

## STEP FOUR

*"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."*

Having followed the spiritual path suggested for us in the first three Steps, we stood on the threshold of self-discovery. The clear phrasing of the Fourth Step, **"made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves,"** gave us the perfect tool with which to begin. The language was free of shaming criticism. It said simply, "Let's take a look at ourselves as we've been, up till now!"

Most of us had spent the better part of our lives preoccupied with other people. We had scrutinized, criticized, and analyzed others and ourselves, sometimes obsessively. But this was not a searching and fearless moral inventory of anyone. It was self-will and self-abuse.

In CoDA's first three Steps we had begun to participate in a partnership with the Higher Power of our own choosing. And it was this partnership that became our guarantee of success. Placing ourselves solely in God's hands would mean the end of self-will and self-abuse.

There was nothing to fear from this investigation. We had surrendered to a Power greater than ourselves, greater than any shortcomings, even our shame and fear. Unless we chose to set aside our decision in Step Three, we were no longer in charge.

### Searching and Fearless

The definitions of those words were as myriad as they were comforting.

**Searching** meant to look over carefully in order to find something lost or concealed; to come to know, learn, seek; to conduct a thorough investigation.

And **fearless** meant courageous, bold, and unconquerable.

If "searching" meant to look for something lost or concealed, we were really on the brink of a great adventure, the discovery of our True Selves.

But this word, "fearless" was another story. Many of us still believed it was impossible to approach this process without fear.

We were comforted by others who had felt, as we had. We realized that we were not alone, that we were embarking upon this journey with God who would guide us gently along our way.

### Moral Inventory of Ourselves

The first part of this Step defined the attitude we adopted as we worked it — one that was searching and fearless. The second part of Step Four gave us our focus and direction.

This inventory would be only of ourselves, and it would pertain to our personal behavior in as many life experiences as we could recall.

The word "moral" had many synonyms. Among them were words like honest, straightforward, fair, and open.

The message in Step Four was clear. This inventory of ourselves was to be honest and straightforward, not critical or abusive.

If this was to be a thorough inventory, we would need to list our assets and our liabilities. That meant we would have a truly balanced picture of ourselves. For some, it was more difficult to discover good points than to face shortcomings. For others, acknowledging positive qualities made the task less painful. Whatever our feelings were about this, we were encouraged to do both as each was an important aspect of a thorough inventory.

Most of us found that putting the inventory in writing was the only way out of obsessing about the past. It also helped us in getting our thoughts organized. We learned from our sponsor and other CoDA friends that there were a variety of approaches. Some had listed fears, resentments and actions taken that were related to specific people and events. Others wrote a life story. Most importantly, we were cautioned that no matter what had happened in the past, the purpose of Step Four was for each of us to become aware of our own participation in the events of our lives. It was only with this information that we could engage in a thorough housecleaning, rid ourselves of the debris from the past, and become whole human beings.

*In this moment, I am willing to see myself as I truly am, a growing, unfolding spiritual being resting in the hands of a loving God. I can separate who I am from what I've done, knowing that the real me is emerging — loving, joyful and whole.*

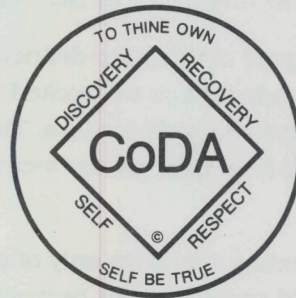
Having completed our Fourth Step, we were ready to move on to Step Five.

**\*Step Four. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

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God,

*Grant me the Serenity to accept things I cannot change, Courage to change things I can and the Wisdom to know the difference.*



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## CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS

STEP  
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