

The Number One Offender

Resentment & Harm

Step-Working Guide · The Recovery Files

In this workbook

1. **The Number One Offender** — key ideas, worksheet

Each topic's scored self-assessment and mind map are in the app.

TOPIC

The Number One Offender

KEY IDEAS

The Number One Offender

Resentment & Relapse

Resentment is the 'number one offender' because it destroys more alcoholics than anything else. It is not just anger; it is a complex re-experiencing of past injuries.

When harboring deep anger, we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. For the alcoholic, resentment is poison.

Active Harboring

Keeping the Fire Alive

Replaying past injuries, holding grudges, and feeling that anger is justified or protective.

We maintain ongoing anger toward specific people, feeling they 'owe' us. This keeps us emotionally tied to the past and blocks spiritual growth.

Blame & Victim Mentality

Powerlessness Choice

Attributing our problems primarily to others' actions and seeing ourselves as victims of circumstance.

This perspective prevents personal responsibility. If our happiness depends on others changing, we remain trapped. Freedom comes from owning our own reactions.

Revenge Fantasies

Mental Poison

Preoccupation with scenarios where those who wronged us suffer consequences or are exposed.

Wishing harm on others directs our mental energy toward destruction rather than healing. It maintains the cycle of pain and blocks us from the help we need.

Expectation-Based Anger

The Source of Frustration

Becoming upset when people don't behave according to our wishes or assumptions.

We expect others to know what we need or to follow our rules. When they don't, we feel hurt. Letting go of expectations is a key to freedom.

Emotional Dysregulation

Overwhelming Response

Anger that feels uncontrollable, creates physical symptoms, and interferes with sleep or functioning.

Resentments hijack our emotional system, creating the very internal distress that we used to treat with alcohol.

Spiritual Impact

Blocking the Sunlight

Resentments interfere with our connection to a Higher Power and spiritual principles.

We cannot simultaneously hold onto hate and experience the love of God. Resentment blocks the channel to the power that saves us.

Perspective & Reframing

Finding Freedom

Examining our own part in conflicts and considering alternative explanations for others' behavior.

We ask: 'What is my part?' We realize that others are often spiritually sick, just like us. We stop looking for blame and start looking for truth.

Spiritual Response

The Action of Forgiveness

Praying for those we resent and practicing forgiveness as a pathway to our own freedom.

We treat the 'offender' as a sick friend. We ask God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience we would cheerfully grant a sick friend.

WORKSHEET**Resentments Worksheet**

Freedom from Anger & Blame

PROFILE**Understanding Your Profile**

1. What category of resentment affects you most powerfully, and why?

2. What specific resentments have you carried the longest?

3. How have your resentment patterns evolved during recovery?

4. What resentments persist despite your intellectual understanding?

5. What situations tend to intensify your existing resentments?

PSYCHOLOGY**Psychology of Resentments**

6. How does viewing resentment as "spiritual illness" affect your willingness to let go?

7. How might your resentments be connected to deeper fears?

8. How do patterns like blame and revenge fantasies interact?

9. What early warning signs indicate resentments are becoming active?

10. How might family history have shaped your vulnerability?

MANAGEMENT

Developing Management

11. What strategies work best for your most challenging resentments?

12. What role do your sponsor/supports play in working through anger?

13. How do you distinguish legitimate grievances from resentment?

14. What spiritual practices help maintain freedom during conflict?

15. How might you strengthen your response to your toughest triggers?

FREEDOM

Building Freedom

16. How has your relationship with resentment changed in recovery?

17. What helps you maintain principles with difficult people?

18. How do you balance acknowledging harm with taking responsibility?

19. What would it look like to view resentments as growth opportunities?

20. How might sharing your experience help others?

MAPPING**Your Resentment Map**

List specific examples for each category:

Active Harboring:

Blame/Victim Mentality:

Revenge Fantasies:

Expectation-Based Anger:

Emotional Dysregulation:

Spiritual Impact:

ACTION

Action Plan

Specific Resentment Pattern:

Goal:

Action Steps (Prayer, Inventory, etc.):

Accountability:

Timeline:

Remember: Resentment is poison. Freedom comes from spiritual action, not from the other person changing.