

Step 5

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

The guiding principle of this Step is Integrity.

In Step 4, we created a dual inventory. First, we listed our character assets and liabilities. Second, we examined our belongings and other troublesome areas. While actively cluttering, many of us became secretive and isolated. Alone, we carried the heavy burdens of fear, guilt, shame, and regret. There is a way out of *all* the negative aspects of our lives, not just our clutter.

In Step 5, we shine a light on our problems and their sources, reveal our clutter, and finally admit the whole truth to ourselves, another person, and our Higher Power. Taking this risk pays off in insights and productivity.

Choosing honesty over deception takes bravery. Our courage comes from our desire to be healthy, joyous, and free, instead of closeted and overwhelmed.

Reading our written inventories aloud is one way to admit our wrongs to ourselves and to God.

We carefully select a person who will hear and see our Step 4 inventories. We share our inventories with someone we trust to protect our anonymity, usually a Sponsor or Co-Sponsor. We feel reassured knowing this person suffers from our affliction, has understanding and compassion for our shared challenges, and does not shame or judge us.

Alternatively, we may choose to go to Confession or talk with our pastor, rabbi, imam, pandit, or spiritual advisor. When we trust someone to hear our inventory, we can be assured that this person is able to assist us, with God's help. We are not alone. By revealing our secrets, we remove a heavy weight, gain a new perspective, and feel relief.

When necessary, the trusted person compassionately questions the details and completeness of responses. Feedback can be verbal or non-verbal: a smile or frown, a nod, a gesture of recognition, an offered touch or hug.

Feedback can help us discover misdirected behavior. Rather than continuing that behavior, we can correct the wrongs of our past. We discover the origin and nature of our wrongs where clutter is concerned. This can be misplaced blame that results in anger, rebellion, misery, shame, or guilt. We also become aware of the forms they can take: overdrawn bank accounts, dwindling savings; money spent buying items we cannot find, time wasted hunting for missing items, broken closet rods that cannot support all our clothes, warped bookshelves that cannot support all our books, etc.

We are now discovering and accepting many new things about ourselves. We can start decluttering in a more constructive way that can change our lives.

An important part of Step 5 consists of showing our Sponsor and Co-Sponsor our homes, cars, and storage areas, not just our inventory sheets. On occasion, we might ask our Sponsor or Co-Sponsor to be present also while we declutter, especially for difficult releases. We must share our secrets, if we are to recover.

The following questions assist in getting to the core of our shame and guilt:

1. Am I now willing to bring my clutter into the open with another trusted person?
 - a. If not, why not?
 - b. Write about my willingness.
2. Is my relationship with my Higher Power growing to a point that I believe my Higher Power can truly help me overcome my clutter?
 - a. If not, why not?
 - b. Write about my trust in my Higher Power.
3. Am I still fearful of trusting God and another person to hear my inventory and see my clutter?
 - a. If yes, can I willingly pray for that trust?
 - b. If no, can I set up a date and time to share my inventory?
4. Can I forgive myself?
 - a. If not, why not?
 - b. Write about forgiving myself.

When you share your inventory, then you are ready to proceed to Step 6.