

The Dreaded Step Five

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

Ah, the dreaded fifth step. When I completed my fifth step I thought my sponsor could smell the fear on me as we began. I was eaten up with remorse and fear. I was also willing to do whatever was required of me to feel better. That's why I was able to be freed from the bondage of fear that someone may know my moral faults. This step requires contrition, ownership, honesty and humility. These are the four building blocks of a solid fifth step. Together they make the cornerstone of our recovery. The rewards for successfully completing this step are freedom from fear, and the keys to the door of character building in our Higher Power's path for us. Without this step we will continue to be dishonest with ourselves, be prideful, and be riddled with self-pity. Serenity will continue to elude us, and eventually we will likely drink again, or worse. Let's take a look at the fifth step.

We admitted to God. This is honest contrition for wrongdoing. This means true sorrow, not self-sorrow (i.e. self-pity). We must be sorry because it hurts or offends our Higher Power, not because it hurts or condemns us. God is not interested in our self-pity. God is interested in our willingness to be repentant, or contrite in the face of life. He is interested in how we spiritually live our lives to our best.

We admitted to ourselves. To our own selves be true! Self-deception has no place in our program of recovery. I am responsible for my behavior and actions in my life because of the choices and decisions I have made. Honesty with oneself requires courage. Many in A.A. verbally admit their wrongs to others, however if someone agrees with them they become defensive and even get resentful. That's not honesty with oneself. That's self-deception through fear. True honesty allows us to accept our wrongdoing.

We admitted to another human being. Here we are granted the choice of person to receive our fifth step. It is wise to find someone who has completed their fifth step, and will be confidential in your sharing. If you decide to share it with someone not in the program of A.A. then at the very least ensure that person understands the A.A. program and what you are trying to accomplish. This is not a confession! Confession may be part of the fifth step for some religious people, but the fifth step itself is not confession. Confession does not discuss the foundation of our wrongdoing or bad behavior. Going to another person makes us practice humility and allows a third party view of ourselves, and behavior. The fifth step, when completed successfully, will cast out fear. Our honesty and thoroughness is important. Do not hold back for fear of impact on one's reputation. Most of us have already achieved a state of tarnished reputation when we arrive in the program of A.A. Reputation is what others think of us. Character is what God knows of us.

After the fifth step we will embark on a journey of character building in the image of God, and along the path of God's will. We will not fear our past. No, instead we will use our past to help

others in their journey. We will know humility in the face of life. The fifth step is the cornerstone in the temple of our spiritual program. Without the temple God has no place to dwell in us. This is why it is so important to our sobriety.