

Lesson 8

MORAL

Principle 4: Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

“Happy are the pure in heart.” (Matthew 5:8)

Step 4: We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.” (Lamentations 3:40)

An important word of caution: Do not begin this principle without a sponsor or a strong accountability partner (these are explained in Lesson 7)! You need someone you trust to help keep you balanced during this step, not to do the work for you. Nobody can do that except you. But you need encouragement from someone who will support your progress and hold you accountable. That’s what this program is all about.

Think About It

In this principle, you need to list (inventory) all the significant events — good and bad — in your life. You need to be as honest as you can be to allow God to show you your part and how that affected you and others. The acronym for MORAL shows you how to begin.

Make time

Set aside a special time to begin your inventory. Schedule an appointment with yourself. Set aside a day or a weekend to get alone with God! Clear your mind of the present hassles of daily life.

“Then listen to me. Keep silence and I will teach you wisdom!” (Job 33:33, TLB)

Open

Open your heart and your mind to allow the feelings that the pain of the past has blocked or caused you to deny. Try to “wake up” your feelings! Ask yourself, “What do I feel guilty about? What do I resent? What do I fear? Am I trapped in self-pity, alibis, and dishonest thinking?”

“Let me express my anguish. Let me be free to speak out of the bitterness of my soul.” (Job 7:11, TLB)

Rely

Rely on Jesus, your Higher Power, to give you the courage and strength this exercise requires.

“Love the Lord, all of you who are his people; for the Lord protects those who are loyal to him. . . . So cheer up! Take courage if you are depending on the Lord.” (Psalm 31:23 – 24, TLB)

Analyze

Analyze your past honestly. To do a “searching and fearless moral inventory,” you must step out of your denial!

That's all that the word *moral* means — honest! This step requires looking through your denial of the past into the truth!

"The Lord gave us mind and conscience; we cannot hide from ourselves." (Proverbs 20:27, GNT)

List

List both the good and the bad. Keep your inventory balanced! If you just look at all the bad things of your past, you will distort your inventory and open yourself to unnecessary pain.

"Let us examine our ways and test them." (Lamentations 3:40)

The verse doesn't say, "Examine only your bad, negative ways." You need to honestly focus on the pros *and* the cons of your past!

As you compile your inventory, you will find that you have done some harmful things to yourself and others. No one's inventory (life) is flawless. We have all "missed the mark" in some area of our lives. In recovery we are not to dwell on the past, but we need to understand it so we can begin to allow God to change us. Jesus told us, "My purpose is to give life in all its fullness" (John 10:10, TLB).

Principle 4 Prayer

Dear God, You know my past, all the good and the bad things that I've done. In this step, I ask that You give me the strength and the courage to list those things so that I can "come clean" and face them and the truth. Please help me reach out to others You have placed along my "road to recovery." Thank You for providing them to help me keep balanced as I do my inventory. In Christ's name I pray, Amen.

Write About It

1. Where will you go for quiet time to begin your inventory?
2. What date have you set aside to start? What time?
3. What are your fears as you begin your inventory? Why?
4. What can you do to help you "wake up" your feelings?
5. Describe your experience of turning your life over to Christ.
6. How do you attempt to turn over your will to God's care on a daily basis?
7. List the things you have used to block the pain of your past.

8. What have you done to step out of your denial?

9. How can you continue to find new ways out of your denial of the past?

10. Why is it important to do a written inventory?

11. What are some of the good things you have done in the past?

12. What are some of the negative things you have done in the past?

13. Do you have a sponsor or accountability partner to help you keep your inventory balanced?