



# Taking Inventory

## Reflecting the glow of recovery from Starlight at Tamassee

By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamassee DAR School



Between college and seminary, I worked for a furniture company, and my least favorite task was taking inventory. Once a year, the store closed for a day, and all employees – office, sales, and delivery – worked to scan every single item in the showroom and warehouse. We had to be thorough and fast, so the inventory would be correct and so we could reopen the next day. Discontinued items had to be removed and written out. Missing items had to be accounted for and resolved. All in all, it was a stressful day.

The Fourth Step of the Twelves Steps asks us to make “a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” Most recovering people get about as excited for this task as I did about inventory at the furniture store. To be honest, if people give up on the 12 Steps, this is usually where it happens.

Taking inventory in a business or in life is difficult, stressful, and often humbling. We must face and address the missing lamp or recliner, or more importantly, the treasured resentment we hold against one who wronged us or the deep shame we feel for breaking faith with our loved ones.

So, why do it? Well, what happens to a business that never takes inventory? For a few years, depending on the size of the business, you may be able to skate by, but eventually, you're selling items you don't have and not selling items you do have. Customers are frustrated and go elsewhere. Revenue suffers and in time, you go out of business.



That's a pretty good picture of what happens in trauma and addiction. Over time, the pain, fear, resentment, shame, and guilt build up, and we struggle to do life on life's terms. We keep medicating the pain with a substance or behavior, but we end up alone and broken. We go out of business, as it were, whether in loneliness, the hospital, jail, or God forbid death.

So, what's the solution? To use a phrase from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, we "clear away the wreckage of the past" by taking inventory and then resolving the issues we find. We write out the things that have been harming us. We address the things we're missing that we need to move forward. We discover the good things within us we can draw on to meet the days ahead.

At Starlight at Tamassee, we believe taking inventory is a door to freedom, and we support mothers to persevere in the healing journey. To learn more about Starlight, visit [www.starlight.tdarschool.org](http://www.starlight.tdarschool.org), or contact us at [starlight@tdarschool.org](mailto:starlight@tdarschool.org) or 864-944-1390. If your church or civic group is interested in a presentation on recovery, contact Jon Holland at [jholland@tdarschool.org](mailto:jholland@tdarschool.org).

*Starlight*  
MIRACLES AWAIT AT TAMASSEE