

## Step 5

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

**Tradition 5.** Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the sexaholic who still suffers.

**Promise 5.** No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

**Reward 5.** Self-respect instead of self-contempt.

#### Readings:

<b>White Book:</b>	111 - 114
<b>AA Big Book:</b>	72 - 75
<b>12 and 12:</b>	55 - 62
<b>Step into Action:</b>	77 - 89

#### Fifth Step Prayer

*Higher Power,*

*My inventory has shown me who I am, yet I ask for Your help  
in admitting my wrongs to another person & to You.*

*Assure me, and be with me, in this Step,*

*for without this Step I cannot progress in my recovery.*

*With Your help, I can do this and I will do it.*

Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it? We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator, and to discover the obstacles in our path. We have admitted certain defect; we have ascertained in a rough way what the trouble is; we have put our finger on the weak times in our personal inventory. Now these are about to be cast out. This requires action on our part, which, when completed, will mean that we have admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our defects (AA 72).

This is perhaps difficult - especially discussing our defects with another person. We think we have done well enough in admitting these things to ourselves. There is doubt about that. In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient. Many of us thought it necessary to go much further. We will be more reconciled to discussing ourselves with another person when we see good reasons why we should do so. The best reason first: if we skip this vital step, we may not overcome (*lusting*) (AA 72).

We search for an easier way - which usually consists of the general and fairly pointless admission that when *lusting* we were sometimes bad actors. Then, for good measure, we add dramatic descriptions of that part of our behavior which our friends probably know about anyhow.

But of the things which really both and burn us, we say nothing. Certain distressing or humiliating memories, we tell ourselves, ought not be shared with anyone. These will remain our secret. Not a soul must ever know. We hope they'll go to the grave with us. Yet if A.A & S.A.s experience means anything at all, this is not only unwise, but is actually a perilous resolve. Few muddled attributes have caused us more trouble than holding back on Step Five. Some people are unable to stay sober at all; others will relapse periodically until they really clean house. Even S.A. old timers, sober for years, often pay dearly for skimping on this Step. They will tell how they tried to carry the load alone; how much they suffered of irritability, anxiety, remorse, and depression; and how, unconsciously seeking relief, they would sometimes accuse even their best friends of the very character defects they themselves were trying to conceal (12n12 56-57).

Time after time, newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to easier methods. Almost invariably they (fell). Having persevered with the rest of the program, they wondered why. We think the reason is that they never completed their housecleaning. They took inventory all right, but hung on to some of the worst items in stock. They only thought they had lost their egoism and fear; they only thought they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness, and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else all their life story.

Hence it was most evident that a solitary self-appraisal, and the admission of our defects based upon that alone, wouldn't be nearly enough. We'd have to have outside help if we were surely to know and admit the truth about ourselves - the help of God and another human being. (12n12 59).

It seems that if one has difficulty in fully taking Step 5 it is likely related to a failure in accepting Steps 1, 2, & 3.

1. Recognizing that we have a disease and are powerless over it. If we believed this, then what shame could we have that is holding us back?
2. That we are not the center of the universe, that there is a Higher Power that can and will restore us to sanity...
3. ...if we only would turn our will and our life over. If this is the case, as suggested in the White Book, it might be best to stop and revisit these steps.

What are we likely to receive from Step 5?

- For one thing, we shall get rid of that terrible sense of isolation we've always had. Almost without exception, sexaholics are tortured by loneliness. Nearly all of us suffered the feeling that we didn't quite belong. That's one reason *lust* became our best friend. It did let us act extemporaneously (even if only in our own minds). But even *that* boomeranged on us; we were finally struck down and left in terrified loneliness.
- This was also the means by which we began to get the feeling that we could be forgiven, no matter what we had thought or done. Often it was while working on this Step with our sponsors or spiritual advisers that we first felt truly able to forgive others, no matter how deeply we felt they had wronged us.
- Another great dividend we may expect from confiding our defect to another human being is humility - a word often misunderstood. To those who have made progress in S.A., it amounts to a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be. Therefore, our first practical move toward humility must consist of recognizing our deficiencies.
- As we took inventory, we began to suspect how much trouble self-delusion had been causing us. This had brought a disturbing reflection. Only by discussing ourselves, holding back nothing, only by being willing to take advice and accept direction could we set foot on the road to straight thinking, solid honesty, and genuine humility (12n12 57).

#### **STEP 5 PROMISES:**

**Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing,**

- 1. We are delighted.**
- 2. We can look the world in the eye.**
- 3. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease.**
- 4. Our fears fall from us.**
- 5. We shall get rid of that terrible sense of isolation we've always had.**
- 6. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator.**
- 7. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience.**
- 8. The feeling that our lusting problem has disappeared will often come strongly.**
- 9. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.**

Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done. We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better. Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand? (AA 75).