

Option 1 - Overeaters Anonymous Inventory Questions for Step 4

SPECIFIC CHARACTER TRAITS

OA 12/12-1 pages 34-37

One good way to inventory ourselves is to ask ourselves questions about specific character traits. Then we examine in writing the ways that we've exhibited these characteristics in our lives.

1. Are we power hungry? Do we enjoy controlling others? In what ways have we tried to control our spouses, parents, brothers or sisters, children, friends, employers, colleagues, teachers, or others? Do we manipulate people? Do we intimidate them?
2. Have we been jealously possessive of a mate or friend?
3. How do we react when we don't get our own way?
4. How do we react when people disagree with us?
5. Are we intolerant of differences?
6. Do we try to smooth stormy waters, or are we troublemakers?
7. Have we insisted on being the center of attention? Have we acted offensively just to be noticed? Are we afraid that we won't be recognized or respected or loved? Do we fear that we won't get our share or that we won't be listened to? Do we push to be first in line? How has prideful self-centeredness caused us to act?
8. Are we status-seekers? How much money, time, and energy have we spent trying to impress or show ourselves better than others?
9. Are we snobs? Do we pay more attention to "VIPs" than to "ordinary" people?
10. Have we sought to put people down or put them in their place?
11. Have we repeatedly belittled anyone?
12. Have we ever played a mean trick on anyone?
13. Have we condemned others for things we're also guilty of? Are we hypocrites, even as we denounce the hypocrisy of others?
14. Have we ever deliberately defamed someone?
15. Do we indulge in gossip ourselves or listen to and enjoy the gossip of others?
16. Are we oversensitive, quick to take offense at what people say to us? Or do we laugh everything off, pretending nothing hurts us?
17. Are we selfish, letting our own desires govern us while we ignore the needs of others? Have we spent money our families needed in order to feed our illness or gratify our other desires? Have we been unavailable to our children or our mates when they needed us?
18. Or do we let the needs of others govern us while we ignore our own? Do we take on other people's responsibilities, doing for them the things they should be doing for themselves?
19. Are we willing to claim responsibility for the problems we've caused, or have we tried to shift the blame to others? When have we rationalized our misbehavior?
20. Are we bigoted? Have we ever denied anyone fair treatment because of race, religion, politics, gender or disability? Do we tell ethnic, racist, or sexist jokes? If not, are we afraid to say that we don't enjoy such "humor"?

21. Can we admit our mistakes and acknowledge that others are sometimes right? Are we teachable or complacent?
22. Do we accept our own failings and those of others as natural, or do we criticize, condemn, and complain?
23. Are we people-pleasers? Do we need everybody to like us, so much so that we make it our goal to find out what people want and give it to them, no matter the cost to ourselves? Are we afraid to say no to others?
24. Are we defiant, either openly or secretly? What is our attitude toward laws, rules, and people who have legitimate authority over us?

FEARS

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First we list the people, places, and things that have caused us fear. Then we look at other ways fear has affected us.

1. Are we anxious about the future? How much of our time do we spend worrying?
2. Are we afraid of people? Do we isolate ourselves from our friends or society?
3. Are we afraid to reach out to new people? Have we held back from others, waiting for them to come to us?
4. Do we repeatedly get into relationships with the kind of people who mentally or physically abuse us?
5. Are we afraid to end existing relationships which are destructive or inappropriate for us?
6. Have we delayed seeking new jobs or careers, held back by worry and fear? Are we so afraid of change that we remain in situations that are not good for us?
7. Are we afraid to express ourselves, to tell others how we feel?
8. Are we so afraid of conflict that we accept abuse rather than risk asserting ourselves?
9. When has fear held us back from taking other actions we should have pursued? Have we stood by and allowed another person to be hurt when we could have done something to prevent it? Did we ever let another person get blamed or punished for something we did?
10. Have we ever abandoned a person we had a responsibility to help?

ANGER AND RESENTMENT

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Anger and resentment are common manifestations of our disease. In fact, most of us ate compulsively when we felt anger or resentment. As we continue writing our inventories, it is important to list the people and institutions we've held grudges against.

1. Are we holding onto a grudge because at one time or another someone threatened or damaged our self-esteem, security, ambitions, or relationships? Have we tried to get even with people who hurt us? Do we make a point of never forgetting when someone does us harm?
2. Do we hold a grudge against anyone due to jealousy? Are we envious of other people's appearance, wealth, sex life, popularity, possessions, or position in society? If so, we list these jealousies in our inventory.
3. Do we carry grudges against ourselves for things we did or failed to do, or for the fact that we're compulsive overeaters? If so, we include ourselves on our grudge list.

Looking at anger, we ask ourselves whether we tend to be harsh, unforgiving, and self-righteous.

4. Do we misdirect our anger? Do we lash out at those closest to us, rather than telling the person at whom we're really annoyed why we're angry?
5. Have we abused others verbally or physically? We need to list each incident we can remember in which we struck out at another person.
6. Have we ever abused animals?
7. Have we ever taken anyone's life because of our anger, fear, carelessness, or another reason?
8. How has greed affected our lives? Are we generous or selfish? Are we satisfied when our needs are filled, or are we always wanting more, seldom content with what we have?
9. Are we obsessed with money? Do we believe more money would solve all our problems? Do we spend money faster than we can make it? Are we responsible managers of the money we have? Do we pay our bills?
10. In what ways have we been lazy and slothful? Have we been procrastinators? If so, we write it down, along with incidents in which we have procrastinated, Are we perfectionists? Do we delay starting things we are afraid we can't do to perfection?
11. Or, on the other hand, do we carelessly rush into things without due thought? Are we impatient?
12. Do we do our share of the work in groups we're a part of, or do we sit back and wait for someone else to volunteer?
13. Are we overly dependent on others? Do we expect them to protect us from the consequences of our actions, to make us feel good, or to take care of things we should be doing for ourselves?

SEX

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1. How about lust? What problems has sex caused us?
2. Have we pursued sex in ways that damaged our self-esteem? Have we been promiscuous?
3. Have we spent hours fantasizing about sex when we might have been building better relationships?
4. Have we been interested only in our own pleasure, never seeking to please our sexual partner as well?
5. Have we ever sought to satisfy our sexual impulses at the expense of others?
6. Have we slept with another person's spouse or lover? Have we cheated on our own spouse or lover?
7. Have we ever forced or manipulated anyone to have sexual contact with us?
8. Have we ever sexually molested anyone? Have we ever had sexual contact with a child or with anyone who was not fully capable of resisting?
9. Have we ever abused a position of trust to get sex from someone who sought our help?
10. Have we used intimidation to get sex? Have we abused a position of power? Have we ever threatened or sought revenge against someone who wouldn't go along with our sexual advances?
11. Have we used sex or pregnancy to trap someone in a relationship?
12. Have we ever got someone pregnant and not shared responsibility for it?
13. Have we transmitted a disease when we knew we were infected?
14. In what other ways have we misused our sexual drives? Compulsive eating has made many of us uninterested in sex. Have we been unfair to our partners and ourselves, preferring isolation and food to the risk of physical intimacy?

TRUST

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1. Do we trust people, or do we have faith in no one, including ourselves?
2. Perhaps we have not been able to trust because we haven't been trustworthy. A willingness to be honest is essential to recovery in OA. How often do we tell the truth? How much do we lie? To whom have we lied and under what circumstances?
3. What have we lied about?
4. Have we been sneaky or practiced deception?
5. Have we taken advantage of someone's ignorance instead of telling the full truth?
6. Have we kept money or items we found instead of returning them to their rightful owners?
7. Have we ever stolen anything?

We need to list of each incident we can remember in which we have taken money, food, or other things which didn't belong to us.

8. Did we ever damage anyone's property and not repair or pay for the damage?
9. Have we ever cheated anyone out of money or possessions? In what cases have we borrowed things and not returned them?
10. Have we ever broken a confidence?
11. Have we ever cheated on tests or in games or contests? Do we make a habit of cheating?
12. Have we cheated and lied to ourselves? Have we lived in denial about our eating, our character defects, or our need to change?

NEGATIVE THINKING

OA 12/12-1 pages 42-43

1. Negative thinking is another form of self-deception which plagues many compulsive overeaters. Do we tend to dwell on the dark side of things?
2. Are we thankful for what we have, or do we ignore our blessings and focus on what we lack?
3. Are we optimistic or pessimistic? Do we concentrate on working for good, or do we become obsessed with bad things which might happen to us?
4. Has our negative outlook made life bleak for others who live and work with us? Have we been cynical and critical?
5. Have we indulged in self-pity? Have we played the martyr?

Negative thinking, like fear, is a habit many of us have had to let of as we have recovered.

After writing our inventory, we review it. Have we listed everything we can think of about ourselves, constructive as well as destructive? Once we've made the inventory, checked it and reviewed it, we ask God to help us remember anything that belongs there. We spend some time in quiet meditation, concentrating on our complete willingness to face whatever truths about ourselves God wants to show us. If we realize we have left out an important item, we add it to our inventory.

Right now all we need to do is list everything we are aware of at present. Having done this honestly as we can, we trust that we have written a searching and fearless moral inventory of our selves. We have completed step four.

Note: A word document is available so that you may insert your answers to these questions directly into this document. Please email oainaction@gmail.com to request this document.