



ILLINOIS DISTRICT 43

Groupvine

APRIL 2026

Step Four

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”

I've done multiple 4th (and 5th) steps over the years, dutifully writing the columns, as instructed by a sponsor, and as it is written out in the book. These provide concrete evidence not only of who I resent and why, but also what it affects and my part.

I've done this with three different sponsors, two of them twice. I've also done countless “minis” which is a more formalized spot-check inventory so I stay clear on my part.

My mom and dad have been at the top of the list for each of these inventories. They definitely gave me a run for my money during childhood. Still children themselves, we used to joke that we grew up together, though I grew up much faster and had to stay multiple steps ahead just to make it through the day. Even writing a generous statement like that is a gift of the 4th step. I wouldn't say the resentment has ever been completely eliminated, but I will say that all of this work prepared me for the situation of today.

Over the last decade, their health has declined significantly. Their already odd decision-making began to threaten their financial well-being and personal safety. It turns out that they both suffer from Alzheimer's and after many woeful incidents, wound up in a memory care unit.

They asked me to take over to make financial and health care decisions because I have business experience and I am “the most reasonable” of the siblings. My dad literally said the work I've done in AA is an example to us all (though I'm the only family member to ever get sober).

While that is a lovely compliment, to say this has been a challenging time in my life is a gross understatement. I have had to use every spiritual tool at my disposal to stay on my side of the street (especially in navigating a relationship with my

sister), to be of service as asked, and maintain a productive path forward amidst a huge amount of noise.

The Fourth step taught me to see my parents as human beings who went through their own horrific childhoods. Through this I learned compassion and understanding I've needed now that they rely on me for everything, not reacting when tempers flare. I am so grateful that my behavior isn't driven by my resentments. Because I can see my alcoholic tendencies more clearly, I've been able to see myself in their alcoholism which motivates my efforts in recovery.

Now, my mom is in late-stages of her disease but she recognizes me. Any of the mean behaviors she used to exhibit have vanished and now she is so sweet. My dad actually calls me to talk to me about his feelings. I've never had conversations with my dad about anything except my mom for my whole life, but now he expresses sadness, frustration and gratitude. He also leans on me when he needs to talk with someone reasonable. What a gift.

I've had similar experiences with my husband. We've been together since 2011, married since 2019 and during the Covid I learned he was leading a secret double life. When we got married I felt so smug I had married a “normal person.” Turns out, he is just as alcoholic as you and I.

Luckily he got sober but that didn't make it easier to unpack an ocean full of secrets and betrayal. I've really had to grow closer to my higher power using a tool my sponsor gave me, a prayer that says “this is too big for me and if I'm supposed to do something about it, please make it obvious.”

I haven't seen anything obvious that needed to happen in that amount of time, even on the hardest days. I'd say the most difficult task is to see him with

love and compassion the way I've learned to do with my family. This is quite an order I can't go through with it (on my own). Inventory after inventory after inventory...still mad.

One day a few weeks ago, he texted me to hurry home from work. Always suspicious, I replied "are we getting a divorce?" He thought that was hilarious and when I arrived home, I saw he'd put out a little spread of cheese and crackers in a room away from the TVs. He claims to have come up with the idea on his own though I swear his sponsor or one of the AA guys told him to do it.

It was a really special experience and he has done it every night ever since. And honestly, it has begun to melt away a lot of ice inside of me. I've been sober long enough to know how to "act the right way," but that gnawing of anger and hurt is easy to mask with a smile. Instead of being married through a light heart and joyful smile, I've been "married" in a house full of silent scorn.

Letting him do this one little act of kindness has given me a soft landing spot for the evening after a long hard day of work and service to my parents, and allowing the love to wash over me has brought us closer together.

I could give example after example of similar situations. Overall, my driving principle of this stems from advice I received after I first got sober. An old-timer coached me not to have an intellectual understanding of the steps, but rather an action-oriented approach.

Through my family and my husband, I hope I've outlined that I've done the work as outlined in the book which is important for a working knowledge of the damage my alcoholism can do. Where I've really found the recovery (and the relief) is from actively working against the alcoholic instincts. I think people use terms like "contrary action," but my life often moves too fast to really apply the correct term like that. What I've found is that when it hits the fan, I've intuitively known how to handle situations that used to baffle me.

-Kimberly M-E.

It's in the Book

(A quote from our literature)

“ Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions. ”

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 64

Upcoming Events! (In and around District 43)

April See our district website for more information on these events!

**PANEL 76
PRE-GENERAL SERVICE
CONFERENCE
WORKSHOP**

April 11 (8am-3:30pm)
@First Covenant Church
316 Wood Road
Rockford, IL 61107
Registration from 8-9am

Complimentary breakfast
\$10 Lunch (Italian Beef)

**DISTRICT 43
BUSINESS MEETING**

April 15th (7:00 pm)
Attend via Zoom
Zoom ID: 965 6659 0236
Password: 932879

**DISTRICT 43
BINGO LOCO**

April 18 (6:00pm-9:00pm)
@ Community United
Methodist Church
20 N. Center Street
Naperville, IL

Glow Foam Sticks, Music,
Dancing, Singing and oh...
BINGO!!!

May

COMING SOON...

**2026 NIA AREA 20
SPRING COMMITTEE
MEETING**

May 16th

FOX VALLEY OPEN

May 16th