

Reflections on Step 4

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

“I'm so grateful for the chance to do the searching and moral inventory of myself that this Step calls for. In doing my self-reflection, I've actually discovered things that troubled me (which I need to be fearless about) - and things to celebrate. In the 5th Steps that I've done, I've shared both my deep sorry and regret about things done and left undone - things said and left unsaid - things I think about and things I shouldn't think about. I share whatever I need to share in order to have a clear conscience - to put things behind me and find release. I also share things that I can celebrate and affirm about who I am and what I've learned amidst the changes and challenges of life. When it comes to the hard stuff, Step 4 is confronting. It's also a real gift in a positive way - giving me the chance to rejoice in the person I am and the person I'm becoming.” — Scott J., *EAI President*

“Step 4 takes time to work through, in my opinion. The first time I faced the step, I felt that I had so much to write in terms of character defects that I must have remembered to mention everything. But that is not how the program works. When I have worked through one defect of character, it gets me closer to discovering others. Sometimes, I’m quite surprised by things I need to work on in my life that come up through working this step a number of times. I am thankful for the program and all of the steps and am particularly grateful that I can continue to make progress on my lifelong journey of personal exploration and development by honestly working Step 4.”— Paul N., *EAI Treasurer*

“Prior to the program I had never attempted anything like it. I had never written down my fears or my character defects. I'd never even thought about my sexual conduct or how I had behaved in any of my relationships, romantic or otherwise. And my resentments: I had always talked about who did what to me, though I had never written it down. And so, if I didn't write that part down, I definitely had no desire to ever write about what I had done to any of them.

Though I was terrified to write about those things, I did it anyway, in spite of my fear. The most fearful part about writing for me was the thought of someone finding it even before I could complete it. I had heard of people burning their inventories or just throwing them in the garbage after they did their 5th step, but my fear was if I died before completing the writing someone would know all of my "business". I don't know why I cared so much then, because now, I don't care much about what a person thinks of me now, while I'm alive, and I surely can care even less when I die.

Doing the fourth step, the inventory step, was the single most life-changing thing I had ever done. They say the fourth step divides us in the Fellowship, those who are successful and have peace and those who are still struggling. And I heard someone say and now I pass it along that the quickest way to finish your 4th step is to schedule your 5th step and that way the 5th step appointment date is your deadline. So, whether it be a week from now or a month from now, that is your deadline. I know people who have been working on their 4th step for years and years and wonder why they are still in the same place. Some people settle for just that initial relief we find when we discover that we are not alone, but I wanted ALL of the promises to come true for me. And they have, though I have to continuously work the program to keep them in my life.

I write this for the same reason I write everything else here: to encourage the newcomer and those who are still suffering. So please, be encouraged. And you are welcome to reach out to me anytime. My contact info is on the website [here](https://emotionsanonymous.org/who-we-are/eai-board-and-staff.html).” — Derita P., *EAI Trustee*