2-1 Title Slide:

Back to Basics Recovery Program ™ Modified Format for PowerPoint Session #2–Steps 4 and 5

2-2:d Session #2:

WELCOME to session number two of the Alcoholics Anonymous Beginners' Meetings. Together, we are taking the Twelve Steps based on the directions found in the "Big Book" of *Alcoholics Anonymous* and the personal experiences of our A.A. pioneers.

(Optional)

Our names are ______ and _____, and we are members of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are grateful for the opportunity to lead these sessions. This is one way we can be of service to others and, at the same time, grow in our own recoveries.

During this session we will guide everyone through the inventory process described in the Fourth and Fifth Steps. We will use a simple assets and liabilities checklist to identify the personality traits that have kept us **"shut . . . off from the sunlight of the Spirit,"** even though we have stopped drinking. By ridding ourselves of these shortcomings, we will expand our **"consciousness of the power of God in our lives."**

2-5 Photo: 1940's Beginners' Meeting

Last session we started on our journey to this spiritual awakening by taking the First, Second and Third Steps. We began by admitting we were powerless over alcohol. Next, we expressed our willingness to believe in a **"Power greater than** **ourselves**"–a Power we're free to call by any name we believe in or feel comfortable with. Then, we agreed to turn our will and our lives over to this Power.

Even though we've spent a considerable amount of time on the first three Steps, all we have done is make a couple of decisions and say a prayer. Now we need to take some specific actions that will result in the **"personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism."**

Step Four Reads:

2-36 Step 4:

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

In the fourth paragraph on page 63, the "Big Book" authors tell us what we need to do now that we've made our decision to proceed:

2-37 (page 63, para. 4, lines 1-2; page 64, lines 1-7)

"Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions."

(Explain that this is the first step in the Sharing process)

Please note the authors say **AT ONCE.** They instruct us to take the Fourth Step immediately after the Third Step prayer. We must identify and remove those things that have been blocking us from the spiritual solution to our difficulties.

A block is an obstacle or barrier. What are the blocks the "Big Book" authors are referring to? They are the liabilities side of an assets and liabilities checklist.

So, we are now going to establish a direct line of communication with the God of our understanding by eliminating those blocks that have kept us in the depths of loneliness and despair. The "Big Book" authors tell us that liquor is only a symptom of our problem. Sure, alcohol has cut us off from the **"Power of God,"** but once we stop drinking, we're still separated from the **"One who has all power."** because of our shortcomings. Now, it is time to look at these liabilities-these **"causes and conditions"**–by taking an inventory.

The "Big Book" authors start by comparing a personal inventory to a business inventory. In the first paragraph on page 64, they state:

2-38 (page 64, para. 1, lines 1-7)

"Therefore we started upon a personal inventory. *This was Step Four.* A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking a commercial inventory is a fact-finding and fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-intrade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, to get rid of them promptly and without regret."

2-n/n Equation: Double Entry Bookkeeping

So, we are going to conduct the equivalent of a commercial inventory on our lives. What is a commercial inventory? For those who have taken an accounting class either in high school or college, we learn that the equation for double-entry bookkeeping is: **Assets = Liabilities + Owner Equity.** So, according to the "Big Book" authors we are going to look at our assets and our liabilities. That's what a commercial inventory is all about. It's an examination of what is working and what is not working in our lives. It provides us with the opportunity to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.

Then, in the second paragraph on page 64, the authors clearly explain what we need to do in order to conduct a commercial inventory:

2-39 (page 64, para. 2, lines 1-6)

"We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly. First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations."

2-n/n A+L Checklist-Assets hidden from view)

So, the Big Book authors ask us to start with the liabilities side of the ledger. First, we look at our shortcomings.

Before we get into the details on how to take this Step, we want to emphasize a few things. First, there is no right or wrong way to take a commercial inventory. There are several assets and liabilities checklists in use today. You can use any one of them.

Second, the commercial inventory described on page 64 precedes a three-column example described on page 65. Because this examination of our assets and liabilities comes first, we assume the "Big Book" authors are asking us to utilize this simple checklist before attempting the more difficult inventory on the following page.

2-40 Photo: Dr. Bob

Third, Dr. Bob, our Akron, Ohio co-founder, has been using an assets and liabilities checklist for many years. Dr. Bob believes that, initially, newcomers should be taken through a simplified version of the Steps. Later, they can work the program in more detail.

2-72 Graphic: 1946 moral inventory with grid

We have provided everyone with an example of an Assets and Liabilities checklist used by many of the A.A. pioneers. It is the same format as the one published in the June 1946 issue of *The A.A. Grapevine*.

2-73 Graphic: Checklist with vertical lines removed

All we have done is remove some of the vertical lines, so we can list the people, institutions and principles we need to talk about to the right of the appropriate liabilities.

2-43 Character Liabilities:

We are now going to define these liabilities in order to provide a clearer understanding of their meaning.

2-44 Resentment:

RESENTMENT is the consequence of being angry or bitter toward someone for an extended period of time over some real or imagined insult. It is a hostile or indignant attitude in response to an alleged affront or personal injury.

2-45 Fear:

FEAR is being afraid of losing something we have or not getting something we want. It manifests itself in many ways such as phobia, terror, panic, anxiety and worry.

2-46 Selfishness:

SELFISHNESS is concern only for ourselves, our own welfare or pleasure, without regard for, or at the expense of, others.

2-47 Dishonesty:

DISHONESTY involves theft or deception. It includes taking things that don't belong to us, cheating people out of what is rightfully theirs, and lying to or withholding the truth from others.

2-48 False Pride:

FALSE PRIDE is either feeling better than or less than someone else. Feelings of superiority include prejudice about race, education or religious beliefs, and sarcasm–putting someone else down to make us feel better about ourselves. Feelings of inferiority include self-pity, dwelling on one's own problems, and low self-esteem–the lack of self-worth or self-respect.

2-49 Jealousy:

JEALOUSY has to do with people-being suspicious of another's motives or doubting the faithfulness of a friend.

2-50 Envy:

ENVY has to do with things-wanting someone else's possessions.

2-51 Laziness:

LAZINESS means lacking the will or the desire to work. Procrastination, which is postponing or delaying an assigned job or task, is a form of laziness.

2-41 (Photo: St. Thomas Hospital)

Dr. Bob uses this format to take newcomers through the Steps as quickly as possible. In many instances, he completes the process during the person's three to five-day stay at St. Thomas hospital in Akron, Ohio. Thousands of alcoholics have recovered by following Dr. Bob's "keep it simple" approach.

The "Big Book" also urges us to take the Steps quickly. We must discover **"the truth about the stock-in-trade"** in order to remove those behaviors that have cut us off from the **"sunlight of the Spirit."** In the third paragraph on page 65, the authors provide us with some of the details:

2-42 (page 65, para.3, lines 1-3)

"We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully." Please note that the authors ask us to be thorough and, in the very next sentence, they tell us what to do when we are finished. Since this is all in one paragraph, we assume they are asking us to complete this inventory in one sitting.

Keep in mind this is only a suggestion. You can spend as much time on this inventory as you wish, just as long as you complete it and discuss it with your sharing partner before our next session.

Now, let's look at what we put on paper. From pages 64 to 71, the authors present us with a list of liabilities we need to eliminate and assets we need to accentuate. In the third paragraph on page 64, they ask us to examine our resentments:

2-56 (page 64, para. 3, lines 1-3, 6-9)

"Resentment is the 'number one' offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, . . .

... In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry."

In the first paragraph on page 66, the authors emphasize that our resentments keep us separated from the **"Presence and Power of God."** We must overcome these resentments if we are to have a spiritual awakening:

2-57 (page 66, para. 1, lines 1-10)

"It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours that might have been worth while. But with the alcoholic, whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die."

Then, in the second paragraph on page 67, the authors instruct us to look for our own mistakes to see if we need to make amends:

2-58 (page 67, para. 2, lines 1-11)

"Referring to our list again. Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely. Where were we to blame? The inventory was ours, not the other man's. When we saw our faults we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight."

<u>2-n/n</u> "We resolutely looked for our own mistakes"

To see where we were at fault in the incidents and events on our checklist can be both revealing and healing. To stop blaming others and take responsibility for our actions can result in a **"revolutionary change in (our) way of living and thinking."**

2-59 "Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?"

Let's look at the third sentence in this paragraph again. It reads, **"Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?"** These shortcomings are based on self-will. In addition, they are the opposites of the Four Standards of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love, which our pioneers have used for years as a test for God's will.

We can use either the A.A. test for self-will or the Four Standards as a test for God's will to determine if we need to **"set right the wrong"**:

2-60 Chart: Test for Self-Will / God's Will-Fourth Step

Test for self-will	<u>Test for God's will</u>
Selfish	Unselfish
Dishonest	Honest
Self-seeking	Purity
Frightened	Loving

Concerning our resentments, the "Big Book" authors provide us with specific instructions on what we are to do. We must get beyond them if we **"expect to live long or happily in this world."**

In the third paragraph on page 66, the authors explain that when we hold onto grudges, we are actually allowing others to control our lives.

2-61 (page 66, para. 3, lines 1-8)

"We turned back to our list, for it held the key to the

future. We were prepared to look at it from an entirely different angle. We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us. In that state, the wrong-doing of others, fancied or real, had power to actually kill. How could we escape? We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than alcohol."

If we don't deal with our resentments, the future will just be a repeat of the past. Every time we are reminded of an old hurt, the old pain returns and we feel it again and again. In the past we may have drank to numb this pain, but now we are going to take the actions necessary to relieve this pain.

The first thing we do is discuss our resentments with our sharing partner. Healing starts with talking about the hurt. But, the healing is not complete until we forgive those who have offended us. We overcome resentment with forgiveness.

We must change our attitude about the experience. We do this by seeing the source of our pain in a new light. We see the person as a sick individual who need our prayers not our anger. Whether it is a person who is still in our lives, someone who has passed on, someone we may never see again, or ourselves, the process is the same. We must forgive. Starting with the first line on page 67, the "Big Book" authors write:

2-62 (page 67, lines 1-8, para. 1, lines 1-5) part 1

"Though we did not like their symptoms and the way these disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too. We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended we said to ourselves, "This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done."

2-63 part 2

We avoid retaliation or argument. We wouldn't treat sick people that way. If we do, we destroy our chance of being helpful. We cannot be helpful to all people, but at least God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one.

2-59x Graphic: Checklist-Resentments

Now, it is time to begin the Fourth Step by making a Resentment list. We realize that the sharing partners are supposed to work on this list together. But, because of the time constraints we have in this seminar, we are asking everyone, who feels comfortable with the process, to start filling out their checklists right now. This way we can begin discussing our inventories immediately after this session.

In the open space to the right of the word, "Resentment," we write down the people, institutions and principles with whom we are angry. We record the first two or three names that immediately come to mind.

To protect our anonymity, we write down the generic equivalents of the specific names of the people, institutions and principles we are inventorying. For example, instead of, "Susan" we can write, "Sister," and instead of, "Bill," we can write, "Friend." We deal with the resentments that are bothering us right now. In the weeks and months ahead, we will conduct additional inventories to take care of those things that may be troubling us then.

Our objective is to get to the **"causes and conditions"** that are blocking us from God and our fellows today. We do this by making amends to those we've harmed and by forgiving those who have harmed us.

(Take a few minutes so everyone can work on their Resentment List.)

Next, the authors ask us to look at our fears. In the first paragraph on page 68, they write:

2-64 (page 68, para. 1, lines 1-7)

"We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them. Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? Selfreliance was good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough. Some of us once had great self-confidence, but it didn't fully solve the fear problem, or any other."

In the third paragraph on page 68, the "Big Book" authors inform us that we will lose our fears if we have faith in the **"Power of God":**

2-66 (page 68, para. 3, lines 2-10)

"... We can laugh at those who think spirituality the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it is the way of strength. The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. All men of faith have courage. They trust their God. We never apologize for God. Instead we let Him demonstrate, through us, what He can do. We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear."

2-59xx Graphic: Checklist-Resentments+Fears

Now, it is time to make a Fear list. Let's start with those fears that have **"no resentment in connection with them."** To the right of the word, "Fear, we write down the people, institutions or principles that have caused us to be afraid.

Then we look back over our "Resentment" list. If, in addition to anger, we have fear or a phobia regarding someone or something, we write the generic equivalent of the person's name or the thing we are afraid of to the right of "Fear."

(Take a few minutes so everyone can work on their Fear List.)

In the first paragraph on page 69, the authors mention some additional shortcomings we need to address:

2-67 (page 69, para. 1 lines 1-6)

"We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness. Where were we at fault, what should we have done instead? We got this all down on paper and looked at it." We overcome our harms with amends. The Big Book authors confirm this in the third paragraph on page 69, starting with the second line:

2-n/n (page 69, para. 3 lines 2-4)

"... We must be willing to make amends where we have done harm, provided that we do not bring about still more harm in so doing...."

2-59xxx Graphic: Checklist-Resentments+Fears+Harms

Now, it is time to make a Harms list. According to the "Big Book" authors we need to look at our "Selfishness," "Dishonesty," "Inconsideration," "Jealousy," "Suspicion" and "Bitterness." On the checklist list we have handed out, we have substituted "False Pride" for "Inconsideration," "Envy" for "Suspicion" and "Laziness" for "Bitterness." These liabilities come from the June 1946 issue of the *A.A. Grapevine*.

If we have hurt anyone, we put their name to the right of the harm that applies. Then we check to see if resentment and/or fear also apply.

(Take a few minutes so everyone can work on their Harms List.)

2-54a (Photo: Liabilities wrapped around whiskey bottles)

An A.A. group in Minneapolis, that has been conducting Beginners' Meetings since 1943, has found an ingenious way to emphasize the importance of dealing with the liabilities side of the ledger. The meeting leaders have taken the liabilities and wrapped them around whiskey bottles. What they are trying to convey is the idea is that if we don't take care of these liabilities by talking about them and making amends for them, we will end up drinking the whiskey in the bottles.

So much for the liabilities side of the ledger. Now, what about the assets?

2-68 Character Assets:

The "Big Book" authors list assets throughout Chapter 5. We've already explained that the asset that corresponds to the liability of "Resentment" is "FORGIVENESS" and the asset that corresponds to the liability of "fear" is "FAITH." Additional assets that correspond to the remainder of the liabilities are "UNSELFISHNESS," "HONESTY," "HUMILITY," "TRUST," "CONTENTMENT," and "ACTION."

We have now looked at both sides of the ledger. Our inventory consists of a list of liabilities to watch for and assets to strive for.

Keep in mind that it is not necessary for the newcomer to talk about every resentment, selfish act, or person he or she has ever lied to in order for the inventory to be thorough. The objective is to get to **"causes and conditions"** Sometimes it takes only a few incidents to make clear which shortcomings have kept the newcomer blocked from an intimate, two-way relationship with the **"One who has all power."**

In the process of sharing our inventory, we may find that we need to "set right the wrong." If that is the case, we circle the name of the person, organization or principle that needs to be

addressed. The circled names become our Eighth Step amends list.

2-78 Completed Checklist with Eight Step amends

After we have finished talking about the events or circumstances represented by the names to the right of the "Liabilities," we unfold the checklist so we can look at the Assets side of the sheet. The sharing partner will usually end the session by describing the Assets we already have (those with the least number of **NAMES**) and the Assets that will be strengthened (those with the most number of **NAMES**) as we make our amends.

To see how this is done, let's look at the example included with our handouts. Using this completed assets and liabilities checklist as a guide, please follow along as I summarize the sharing session for this newcomer. Based on the **NAMES** on the sheet, I would say something like, "This inventory shows that, for the most part, you are a humble, trusting, and contented person. In addition, you will become more forgiving and loving as you let bygones be bygones and you will become more unselfish, honest and active as you make amends for your selfishness, dishonesty and laziness."

The Liabilities with **NAMES** to the right of them are the shortcomings we turn over to the God of our understanding in Steps Six and Seven. As mentioned previously, the circled **NAMES** are our Eighth Step amends list.

2-n/n Types of Amends

Next to the circles, we can add **NOTES** to identify the specific types of amends we are to make in Step Nine. The Amends mentioned in the "Big Book" are Direct Amends, Living Amends, Amends in Kind, and Amends to Those Who Cannot be Seen. We'll talk more about the amends process next session.

2-XX Completed Checklist after Ninth Step Amends Added

So, on one sheet of paper, we now have everything we need to take Steps Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Nine.

We look at assets as well as liabilities because many of us have lost much of our self-esteem and self-worth as the result of our alcoholism. Even though we've done some very foolish and destructive things while drinking, we will never have to repeat these actions, provided we are willing to admit our faults and correct them. If we are genuinely sorry, God has already forgiven us. Now, it is time to forgive ourselves.

So, it is time to make a searching and fearless moral inventory—time to clean up the wreckage of the past so we can strengthen our connection with the **"Spirit of the Universe."**

We have completed our presentation on the Fourth Step inventory, but before we end this session, we need to discuss one more detail – the person or persons with whom we share our inventory.

Step Five reads:

2-69 Step Five:

"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

On page 72, starting with the ninth line in the second paragraph, the "Big Book" authors tell us why we need to admit our faults to another person:

3-6 (page 72, para. 2, lines 9-13; page 73, lines 1-10) part 1

"... The best reason first: If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking. Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to easier methods. Almost invariably they got drunk. Having persevered with the rest of the program, they wondered why they fell. We think the reason is that they never completed their housecleaning. They took inventory all right, but

3-7 part 2

hung on to some of the worst items in stock. They only *thought* they had lost their egoism and fear; they only *thought* they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else *all* their life story."

We share our inventories because we are great at self deception. Aren't we the ones who used to say we didn't have a drinking problem? Didn't we tell ourselves over and over that we were doing fine as we were sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss of alcoholism?

Since we're not good judges of character, especially our own, we confide in someone else. Only another person can see us as we really are.

This individual can be the member of the Twelve-step

community who is helping us through these sessions, but it doesn't have to be. The "Big Book" authors provide us with other options.

Starting with the fourth paragraph on page 73, they give us directions on how to choose the person or persons with whom we share our inventories.:

2-70 (p. 73, par. 4, line 1; p. 74, lines 1-9; par. 1, lines 1-4) part 1

"We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. Rightly and naturally, we think well before we choose the person or persons with whom to take this intimate and confidential step. Those of us belonging to a religious denomination which requires confession must, and of course, will want to go to the properly appointed authority whose duty it is to receive it. Though we have

2-71 part 2

no religious connection, we may still do well to talk with someone ordained by an established religion....

"If we cannot or would rather not do this, we search our acquaintance for a close-mouthed, understanding friend. Perhaps our doctor or psychologist will be the person."

2-n/n Photo: Joe and Sponsor Talking Over Lunch

Of critical importance is confidentiality. The "Big Book" authors list some of the people who are legally bound to keep a secret. This "privilege" protects communications between certain individuals and insures that these communications will remain confidential. The people listed in the "Big Book" who have this legal protection are religious, medical, and mental health professionals. Attorneys also have this "privilege."

2-n/n Legal Privilege

This "privilege" is not absolute-there are exceptions. This legal protection does not include Twelve-step sponsors or sharing partners. This is why we must be very careful about what we share during a Fifth Step.

If you feel uncomfortable talking about some parts of your checklist with your partner, all we ask is that you make a commitment to this person as to when, where, and with whom you will share those portions of your inventory.

If you are willing to make this commitment, you can take the rest of the Steps with us today. In the second paragraph on page 74, the "Big Book" authors explain the circumstances under which this Step may be temporarily postponed:

3-n/n (page 74, para. 2, lines 1-9; page 75, lines 1-2)

Notwithstanding the great necessity for discussing ourselves with someone, it may be one is so situated that there is no suitable person available. If that is so, this step may be postponed, only, however, if we hold ourselves in complete readiness to go through with it at the first opportunity. We say this because we are very anxious that we talk to the right person. It is important that he be able to keep a confidence; that he fully understand and approve what we are driving at; that he will not try to change our plan. But we must not use this as a mere excuse to postpone. The "Big Book" authors give us specific instructions for taking the Fifth Step. In the first paragraph on page 75, they tell us that, as soon as we decide who we are going to talk to, we take action immediately:

3-10 (page 75, para. 1, lines 1-8)

"When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time. We have a written inventory and we are prepared for a long talk. We explain to our partner what we are about to do and why we have to do it. He should realize that we are engaged upon a life-anddeath errand. Most people approached this way will be glad to help; they will be honored by our confidence."

Then, the "Big Book" authors announce that, once we admit our shortcomings, our lives will change. On page 75, starting with the second line in the second paragraph, they describe some of these changes:

3-12 (page 75, para. 2, lines 2-11)

". . .Once

we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience. The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe."

We are now well on our way toward recovering from alco-

holism. The authors tell us we are in the process of having a spiritual experience. As the result of this **"psychic change,"** our obsession to drink is being removed.

Please, let the God of your understanding guide you through the inventory process. If you do, you'll find these steps simple and straightforward.

As we have already said, there is no right or wrong way to do the Fourth and Fifth Steps. Just do them.

2-78 Photo: Completed Checklist

Are there any questions?