

Inventory and the Fourth Step

March 11

As we move forward in The Steps, we see how important the fourth step is to our long-term sobriety. We've expected this step for so long, getting close yet dragging our feet at the enormity of the task it presents. The pain, shame, and guilt, buried without reconciliation all those years have locked us in a state of unmanageability. Many of us cut and run or bury our heads back in the sand. We lose courage, weaken, and our addiction wins yet again.

Step Four is not meant to reinforce the enormity of our pain and shame. This thorough moral inventory is a search in every nook and cranny for fear, defects, and the harms we have done to others. Step Four is vital to the freedom from the bondage of self that comes in Step Five.

Walking with our Higher Power, we entrust our past to a professional, a sponsor, or a confidant, without fear of being condemned. We are on a critical fact-facing mission, overturning and casting aside every stone in our path. We have criticized the behavior of others and have hurt them for their perceived misdeeds long enough. Now, we are confident in our ability to be honest about our own behavior, a rigorous assessment so long avoided.

As we struggle to complete our inventory, it is easy to forget that the first three Steps have built the framework of faith. Comforted now, we trust a Higher Power to provide the strength and courage we need to face what we are ready to see. We must remember we no longer walk or face anything alone.

We've come a long way toward acknowledging facts about ourselves, and understand that we are our own worst critic. There is no final score. We are ready to dump the junk we hid in our mind's closet for so long and live without fear of rejection. Step Four cracks open the door to freedom.

With humility, we're ready to admit long forgotten truths about ourselves as we are lifted now in courage and mature acceptance.

Like every other step before and after, Step Four is a process. The miracle is that we are preparing ourselves for the humility that comes in Step Five.

TODAY'S MEDITATION

Dear God, as you hold my hand, I trust this process. Through faith, I will be set free.

.....
"Confession of errors is like a broom which sweeps away the dirt and leaves the surface brighter and clearer. I feel stronger for confession."

--Mahatma Gandhi