things that have blocked us from God, which is the ONLY Power that can remove the food addict obsession. The OA Program then goes on to ask that we become willing to have God relieve us of our defects of character in Steps Six and Seven and then asks you to make restitution to those whom you've harmed in Steps Eight and Nine. Also, after you complete your 4th Step Inventories, you will have all the information that you are going to share in your 5th Step, all of the defects/shortcomings you'll be asking God to help you with in Steps 6 & 7, & a list of all the harms you'll be making amends for in Steps 8 & 9; so your 4th Step will provide everything you need for Steps 4 through 9.

Those of you who have never done a Fourth or Fifth Step and were NOT intending to, may hear something tonight that will motivate you to complete Steps Four and Five in the near future. We want you to know that everything you hear and read tonight is ALSO for your benefit.

We are now entering the phase of the program where more and more actions are required. But these actions produce many powerful and positive results.

Overeaters Anonymuos Big Book Study – Session Three

Many of these results are in the form of promises, which as our lives change, become an integral part of our spiritual being.

If our lives didn't get better, why would we want to stay vigilant? If all we had to look forward to was more restlessness, irritability and discontentment, why do the work? O.A. offers so much more - a new way of living (not just a new way of not compulsively eating) which is far more wonderful than ANYTHING we could EVER have imagined. THAT'S why we take the Steps.

Please pay attention to what I am about to read. This is a review of what is expected over the next week:

- 1) Please continue saying the Third Step Prayer each morning and when needed throughout the day.
- 2) If you haven't done so already, please make copies of each of the three inventories provided in your packet so that you will have blank forms to write on. What is suggested is to make 10 copies of the Resentment Inventory, five copies of the Fear Inventory, and 10 copies of the Sex & Harms Inventory.
- 3) If you haven't done so already, please begin to pray for the people, institutions or principles that you wrote down in the first column of your Resentment Inventory, and also pray for yourself to have a better attitude toward them. Then, begin writing the FOURTH column of your Resentment Inventory.
- 4) Continue writing the rest of your three Fourth Step Inventories, as well as create your future sex/relationship ideal. Please remember to do the Inventories one column at a time, top to bottom, before going on to the next column. Please make this a priority and try to do some writing EVERY day.

This brings us to the end of Step Four and to the end of this session. Are there any questions?