

## 1st Column

Ask yourself what you really feel or believe about people, sentiment, things, money, and yourself.

It helps to look at beliefs not so much as an intellectual act, but rather a moral act whereby we deliberately commit ourselves to the fulfillment of its agenda.

The core of every belief has an agenda. And the purpose of a belief is to fulfill its agenda. Even if the agenda is self-defeating; good or bad, a belief must fulfill its agenda. Therefore it is of enormous value to challenge our self-defeating beliefs (principles). Obviously, self-defeating beliefs are the type of principles that are damaging and blocking.

The dictionary definitions of belief and principle are (ref from World English Dictionary):

- BELIEF

1. a principle, proposition, ~~idea, etc, accepted as true~~
2. ~~opinion; conviction~~

- ~~PRINCIPLE~~

1. ~~a conviction of something held as fundamental truth or fact~~
2. ~~a belief system~~

The book talks about us leading a double life. To the outer world we present our stage character, this is the one we want others to see, but know in our hearts we don't deserve it. The 4<sup>th</sup> step is a moral inventory, so we need to look at our moral principles, or if you wish "our beliefs".

We all have ideologies and wishful thinking. But what do we really believe in our hearts? What do we really hold as fundamental truth? That's where we need to go on principle inventory.

Take a blank sheet of paper and start statements with "I believe." Remember to reflect on the categories of: people, sentiment, things, money, and ourselves. These are the things we tend to worship.

Examples might be:

- I believe my only value to women is how I make them look, and what I can do for them.
- I believe I will never be financially solvent.
- I believe eventually others will leave me.
- I believe I must find some one to take care of me.
- I believe others don't like me.
- I believe if others really knew me they wouldn't love me.
- I believe you can't really trust women/men.
- I believe men only want me for sex.
- I believe I am not a lovable person.
- I believe I will never be truly happy.
- I believe I am not smart enough, slick enough, pretty enough, or good enough to be valued and esteemed by my peers. etc, etc.
- I believe I have nothing to offer another man/woman. (Define offer)
- I believe I will never be repaired.
- I believe I cannot finish my amends.

These examples can help, but write in your own language and from your own point of view, what speaks to your heart as your truth.

Remember, write down what you really believe deep down in your heart, not the ideologies you think you should believe, or your wishful thinking. Rigorous honesty.

Write the truth about what you really believe deep down in your heart.

## **2nd Column**

Since principles are inventoried in the grudge list, we have to ask ourselves why we are angry?

Many times when first writing principle beliefs we tend to not understand why we are angry when it comes to the 2nd column or "the cause".

Bill talks about being plagued by waves of resentment and self-pity.

It's helpful to understand how anger works. The simple way to view this is by looking at anger as a two-sided coin.

The front side is RESENTMENT. This side is easily seen when we point out towards others. We say things like, "they did this or they did that to interfere with me." These types of expressions usually come out when writing on people or institutions.

The other side of anger is SELF-PITY, which points in. "Sometimes it was remorse and we were sore at ourselves," (Page 66, How it Works). So with self-pity, oftentimes we resent ourselves but, more often, experience feelings of inadequacy, self-hate, frustration, jealousy, envy, guilt, remorse, regret, fear, shame, entitlement, grief, bewilderment, lack of ownership, victimization, depression, anxiety, despair, etc. These typically lend themselves to anger turned inward or "self-pity." Self-pity means we are pitying ourselves. That we are expressing concerns about the quality of our internal conditions and often-pure contempt for others. Contempt cannot co-exist with love. Our conscience has been compromised somewhere and we see no platform for ownership, which, thereby, keeps us in a place of no forgiveness. Self-pity is destructive, debilitating, incredibly selfish, and extremely subtle. We need to get in touch with what self-pity really looks like. So, even though you may not feel the actual emotion of anger as you would when writing about people or institutions, many times, when writing on principles, you can always find some of the above mentioned emotions somewhere when looking at a self-defeating belief.

The other thing that is of great benefit when considering "the cause" for a belief, is to look at the belief and ask yourself, "When did I start believing this and or why?" It's best to start from first dawn of memory and work your way forward. Family of origin is where we almost always pick up our systemic belief systems. Mom, dad, in-laws, siblings, extended family members, boyfriends, girlfriends, teachers, etc. Someone influenced us somehow. How were we talked to? Perhaps they were emotionally unavailable, ridiculed us, neglected us, were judgmental, shaming, unsafe, or they abandoned us somehow, either physically or emotionally. Maybe they abused us, acted in a way, or treated us in some manner which left us with the impression of a belief. Sometimes beliefs are cultivated or compounded over time. But it's best to start in the family of origin first.

Bring a good searchlight and be prepared to think and reflect. (Also bring God and pray that He show you the truth) :)

### **An example of how to dig up a cause could look like this:**

Say you had a belief that you are not very likable to women?

Ask yourself who the first women in your life were (usually our mothers and sisters)? Ask yourself how you were talked to or treated by them? How much did you value their approval and acceptance?

Questions along these lines will typically unearth a lot of information.

You don't have to spend a ton of time explaining the "cause" in the second column.

Once you get a good idea of how it started and where it came from, just write down enough so you can remember it and talk about it. It doesn't have to make perfect sense either. Many times it can feel like shooting in the dark. In a real sense, that is what we are doing. If this stuff was clear to us in the first place, chances are we would not be so despaired, frightened, or perplexed about why we continue to land ourselves in undesirable internal and external conditions. So, give yourself a break. Leave the psychobabble to others and leave the Truth to God and your inner most self. And remember, don't be scared.

### 3rd Column:

3rd column on principles is very similar to doing people and institutions. Some variations on the self-esteem and pride considerations do come into play.

Sometimes it's best to do them from both extremes. The Big Book talks about the alcoholic leading a double life. "To the outward world he presents his stage character, this is the one he likes his fellows to see, but knows deep in his heart he doesn't deserve it". The double minded individual has no rest.

A couple examples:

#### Self-Esteem:

If you have a belief that you have nothing to offer a woman, one way to write self-esteem is to write how you really feel about yourself:

*I feel unworthy and not good enough.*

Then write one from a high perspective:

*I'm a good catch, I shouldn't have to worry about what others think of me.*

#### Pride:

High: *I should be valued the way I am by women, I shouldn't have to prove myself.*

Low: *I know women think I'm a crackpot.*

Sometimes the best way to write the 3rd column for principles is to just ask yourself, "How does this belief affect these areas of self?"

**Self-Esteem:** How you feel and think about yourself.

**Pride:** How you want to be seen or treated.

**Ambitions:** Who you want to be and what you want to do.

**Security:** How you're trying to make yourself safe.

**Personal Relations:** How are your relationships directly affected by this having this belief?

**Sex-Relations:** Sex relations are typically just more intense personal relationships. So here, look at gender role assignments.

**Pocket Book:** How it affects your money. Also, look at loss of time, energy, etc.

As far as the ***extended fear column***, just ask yourself what you are afraid of and write it in.

### For the Realization:

Re-write the belief you wrote in the first column in the realization section. The realization is a consideration for "people" as stated in the book and does not easily lend itself to institutions and less so for principles. Re-writing the belief from the first column in the realization section will enable you to re-read the belief each time you answer selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, and frightened in the 4<sup>th</sup> column.

Before starting the 4<sup>th</sup> column, understand that regardless of where or how the belief got started, it is necessary to look at how this belief is functioning today? We must pull away from the origin of the belief and focus on the reality of its function today when considering selfishness, dishonesty, self-seeking, and frightened.

#### **4th Column:**

Ebby told Bill after outlining the step process and making several promises, that the price for these promises is the destruction of self-centeredness. The Big Book paints an exact description of self-centeredness in the paragraph at the bottom of page 61 to the top of page 62. Look for blame, self-deception, and holding onto the position of the retired businessman lolling in the Florida sunshine complaining of the sad state of the nation and all those other characters in that paragraph. So it helps to define how you are like these characters? Since the price is the destruction of self-centeredness, it helps to know what the target looks like.

How does each one of these characters apply to you? Are you insisting on these types of internal postures? Would holding these postures and positions be considered selfish? If so, why? Look for obtuse arrogance and/or conceit that may be used as a trumped form up of self-esteem. And look for your unwillingness to change your mind. How are these beliefs inconsiderate and disregarding of others? How do your beliefs disconnect you from other people? How do they make others invisible? Do your beliefs leave you with a lack of conscience for others? Are your emotions leading you around? Are you making others wrong by making yourself right?

Pay attention to entitlement especially. Entitlement often times is so ingrained and subtle, we can't recognize it as entitlement.

Look for lack of ownership around your thoughts, actions, or lack of actions. Ask yourself if you have spiritual laziness or mental/emotional listlessness? Do you refuse to be rigorous and painstaking concerning your spiritual life? How much of the three-dimensional world comes before God? Look at how you rely on your own understanding.

Look at the belief: Is it a lie? If so, why? Is it dishonest to believe a lie? Do you refuse to change your mind?

Self-pity is incredibly debilitating emotionally, morally, and spiritually. Not only to the individual gripped in it, but to the people around. It is a veritable plague because it instantly obliterates God and places self-interest on the throne. Does your self-pity allow you to stay the victim? Would this be considered selfish? If so, how?

These types of questions will lend themselves to the categories of selfishness, dishonesty, self-seeking, and frightened.

We need to know what this self-centeredness looks like, feels like, and tastes like. We need to see exactly how self-centeredness operates in real time so we have something to take into steps 6 & 7.

Some thoughts on 6 & 7; Remember that defect literally means "deficit" or "lack". A shortcoming is a defective deficit or if you prefer, "a lack of character". Bill Wilson spoke extensively in many of his writings about "character building". Character is essentially about "Add". So the question is; Where are we lacking in character? What needs to be added in my shortcoming? Remember the 3<sup>rd</sup> step commitment? To build with me and do with me as Thou wilt. This may help some for 6 & 7 step considerations.