

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.

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*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.*

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

## The Serenity Prayer

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the  
things I cannot change,*

*courage to change the things I can,*

*and Wisdom to know the difference.*

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## The Togetherness Prayer

*I put my hand in yours  
and together we do  
what we could never do alone.*

*No longer is there a sense of hopelessness.*

*No longer must we depend upon our own  
unsteady willpower.*

*We are all together now,  
reaching out our hands for power and  
strength greater than ours, and as we join  
hands, we find love and understanding  
beyond our wildest dreams.*

# 4

## Step Four

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



# 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 until 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 the basis for a searching and fearless moral inventory of anyone. It was self-will, self-abuse, and obsession with others.

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, greater even than 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, to learn, to 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