

STEP FIVE

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

Principle	Theme	Action	Defect	Result
Integrity; Truth	Own our defects	Confession	Fear and isolation	Relief; Humility; Nearness of HP

PRAYER

- We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know him better {**BB, p. 75**}.
- Higher Power, my inventory has shown me who I am, yet I ask for your help in admitting my wrongs to another person and to You. Assure me, and be with me, in this Step, for without this Step I cannot progress in recovery. With Your help, I can do this, and I will do it. {**unknown**}

REWARDS - Begin to get humility; start of spiritual experience; reduced loneliness & fear.

NOTES

- STEP SIMPLIFIED: *Tell another person all about me and let God listen.*
- Pre-AA STEP: *I admitted to no one, including myself, that there was anything wrong with me.*
- HOW TO WORK THE STEP: **BB page 75**: para. 1, lines 1-4; para. 2, lines 1-2; para. 3
- Steps 4, 5, 6, and 7 “Get Right with SELF”
- Why do this step?
 - If we skip this step we may not overcome drinking {**BB, p. 72**}.
 - Can’t live alone with our defects (esp. now that we know about them); (**12 & 12**)
 - Grace of God won’t enter until do it (**12 & 12**)
 - Can’t appraise selves fairly – saw in 4 how we delude self; (**12 & 12**)
- Why not just God? (**12 & 12**)
 - Being honest with another confirms being honest with God and self
 - Inexperience in spiritual matters: going it alone dangerous & we still same rationalize.
- Joe McQ**:
 - Improve on the truth by refining column 4 (*exact nature of our wrongs*) and perhaps column 3 (*what of self was affected*) through review by uninvolved other person
 - First time we try to adopt God’s design for living – to rely on God & others
 - Cannot change 1 & 2 (our wrongs; the past) or 3 (turned over to God); only 4, nature of our wrongs, which we must be clear on them since this is what we work on
 - Freedom through seeing that the problem is you, because that’s all you can change

REFERENCES: - BB - Chapter 6 - Into Action p. 72-75

PROMISES:

- *Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted.* {**BB, p. 75**}
- *We can look the world in the eye.* {**BB, p. 75**}
- *We can be alone at perfect peace and ease.* {**BB, p. 75**}
- *Our fears fall from us.* {**BB, p. 75**}
- *We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator.* {**BB, p. 75**}
- *We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience.* {**BB, p. 75**}
- *The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly.* {**BB, p. 75**}
- *We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.* {**BB, p. 75**}
- *...the dark past is the greatest possession you have - the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert death and misery for them.* {**BB, p. 124**}
- Also see **12 & 12 p 61-62**.

Step Five

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

When it comes to ego deflation, few steps are harder to take than Five. But scarcely any Step is more necessary to longtime sobriety and peace of mind than this one. {12 & 12, p. 55}

We are only as sick as our secrets. {Common AA saying}

It's the side of myself that I refuse to look at that rules me. I must be willing to look at the dark side in order to heal my mind and heart because that is the road to freedom. I must walk into darkness to find the light and walk into fear to find peace. {DAILY REFLECTIONS , p.130}

We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. {BB, p. 73-74}

The real tests of the situation are your own willingness to confide and your full confidence in the one with whom you share your first accurate self-survey. . . Provided you hold back nothing, your sense of relief will mount from minute to minute. The dammed up emotions of years break out of their confinement, and miraculously vanish as soon as they are exposed. As the pain subsides, a healing tranquility takes its place. {12 & 12, p. 61-62}

Such parts of our score we tell to someone who will understand, yet be unaffected. The rule is we must be hard on ourself, but always considerate of others. {BB, p. 74}

Another great dividend we may expect from confiding our defects to another human being is humility - a word often misunderstood . . . it amounts to a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be. {12 & 12, p. 58}

I believe the happiest an individual is ever going to be is when he is in this pattern of living, relying on God and on other people. This is the design of life – to rely on God and others, as well as ourselves. {The Steps We Took, p. 71}

...somebody may do something against us anyway... [but] if we're spiritually well, it won't make any difference. {The Steps We Took, p. 82}

Personality change begins as a result of Step 5. {The Steps We Took, p. 86}

The inventory is of our defects, not our incidents. Here are the defects:

Resentment, Anger	Jealousy
Fear, Cowardice	Envy
Self pity	Laziness
Self justification	Procrastination
Self importance, Egotism	Insincerity
Self condemnation, Guilt	Negative Thinking
Lying, Evasiveness, Dishonesty	Immoral thinking
Impatience	Perfectionism, Intolerance
Hate	Criticizing, Loose Talk, Gossip
False pride, Phoniness, Denial	Greed

Now that you've admitted these defects, ask, "Don't you want to get rid of them?" These same defects caused your life to be unmanageable. How can you ask God to get rid of the THINGS you did in your past? YOU CAN'T!! You can ask to get rid of the defects, which caused you to act in the manner you did by taking... {Clarence Snyder 1944 - A.A. Sponsorship Pamphlet}

BB

1. Casting out defects requires action by us
2. Why do we need to do it?
 - Loss of sobriety
 - Learn humility, fearlessness and honesty
 - To live a long and happy life
 - To make our past our greatest asset (p. 124) (another promise!)
3. Who?
 - Clergy
 - Close-mouthed, understanding friend (Dr? Psych?)
 - Family member (but don't disclose something that'll hurt them)
 - Postpone if no one available, but only until there is someone. Not an excuse!
4. Doing it:
 - Explain what we have to do and why (life and death!)
 - Hard on ourselves, considerate of others
 - After: be quiet for an hour; meditate; thank God that we know him better; review solidity of first 5 steps
5. What we get (Promises):
 - Delight; peace
 - Fears fall away
 - Nearness of HP; begin to have spiritual experience
 - Feeling that drink problem has left us may come on strong

12x12

1. All the steps deflate ego, but few are harder than 5, but none are more necessary
2. The "easier way": rationalize that we were just bad actors
3. Confession common to lives of all spiritually centered & religious people
4. Why do we need to do it?
 - We CANNOT live alone with our defects (esp. now that we know about them); we MUST get outside help
 - Step 4 was only a look; this "improves" on the look/the truth (**Joe McQ**)
 - Lose our sobriety (or never get it in the first place)
 - Depression, anxiety, etc. Accuse others of same defects as their own
 - Grace of God won't enter until do it
 - Can't appraise selves fairly – saw in 4 how we delude self; exaggerate; some defects still hidden
 - Take advice and accept direction (step 3 work)
5. What do we get?
 - Get rid of isolation; loneliness; not belonging [hiding defects → cuts us off → anxiety → drink]
 - Forgiveness – both getting and giving it
 - More humility (the next step towards it after the beginning in 4; see definition on p. 58)
 - Mounting sense of relief, tranquility
 - Dammed up emotions released
 - Some: heightened or first time feeling the presence of God
6. Who with?
 - Someone discreet, experienced at being sober and surmounting difficulty
 - Sponsor; clergy; doctor; complete stranger
 - Split between multiple people if necessary, but begin ASAP
7. Why not just God?
 - Being honest with another confirms being honest with God and self
 - Inexperience in spiritual matters: going it alone dangerous & we still same rationalize.
 - Even veterans check guidance from God out with another person.
8. Doing It:
 - Takes WILLPOWER
 - Picks up steam quickly
 - Recipient shares too

The Steps We Took

1. Improve on the truth by refining column 4 (*exact nature of our wrongs*) and perhaps column 3 (*what of self was affected*) through review by uninvolved other person; cannot rely on self – bad track record WRT truth.
2. Order is important: first talk to God, then self, then a third person
3. First time we try to adopt God’s design for living – to *rely on God & others* (see p. 20). Not easy for a “DIY”
4. Cannot change 1 & 2 (our wrongs; the past) or 3 (turned over to God); only 4, the exact nature of our wrongs
 - This is not confession – it’s not about our wrongs; and it’s not a *general* discussion
 - Specific discussion about the nature of our wrongs; we must be clear on them since this is what we work on
 - Instructions to 5th step recipient on p. 79
5. The way to true freedom is through seeing that the problem is you, because that’s all you can change; if you stay hung up on the problems of others, you are enslaved by them.

Language of the Heart – Humility: see Step 7