

STEP FIVE

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

In Step Four we made a searching and fearless moral inventory of the acquired character defects. The inventory from Step Four details the acquired character defects which are of the false self. These defects, when the false self controls our lives, allow us to act and react in a manner that causes havoc not only to ourselves but also toward other people, places and things. It is this inventory of the acquired character defects that forms the foundation for doing Step Five.

Step Five involves the admission of the exact nature of our wrongs. Once again, the wrongs are from the false self. In order to admit these wrongs, we must search in our past. What wrongs are we looking for? We are searching for the acts that we did when we caused harm toward other people. We include the problems and character defects which caused or aggravated the reactions toward others. We are after the recognition of our deficiencies. Each twist of character that has been acquired must be illuminated. Therefore, each wrong, no matter how painful, must be brought up to the surface and honestly looked at. To the extent that we are searching and fearless in finding the exact nature of our wrongs, the rest of the S.A. program will be built on this foundation.

The exact nature of our wrongs, when we have fearlessly exposed them, must then be expressed to God, ourselves and another person. Although we have admitted the exact nature of our wrongs to ourselves and God, the process of clearing away the wreckage of the past is not complete until we have shared these wrongs with another human being. It is only when we include another person in this healing process that we are able to become aware of our own self-delusion. The other person, if carefully chosen, will show us where we have not been totally honest in our digging out of our wrongs. We must be candid, to the best of our ability, with this person and lay out all our wrongs that we are aware of.

After completing Step Five, many benefits will be ready for us if we have done a thorough and honest job. Our ability to remain sober will be increased. Step Five is a part of the footwork that allows the Grace of God to enter us and expel the acquired destructive obsessions. No longer will we feel that terrible sense of isolation. The willingness to forgive, not only ourselves but also other people, will be enhanced. This healing tranquility will be a greater awareness of the presence of God within our lives.

The Fifth Step should be written since most of us have many wrongs to uncover. The fact of putting these wrongs in black and white shows us that they are not as big as we had blown them up to be. Also, we will need a reference from which to tell our story. The written inventory of the Step Four with the exact nature of our wrongs will help us in making a list of the people we have harmed.

Use the following list to help dig out the exact nature of your wrongs. Remember, you are after the destructive, acquired character defects.

WRITING EXERCISE -- STEP FIVE
UNCOVERING THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS

Use the following areas as a guide to help you jog the memory in uncovering the exact nature of your wrongs. In each area, list the conflicts, distressing, humiliating or embarrassing memories, and twists of character that you have kept hidden. When possible, list the persons and your wrongs, and then identify the specific acquired character defect that caused the problem:

1. Family -- parents, brothers and sisters, spouses and children, in-laws, etc.
2. Employment -- supervisors and co-workers.
3. Organizations -- SA, hospitals, schools, churches
4. Relationships with people -- men, women, and children.
- 5 Distressing and humiliating facts -- stealing, lying, physical harm and sexual acting out.