

# How to Keep a Recovery Inventory Balanced

*Step 4: We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

How do we include the good in our inventory process when it is all about unearthing and writing down the bad—the ugly things we’ve done or what’s been done to us? On the surface there is nothing good about that. The good comes from the results of writing it down (Step 4), sharing it with our sponsors (Step 5), and then when possible, making amends (Step 9).

So how is our inventory balanced? A balanced inventory does not mean that we add columns to our inventory worksheet for the good, although that can be done. A balanced inventory means that we are to take in the good that we have done in our lives as well. We are not to dwell on the negative. We are not the sum of the bad things that are included on our inventory. We have our identity in Christ who has wiped our sins clean. He sees us as unblemished—spotless and clean.

“Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.” (Isaiah 1:18, NIV)

The problem is that we don’t see ourselves as that because we carry around our past mistakes and often let them define us.

Keeping our inventory balanced actually starts the minute we actively enter recovery (or join a Step Study). It is when we start to create relationship with others in recovery. It is through building accountability teams and having regular meetings with our sponsor. These relationships start to pour positive things into us. They provide encouragement, wisdom, support, and prayer. They are helping us to see that we are worthy of love and accepted for who we are, not what we’ve done.

Our inventories are also balanced by memorizing scripture, like Isaiah 1:18 above, by regularly attending Celebrate Recovery meetings, by listening to or reading others’ testimonies of hope (shared at meetings or one on one), and by filling our minds with any of the over 7,000 promises of God found in the Bible. We are renewing our minds—replacing the not-so-good with the good, with the better, and the best of what God has to offer us.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Romans 12:2, NIV)

Also, as you write about the negative things that happened in your past, look for any good that may have come out of it. Keep track of those things. They help to turn our negative attitude into an attitude of gratefulness. Review them as you work on your inventory and maybe share them with your sponsor too.

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” (Isaiah 43:18-19, NIV)

As you take in the good from those around you in recovery and from God’s Word, let God make you into something new—where your life is filled with greater purpose. Taking out the garbage, so to speak, by writing out our personal inventories, frees us to receive the good.

Like a circus performer walking on a tightrope above the crowds, finding the right balance can be a challenge while working on our inventories. Once you find it, with the help and support of your recovery relationships and God’s Word, you will find it easier to balance life later on.

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8, NIV)