



RECOVERY ROAD ONLINE

RECOVERY STEP 4 RESENTMENTS

ZOOM UP THE HIGHWAY OF HOPE



WORKING THE RECOVERY STEPS

“STEP FOUR”

Made a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory of ourselves

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: TRUTH & TOLERANCE

FOURTH STEP PRAYER

Dear God,

It is I who has made my life a mess. I have done it, but I cannot undo it. My mistakes are mine and I will begin a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory. I will write down my wrongs, but I will also include that which is good. I pray for the strength to complete the task.



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MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL AND FINANCIAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES.

MORAL INVENTORY

RESENTMENTS

Some members have described resentments as the number one cause of or excuse for our gambling. Far more than most people, we often let even the most minor offenses cause us to seethe with rage. We can carry these petty resentments for weeks and occasionally years. This is a major barrier to our peace of mind. Also, it is of course a colossal waste of time. Resentments have been compared to “drinking poison and expecting the other person to die”. The other people may be blissfully unaware of or at least unconcerned with our anger as they cheerfully go about their lives. On the other hand, we waste many hours reliving their actions in our mind and in many cases plotting our revenge and fantasizing about their reaction. Some members refer to this as letting these people live rent free in our head. If someone has done some action to harm us – well shame on them. On the other hand, if we replay this scene over and over in our mind and feel the hurt again and again every time - well shame on us. Of course, every time we replay this in our mind, their actions become a little worse and whatever role we played that contributed to the situation is diminished a little more.



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MORAL INVENTORY

RESENTMENTS (continued)

After numerous replays in our mind, their transgression was one of the worst atrocities in the history of the world and we were totally innocent victims.

Frequently we discover that these resentments are based on little more than the fact that we didn't get our way. More than most people, problem gamblers seem to have this notion that we should be able to run the world and other people should simply know what they are supposed to do. We get frustrated that other people have their own opinions and ideas about things. We think, "Why can't they see how much better our way is and how stupid they are?" These unrealistic expectations inevitably result in our frustrations and resentments.

The simple truth is that a life that includes deep resentments leads only to futility and unhappiness. We waste many hours obsessing over these things that we could have put to positive use helping our fellow human beings. For gambling addicts like us, this is especially



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RESENTMENTS (continued)

dangerous. These resentments stand in the way of our spiritual growth and our newly formed relationship with our Higher Power. Carrying these grudges will often lead us back to gambling and the devastating consequences of our illness.

The simple truth is that a life that includes deep resentments leads only to futility and unhappiness. We waste many hours obsessing over these things that we could have put to positive use helping our fellow human beings. For gambling addicts like us, this is especially dangerous. These resentments stand in the way of our spiritual growth and our newly formed relationship with our Higher Power. Carrying these grudges will often lead us back to gambling and the devastating consequences of our illness.

What we have learned about resentments is that these are often simply a defense mechanism to justify our own bad behavior. We can justify lying to our boss or our spouse about our gambling if we



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RESENTMENTS (continued)

convince ourselves that they were the true villains in our imaginary life, and we were just innocent victims that had had a run of bad luck.

Also, we think that if we start practicing forgiveness, this will somehow allow these people to get away with their actions. This is not true. They still have to live with themselves and their actions. We are not punished for our sins; we are punished by our sins. If they have committed crimes, they still have to deal with the criminal justice system. If their behavior was boorish, they will probably have few friends and live a sad lonely life. On the other hand, we can make a simple choice with our resentments – “We can let go or be dragged”. This is about our peace of mind, not theirs

Let us begin the process of writing down all of our resentments:



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MORAL INVENTORY

Worksheet 4A - RESENTMENTS

To whom am I resentful?	What exactly did they do to cause this resentment?	What in me did it affect?	What part of this situation was my fault, or did I make worse?	What were my character defects that I displayed in this situation?

INSTRUCTIONS:

All five columns need to be filled out for this worksheet. We recommend that you either make copies of this page, draw five columns on a piece of paper or use a spreadsheet on your computer to create the columns. It is suggested that you do this worksheet vertically instead of horizontally, i.e. complete all of column one before you move on to column two and complete that column before you start on column three and etc.



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Worksheet 4A - RESENTMENTS

TO WHOM AM I RESENTFUL?

COLUMN ONE – For this column, simply list all of the people, groups or organizations for whom you carry resentments. It can be any individual, group of people, organization or institution. It can be as painful to recall as someone who may have committed a violent crime against you or a family member or it can be as petty as a coworker who neglected to copy you on an e-mail. It doesn't matter if this is a resentment over something that happened to you as a child or something that happened yesterday. This doesn't have to be related to your gambling. You may not even know their name in which case just describe them as "Person who told lies about me to my boss" or "Person who hit my car" etc. If you are unsure whether they should be included in your list, go ahead and include them. Your list might only have three or four names, or it could be thirty or forty. There is no right number. The point is that when you are done there is no one else that you can think of that makes you feel even a slight flash of anger.



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Worksheet 4A - RESENTMENTS

To whom am I resentful?	What exactly did they do to cause this resentment?	What in me did it affect?	What part of this situation was my fault, or did I make worse?	What were my character defects that I displayed in this situation?

WHAT EXACTLY DID THEY DO TO CAUSE THIS RESENTMENT?

COLUMN TWO – After you have finished column one, go ahead and list next to the name in the second column exactly what they did to cause the resentment. Be brief but be specific. There should be no judgment here, only a description of the precise act that they did.



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MORAL INVENTORY

Worksheet 4A - RESENTMENTS

To whom am I resentful?	What exactly did they do to cause this resentment?	What in me did it affect?	What part of this situation was my fault, or did I make worse?	What were my character defects that I displayed in this situation?

WHAT IN ME DID IT EFFECT?

COLUMN THREE – What in you did it actually affect to cause the resentment? Did it cost you money? Did it create fear about your security? Did it affect your sex relations? Did it just hurt your feelings or your pride?



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Worksheet 4A - RESENTMENTS

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WHAT PART OF THIS SITUATION WAS MY FAULT, OR DID I MAKE WORSE?

COLUMN FOUR – Truthfully list anything that you did or didn't do that either contributed to the situation or made it worse after. It may be as obvious as you insulting them before they lashed out at you or simply the fact that you have continued to carry the resentment for a long period of time for no useful purpose.



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Worksheet 4A - RESENTMENTS

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WHAT WERE MY CHARACTER DEFECTS THAT I DISPLAYED IN THIS SITUATION?

COLUMN FIVE – List the character defect you exhibited in Column Four. Were you dishonest, selfish, judgmental, arrogant, short-tempered, envious, greedy, lazy, lustful etc.?



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When you finish, the worksheet might look something as this:

Worksheet 4A - RESENTMENTS

To whom am I resentful?	What exactly did they do to cause this resentment?	What in me did it affect?	What part of this situation was my fault, or did I make worse?	What were my character defects that I displayed in this situation?
My father.	Left when I was very young, and I had no structure or discipline in my home.	My sense of security. My self-esteem. My pride.	I continued to carry this resentment and used it as an excuse for my own gambling.	Lazy Judgmental Selfish (never thought about my mother or brother)
My husband	He always complains about my gambling.	My self- esteem. My pride. My peace of mind.	I gambled. I lied. Never sought help.	Dishonest Selfish
My boss	Didn't give me a raise. Criticizes my job performance.	My financial security. My self-esteem. My pride.	Spent work time gambling online and arranging loans. Lied about why I needed more money.	Dishonest Selfish
My friend Carol.	She wouldn't loan me money. Threatened to tell my husband about my gambling.	My financial security. My self-esteem. My pride.	I gambled. I lied. Never sought help.	Dishonest Selfish



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RESENTMENTS (continued)

Now we should try to look at our list from a different point of view. Sometimes we discover that we had built up in our mind that some person had committed some horrible transgression. However, when we actually look closely at the second column, it was often a fairly mild offense. In some cases we feel a little sheepish when we realize that we got so angry over such a stupid little thing. This is sometimes referred to as “pole vaulting over mouse turds”.

The next thing we often discover from this exercise is in column three how often these offenses hurt nothing except our feelings, our pride, our egos and our self-esteem. In many cases they didn't impact our finances or our health. In other words, we were not tangibly worse off except inside our own head. Therefore, this hurt was really a matter of choice for us. We could choose to be angry and carry this grudge for no good purpose or we could make a decision to forgive them and move on with enjoying our lives. Now we look at column four. Invariably we now see that our behavior in



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RESENTMENTS (continued)

this matter was not exactly above reproach. Often, we see that this person actually reacted quite normally to our actions that lead to this resentment. At the very least, we typically realize that we had been carrying this grudge for far too long and for no good reason.

Finally, we look at column five. Here we face squarely some of our character defects that have been inhibiting our spiritual growth and enjoyment of life. We have to honestly acknowledge that we are imperfect humans and perhaps not fully qualified to judge others too harshly. We will return to this when we work steps six and seven.

Hopefully we can now begin the process of forgiving some of the people on this list – not for them, but for our own peace of mind. The first thing we need to realize is that most people are in some way emotionally sick themselves. They may well suffer from insecurities and pain caused by their own background and experiences. It is true



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RESENTMENTS (continued)

that “hurt people hurt people”. Though we didn’t like their actions, they like ourselves, were sick also. We therefore must avoid retaliation or arguments. We wouldn’t treat a sick stranger that way.

Prayer is a useful tool here as well. We ask our Higher Power to help us show them the same tolerance, understanding and patience that we would show a friend who had dementia, schizophrenia, or some other illness. We say to our Higher Power “This is a sick person. How can I be helpful to them?” “Please grant me the power to forgive them so I can move on with my recovery and my life.”

If we are still struggling with some of these resentments, we should try praying for the people themselves on our list. This can be both extremely difficult and remarkably effective. We pray that these people on our list find the peace of mind and blessings in their life that we want for ourselves. If we do this every day for a couple of weeks, invariably we start to find ourselves becoming free from these enslaving resentments.



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It is time to move on to the next section – Fears.

