



Step Four for Dummies

Reflecting the glow of recovery from Starlight at Tamassee

By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamassee DAR School



You've probably seen *For Dummies* books: *Beekeeping for Dummies*, *Computers for Dummies*, *Finances for Dummies*. There's a seemingly endless number. Each one is designed to introduce the reader who knows nothing about a topic to the basics of that subject. They're very helpful guides if you don't mind the tongue-in-cheek titles.

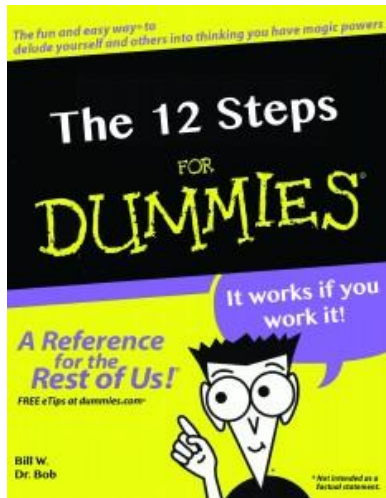
For the past several blogs, we've considered Step Four of the 12 Steps of recovery, which says, "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." This step isn't primarily intended to be talked about but to be done. So, here's a Step Four for Dummies guide on the basics of taking this life changing step.

A moral inventory has two sections: liabilities and assests – the dynamics that fed addiction and the resources we already have to find freedom. Let's start with the liabilities.

Most 12 Step inventories begin with resentments because they are often what pushed us toward an addiction and cause relapse. We feel angry and bitter about the people and circumstances that hurt us. These may be early traumas or perceived offenses, but if we

hold on to them they are toxic to us. So, we list our resentments and their effects on us. The solution for them is forgiveness, which is usually a process to tell our stories, feel the pain, and then release the debts others owed us with God's help.

The next set of liabilities is our fears. Whether it's trauma making us afraid of being hurt again or anxieties about life's daily problems, recovery always means facing and resolving our fears. So, we write what we fear and why. The solution to fear is faith. As we come to trust God to care for us, we can move through our fears into action.



The final section of our liabilities is the harms we have committed. How have we hurt others? We write down instances of selfishness, dishonesty, superiority or inferiority, jealousy and envy, and laziness. The solution to our harms is to make amends in order to put right what we have broken and to rebuild trust with others.

After our liabilities, we then look at our assets. We have strengths and goodness to draw on as we begin this new way of life. We write out when in our lives we've been forgiving, trusting, generous, honest, humble, loving, content, and proactive. Then we think through our desired ideal. What kind of person do we want to be? What character do we aspire to? How will we get there?

At Starlight at Tamassee, we have seen mothers who authentically complete Step Four find relief, freedom, acceptance, and peace. It's a powerful process and experience. To learn more about Starlight, visit www.starlight.tdarschool.org, or contact us at 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.

