

Explanation of Terms

Fourth Step Assets and Liabilities Checklist

In the late 1930's, Dr. Bob, one of the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, developed an Assets and Liabilities Checklist, which he used to take thousands of newcomers through the inventory and restitution process. Since then, various checklists have been used by sponsors, spiritual advisors and sharing partners to bring those "interested in a spiritual way of life" to a greater understanding of the shortcomings that have prevented them from finding a spiritual solution to their difficulties, a solution that is based upon establishing an intimate, two-way relationship with the "One who has all power."

We have defined these shortcomings—the liabilities that have been blocking us from this "Power"—in a way that, hopefully, will provide a clearer understanding of their meaning:

RESENTMENT is the consequence of being angry or bitter toward someone for an extended period of time over some real or imagined insult. It is a hostile or indignant attitude in response to an alleged affront or personal injury.

FEAR is being afraid of losing something we have or not getting something we want. It manifests itself in many ways including phobia, terror, panic, anxiety and worry.

SELFISHNESS is concern only for ourselves, our own welfare or pleasure, without regard for, or at the expense of, others.

DISHONESTY involves theft or deception. It includes taking things that don't belong to us, cheating people out of what is rightfully theirs, and lying to or withholding the truth from others.

FALSE PRIDE is either feeling better than or less than someone else. Feelings of superiority include prejudice about race, education or religious beliefs, and sarcasm—putting someone else down to make us feel better about ourselves. Feelings of inferiority include self-pity, which is excessive concern about our own troubles, and low self-esteem—the lack of self-worth or self-respect.

JEALOUSY has to do with people—being suspicious of another's motives or doubting the faithfulness of a friend.

ENVY has to do with things—wanting someone else's possessions.

LAZINESS means lacking the will or the desire to work. Procrastination, which is postponing or delaying an assigned job or task, is a form of laziness.