

Fear Inventory

[Fear] somehow touches about every aspect of our lives. It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it. It set in motion trains of circumstances which brought us misfortune we felt we didn't deserve. But did not we, ourselves, set the ball rolling? Sometimes we think fear ought to be classed with stealing. It seems to cause more trouble.

—*Alcoholics Anonymous*, pp. 67–68

Begin your Fear Inventory by listing each of your fears in the first column. Then describe the cause of your fear in the second column, adding any details that will be helpful for self-reflection. If there is more than one cause for a fear, note it in a separate row. Then, for each cause, describe how you are affected in the third column. It might be that your social instincts (personal relationships, pride, self-esteem, prestige, or companionship), security instincts (material or emotional), love/sex instincts (acceptable or hidden), or ambitions (security, social, or romantic ambitions) are threatened.

Finally, and most importantly, conclude the fourth column by noting *your part* in the fear. Did you attempt to overcome feelings of fear and insecurity by lying, cheating, manipulating, hiding the truth, or acting out in your addiction/compulsion? Did your pride keep you from being honest and acting with integrity? Did you gossip with others to undercut those with whom you compare yourself? What did you do initially to get the ball rolling? How could you have done things differently? Provide a thorough inventory of your fears, and spend time speaking with others who have completed a Fear Inventory to help uncover fears you may not be able to recognize.

Sample Fear Inventory

I fear	Because	Affects my	My part
Conflict	I have never been exposed to healthy conflict; parents were manipulative and dishonest.	Personal relationships; social ambitions; emotional security instincts	I fail to speak up and have not had an adult conversation with my parents about this. Failure to forgive.
Conflict	I feel at fault when others are uncomfortable.	Self-esteem; pride; personal relationships	Valuing others' approval over God's; needing to be liked by others
Conflict	Shame and anxiety that I am at fault.	Security ambitions; emotional instincts; self-esteem	Sometimes I am at fault; expectations of perfection; disconnection from God

My Fear Inventory

I fear	Because	Affects my	My part