

# ISA STEP WORKSHEETS 03/2021

## Set 1: RESENTMENTS

### 1. WHAT/WHOM DO I RESENT?

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(What person or institution am I holding something against? Thinking of a specific event is helpful. If thinking of someone who did many things over a period of time, think of one specific example which can symbolize what you're resentful about.)

### 2. WHY? (what was the offense)?

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Thinking of a specific event is helpful. If thinking of someone who did many things over a period of time, think of one specific example which can symbolize what you're resentful about. It may be helpful to break down resentments into several different "beefs" with the same individual. Some questions that may be helpful: What happened that I interpreted as painful or unpleasant? What was the offense? Was there injustice? What event or circumstance did I feel angry about? Be as brief and specific as possible. It may be helpful to journal about the incident/situation in order to clarify what the specific resentment is.

### 3. WHAT BASIC HUMAN NEEDS OR RIGHTS WERE AFFECTED OR THREATENED?

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(Am I resenting my own hurts or the fact that someone I care about was hurt? How were my needs, or another person's, not met? How were my rights, or another person's, threatened? It may be helpful to view the "Instincts" on page 3 for more understanding.)

### 4. WHAT FEELINGS DID I HAVE AT THE TIME AND WHERE IN MY BODY DID I FEEL THEM?

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(Did I feel scared, anxious, or frightened? Disappointed? Sad or depressed? Confused? Confident or smug? Disgusted, repulsed or offended? Aroused? Lonely? Impressed? Hopeful? Jealous? Lovestruck? Bored? Enraged? Shocked? Surprised? Embarrassed? Ashamed? Curious? Joyful? Grateful? Suspicious? Shy? Self-hatred? Bereaved (loss)? Other feelings? See pages 4 & 5 for ideas)

### 5. HOW DID WHAT HAPPENED AFFECT THE COURSE OF MY LIFE?

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(How did what happened affect my: SELF-ESTEEM (how I view myself) RELATIONSHIPS with others; FINANCES, PRIDE (how I think others view me); AMBITIONS (goals, plans, desires for the future); SECURITY (personal well-being); SEXUAL desires. It is acceptable to either briefly explain or just list whatever parts were affected without elaborating)

### 6. WHAT WAS MY ROLE (NOT NECESSARILY MY FAULT) IN THE SITUATION OR EVENT?

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(What did I do before what happened, happened? Was my part to simply be the recipient of mistreatment? Did I contribute to the situation in any way? Did I allow something to happen? Did someone react to something I said, did, or failed to do?)

### 7. WHAT DID I WANT TO HAPPEN? ("Selfish")

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(Selfishness isn't always a negative thing. Sometimes it's reasonable. What did I want from the person or situation? What did I need, want, or expect to happen that didn't? What different outcome was I hoping for, and how did I feel when things didn't turn out the way I wanted? Did I have any unrealistic demands or expectations for myself or others (spoken or unspoken)? Did I ignore the feelings of others and think only of myself? Did I feel slighted for lack of recognition or acknowledgement?)

## 8. WHAT LIES DID I TELL MYSELF OR OTHERS? ("Dishonest")

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(Consider purposeful dishonesty as well as unintentional. Did I lie to myself or anyone else? How was my perception of the truth distorted? Did I blame someone else for my behavior? Did I ignore reality? Did I assume this was only about the present and fail to consider emotions from past trauma that might be surfacing? Did I hide my true thoughts and feelings? Did I interpret the events to mean something about me?)

## 9. HOW HAVE I BEEN FEARFUL?

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(Was I fearful when the event (or cause of the resentment) was happening? What was I afraid might happen? What was I scared the event/conditions might mean about me? What fears do I now have as a result of the event /circumstances?)

## 10. WHAT DID I DO AS A RESULT OF THE RESENTMENT? ("Self-seeking")

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(How did I try to control the situation? Was it any of my business? How did I react because of my resentment? What did I do to make myself feel better? Did I behave in a way that was harmful towards someone else or myself? What actions did I take to get what I wanted? Did I act like a victim to control others, or to get attention or sympathy? Did I freeze into inaction or any other form of avoidance/anorexia? Did I resist help from God or others? Did I insist on being right? How have my attitudes and actions set me up for or perpetuated my negative feelings?)

## 11. HOW AM I FEELING RIGHT NOW?

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(Pause for a few minutes and let yourself feel what's coming up. Sometimes it's difficult to give yourself permission to acknowledge and feel that whatever happened was important and to take time to let it in. Some people try to convince themselves they "shouldn't be feeling" what they are, or they may experience shame or guilt. It may also feel "too painful," or they may feel too scared to feel anything at all. Anything you feel is valid.

You're encouraged to stay in touch with what you're feeling for a few moments, instead of staying in your head by moving on to the logical, problem-solving part of this exercise. Taking time to let yourself feel these feelings may be easier with help from a sponsor, outreach partner, or other trusted individual, if needed. Talking with someone who can validate you and support you in what you are experiencing makes it less difficult or scary to feel what is coming up for you.)

## 12. HOW HAS HOLDING ONTO THE RESENTMENT AFFECTED ME?

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(How have I allowed the past to affect my present? Because of my resentment towards \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_. What "pushes my buttons" or irritates me in the present that originated in the past? Consider how harboring my ill feelings has had an effect on my: SELF-ESTEEM (how I view myself); RELATIONSHIPS with others; FINANCES; PRIDE (how I think others view me); AMBITIONS (goals, plans, desires for the future); SECURITY (personal well-being); SEXUAL desires)

## 13. DID I CAUSE HARM?

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(WE WILL LOOK AT HARMS AGAIN IN STEPS 8 AND 9, BUT HERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECORD OBSERVATIONS FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. Questions to consider: Did I hurt another person? Did I hurt myself? Were there negative or undesirable consequences as a result of my behavior? Did/do I keep myself too busy to spend time with friends or family? Did I avoid emotional or physical intimacy with anyone? Have I kept secrets or kept a part of my life hidden? Have I done or fantasized about doing something I feel sad, angry, frustrated, anxious, guilty, or shameful about? If I caused no harm, affirm that by writing, "I did no harm.")

## 14. OTHER CHOICES I HAVE TODAY?

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(Now that I have more awareness and tools, what can I do differently if a similar situation arises? What other options do I now have? What would be healthier?)

**If thinking and writing about this example brings up difficult emotions,  
the next three sections may help you know what to do with those feelings.**

## 15. AFFIRMATIONS

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(An affirmation can appear to invalidate what you are actually feeling. One way to handle this is to reaffirm truths you know in your head, and invite yourself to imagine what it would be like to feel the truth of that affirmation in your heart. What truths can I reaffirm about myself today? Examples: I am always more than enough. My worth as a human being is independent of my actions. I am being given the tools, wisdom, strength, and support to do what I need to do. Other affirmations?)

## 16. REACHING OUT

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(Do I need to reach out to anyone right now? My sponsor? A therapist? Program support via outreach calls? Attend a meeting? Quiet time with God? Do I need to bookend with my sponsor or an accountability partner?)

## 17. GENTLE CONSIDERATIONS

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(What do I need right now? How am I taking care of myself? Are there self-care behaviors such as eating nourishing foods, staying hydrated, planning sufficient time for sleep, grooming, etc. that I am doing well? Is there a self-care behavior that I feel my Higher Power wants me to increase or focus on? In what ways can I show myself love and compassion? Which of my sponsor's suggestions am I finding particularly helpful? What Outer Circle Behaviors might be pleasant or helpful right now? Are there new Outer Circle Behaviors I could try or add to my circles? Do I need to journal about my feelings? What is the next right thing for me to do?)

## 18. RELEASING THE RESENTMENT: FORGIVENESS

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(FORGIVENESS CANNOT BE FORCED OR RUSHED, AND IS PART OF STEPS 8 AND 9. However, this part of the inventory offers me a chance to prayerfully consider the state of my heart: Where am I as far as willingness to LET GO of what I'm holding against someone? Questions to consider: In what ways am I similar to the person I resent? Do I notice resistance when I consider forgiving? Why? What would be the best outcome I could imagine? What could change for the better if I forgive? How has the painful experience made me stronger, made me grow, and helped me have empathy for others? One suggestion which could help me receive forgiveness: Write my story again, but this time, not as a victim, but as a hero. CONSIDER RATING YOUR WILLINGNESS TO LET GO of this resentment on a scale of 1-10, 1 = not at all willing and 10 = I have let it go.)

## 19. RELEASING OR RENEWING THE RELATIONSHIP

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(IF THE RELATIONSHIP IS NOT DAMAGED, SKIP THIS LAST QUESTION. IF THE RELATIONSHIP IS DAMAGED, PRIOR TO MAKING AMENDS FOR MY PART IN THIS SITUATION IN STEP 9, I MAY WANT TO CONSIDER WHAT I FEEL LED TO DO WITH THIS RELATIONSHIP IN THE MEANTIME. Questions to consider: Is the person healthy for me to have a relationship with, or is that person toxic for me? Is a period of reduced contact appropriate? What do my sponsor and fellow travelers offer as experience, strength, and hope about what I've shared in regards to this relationship?) Bonus question: Is there anyone in my life that reminds me of the person (above) who I resent? Is there anything I could do to improve that relationship

## INSTINCTS & NEEDS LISTS

The following lists may help in answering the question, "What basic human needs or rights were affected or threatened?"

### **SOCIAL INSTINCTS:**

Companionship: Wanting to belong or to be accepted.

Prestige: Wanting to be recognized or to be accepted as a leader.

Self-Esteem: What we think of ourselves, high or low.

Pride: An excessive and unjustified opinion of oneself, either positive (self-superiority) or negative (self-hate).

Personal Relationships: Our relations with other human beings and with the world around us.

Ambitions: Our plans to gain acceptance, power, recognition, prestige, etc.

### **SECURITY INSTINCTS:**

Material: Wanting money, buildings, property, clothing, etc., in order to be secure.

Emotional: Based upon our needs for another person or persons. Some tend to dominate, some are overly dependent on others.

Ambitions: Our plans to gain material wealth, or to dominate, or to depend on others.

### **SEXUAL INSTINCTS:**

Acceptable: Our sex lives as accepted by either society's, God's, or by our own principles.

Hidden: Elements of our sex lives which are contrary to either society's, God's, or our own principles.

Ambitions: Our plans regarding our sex lives, either acceptable or hidden.

## NEEDS LIST

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### **CONNECTION**

Acceptance, affection, appreciation, belonging, cooperation, communication, closeness, community, companionship, compassion, consideration, consistency, empathy, inclusion, intimacy, love, mutuality, nurturing, respect/self-respect, safety, security, stability, support, to know and be known, to see and be seen, to understand and be understood, trust, warmth

### **PHYSICAL WELL-BEING**

Air, food, movement/exercise, rest/sleep, sexual expression, safety, shelter, touch, water

### **HONESTY**

Authenticity, integrity, presence

### **PLAY**

Joy, humor

### **PEACE**

Beauty, communion, ease, equality, harmony, inspiration, order

### **AUTONOMY**

Choice, freedom, independence, space, spontaneity

### **MEANING**

Awareness, celebration of life, challenge, clarity, competence, consciousness, contribution, creativity, discovery, efficacy, effectiveness, growth, hope, learning, mourning, participation, purpose, self-expression, stimulation, to matter, understanding

## EMOTIONS WHEN MY NEEDS AREN'T MET

((c) 2005 by Center for Nonviolent Communication, [www.cnvc.org](http://www.cnvc.org))

## **AFRAID**

Apprehensive, dread, foreboding, frightened, mistrustful, panicked, petrified, scared, suspicious, terrified, wary, worried

## **ANNOYED**

Aggravated, dismayed, disgruntled, displeased, exasperated, frustrated, impatient, irritated, irked

## **ANGRY**

Enraged, furious, incensed, indignant, irate, livid, outraged, resentful

## **AVERSION**

Animosity, appalled, contempt, disgusted, dislike, hate, horrified, hostile, repulsed

## **CONFUSED**

Ambivalent, baffled, bewildered, dazed, hesitant, lost, mystified, perplexed, puzzled, torn

## **DISCONNECTED**

Alienated, aloof, apathetic, bored, cold, detached, distant, distracted, indifferent, numb, Removed, uninterested, withdrawn

## **DISQUIET**

Agitated, alarmed, discombobulated, disconcerted, disturbed, perturbed, rattled, restless, shocked, startled, surprised, troubled, turbulent, turmoil, uncomfortable, uneasy, unnerved, unsettled, upset

## **EMBARRASSED**

Ashamed, chagrined, flustered, guilty, mortified, self-conscious

## **FATIGUE**

Beat, burnt out, depleted, exhausted, lethargic, listless, sleepy, tired, weary, worn out

## **PAIN**

Agony, anguished, bereaved, devastated, grief, heartbroken, hurt, lonely, miserable, regretful, remorseful

## **SAD**

Depressed, dejected, despair, despondent, disappointed, discouraged, disheartened, forlorn, gloomy, heavy hearted, hopeless, melancholy, unhappy, wretched

## **TENSE**

Anxious, cranky, distressed, distraught, edgy, fidgety, frazzled, irritable, jittery, nervous, overwhelmed, restless, stressed out

## **VULNERABLE**

Fragile, guarded, helpless, insecure, leery, reserved, sensitive, shaky

## **YEARNING**

Envious, jealous, longing, nostalgic, pining, wistful

## **EMOTIONS WHEN MY NEEDS ARE SATISFIED**

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## **AFFECTIONATE**

Compassionate, friendly, loving, open hearted, sympathetic, tender, warm

## **ENGAGED**

Absorbed, alert, curious, engrossed, enchanted, entranced, fascinated, interested, intrigued, involved, spellbound, stimulated

## **HOPEFUL**

Expectant, encouraged, Optimistic

## **CONFIDENT**

Empowered, open, proud, safe, secure

**EXCITED**

Amazed, animated, ardent, aroused, astonished, dazzled, eager, energetic, enthusiastic, giddy, invigorated, lively, passionate, surprised, vibrant

**GRATEFUL**

Appreciative, moved, thankful, touched

**INSPIRED**

Amazed, awed, wonder

**JOYFUL**

Amused, delighted, glad, happy, jubilant, pleased, tickled

**EXHILARATED**

Blissful, ecstatic, elated, enthralled, exuberant, radiant, rapturous, thrilled

**PEACEFUL**

Calm, clear headed, comfortable, centered, content, equanimous, fulfilled, mellow, quiet, relaxed, relieved, satisfied, serene, still, tranquil, trusting

**REFRESHED**

Enlivened, rejuvenated, renewed, rested, restored, revived

## Set 2: FEARS

### 1. WHAT AM I AFRAID OF?

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(What situations, behaviors, feelings, objects, etc. cause me anxiety, fear, or unrest?)

### 2. WHEN HAVE I FELT THIS FEAR?

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(Is there an event in the past that began or caused this fear? Or, when is a time when I felt this fear?)

### 3. WHY DOES THIS CAUSE ME FEAR?

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(So, what? Why does that matter? What am I afraid will happen? What am I making it mean about me? Consider how this fear threatens my: SELF-ESTEEM (how I view myself); RELATIONSHIPS with others; FINANCES; PRIDE (how I think others view me); AMBITIONS (goals, plans, desires for the future), SECURITY (personal well-being), and SEXUAL desires. The "Instincts" page may be helpful. It may also be helpful to continue asking, "Why?" until the root of the fear is found.)

### 4. WHAT AM I FEELING RIGHT NOW?

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(Pause for a few minutes and let yourself feel what's coming up. Sometimes it's difficult to give yourself permission to acknowledge and feel that whatever happened was important and to take time to let it in. Some people try to convince themselves they "shouldn't be feeling" what they are, or they may experience shame or guilt. It may also feel "too painful," or they may feel too scared to feel anything at all. **Anything you feel is valid.** You're encouraged to stay in touch with what you're feeling for a few moments, **paying attention to where in your body you feel it**, instead of staying in your head by moving on to the logical, problem-solving part of this exercise. Taking time to let yourself feel these feelings may be easier with help from a sponsor, outreach partner, or other trusted individual, if needed. Talking with someone who can validate you and support you in what you are experiencing makes it less difficult or scary to feel what is coming up for you. This is an opportunity to explore whether the emotions you're feeling are linked to past trauma.)

### 5. WHAT CHARACTER "DEFECTS" KEEP ME IN FEAR?

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(What character weaknesses caused me to do what I've done, or cause me to hold on to my fearful feelings? SELFISHNESS: (What have I wanted from the person or situation?); DISHONESTY: (Have I ignored reality? What have I been in denial about? Has my perception of the truth been distorted? Have I interpreted events to mean something about me? Have I hidden my true thoughts or feelings?) Other character weaknesses? See "Defects" tab for suggestions)

### 6. HOW DO I REACT?

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(This question looks for SELF-SEEKING behavior. When I'm feeling this fear, what do I do/avoid doing? In what ways have I been handicapped by my fears? How has fear motivated actions that I later regretted? How has fear prevented me from achieving the things I desired? (For example, how has the fear of intimacy and commitment contributed to my loneliness?) How has fear affected my beliefs? My relationships? My feeling of self-worth?)

### 7. AFFIRMATIONS

(What truth(s) can I reaffirm to myself that will help me release this fear and trust in my Higher Power? (Examples: I am always in the care of a loving God. I am braver than I believe, stronger than I seem, and smarter than I think. Today with God's help, I can do difficult things.)

## **8. REACHING OUT**

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(Do I need to reach out to anyone right now? My sponsor? A therapist? Program support via outreach calls? Attend a meeting? Quiet time with God? Do I need to bookend with my sponsor or an accountability partner?)

## **9. GENTLE CONSIDERATIONS**

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(What do I need right now? How am I taking care of myself? Are there self-care behaviors such as eating nourishing foods, staying hydrated, planning sufficient time for sleep, grooming, etc. that I feel my Higher Power wants me to increase or focus on? In what ways can I show myself love and compassion? Which of my sponsor's suggestions am I finding particularly helpful? What Outer Circle Behaviors might be pleasant or helpful right now? Are there new Outer Circle behaviors I could try or add to my circles? Do I need to journal about my feelings? What is the next right thing for me to do?



## Set 3: SEX & INTIMACY INVENTORY

It is suggested that you do this exercise several times, using examples of different kinds: platonic (non-sexual) positive and negative experiences as well as romantic or sexual experiences, both positive and negative.

### Part A: WITH WHOM AND WHAT HAPPENED?

#### A-1. Who? \_\_\_\_\_

**A. – PLATONIC (non-sexual) INTIMACY:** With the help of your Higher Power, name someone that stands out or feels important to you in regards to *emotional intimacy* (can be a friend or family member, etc.). You don't have to know why this person is standing out or feeling important -- just let your Higher Power bring someone to mind. Then answer as many of the following questions as apply.

OR...

**B. – ROMANTIC OR SEXUAL INTIMACY:** With the help of your Higher Power, name someone with whom you have wanted or experienced romantic or sexual intimacy. Then answer as many of the following questions as apply.

#### A-2. Name an event \_\_\_\_\_

(With the help of your Higher Power, pick a situation that you feel led to write about. It could be an event that stands out to you as memorable or you could choose a subject or theme and allow your Higher Power to bring to your mind an exchange which epitomizes (is an example of) many similar situations with the person you have in mind. It can be a positive experience or a negative one. Then write a title for the event or situation.

If you feel stuck, consider the following prompts:

- a special event such as a birthday or holiday
- an activity with a favorite friend or family member
- an embarrassing moment
- something that causes feelings of anger or grief.
- an unforgettable beautiful moment)

#### A-3. Who was it that wanted (or initiated) the connection / intimacy?

(You? The other person? Or both?)

#### A-4. What were my wants and needs in this situation?

(This is just to give you a rough sense of what was going on. You'll have a chance to fill in more details later. For now, you're invited to list 2 or 3 wants or needs. There is a list of feelings and needs starting on page 4 of the resentments Inventory if you would like some ideas or prompts.)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_

**A-5. List a brief sequence of events.**

(Don't forget to consider the following: What did I do before what happened, happened? Did I contribute to the situation in any way? Was my role to simply be the recipient of mistreatment? Did I allow something to happen? Did someone react to something I said or did or failed to do?)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**A-6. What were my feelings before, during, and after the event?**

Before: \_\_\_\_\_

During: \_\_\_\_\_

After: \_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings, see the end of the Resentments Inventory.)

**SEX & INTIMACY / Part B:**  
**HOW WAS I AFFECTED BY THE INTERACTION?**

Fill in any that apply. Effects can be positive or negative.

**B-1. How was my SELF-ESTEEM affected?** (how I view myself)

\_\_\_\_\_

**B-2. How was my PRIDE affected?** (how I think others view me)

\_\_\_\_\_

**B-3. How were my RELATIONSHIPS with others affected?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**B-4. How were my AMBITIONS affected?** (goals, plans, desires for the future)

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**B-5. How were my FINANCES affected?**

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**B-6. How was my SECURITY affected?** (personal well-being, safety)

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**B-7 How were my SEXUAL DESIRES affected?**

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**B-8 What am I feeling right now?**

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(Pause for a few minutes and let yourself feel what's coming up. Sometimes it's difficult to give yourself permission to acknowledge and feel that whatever happened was important and to take time to let it in. Some people try to convince themselves they "shouldn't be feeling" what they are, or they may experience shame or guilt. It may also feel "too painful," or they may feel too scared to feel anything at all. Anything you feel is valid.

You're encouraged to stay in touch with what you're feeling for a few moments, instead of staying in your head by moving on to the logical, problem-solving part of this exercise. Taking time to let yourself feel these feelings may be easier with help from a sponsor, outreach partner, or other trusted individual, if needed. Talking with someone who can validate you and support you in what you are experiencing makes it less difficult or scary to feel what is coming up for you.)

## **SEX & INTIMACY / Part C:**

### **WHAT WAS DRIVING MY BEHAVIOR?**

**C-1. Was I trying to meet the needs of a younger self in an adult situation?**

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(Sometimes experiences from the past have shaped our reactions so strongly that it's hard to separate those reactions from what's happening today. Validating the feelings and needs of a younger self can make it possible to continue looking at the current or adult things in the inventory, from an adult perspective.)

**C-2. How was I not being truthful?**

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(What stories or lies did you tell yourself or others? Consider purposeful dishonesty as well as unintentional. How was your perception of the truth distorted? Did you blame someone else for your behavior? Did you ignore reality? (Were you in denial about anything?) Is there something driving your behavior that you're not acknowledging?)

Did you hide your true thoughts and feelings?

Did you interpret the events to mean something about you?

Did you have unclear or conflicting goals? (For example, telling yourself that you want the other person to change their behaviors, but what you really want is to be true to yourself and be heard and validated.)

Were you trying to get your needs met from someone who can't do it?

Were you "wearing a mask" or trying to look a certain way in order to manipulate the situation?)

### C-3. How was I being fearful? \_\_\_\_\_

(Were you fearful when the situation was occurring? What were you afraid might happen?)

What were you scared the event/conditions might mean about you?

Can you identify fears of your Inner Child as well as the adult you?)

### C-4. Where was I selfish or self-centered? Did I have any needs that felt so strong that they made it hard to consider anyone else's needs? \_\_\_\_\_

(What did you need, want, or expect to happen that didn't? What different outcome were you hoping for? Did you have any unrealistic demands or expectations for yourself or others? (spoken or unspoken)

Were you trying to control the thoughts, feelings, or behavior of someone else?

Did you want recognition, acknowledgement, or validation?

Were you trying to protect yourself? Were you relying on childhood survival strategies?

Did you try to meet your needs at the expense of others, either intentionally or unintentionally?)

## SEX & INTIMACY / Part D: HOW DID THE SITUATION UNFOLD?

### D-1. What was my goal or intention in this interaction? \_\_\_\_\_

(Sometimes it's hard to know what you wanted. Some goals are more conscious than others. The previous two sections (Parts B and C) may give more insight about what you were wanting or needing in this situation.

Here are three categories of things people sometimes want.

1. Some sort of **specific behavior or action**: want the other person to do something, take some action, change something, specific goals, asking someone to do something in the future
2. Sometimes you need to **get closer** to the other person or strengthen the relationship
3. Need to **do something to help out yourself** -- self respect, express a boundary, recognize or validate yourself, strengthen who you are, take care of yourself, stronger in who you are in the relationship, values and beliefs, moral and effective, acting in a way that makes me feel moral, capable or affective, how do I want to feel about myself when the interaction is over --- do I have a pattern of not being true to myself?)

**D-2. How was I hoping the other person would respond in this situation? Did they act that way?**

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**D-3. What actions did I take?**

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(Focus on your own behavior. Did your behavior move you towards or away from intimacy? We cannot change the other person. There may be times when we do our best to move towards intimacy, but the other person didn't reciprocate. That doesn't invalidate our efforts to move towards intimacy. Sometimes it's a sign that we can be more effective, and sometimes it means the other person has a limitation.)

## **SEX & INTIMACY / Part E: TAKING STOCK**

**E-1. What patterns am I seeing in my approach to intimacy?**

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(Are there ways that you find easier to move towards intimacy?

Are there ways you're avoiding intimacy?

Are there things in yourself that prevent you from moving towards intimacy? Are there specific behaviors that get in the way even when you want connection?

Are you telling yourself or another that you want intimacy but moving away from it?

Are you improving? What positive or courageous actions did you take? What did you do that helped foster connection? What are you pleased with yourself for doing?

Are there some people that are easier to connect with than others? Is there a pattern?

Are there red flags with other people who aren't safe and you need to protect yourself when you're around them? If this person is currently in your life, is there anything that would be helpful in preparing for or handling similar interactions with this person in the future?

Are you seeking something from someone that can never give it?

Are you believing the fantasy of who you think the person is or should be versus seeing someone for who they really are?)

**E-2. Have I caused harm to myself or someone else? If so, how?**

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(Did you hurt another person? Did you hurt yourself? Were there negative or undesirable consequences as a result of your behavior? Did/do you keep yourself too busy to spend time with friends or family? Do you avoid emotional or physical intimacy with anyone? Have you kept secrets or kept a part of your life hidden? Have you done or fantasized about doing something which you feel sad, angry, frustrated, anxious, guilty, or shameful about? If you caused no harm, affirm that by writing, "I did no harm.")

### **E-3. What could I choose to do differently next time?**

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(If a similar situation happens in the future, what other options might you have?)

## **SEX & INTIMACY / Part F: FEELINGS CHECK, SELF-CARE**

### **F-1. After answering these questions, how am I feeling right now?**

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### **F-2. What messages to myself will help me right now?**

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(What truths can I reaffirm to myself that will help me move forward, validate myself, or release negative emotions and trust in my Higher Power? Examples: I am a beloved child of God who accepts me in my entirety. I am always more than enough. I have been given the tools, wisdom, strength, and support to do what I need to do. The past has happened; things are different now. I am not alone. Other affirmations?)

### **F-3. Reaching Out**

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(Do I need to reach out to anyone right now? My sponsor? A therapist? Program support via outreach calls? Attend a meeting? Quiet time with God? Do I need to bookend with my sponsor or an accountability partner?)

### **F-4. Gentle Considerations**

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(What do I need right now? How am I taking care of myself? Are there self-care behaviors such as eating nourishing foods, staying hydrated, planning sufficient time for sleep, grooming, etc. that I feel my Higher Power wants me to increase or focus on? In what ways can I show myself love and compassion? Which of my sponsor's suggestions am I finding particularly helpful? What Outer Circle Behaviors might be pleasant or helpful right now? Are there new Outer Circle behaviors I could try or add to my circles? Do I need to journal about my feelings? What is the next right thing for me to do?)

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## Set 4: SHAME

### 1. WHAT (PRECISELY) DO I FEEL SHAME ABOUT?

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(In one word or phrase, what sums up something I feel shame about? Do I feel "less than" others, like I don't measure up, like I'm not good enough, like I'm not worthy or deserving of love and belonging? Why? What things don't I like about myself? What parts of my body, behavior, circumstances thoughts or feelings do I feel shameful or guilty about?)

### 2. EXAMPLE OR EVENT

---

(Think of a specific event or action that highlights the particular thing I feel shame about. This can be an action I did or that was done to me. Is there a traumatic event in the past that first caused the shame about this particular characteristic/body part/behavior? Or list a recent event which triggered this shame.)

### 3. WHO SHAMED ME?

---

(Was I the one who did something I feel shameful about? Or did someone else shame me?)

### 4. WHO WAS AFFECTED?

---

(Was I the only one affected? If not, who else was affected?)

### 5. WHAT WAS MY PHYSICAL RESPONSE TO THE SHAME?

---

(Where in my body did I feel the shame (face, head, chest, spine, stomach, intestines, other places?)

### 6. WHAT DID I WANT: SOCIAL INSTINCTS

---

(Was I seeking something in the social area of my life? Was I seeking esteem, validation, or acceptance from others? Was I reacting to a marring of my dignity or others' rejection? Was one of my social instincts being threatened or affected? See "Instincts" on page 3 for more information.)

### 7. WHAT DID I WANT: SECURITY INSTINCTS

---

(Was I seeking material security? Was I responding to threats to my material security? Was I seeking emotional security? Was my sense of emotional security being threatened? Were my plans for the future being threatened? See "Instincts" on page 13 for more information.)

### 8. WHAT DID I WANT: SEX INSTINCTS

---

(Was I seeking romantic or sexual satisfaction? Was my sexuality being threatened? (See "Instincts" on page 13 for more info.)

### 9. WHAT LIES DID I TELL MYSELF OR OTHERS? ("Dishonesty")

---

(WHAT STORY DID I TELL MYSELF? What did I interpret the event or situation to mean about myself? What false messages did I receive from others? Did I lie to myself or anyone else? How was my perception of the truth distorted? Were my expectations unrealistic? Was I in denial about anything? Did I hide my true thoughts and feelings? Did I ask for what I needed or were my expectations unspoken?)

### 10. WHAT FEARS DID I HAVE?

---

(Was I fearful when the cause of shame happened? What was I afraid might happen? What was I scared that the event/action might reveal about me?)

### 11. HOW DID I REACT? ("Self-Seeking")

---

(How did I react because of my shame? What did I do to make myself feel better? Did I fight or hide? Did I freeze into inaction?)

### 12. WHAT WAS I POWERLESS OVER?

---

(What was beyond my control? What am I not in charge of? What is not my fault? What can't I fix?)

#### OTHER CHOICES I HAVE TODAY?

---

(Now that I have more awareness and tools, what can I do differently if a similar situation arises? What other options do I now have? What would be healthier?)

### 13. AFFIRMATIONS

---

---

---

(An affirmation can appear to invalidate what you are actually feeling. One way to handle this is to reaffirm truths you know in your head, and invite yourself to imagine what it would be like to feel the truth of that affirmation in your heart. What truths can I reaffirm about myself today? (Examples: I am always more than enough. My worth as a human being is independent of my actions. I am being given the tools, wisdom, strength, and support to do what I need to do. Other affirmations?)

### 15. REACHING OUT

---

(Do I need to reach out to anyone right now? My sponsor? A therapist? Program support via outreach calls? Attend a meeting? Quiet time with God? Do I need to bookend with my sponsor or an accountability partner?)

### 16. GENTLE CONSIDERATIONS (SHAME TOOLBOX)

---

(What do I need (or what does my inner child need) right now? How am I taking care of myself? Are there **self-care** behaviors such as eating nourishing foods, staying hydrated, planning sufficient time for sleep, grooming, etc. that I feel my Higher Power wants me to increase or focus on? In what ways can I **show myself love and compassion**? (Self-nurture) Which of my sponsor's suggestions am I finding particularly helpful? What **Outer Circle** Behaviors might be pleasant or helpful right now? Are there new Outer Circle behaviors I could try or add to my circles? Do I need to **journal** about my feelings? What is the **next right thing** for me to do? Would a visualization exercise be helpful in this moment?



## Set 5: GRIEF

### 1. WHAT DO I NEED TO GRIEVE?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(What event or circumstances do I need to let myself grieve? What loss have I experienced? What event or circumstances is underneath my anger or resentment? What am I feeling heaviness or deep sadness about? What did I miss out on when I was younger, or what do I/did I not have that I wish I did?)

### 2. WHAT BASIC HUMAN NEEDS WERE NOT MET, OR WHAT RIGHTS WERE THREATENED? OR HOW DID THE LOSS IMPACT MY LIFE? (Name the hurt) \_\_\_\_\_

(Why do I need to grieve this? How were my needs not met? How were my rights threatened? What would I have preferred to happen instead? It may be helpful to view the "Instincts and Feelings" tab below for more understanding about needs.)

### 3. WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF THE LOSS? (Effects on my life)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Because of the loss, I now suffer from \_\_\_\_\_. The loss caused \_\_\_\_\_. I've never had \_\_\_\_\_. I needed \_\_\_\_\_ and that need wasn't met, so \_\_\_\_\_ happened. I became \_\_\_\_\_.)

### 4. WHAT THOUGHTS, BELIEFS, OR BEHAVIORS HAVE KEPT ME FROM ALLOWING MYSELF TO GRIEVE? ("Self-Seeking," "Dishonesty," and/or "Fearful")

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Do I believe that crying or feeling sad is "weak" and undesirable? Have I been in denial about the pain I'm pushing back? How was my perception of the truth distorted? Have I had sufficient support to be able to handle difficult feelings and memories? What have I been afraid might happen if I let myself grieve?)

### 5. HOLDING SPACE FOR MY EMOTIONS: WHAT AM I FEELING RIGHT NOW? \_\_\_\_\_

(Pause for a few minutes and let yourself feel what's coming up and compassionately witness it. Sometimes it's difficult to give yourself permission to acknowledge and feel that whatever happened was important and to take time to let it in. Some people try to convince themselves they "shouldn't be feeling" what they are, or they may experience shame or guilt. It may also feel "too painful," or they may feel too scared to feel anything at all. Anything you feel is valid. You're encouraged to stay in touch with what you're feeling for a few moments, instead of staying in your head by moving on to the logical, problem-solving part of this exercise. Taking time to let yourself feel these feelings may be easier with help from a sponsor, outreach partner, or other trusted individual, if needed. Talking with someone who can validate you and support you in what you are experiencing may make it easier. This is an opportunity to explore the idea that some of our emotions may be due to past trauma.)

### 6. WHERE IN MY BODY DO I FEEL THE GRIEF? \_\_\_\_\_

(What physical symptoms am I experiencing? What do these feelings cause in my body? In what areas of my body am I carrying the grief? Does it help if I visualize myself "breathing into" those spaces or sending loving thoughts?)

### 7. AFFIRMATIONS \_\_\_\_\_

(What truths can I reaffirm to myself today? For example, "It's okay to be feeling sad or heavy about this," or "Dear Inner Child, I am here for you." Can I affirm that what I've gone through was difficult and painful, and it makes sense that I would need to grieve? Can I gently affirm that grief takes time, and I will give myself all the time and loving support I need? Other affirmations?)

### 8. REACHING OUT \_\_\_\_\_

(Grief, when shared with a safe, supportive person, can be extremely healing. Do I need to reach out to anyone right now? My sponsor? A therapist? Program support via outreach calls? Attend a meeting? Quiet time with God? Do I need to bookend with my sponsor or an accountability partner?)

## 9. GENTLE CONSIDERATIONS

---

(What do I need right now? How am I taking care of myself? Are there self-care behaviors such as eating nourishing foods, staying hydrated, planning sufficient time for sleep, grooming, etc. that I am doing well? Is there a self-care behavior that I feel my Higher Power wants me to increase or focus on? In what ways can I show myself love and compassion? Which of my sponsor's suggestions am I finding particularly helpful? What Outer Circle Behaviors might be pleasant or helpful right now? Are there new Outer Circle Behaviors I could try or add to my circles? Do I need to journal about my feelings? What is the next right thing for me to do?)

## Set 6: ASSETS

[illegible]

## STEP 4 - SET 6: ASSETS

[illegible]

## Set 7: "DEFAULTS," (Misguided Assets)

**BRAINSTORM:** What undesirable behaviors did I write in my Resentments, Fears, Intimacy, and Shame inventories? These are my DEFAULT behaviors (a.k.a. "Defects")

(List as many as you would like for now – we'll group similar things together to consolidate the list next.

Consider: How have the shortcomings I most resent in others shown up in my own behavior as well? What emotions or self-seeking or self-destructive behaviors are keeping me from connecting to my Higher Power?)

Brainstorm a list of "default behaviors" below.


If you have difficulty pinpointing the "defect" or putting it into words, here is a list of possible words that can be used either on the lines above, or below as an "umbrella" term which groups several examples of behaviors into one category.

Aggression, Aloofness, Apathy, Argumentativeness, Arrogance, Attention-seeking, Bigotry, Belligerent, Bitterness, Bossy, Braggart, Careless, Cold-hearted, Complainer, Compulsive, Critical, Cruelty, Deceitfulness, Defensiveness, Denial, Dependent, Depression, Detached, Discrimination, Dishonesty, Disorganization, Distant, Distrustful, Dominating, Dramatic, Egocentric, Enviousness, Evasiveness, Fearful, Flightiness, Forgetfulness, Gluttony, Gossiping, Grandiosity, Greed, Hatred, Head-strong, Hostile, Humorless, Immature, Impatience, Impulsive, Inauthenticity, Inconsiderate, Inconsistent, Indecisive, Indulgence, Inhibited, Insecurity, Insensitivity, Intolerance, Irritability, Irresponsibility, Isolationism, Jealousy, Lack of humility, Laziness, Lust, Lying, Low self-confidence, Manipulative, Materialism, Negative Thinking, Neglect, Obsessed, Opinionated, Over-cautious, Overly-emotional, Oversleeping, Passivity, People-pleasing, Perfectionism, Perversion, Pessimism, Poor handling of finances, Preoccupation, Pride, Procrastination, Promiscuity, Prudish, Quarrelsome, Rageful, Rebellious, Reckless, Resentful, Rudeness, Rueful, Sarcasm, Secretive, Self-centered, Self-condemnation, Self-doubting, Self-hating, Self-importance, Selfishness, Self-justification, Self-pity, Self-seeking, Self-will, Short-temperedness, Shyness, Snobbery, Stinginess, Stubbornness, Submissive, Superficial, Thin-skinned, Thoughtless, Timidity, Too trusting of strangers, Undependable, Undisciplined, Unemotional, Unfriendly, Unkind thoughts or words, Unrealistic, Unromantic, Unscrupulous, Unstable, Vague, Vanity, Verbally abusive, Vindictive, Violence, Vulgar, Withdrawn, Workaholism.

### SIFT, CONSOLIDATE, AND PRIORITIZE

(At one time or another, we have all done/felt most of the above, but this exercise is not meant to create a list of "everything that's wrong with us." Instead, it is designed to highlight the "exact nature" of our wrongs: the thought and behavior patterns which motivate selfishness, dishonesty, fear, or self-seeking behavior. Make a Top 6 list (or 5-or-Less List) of Defaults (or Defenses) which are really problematic right now in your life. You can consolidate similar Defaults into one heading. For example, Defaults such as pride, grandiosity, lack of humility, arrogance, and feeling better than others can all be understood in or included in the word "arrogance;" and the

words inhibited, insecure, low-self-confidence, timidity, and being withdrawn can all go under "low self-esteem." Please limit yourself to 6 or less Defaults in this exercise!

1. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

Now, for each of the Defaults you just listed, consider what fear drives that behavior/thought pattern. (What am I afraid will happen if I don't \_\_\_\_\_ (insert Default)? Is one of my core fears behind this Default?) (For examples, see next page)

Then consider what beliefs are driving the fear.

(What do I believe to be true that is governing my behavior when it comes to this fear? What do I believe about myself or others?)

Next, consider what needs the Default or Defense may be trying to meet.

DEFAULT NEEDS	FEAR	BELIEFS
1 _____	_____	_____
2 _____	_____	_____
3 _____	_____	_____
4 _____	_____	_____
5 _____	_____	_____
6 _____	_____	_____

#### EXAMPLES:

Default - being bossy/controlling;

Fear - fear of the future/the unknown;

Belief - I have to make sure it happens the way I want in order for me to feel secure.

Need - I have a need for security.

Default - Isolationism

Fear - Fear of letting people get close

Belief - They will probably hurt, reject, or abandon me

Need - I need safety, connection and support.

Default - Indecision

Fear - Fear of making decisions

Belief - I might be humiliated if I make a mistake

Need - Freedom to learn from my choices without being ridiculed or ostracized

It may now be clearer what purpose these Defaults or Defenses ("defects") are serving. Next, we will look for the good in each of the character Defenses listed above. Questions to ask yourself: What character strength is at

the core of this Default? When this Default is appearing, and I tone it down, what strength would be manifesting? When is it good to be \_\_\_\_\_ (insert Defect)? If the fear was taken out of this Default, what spiritual principle stays? What purpose does this Character Default serve?

DEFAULT BEHAVIOR

WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT THE DEFAULT ("DEFECT")?

1 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

### STEP 5:

**“Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being  
the exact nature of our wrongs.”**

In the ISA Step Study, this happens during the pair-and-share conversations and the sharing during the step study meetings.

---

## Step 6

**“Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”**

To become entirely ready to have God "remove" (transform) my "defects" of character, it might be helpful to address the beliefs and fears and needs behind them. What exercises might help me better understand my feelings and needs? What might help me come up with healthier ways of getting those needs met? Examples of such exercises might include:

- Affirmations: What truths can I affirm to myself today to counteract the false beliefs which drive the fears which my DEFAULTS are attempting to protect me from?
- Journaling about the beliefs, doubts, fears, and needs behind the DEFAULTS
- Releasing visualization exercises, or
- Mentally rehearsing behaving in a way that exemplifies using the Character Strength (asset).
- Answering the following questions: What is the pattern? How does it show up in everyday life? What would it be like if this unhealthy pattern was gone? Am I willing to be like this?
- Practicing, in a general way, the OPPOSITE of the DEFAULT, as mentioned on page 42 of Sex Addicts Anonymous, 2nd-to-last paragraph.

List each Default behavior again, and prayerfully consider, preferably with a sponsor or fellow traveler, what you can do to prepare yourself to let go of this Default behavior and ask for it to be transformed.

DEFAULT	WHAT CAN I DO TO PREPARE TO LET GO OF THIS DEFAULT?
1 _____	_____
2 _____	_____
3 _____	_____
4 _____	_____
5 _____	_____
6 _____	_____

**PLEASE WAIT TO MOVE ON TO STEP SEVEN UNTIL IT IS ASSIGNED.**



**STEP 7****Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.**

In what ways will I ASK for this DEFAULT to be TRANSFORMED ("removed")? What actionable item(s) can I do to help my Higher Power guide me towards transformation? • "Humbly asked" implies prayer. Besides prayer, there are other ways I can behave that open myself up to allowing HP to help me shift from DEFAULT to STRENGTH. • I can write something on a piece of paper and put it in a "God Box." Or burn it. • I can commit to check in frequently with a sponsor or accountability partner regarding specific DEFAULTS. • I can journal about the DEFAULT and it's inherent STRENGTH(s) , possibly 2-way journaling (directing questions towards God and then journaling God's response). • I can visualize myself responding with this DEFAULT'S inherent ASSET behaviors.

DEFAULT	WHAT WILL I DO TO ASK FOR THIS DEFAULT TO BE REMOVED (TRANSFORMED)?
1 _____	_____
2 _____	_____
3 _____	_____
4 _____	_____
5 _____	_____
6 _____	_____

## Step 8 - SET 1: HARMS AND AMENDS

### 1. WHOM DID I HARM?

---

(Consider everyone affected – others as well as myself. Are there people from the Resentments, Intimacy, or Shame inventories that belong here? See the "My Part" columns.)

### 2. WHAT DID I DO OR NOT DO?

---

(What do I regret? Did something I did – or failed to do – create negative consequences or undesirable consequences for another person or for myself? It may be helpful to refer to the "My Part" columns of the Resentments, Intimacy, or Shame inventories.)

### 3. HOW DO I FEEL ABOUT WHAT I DID?

---

(Do I feel scared, anxious, or frightened about possible results of the harm I caused? Disappointed? Sad, dejected, or depressed? Disgusted or repulsed? Self-hatred? Shocked? Surprised? Embarrassed? Ashamed? Regret or remorse? Bereaved (loss)? Other feelings)

### 4. I FEEL \_\_\_\_\_ ABOUT WHAT I DID BECAUSE IT DID NOT MEET MY NEED FOR \_\_\_\_\_.

(Instead of looking at what I did as being "wrong," which prompts me to "apologize," I can ponder about how my behavior did not meet some of my own needs. How I treated that person may have not met my need for connection, communication, compassion, authenticity, communion, harmony, to understand and be understood, etc. See "Instincts and Feelings" on page 3 for ideas.)

### 5. WHAT CHARACTER ASPECTS (DEFAULTS) WERE BEHIND THE HARM I CAUSED?

---

(Summarize briefly the motivation for my action/inaction. If it helps, fill in the blanks: "I did what I did because \_\_\_\_\_. Or, "I wanted \_\_\_\_\_ to happen or be a certain way." (This is the SELFISH motive.)

I was afraid of \_\_\_\_\_. (FEAR)

I told myself \_\_\_\_\_, or I wanted others to believe \_\_\_\_\_. (DISHONESTY)

I wanted to feel better about myself, so I \_\_\_\_\_. (SELF-SEEKING)

These are the main ones. See "Instincts" or the "Defects" on page 3 for other possible motivations.)

### 6. WHAT COULD I HAVE DONE INSTEAD?

---

(What do I wish I would have done differently? What other options did I have? What could I do next time something similar comes up?)

### 7. GENTLE CONSIDERATIONS:

---

(If I'm feeling fear, shame, or self-hatred instead of remorse, what can I do to work Steps 6 and 7 around it? (If not, skip this and move on to the next portion.)

## **STEP 8**

**Made a list of all persons we had harmed  
and became willing to make amends to them all.**

**1. WHAT NEEDS TO BE MADE RIGHT IN REGARDS TO THE ABOVE-MENTIONED HARM?**

---

(Is there something that was damaged that needs to be restored? Was there something that needs to be "made up for"?)

**2. WHAT CAN I DO TO PREPARE TO MAKE AMENDS?**

---

(What can I do to become willing to make amends? Suggestions include prayer, visualization exercises, and journaling or two-way journaling.)

## **STEP 9**

**Made direct amends to such people wherever possible,  
except when to do so would injure them or others.**

**PRAYERFULLY DECIDE WITH A SPONSOR HOW AND WHEN TO MAKE AMENDS.**

---

(Things to consider: Am I in contact with this person? Would contacting this person cause harm to anyone?)

This concludes the worksheet for steps 4 – 9. Please refer to the ISA Step Study Guide and Homework document for material regarding the final three steps.