

CLA 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 ourselves, which includes the acquired character defects and their opposite positive traits. 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. We are not interested at this point in how you have gotten better—this Step is all about the bad stuff.

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 CLA 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. This means that we give three distinct deliveries with this Step. Even after we have admitted the exact nature of our wrongs to God and ourselves, 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 can 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 act of putting these wrongs in black and white shows us that they may not be 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 Step Four with the exact nature of our wrongs will help us in making a list of them.

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 -- CLA, hospitals, schools, churches, governments
4. Relationships with people -- men, women, and children.
5. Distressing and humiliating facts -- stealing, lying, hoarding, cluttering, physical harm and sexual acting out.
6. Step 4 Left Column of Evils – specific incidents of wrongdoing will come to mind.

ADMITTING TO GOD – The purpose of this first of 3 deliveries is for us to get on the same page as God about ourselves. We present the evidence before God as proof of our brokenness. God already knows the truth about us. God also wants us to know the truth about ourselves. Our best use to God only comes after we dispel any illusion of our perfection or grandiosity. It is as if we are acting as our own prosecuting attorney, except for the punishment phase. Some of us read our document to an empty chair, after having invited God to sit in it. Some do it in a graveyard, or by a lake. It is tempting to just gloss over this part, but we suggest that you make a big deal over this disclosure to God.

ADMITTING TO OURSELVES – *“This is stupid. Didn’t I just write all this? Didn’t I just read it to God? Why do I have to read it to myself?”* The purpose of this second of 3 deliveries is for our insides to match our outsides. We sit in front of a mirror with our document and read from our inner self to our outer self. This is where we learn to say in our “outside” voice, “I was wrong.” This is where the people around us see a change in

us for the better. We explain to our outer selves just what kind of material we are working with. Our outer selves need to know our limitations.

ADMITTING TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING – This third of 3 deliveries is done last for a reason: We have disclosed twice already, so we have had a little practice. We find someone whom we can trust with our bad stuff. We do NOT find someone who doesn't speak our language, or is in a coma. The person we choose might ask us clarifying questions as we disclose our wrongs. The person we choose might begin the session by disclosing some of his or her wrongs to calm us down, and to assure us that we are not alone. Choose a quiet place where you can spend a long time without interruptions. A beautiful cemetery, the shore of a lake, an abandoned building. Not a restaurant or coffee shop. If this step is delivered electronically, use both audio and video in both directions to convey your emotions and body language, and to visualize a real human being during the process.

NOTE to those in Group Step Study – In the group, please report on your progress in preparing for, and deliveries of this step work. Also share on your emotions during and after the process. The actual contents of the step will only be shared with God, yourself, and one other human being.