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DISCUSSION No. 3

INVENTORY & RESTITUTION

The material contained herein is merely an outline of the inventory and restitution steps and is not intended to replace or supplant:

- a. The careful reading and re-reading of the Big Book.*
- b. Regular attendance at weekly group meetings.*
- c. Study of the program.*
- d. Daily practice of the program.*
- e. Reading of approved printed matter on alcoholism.*
- f. Informal discussion with other members.*

This instruction is not a short-cut to A.A. It is an introduction - - a help - - a brief course in fundamentals.

This meeting covers Steps 4, 8, 9, 10. We will take them in order.

Step No. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

The intent and purpose of this step is plain. All alcoholics have a definite need for a good self-analysis - - a sort of self-appraisal. Other people have certainly analyzed us, appraised us, criticized us and even judged us. It might be a good idea to judge ourselves, calmly and honestly. We need inventory because:

1. **Either** our faults, weaknesses, defects of character, are the cause of our drinking,
2. **or** our drinking has weakened our character and led us into all kinds of wrong action, wrong attitudes, wrong viewpoints.

In either event we obviously need an inventory and the only kind of inventory to make is a **good** one. Moreover, the job is up to **us**. **We** created or **we** let develop all the anti-social actions that got **us** in the wrong. So **we** have got to work it out. **We** must make out a list of our faults and then **we** must do something about it.

The inventory must be four things:

1. It must be **honest**. Why waste time fooling ourselves with a phony list? We have fooled ourselves for years, we tried to fool others, and now is a good time to look ourselves squarely in the eye.
2. It must be **searching**. Why skip over a vital matter lightly and quickly? Our trouble is a grave mental disease, confused by screwy thinking. Therefore, we must search diligently and fearlessly to get at the truth of what is wrong with us - - just dig in and search.
3. It must be **fearless**. We must not be afraid we might find things in our heart, mind and soul that we will hate to discover. If we do find such things they may be the root of our trouble.
4. It must be a **moral** inventory.

Some, in error, think the inventory is a lot of unpaid debts, plus a list of unmade apologies. Our trouble lies much deeper.

We will find the root of our trouble lies in *Resentments, False Pride, Envy, Jealousy, Selfishness* and many other things. *Laziness* is an important one. In other words we are making an inventory of our character: our

attitude toward others, our very way of living.

We are not preparing a financial statement. We will pay our bills all right, because we cannot even begin to practice A.A. without honesty.

Step No. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Under this step we will make a written* list of those we have harmed. We ask **God** to let his will be done, not **our** will, and ask for the strength and courage to become willing to forget resentments and false pride and make amends to those we have harmed. We must not do this step grudgingly, or as an unpleasant task to be rid of quickly. We must do it **willingly**, fairly, and humbly - - without condescension.

*The original Detroit pamphlet said "a list (mental or written)," but the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* later made it clear that it needed to be *written*.

Step No. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

This is where we make peace with ourselves by making peace with those we have hurt. The amends we make must be *direct*. We must pay in kind for the hurt we have done them.

- If we have cheated we must make restitution.
- If we have hurt their feelings we must ask forgiveness from them.

The list of harms done may be long but the list of amends is equally long. For every *wrong* we have done, there is a *right* we may do to compensate.

There is only one *exception*. We must develop a sense of justice, a spirit of fairness, an attitude of common sense. If our effort to make amends would create further harm or cause a scandal, we will have to skip the direct amends and clean the matter up under Step Five.

Step No. 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

In coming into A.A. we usually will have a pretty big inventory to work on, as in Steps Four, Eight, and Nine. But even after that, we will not be perfect. We have a long way to go. We will continue to make mistakes and will be inclined to do some more wrong thinking and wrong doing. So at intervals, we **continue** to take inventory. Here the purpose is to check on our progress. We certainly cannot be perfect, so the need for regular inventory is apparent.

These inventories are **personal**. We confine the inventory to ourselves. We are the ones who need it. Never mind the other fellow! He too is probably troubled and will have to make his own inventory.

When we make these inventories, probably the best way to start is to go over (one by one) each of the twelve steps, and try to discover just what (in these steps) we are not following.

The businessman **has** to make a physical inventory from time to time. We have to make a personal inventory of ourselves from time to time if we want to recover from a serious mental illness.

Character Defects and Vices

So much for the inventory *steps* - - now look at some of the *things* we would do well to cover in an inventory:

1. Selfishness - - the common vice of all alcoholics.
2. Egotism - - who is without some of it? Self-Importance, Mr. Big.
3. False Pride - - too big to admit a fault or an error.
4. Impatience - - the spoiled child in a grown man.
5. Resentments - - an alcoholic usually is sore at the whole world. Everybody is wrong!
6. Lack of common honesty - - usually fooling ourselves and *trying* to fool others. False pretense, sham.
7. Deceit.
8. Hate - - the outgrowth of anger and resentment.
9. Jealousy - - just *wanting* what the other fellow worked to get.
10. Envy - - a sure-fire cause of discontent and unhappiness.
11. Laziness - - just plain laziness.

And so on through a long list.

Conversely Our Inventory Could Show a List of Virtues

which we very definitely lack and should go to work on to develop such as:

Honesty	Humility
Simple Justice	Honest Pride in work well done
Fairness	Simplicity
Generosity	Patience
Truthfulness	Industry (go to work and really <i>work</i>)
Modesty	And so on through a long list.

Then Consider a Few MAJOR Virtues

- FAITH** If we have lost faith we must work desperately hard to get it back. Ask God to give us faith in him, our fellow man, and ourselves.
- HOPE** If we have lost hope we are dead pigeons. Only those who have been cruelly hurt and in desperate need can know the wonderful sense of security that lies in hope for better things.
- TRUST** Since our own self-sufficient conduct of our own life has failed us, we must put our trust in **God**, who has never failed.

ASK QUESTIONS

*No question pertaining to drinking, or stopping drinking, is silly or irrelevant. The matter is **too serious**. In A.A. we*

learn by question and answer. We learn by exchanging our thought and our experience with each other. Any question we ask may help someone else. To cover as many questions as possible in the short time available, all answers must be limited to three minutes.

HUMILITY

A state of humility is very difficult to attain, but the goal is well worth the effort, considering the serenity that is achieved.
