



A Moral Inventory

Reflecting the glow of recovery from Starlight at Tamassee

By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamassee DAR School



Very few people like conflict. Even those who learn to handle it professionally and graciously don't normally enjoy it, but I've learned over the years there are benefits to addressing conflict. When done well, conflict can lead to greater understanding, truer humility, and deeper relationships. In the end, conflict can be a gift.

There are a few places where some folks object to the Twelve Steps. I've even seen conflict arise over these concerns. So, let's address one. A common objection is Step Four and taking a moral inventory. Some see addiction is purely a disease. They see those suffering with addiction as largely irresponsible for their harmful choices since the brokenness in their brain leads them to those choices. Others know how deeply those how struggle feel shame, regret, and guilt for the consequences of their issue, so talking about a moral inventory just feels like piling on those already fighting to dig out. They may see it as judgmental.

Let's start with the word "moral." If you look the word up in a standard dictionary, you'll find the first definition has to do with right and wrong behavior. No one thinks that addiction is right for

anyone (otherwise we wouldn't be involved in recovery), and even those still in the throes of the struggle will admit, in saner moments, they know it is not good for them. Addiction destroys not only individual lives but also families, businesses, and even communities. This disease causes incredible harm to so many, and we know that's not good. It doesn't lead to flourishing. It leads to devastation.

There is no doubt addiction is a disease of the brain and so many have a genetic predisposition to it. They need all the compassionate and wise help we can provide. But does the predisposition let them off the hook? If I know I have a family history of diabetes, what does that mean for how I manage my diet? The predisposition means I have a greater responsibility to prevent the disease.



I believe the same is true with addiction in all varieties. Our own sense of values tells us it is not good and causes so much pain. Taking a moral inventory is not about condemning us for the struggle. It's about finally being honest with ourselves about the struggle. Not so we feel judged, defeated, or rejected, but so that we can heal and overcome. So that we can honor the pain we've caused others and begin restoring their trust. So, we can clear our conscience and begin living comfortably in our own skin. So, we can carry the message of hope and freedom to those still sick and suffering.

At Starlight at Tamasee, we believe in the goodness of recovery and the hope for freedom mothers can find. To learn more about Starlight, visit www.starlight.tdarschool.org, or contact us at starlight@tdarschool.org or 864-944-1390. If your church or civic group is interested in a presentation on recovery, contact Jon Holland at jholland@tdarschool.org.

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