

Chapter 19:

Expert Giver Groups

Introduction

Shortly after my revelations, the term *Expert Giver* came up in my mind. I went online in January 2018 to search for the domain name ExpertGiver.com, and discovered that it was available to purchase for ten dollars. What are the odds of that domain being available at that time for that price? All of the information contained in this book concerning the chapters on World Goals and Expert Giver Groups will be provided free on the website.

We are becoming more and more divided, separated, and isolated from each other. Many of us do not have the kind of genuine connections that we all long for. We want to connect, but don't know how, or where to do it. My intent for the Expert Giver Groups is to provide a new way for people to connect directly in person to build meaningful supportive relationships around the principles of humility, accountability, forgiveness, and unconditional giving. And it won't be corrupted by money. There will be no fees or dues for membership. Expert Giver Groups are open to all people, regardless of age, race, culture, sexuality, socioeconomic status, religion, or political affiliation.

Check out: www.ExpertGiver.com. Join or start a group today.

The Foundation of Expert Giver Groups Comes from AA's Proven Methods

You may or may not be familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), which was started in the 1930s by a stockbroker named Bill Wilson. If you aren't familiar with the AA program, you may guess that it is about people sitting around in groups, discussing how to stop drinking, and that's it. But the program is much deeper than most people know. When I was 15, I got my first girlfriend. She told me, "You should go to Alcoholics Anonymous and stop hanging around your friends who drink." So I did. AA was the first place I witnessed people helping each other without selfish motives. I am grateful for my experience with the AA program, and for the influence it has had on my life.

AA has twelve steps, which I won't go through in detail, but they provide methods that convert people from takers to givers. The steps involve personal inventory, accountability, forgiveness, and service to others. I have taken the fundamental core elements that have proven to work in AA, and created the Seven Steps of Expert Giver Groups.

In this book, I talk about "God." But in the Seven Steps of Expert Giver Groups, I don't mention "God" or a "Higher Power." That concept is for all individuals to determine for themselves, whether or not they follow a particular religion. My intent is for the Seven Steps of Expert Giver Groups to provide the tools needed to remove the blocks in the way of individuals becoming of service to others, which will lead to their spiritual awakening. My wish is that Expert Giver Groups will remain free from arguments over religion or politics. Functional unity is paramount.

The 7 Steps of Expert Giver Groups (Short Form)

Step 1: Finding a Mentor in an Expert Giver Group. Admit that you need help managing your instinctual drives, and are willing to become humble and teachable, and to seek humility by finding a mentor in an Expert Giver Group and by committing to being honest and accountable to that person.

Step 2: Completing Your Personal Inventories. In the formats suggested, write down four different personal inventories: (a) Resentments; (b) Relationships; (c) Fears; and (d) Character Defects.

Step 3: Reviewing All Four of Your Inventories with Your Mentor. Once you complete all four inventories in Step 2, arrange a meeting with your mentor to humbly and honestly go over all the lists together, being open to feedback that helps you to see things that you could not see on your own.

Step 4: Making a List of Amends and Reviewing It with Your Mentor. Make a list of amends that you owe to others, and review the list with your mentor.

Step 5: Making Your Amends. After you review with your mentor which amends to make and how to make them, start making those amends.

Step 6: Continue Taking Your Personal Inventory and Promptly Admit When You Are Wrong. Continue reviewing your resentments, intimate relationships, fears, and character defects—promptly admitting when you are wrong, and making amends immediately when you cause harm to others.

Step 7: Mentoring Others. Offer to become a mentor for others who are willing to go through the above steps. Be as unconditionally giving as you can in service to others. Be open to starting an Expert Giver Group in your area.

The 7 Steps of Expert Giver Groups (Long Form)

Step 1: Finding a Mentor in an Expert Giver Group

Admit that you need help managing your instinctual drives, and are willing to become humble and teachable, and to seek humility by finding a mentor in an Expert Giver Group and by committing to being honest and accountable to that person.

Humility defined:

- A modest or low view of one's own importance; humbleness.

Humiliate defined:

- To make someone feel ashamed and foolish by injuring his or her dignity and self-respect, especially publicly.

Humility requires a modest or low view of your own importance. To be humble is to admit that you don't have all the answers, and so are teachable and open-minded.

Some people mock humility or put it down as if it were a weakness, but that comes from denial or ignorance. Humility is required for honest self-examination. Humility is required to become accountable to others, allowing them to give you constructive criticism so that you may advance in your giving and service to others. Humility is saying, "I don't know it all," and then being open to constructive feedback from others to examine how we can improve.

The reality is, you can't always trust your own thoughts and ideas, because they are driven by your instinctual drives, which can cause you to justify selfish behaviors, which in turn can result in neglect or harm to yourself or others. Because of your instinctual drives, you can justify why it is alright to be selfish or to harm others, directly or indirectly. Having humility means allowing feedback, suggestions, and constructive criticism from other people who want to help you grow. When you have ideas that may be selfish, practicing humility requires you to "tell on yourself" to others to whom you are accountable.

Like an adolescent child, the ego says, "I know it all, and I decide everything for myself." The ego does not like to examine its faults or to practice humility. It prefers to justify its faults or blame others for them.

The humble person responds, “The greater good is important. I don’t have all the answers, and before taking a questionable action, I will check myself by being accountable to my motives, and I will bounce this off my mentor or a close friend who cares about me and wants the best for me.”

Some people do not have good friends or mentors in their lives who can help them in this way, or who have their best interests at heart. Many people do not have access to other people who really care about them, want to see them succeed, and get better. Many people get together and validate the selfish instinctual behaviors of their egos with each other. Relationships of this nature are empty and unsatisfying. Ideally, both parties in a relationship should have a genuine desire to support each other in encouraging service, unconditional giving, and forgiveness toward others. We need to become examples and coaches for each other to encourage these qualities. But there are not many places to go that give us the tools and methods that enable us to start interacting with these intentions.

Humility is not the same as humiliation, which is the act of being dishonored, disgraced, embarrassed, and shamed. When you see a big ego getting humiliated, you love it, because privately you want that person to be taught a lesson and get put in his or her place. You want to see egotistical people become humble because you don’t really appreciate, respect, or admire inflated egos. Humiliation is painful, because it is meant to direct a person toward humility. It is the discipline needed to correct egotistical behavior. None of us like discipline or being corrected, especially when we are being selfish. A humble person, when confronted about being selfish, will simply say, “Yeah, you’re right. Thanks for helping me to see that. Forgive me. I’ll try to do that differently next time.”

Some people pretend to admire others who have a big ego when, deep down, they don’t really like them. No one likes people who brag about themselves, are selfish, and claim to know everything. But we do appreciate, respect, and admire humility. We admire humble men and women who don’t take selfish shortcuts that hurt others. Humble people can admit when they are wrong. Humble people are not victims who blame others. Humble people are the ones we respect and admire the most. They are the examples that we all need and want. Humility is true strength, not weakness. What are *you* teaching others by your example?

Self-centeredness, driven by our instincts, hormones, and the illusion of separation, is the root of our problems. Self-centeredness directs us to self-focus, seeking self-gratification, pleasure, sex, and excessive money. Sometimes we justify hurting others in the process of satisfying our selfish motives.

The selfish instinctual drives are not inherently bad or sinful. They are natural and human, but become bad and sinful when they control us and dominate us, demanding more than is necessary, and causing us to justify selfishly hurting ourselves and others. The ultimate goal is to live without our instincts causing harm to ourselves or others. We need help with instinct management, and we can’t do it alone. Humility is required to get the ongoing help and support we need from others.

Finding a mentor who can give you feedback is the first step toward gaining humility. Having a mentor will be helpful in checking whether your choices are to serve or to be selfish—that is, if your motives come from the heart or from self-centered instinctual drives. The latter can dominate and blind you quickly if they are left unchecked and under your own stewardship. Alone you lose. Together you win. Helping you is helping me.

Willingness to acquire humility is the first step toward becoming an Expert Giver. Humility is required to take accountability and responsibility for our own lives. Humility is very rare in today’s world because most people operate from an “I’m right, and you’re wrong” perspective. The blame game is default human behavior. “It’s your fault. I didn’t do it.” People don’t like to admit how they’re wrong. Many of us point the finger of blame at other people for our problems and circumstances. We often seek to divert attention away from ourselves when we were wrong—because the last thing we want to do is say, “I’m sorry,” or “I was wrong about that,” or “Please forgive me, I just didn’t know.”

If you are your own mentor, your pride, ego, and instincts will not allow you to see and admit when you are wrong. That would require you to examine your selfish motives before you act. The

process of accountability to another person requires humility, which is an admission that you need help from others.

However, many of us have been hurt over and over again by different people throughout our lives. We have all been let down, tricked, conned, and scammed. Because of that, we have given up hope in the goodness of others, and in their ability to be trustworthy with our best interests at heart. With the increasing fear of others and the lack of trust that most of us have, we don't want to be vulnerable, or to take the risk of being used or hurt by another's selfish motives. Therefore, we have become more and more isolated. Many people believe that the idea of others helping them with pure motives is impossible. But being open to trusting again is required in order to develop a productive relationship with a mentor.

We have lost trust in each other's motives. But to change and grow, we need honest feedback from each other, which involves trust. When people first go to an Expert Giver Group meeting, they are received with open arms, and they experience other people who just want to help them get better. At first, the newcomers may not trust that the help is without selfish motives. They may think, *What's the catch here?* But after a short time, they will realize that there *is* no catch. Then they begin to truly appreciate the fact that most people there have good intentions to truly help each other grow and succeed, without hidden motives for sex or money. How much do we experience this in the real world? Sadly, not much. My goal with the Expert Giver Groups is to connect people with the goal of unconditionally helping each other with no hidden motives and no strings attached.

I suggest that you choose a mentor from an Expert Giver meeting. This will be someone who wants to help you grow, and who is committed to doing so. I do not recommend having people of the opposite gender mentoring each other because of the possibility of sexual motives entering the picture. But this is only a recommendation, not a rule. The mentor is there to help you go through the Seven Steps, to develop an accountability feedback relationship, and to share experience, strength, and hope.

Your mentor's goal is to have a sincere desire to help you without seeking anything in return. Follow your gut and your intuition. It is okay to change mentors. I recommend getting a mentor within your first few Expert Giver meetings. At least, choose a temporary mentor and exchange numbers within the first two meetings. The first step is to become accountable to another person. I recommend daily phone contact for the first month, and weekly in-person meetings of at least an hour, if possible. A mentor will be your guide through the remaining steps below.

Are you teachable? Acquiring humility combined with open-mindedness, willingness, and honesty are the keys to begin managing your instinctual drives, to start your transition from a taker to an Expert Giver.

Step 2: Completing Your Personal Inventories

In the formats suggested below, write down four different personal inventories: Resentments; Intimate Relationships; Fears; and Character Defects.

I recommend keeping your inventories private from others. They will be only for you and your mentor to review together, after which you may choose to dispose of them or save them for review later.

There will never be a perfect time to begin writing out the lists below. You just need to start. Once you begin writing, it will start flowing. I found that I got most of it done in a couple of sittings over several hours. But everyone will be different about the time required. The first time you have thirty minutes to dedicate to it, do it. Don't put it off. It's important. Completing these inventories will be life-changing.

Resentment defined:

- Bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly.

List Your Resentments. In the following sections, you will be creating four resentment lists, which you will ultimately combine into one master list that will look like Table 1, below:

Table 1: Master List of Resentments

<i>Resentment List #1 (Offenders)</i>	<i>Resentment List #2: What Happened / Instincts Affected</i>	<i>Resentment List #3: My Part</i>	<i>Resentment List #4: Forgiveness (when I have no part)</i>
Boss from XYZ, Inc.	Fired me from my job at XYZ / <i>Security (emotional and financial)</i>	I did poor work; I showed up late for work too many times	—
Wife	Cheated on me with my friend / <i>Sex; Security (emotional)</i>	I was not emotionally available; I cheated on her a year earlier	—
Male Mugger	Threatened me with a gun and stole my wallet / <i>Security (personal, emotional, and financial)</i>	I had no part	I forgive him
Female Co-worker	Insulted me / <i>Security (emotional)</i>	I insulted her three weeks earlier	—
Etc.			

Resentment List #1: Name All of Your Resentments by Offenders. Either by hand or with a computer spreadsheet, create a four-column list as in Figure 2, above. Label the first column, “Resentment List #1 (Offenders).” Then list all the people and institutions that you still feel angry toward—*everyone* you hold a grudge against, in any order you think of them. This list might contain family members, friends, previous bosses, policemen, judges, teachers, bullies, institutions, politicians, former romantic partners, and so on.

Table 2, below, shows an example of Resentment List #1:

Table 2: Resentment List #1 (Offenders)

Boss from XYZ, Inc.
Wife
Male Mugger
Female Co-worker
Etc.

Resentment List #2: Name All of Your Resentments by What Happened and the Instincts Affected. Label the second column, “Resentment List #2 (What Happened / Instincts Affected).”

Then describe exactly what happened that made you upset. If there is more than one offense to list under that person or organization, write them all down.

How did the person or organization wrong you? What did they do to hurt you or make you angry? Does what he or she did affect your instincts for sex or security? Throughout this book, I have mostly referred to security as it relates to money. However, as we noted earlier, in addition to financial security, there are also personal and emotional security. When we examine our resentments and which instincts are affected by them, it may be our personal or emotional security that was affected instead of our financial security. So as you are labeling which instincts are affected, security can be thought of as money, physical health and safety, or emotional/social well-being.

Some examples of your *financial security* being affected might include: (1) someone took away your income or job; (2) someone stopped providing for you; or (3) someone set a boundary that cut off your resources.

Some examples of your *personal security* being affected might be: (1) someone harmed you physically; (2) someone threatened to harm you physically; or (3) someone deprived you of food and shelter.

Some examples of your *emotional security* being affected might be: (1) someone hurt your feelings; (2) someone abandoned you; or (3) someone interfered with an important relationship in your life.

Some examples of your *sex instinct* being affected might include: (1) someone cheated on you sexually; (2) someone stopped providing sex for you; or (3) someone shamed you about your sexual desires or orientation.

Table 3, below, shows an example of Resentment List #2:

Table 3: Resentment List #2
(What Happened / Instincts Affected)

Boss fired me from my job at XYZ / <i>Security (emotional and financial)</i>
Wife cheated on me with my friend / <i>Sex; Security (emotional)</i>
Mugger stole my wallet at gunpoint / <i>Security (personal, emotional, and financial)</i>
Female co-worker insulted me / <i>Security (emotional)</i>
Etc.

This second list will reveal all the blocks that keep you poisoned with anger and resentment. Resentments are poisons that are hurting *you*, not the people or institutions that you feel angry toward.

You have now listed all the people who have harmed you or whom you are mad at; you have listed exactly what happened; and you have listed whether the action threatened your instincts concerning sex or security. When you are done with List #2, you are now ready to determine if you played a part in any of your resentments.

List #3: Determining Your Part in Each Resentment. The third part of your resentment inventory is to describe in writing *your* part in creating or causing your resentments. To make this third list, for each offender write down your part in causing the person to react negatively to you.

Was the other party reacting to or retaliating for something you did? People often do things that hurt us because we stepped on their toes in some way, or we had some part to play in causing their reaction. But many times, we are unaware of the part that we played. When we think about it, we usually find that we have blamed others for retaliating for something that *we* started in the first place. In the *My Part* list, you take responsibility for your own actions. The task of finding and admitting your part is about reviewing *your* fault, not the other person's fault. This exercise is about looking at yourself, not others.

What is your part, and where are you to blame? This shifts your perspective from nurturing a victim mentality to owning up to how you played a part, taking responsibility for the role you played. That requires honesty, humility, and courage to examine your part for the first time. It is not easy to look at your own part, or to admit what you did that caused another person to harm you. Most people only focus on the other person, ignore their own part, and justify being a victim. It's natural for us to blame others; that's our default mode. It takes courage and humility to look at and acknowledge our own part honestly. That is the beginning of the truth setting you free.

On your third list, here are some questions to help you examine if you played a part in your resentments. You don't need to write out all the questions. Just use them as guidelines to uncover your role in reviewing your part, if any, in what happened.

- Was I taking advantage of others, using them, or expecting more than I should have from them?
- Did I make demands or set expectations for them that they did not agree to fulfill?
- Did they set a boundary or limit that I didn't like, and so I reacted in anger?
- What did I do to them first for them to react this way?
- Did I threaten their instincts for sex or security?
- Did they threaten *my* instincts for sex or security?
- Did I lie, cheat, or steal?
- What could I have done differently?

Even if other people deserve some portion of the blame, this inventory is not about them—it is about examining *your* part in how *you* caused people to react against you—in other words, you discover your own part in causing your resentment.

Table 4, below, shows an example of Resentment List #3:

**Table 4: Resentment List #3
(My Part in What Happened)**

Boss: I did poor work; I showed up late for work too many times
Wife: I was not emotionally available; I cheated on her a year earlier
Male Mugger: I had no part
Female Co-worker: I insulted her three weeks earlier
Etc.

List #4: Practicing Forgiveness of Resentments in Which You Played No Part. What about when, as with the Male Mugger above, you have *no* part in your resentment? Sometimes sick, ignorant, or criminal people harm us for no reason caused by us, but still they hurt us. In some instances, we are truly the victim of another’s selfish, harmful actions. How do we deal with resentments that we haven’t caused? The answer may initially seem impossible. But the resentment that you feel only hurts *you*.

Forgiveness goes against your feelings of “justified” resentment. However, ultimately, forgiveness is the solution, because the forgiveness is really for you and your freedom from the resentment. To forgive despite your “justified” anger is no easy task. But resentments are the number one block that hold us back from unconditional giving to and serving of others. To be truly free, you must forgive the other party—but it is a hard choice to make.

Table 5, below, shows an example of Resentment List #4:

Table 5: Resentment List #4
(Forgiveness, when I have no part)

Boss: —
Wife: —
Male Mugger: I forgive him
Female Co-worker: —
Etc.

So, how do you practice forgiveness? At times when you are alone, I suggest that you say out loud, “I forgive ‘so-and-so’ for doing ‘such-and-such’ because he or she is a sick, ignorant, or criminal person operating from his or her instincts. I hope that ‘so-and-so’ figures out how to become giving in this life, so he or she can have all the happiness, peace, joy, and wisdom available to a human being.” I would suggest doing this every day until the resentment is gone, and you have totally forgiven the other person. It’s not easy, but it has worked for me, taking anywhere from one to three weeks. Forgiveness is the biggest give, and it is required for you to heal and be free.

Now that you have completed all four sections of your Resentment Inventory (Offenders; What Happened / Instincts Affected; My Part; and Forgiveness), you are ready to begin your Intimate Relationship Inventory.

List Your Intimate Relationships. Make a list of *all* the people with whom you have had previous intimate relations, using their first name or initials. The purpose here is *not* to describe or discuss details of how and what we have done sexually, or our sexual tastes and preferences. To that I say, “To each his own.”

Create a list of all your previous intimate partners. As you list each name, write out the answers to each question below:

- **Selfishness:** How was I ever selfish?
- **Dishonesty:** How was I ever dishonest?
- **Inconsideration:** How was I ever inconsiderate?
- **Jealousy:** How did I ever create jealousy?
- **Alternative Behavior:** What could I have done differently?

Examples:

Pam (my ex-wife):

Selfishness: I only took care of my own selfish sexual desires.

Dishonesty: I cheated on Pam with Susan.

Inconsideration: I disregarded Pam's feelings.

Jealousy: Pam found out and became jealous.

Alternative Behavior: I should have divorced Pam or separated from her before seeing other women.

Susan:

Selfishness: I put my own interests before hers.

Dishonesty: I lied about being single so I could have sex with her.

Inconsideration: I disregarded Susan's feelings.

Jealousy: n/a: Susan never found out about Pam.

Alternative Behavior: I should have divorced Pam or separated from her before seeing Susan.

Monica:

Selfishness: I put my own interests before hers.

Dishonesty: I told her I loved her when I didn't mean it so she would stay with me because I wanted the companionship and didn't want to be alone.

Inconsideration: I ignored Monica's feelings.

Jealousy: n/a

Alternative Behavior: I should have told Monica the truth, regardless of the consequences.

Kim:

Selfishness: While in a relationship with Kim, I spent time with other female friends I was attracted to sexually because I wanted to find another partner before ending the relationship with Kim.

Dishonesty: I lied to Kim about seeing other women.

Inconsideration: I disregarded Kim's feelings.

Jealousy: Kim would have become jealous if she ever found out about the other women, which she did not.

Alternative Behavior: I should have separated from Kim before looking for other women to date.

List Your Fears. Fear is defined as “an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous and likely to cause us pain or threat.” Fear is based on the belief that we will lose something that we already possess, or won't get something that we want, need, or demand. Fears are based on our survival instincts, for they help to keep us alive. But they are also the primary cause of our self-centeredness. Human beings have a complex design, which inclines us to be suspicious and not immediately trust other people. We are on guard against being hurt, conned, or tricked. The world is selfish, so fear drives everyone to varying degrees.

When our basic physiological needs for food and shelter are met, we experience less stress and fear, which allows us to become more giving toward others. Our instincts create the fears that drive our insecurities of not having enough—primarily not having enough financial, personal, or emotional security. The drives of our fears and instincts tell us that “more” will fulfill us—but “satisfaction” is never obtained. We can get stuck living in a constant state of fear and lack, which then converts excess wants into needs that can never be satisfied, no matter how much we obtain. We do need some level of selfishness to survive, but once our basic needs are met, most of us still want “more.” Just when we should be slowing down for the stop sign, our instinctual drives, fueled by fear, reach down and push the gas pedal all the way to the floor.

Write down a numbered list of all your fears, and relate them to the instinct affected:

1. Fear of losing my job. (Financial, Personal, and Emotional Security)
2. Fear of losing my intimate partner. (Sex & Emotional Security)
3. Fear of losing my house. (Financial, Personal, and Emotional Security)
4. Fear of dying from cancer (Personal and Emotional Security)
5. Etc.

List Your Character Defects. Our main character defects are based on fear and self-centeredness. Write out how the character defects below appear in your life today, so you can become aware of how they block your ability to give. Ask yourself how the following thoughts do or do not apply to you:

1. **Greed:** I don't have enough to share with others, and I always need *more* to be okay. It doesn't matter how much I accumulate. No matter how much I have, I am always dissatisfied, so I justify being selfish, wanting more, and needing to keep more for myself. My goal is to always be as generous as possible. *List examples of my being greedy, writing down the who and the why.*

2. **Jealousy:** I don't like others because they threaten to take away what is mine, such as my sexual partner, my money, or my resources. My goal is to never be jealous. *List some examples of my being jealous, writing down the who and the why.*
3. **Envy:** With this cousin of jealousy, I resent others for having what I want. It is a feeling of discontent aroused by others' possessions, qualities, attributes, or luck. My goal is to always want the best for others. *List the people I envy and why.*
4. **Doubt:** Doubt is the biggest destroyer of dreams. My goal is to always practice persistence toward goals despite my doubts. *List doubts that I have, writing down the what and the why.*
5. **Worrying:** When I dwell on troubles over which I have no control, I become anxious. My goal is never to worry about things I have no control over. *List things I worry about which I have no control over.*
6. **Revenge:** This character defect involves righting a wrong with another wrong—"an eye for an eye"—when the actual solution is forgiveness. When I hurt others, I hurt myself. My goal is to forgive everyone, wishing them happiness, peace, and joy in this life. That, in turn, will set me free. *List those people I would like to seek revenge against, and why. (You may wish to review your Resentments List, above.)*
7. **Sloth:** This character defect involves the reluctance to work or to contribute to one's own expenses. If sloth is unrelated to physical or mental incapacities, it is a form of selfishness. My goal is to always earn my own way. *List how I am slothful, and why.*
8. **Gluttony:** When I eat excessively, I hurt myself by becoming overweight and suffering from all the associated health problems. My goal is to take excellent care of my body and my health. *List examples of how I am gluttonous, and why.*
9. **Lust:** Strong sexual desire is not bad unless I harm others or myself, or am dishonest with others for sexual motives. My goal is for my sexual relations to be totally honest and cause harm to no one. *List examples of how my sexual desires have harmed others, and why. (You may wish to review your Intimate Relations List, above.)*
10. **Controlling:** Control involves imposing my will on others. My goal is to always live and let live. *List examples of how I try to control others, and why.*
11. **Pride:** Pride has two completely opposite definitions, one positive and one negative. The positive definition refers to feelings of self-worth and self-respect. The negative definition refers to feelings of vanity and arrogance, which are actually a mask for low self-esteem. Positive pride is associated with giving, whereas negative pride is associated with taking. My goal is to seek humility and to become more giving and of service to others, which leads me to positive pride and turns me away from negative pride. *List examples of how I display positive and negative pride, and why.*

Step 3: Reviewing All Four of Your Inventories with Your Mentor

Once you complete all four inventories in Step 2, arrange a meeting with your mentor to humbly and honestly go over all the lists together, being open to feedback that helps you to see things that you could not see on your own.

This step will take courage and humility to follow through on. It requires you to trust another person with intimate details about yourself, making you vulnerable to him or her. You may be apprehensive about doing this, but you will find that once you start to truly open up to another human being, it will feel like lifting a weight off your shoulders. By being truly honest about yourself with another person, you will find that your mentor will be able to help you to uncover

more of your responsibility for your own resentments—which we called “My Part” in the resentments list you filled out above in Step 2.

You may think you did a good job of listing your part when you were completing that list, but I can tell you from experience that another person can help you to uncover and see more of your faults than you can on your own. The mentor’s main job is to point out your own part in causing your resentments, so that you can change your future behavior by becoming accountable for how you have minimized or justified hurting others in the past. You need other people to help you see those things about yourself. Over time, you will become better at seeing your part on your own, but in the beginning, you are mostly blind to it without help from another. Again, accepting help from a mentor in this way will initially take courage and humility—but it will be the beginning of an incredible bond and friendship.

There is great value in someone knowing who you really are, with the insight to then give you valuable feedback. That will prepare you for the future, when you will mentor others. However, you must be a student before you can become a teacher. Receiving feedback from a mentor is not about being shamed for your bad behavior. Rather, it is about being open to reviewing your behavior, taking accountability for it, and not being a victim.

Reviewing all your inventories with a mentor will ignite powerful changes in your life, enabling a positive direction for your future. Once you start this process with another person who has a genuine loving intent to help you grow, you will want to share more with him or her, and to become increasingly open to getting feedback. It is a leap into practicing humility. By being willing to take this step, you will make real progress in your own growth, which will lead to a better life for yourself and everyone you know by allowing another person to help you remove the blocks that are in the way of you becoming an Expert Giver.

After completing your inventory lists and reviewing them entirely and honestly with your mentor, you should tell him or her any secrets that you feel shame or guilt about. Secrets eat at us from the inside and keep us sick. When they are shared with another person, that takes away most of their power. In turn, your mentor may share with you a secret that has weighed him or her down. If your secrets involve a crime for which you could be jailed, you can describe it in general terms so as not to reveal exact details, or you may choose to share the secrets anonymously with a priest.

This kind of trust makes for the strongest possible friendships and bonds, creating a cycle of giving and receiving. Helping you is helping me, and vice versa. In this process between you and your mentor, both of you give and receive. You are giving your mentor your trust and opportunities for him or her to give back to you. It is always a two-way street of healthy giving and receiving. Both parties benefit. It’s a win-win situation.

You will experience all this from the other side when you become a mentor yourself. There will be no greater joy or reward for you than to become trusted by others, to be a part of their success and growth, and to create genuine bonds with them based on trust. In that relationship, your only intention will be to want the other person to grow, succeed, become less self-centered, and start helping and connecting with others. Nothing feels better than that.

Step 4: Making a List of Amends and Reviewing It with Your Mentor

Make a list of amends that you owe to others, and then review the list with your mentor.

First, go back to your Resentment List #3 (Your Part), and reexamine those resentments that you learned you had a part in creating. Those resentments will become the bulk of your Amends List.

Second, go back and review your Intimate Relationship List, adding those individuals to your list whom you think you owe an amends.

You do not have to review your Forgiveness List, because you have already practiced forgiveness with anyone on that list (e.g., the Male Mugger), and you do not have to make amends to anyone on that list, because you did not harm anyone on that list (they harmed you).

Fourth, think of people or organizations who are not on any of your previous lists, but you harmed in some way, such as by lying, stealing, or cheating. Add them to your Amends List, which is now complete.

Remember—and this is *very* important—you are not yet doing Step 5. That is, you are not yet making amends. And you are not yet deciding *if* and *how* you will make amends. You are only making a list of the amends you *may* need to make. If you have an urge to make some amends immediately, resist.

First, you need to meet with your mentor and review the amends that you wish to make and how you wish to make them. Then, with the mentor's feedback, determine which amends to make now, which ones to make later, and which ones not to make at all. You do not want to make any amends that will cause harm to anyone else in any way. Make all these decisions with your mentor.

Remember, you are accountable to your mentor, whose role is to help you become a better giver, and to prevent you from ignorantly harming others. If you make amends your way, without first consulting your mentor, you can do unnecessary harm. This is especially true if you make amends to former romantic partners, which can cause more harm than good. When you contact a former romantic partner to apologize, be certain that you do not have a sexual motive. Remember, amends are not about you feeling better while making someone else feel worse. It is for you and your mentor to decide together when making amends is needed.

Your mentor will also help you to decide the best way to make your amends. It may be face-to-face, over the phone, through e-mail, anonymously, or not at all. In some cases, not contacting the injured party *is* the amends you need to make. To confess to cheating on a former partner just to get it off your chest will only cause further harm. That is selfish and not recommended. If you are planning on confessing to cheating on a current partner, your amends may be *not* to tell him or her, but instead to resolve never to cheat on anyone ever again. This is called a "living amends."

Then there are financial amends, which may involve owing people or organizations money that you have borrowed or stolen. How do you make those wrongs right? Do you call up a person or company and admit a crime, thereby putting your freedom and income in jeopardy? No, especially if other people depend on your income. This falls under the category of amends that cause further harm.

In some cases, it may be best to come up with a plan with your mentor to repay money anonymously. If you cannot find the people to repay, or they have died, you can repay them indirectly by donating to some cause they may have approved of. In some cases, it is best not to make the amends immediately, but to wait for the best timing. Your plan of action concerning your amends should be discussed and decided with your mentor.

Step 5: Making Your Amends

After you review with your mentor which amends to make and how to make them, start making those amends.

Now that you have gone over with your mentor which amends to make and which not to make, and the how and when to make them, you can begin to make them without delay. Some may require you to wait for an opportunity to present itself. With money that you owe, you should pay it back immediately, assuming you are able to. Otherwise, immediately start a payment plan with the individual or company, as you decided earlier with your mentor. Once you have worked out the specifics of each amends, including the methods and the timing, you can move forward with courage.

After the amends process begins, you will start to experience a freedom and peace that you had not previously known. You will have a new perspective on life. Self-pity will fade away. Your desire to help others will grow, and selfishness will begin to fade and be less of a challenge. You will become less interested in selfish things, and more interested in helping others. Your fear of people and economic insecurity will leave you. You will have new meaning and purpose in your life that

you didn't have before. You will experience a level of happiness, joy, wisdom, and peace previously unknown to you.

Step 6: Take a Daily Personal Inventory and Promptly Admit When You Are Wrong

Every day, complete your Daily Personal Inventory (see below), reviewing your resentments, intimate relationships, fears, and character defects. Write down any new amends to review with your mentor, and practice forgiveness when the need arises. Also, evaluate your giving during the day, determining whether it was unconditional, or if you gave with conditional selfish motives.

Denial and instincts are powerful forces that never go away. So long as we are human, we are never fully cured of our instinctual drives, desires, and motives, which direct us to be selfish. That part of us will always take more and give less. It usually dominates our choices if we leave ourselves unaccountable and unchecked.

At the end of each day, take your personal inventory. I suggest either printing out several copies of the Daily Personal Inventory table provided below, or getting a notebook in which, while you refer to the table, you only write down any new items that come up. I also suggest that you have a weekly meeting with your mentor to go over your Daily Personal Inventory, in order to maintain accountability to yourself and another.

First, examine any new resentments you may have. If you need to make amends to anyone, list those to discuss with your mentor how and when you will make them. If you need to forgive anyone, start practicing the forgiveness as described in Step 2, above.

Second, review if you experienced any character defects today, thinking about how you can improve.

Third, examine if you were selfish, dishonest, inconsiderate, or jealous in your intimate relationship(s) today. And write down what you could have done differently.

Fourth, list any new fears you may have experienced that day, and write down whether they affected your financial, emotional, or personal security or your sexual relations.

Fifth, write down examples of how you gave to others throughout the day, noting in each case whether you gave unconditionally or with financial or sexual motives.

Taking a Daily Personal Inventory, meeting with your mentor to discuss your Daily Inventories weekly, and regularly attending Expert Giver Groups are all ongoing actions to maintain progress in becoming a more Expert Giver.

Table 6: Daily Personal Inventory

<i>Resentment List #1 (Offenders)</i>	<i>Resentment List #2 (What Happened / Instincts Affected)</i>	<i>Resentment List #3 (My Part)</i>	<i>Resentment List #4 (Forgiveness, when I have no part)</i>

Intimate Relationships Review

Selfishness:

Dishonesty:

Inconsideration:

Jealousy:

Alternative Behavior:

Character Defects

Greed:

Jealousy:

Envy:

Doubt:

Worrying:

Revenge:

Sloth:

Gluttony:

Lust:

Controlling:

Pride:

Fears

Amends

Was My Giving Unconditional or Conditional Today?

Step 7: Mentoring Others

Mentor others who are willing to go through the above steps. Be as unconditionally giving as you can in service to others. Be open to starting an Expert Giver Group in your area.

Now that you have completed the previous 6 steps, you can offer your guidance as a mentor to other people. You now have the experience to walk others through the steps.

When an Expert Giver Group is just beginning, the participants will not yet have experience completing the 7 Steps of Expert Giver Groups. Thus, at first, the participants will pair up to mentor each other. But as the group matures, newer members can decide whether or not to select their mentors from more experienced members.

When someone agrees to be your mentor, arrange a weekly time to get together with the goal of discussing and working through the 7 Steps.

For more information on finding an existing group or starting a new one, go to www.ExpertGiver.com.

The Ten Guidelines of Expert Giver Groups (Long Form)

1. Our common welfare comes first. Personal development depends on the unity of the group.

Unity is priority. Any personal ambitions or desires should not be allowed to affect or interfere with the group. And no individual has the authority to punish or expel any other member from the group.

2. Leaders in Expert Giver Groups are trusted servants; they do not govern.

When someone decides to start an Expert Giver Group, he or she initially assumes the three roles of Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. When the group has three or more members, they can decide how to divide up these responsibilities.

The *Chairperson* leads the general meetings and business meetings.

The *Treasurer* takes money from a passed basket, banks it, pays rent and other bills with it, and makes a regular report at the group's monthly business meeting.

The *Secretary* takes notes at business meetings, keeps a list of members with contact information, and posts meeting notices on the web.

All of these positions are voluntary and temporary, with specific term limits to be decided at the first business meeting.

Initially, the Chairperson finds a location for the meetings, arranges terms for rent, if any, decides on a time to hold the weekly meetings, and posts the time and location on the web at ExpertGiver.com. The meetings can be held in a member's home or in a church or library.

When starting the very first general meeting, the Chairperson will propose a date and time for the monthly business meeting, to be agreed upon by the members. The date and time of the business meeting, which will be open to all members, will be announced at the beginning of every subsequent general meeting. At the first business meeting, and those following, the goal is to fill positions for the group with voluntary commitments from the members. The business meetings should operate according to Roberts Rules of Order (available at ExpertGiver.com), a simple formal way to hold meetings in an orderly fashion.

3. The only requirement for membership in an Expert Giver Group is the desire to become an Expert Giver.

You are a member of an Expert Giver Group if you say you are. No one may be refused.

There are no religious or political belief requirements, and no membership regulations of any kind.

4. Each Expert Giver Group is autonomous.

Autonomous means that every Expert Giver Group can manage its affairs exactly as its members please. An Expert Giver Group should never affiliate itself with anything or anyone else. With respect to its own affairs, each Expert Giver Group should be responsible to no other authority.

5. The purpose of each Expert Giver Group is to support the methods and content provided by the 7 Steps.

6. An Expert Giver Group should never offer or lend the Expert Giver Group name to any facility or outside enterprise.

An Expert Giver Group should never go into business of any kind.

7. Every Expert Giver Group should be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Each Expert Giver Group should be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of its own members.

There is to be no public solicitation of funds using the name Expert Giver Groups.

The Treasurer of each Expert Giver Group should only collect and maintain a prudent reserve of money. It is up to each group to determine at its first business meeting, by a majority vote, what that prudent reserve level should be, as well as what its expenses should be. One suggestion for a prudent reserve would be to have enough money to cover the group's rent for two months. If the reserve ever exceeds that level, any further voluntary collections occurring at meetings should cease until funds return to a two-month prudent reserve level. Aside from rent, a group's expenses might include providing snacks and beverages at its meetings.

8. Expert Giver Groups should remain forever voluntary and nonprofessional.

The Trusted Servants and the mentors should never be paid for their services. In fact, members should never pay other members for any services related to the Seven Steps.

9. Expert Giver Groups have no opinions on outside issues, so the name Expert Giver Groups should never be drawn into public controversy.

Expert Giver Groups should never take a stance or side concerning any public controversy or argument. The sole purpose of the groups is outlined in the 7 Steps. Expert Giver Groups have no opinions on outside issues.

The meetings' primary focus should be on the 7 Steps of Expert Giver Groups. Avoid religious or political debates in meetings.

10. At general meetings, there is to be no discussion of outside business of any nature. At business meetings, the discussion is to be confined to the group's business.

The Ten Guidelines of Expert Giver Groups (Short Form)

- 1. Our common welfare comes first. Personal development depends on the unity of the group.*
- 2. Leaders in Expert Giver Groups are trusted servants; they do not govern.*

3. *The only requirement for membership in an Expert Giver Group is the desire to become an Expert Giver.*
4. *Each Expert Giver Group is autonomous.*
5. *The purpose of each Expert Giver Group is to support the methods and content provided by the 7 Steps.*
6. *An Expert Giver Group should never offer or lend the Expert Giver Group name to any facility or outside enterprise.*
7. *Every Expert Giver Group should be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*
8. *Expert Giver Groups should remain forever voluntary and nonprofessional.*
9. *Expert Giver Groups have no opinions on outside issues, so the name Expert Giver Groups should never be drawn into public controversy.*
10. *At general meetings, there is to be no discussion of outside business of any nature. At business meetings, the discussion is to be confined to the group's business.*

Suggested Guidelines for Opening and Closing Expert Giver Group Meetings

At the beginning of every meeting, I suggest that the Chairperson read aloud the Short Form of the Seven Steps, the Short Form of the Ten Guidelines, and then read the following:

Expert Giver Groups are fellowships of men and women who share their experiences, strengths, and hopes with each other with honesty, open-mindedness, humility, and a willingness to become less selfish, striving to live by the Golden Rule: *Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.*

There are no dues or fees for membership. Each Expert Giver Group is self-supporting through the contributions of its participants. The groups are not allied with any sect, denomination, religion, political party, organization, or institution. They do not wish to engage in public controversy, and neither endorse nor oppose any causes. Their primary purpose is for all the members to support each other in becoming Expert Givers.

This is a one-hour meeting from 7:00 to 8:00 P.M. (the length and time of the meeting may vary).

If you have a cellphone, please silence it.

Are there any newcomers attending their first, second, or third meeting? If so, please introduce yourself by your first name only, so that we may welcome you.

Everything said here in the group meeting and outside from member to member must be held in confidence.

At this time, we break briefly for the seventh guideline, which states that “Every Expert Giver Group should be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” We have no dues or fees required. A basket is passed to cover the expense of rent.

(Pass the basket)

Are there any announcements for the good of Expert Giver Groups?

(Members make announcements)

Please keep your sharing to a time limit in consideration of the size of the meeting, allowing others a chance to share. (A timer, such as on a cellphone, may be used by a volunteer to assist with this.)

The topic for this meeting will be _____
_____.

(The Chairperson will briefly share with the group about the topic and then invite the members to share. Topics may include one of the Seven Steps)

At the closing of every meeting, I suggest that the Chairperson read the following statement:

I would like to say that the opinions expressed here were strictly those of the individuals who gave them. Take what you like and leave the rest.

The things you heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Keep them within the walls of these rooms.

Let there be no gossip or criticism of one another.

Please join me in closing...

(Stand up, hold hands, and then repeat the following together, line by line:)

I will do my best
in all circumstances
to be kind, patient, tolerant,
humble, unconditionally giving, and forgiving
with everyone.
So be it.