

Step 4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

4B Lets start with the tough word in that sentence: Moral

Many of us don't know what to do with that word, moral. For a lot of us, we were taught a morality that condemned us because of our addiction. We were constantly beating up on ourselves because we did not match a merciless perfectionism. Such condemnation does not fit with recovery. Other people are very comfortable with using a predefined idea of morality and do not need to struggle with this word. Step four is a step of recovery, not of condemnation. That means that we need to find what "moral" means in recovery.

Prior to recovery, what defined morality for me? Where did morality come from for me?
Is that a definition of moral which builds me up?

Step 3 talks about turning my will and my life over to the care of a higher power. When I do so, how different are the decisions I make and actions I take? In what ways do these decisions and actions have different outcomes from my prior decisions?

Many people need to go through a process of discovering a foundational principle for their morality. (Often, these people started their addiction in early childhood as a result of abuse or neglect.) By doing so, they regain integrity upon which they can base an inventory of their prior moral choices. Do you know some foundational principles for your life? If so, what are they?

In working this Step, many people start making decisions based on recovery principles. (See Personal Spirituality in SAA) What principles can guide your decisions today? How can the principles of honesty, openness, and willingness give you direction when needing to make a decision?

In turning our wills and our lives over to the care of a higher power, we often start to see the signs of what is in accordance with our higher power's will or the principles we want to live by. Rarely are these large signs. What things show you that you are having an interaction with your higher power and that power is guiding you?

How can I find out what fits my desired life principles or what is in accordance with my higher power? What am I learning about how I need to change how I make my decisions and which actions I take in order to conform to a higher power's will or to be living by principles?

As I watch other people get recovery, how am I seeing people live by principles instead of rigid rules? What does that say about how this recovery works? What hope does that give me?