

#4-B      S/O P      5

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difficulties at the time of writing are not limitless and we gain power over what we are able to write down on paper. When we have achieved progress and identified a few prominent defects we seek out a person who will understand what we are talking about and tell him or her the exact nature of our wrongs. Your higher power will be with you when you do this and your admissions will help free you from the old ways of fear. Before we take this step we live in fear that if we reveal ourselves as we really are, then we'll be rejected and lose the friendships that have filled our lives. Humans have much more in common with each other than they suppose and we can consciously experience this oneness if we can come out of hiding a little bit. The wonderful thing about N.A. is that it puts us with the only people in the world who can really understand where we are coming from. Admitting to God, ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs is the fifth step we take to preserve and extend our cleanliness. Discussing with another person our basic ideas, our misconceptions will usually reveal themselves.

# STEP 5

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counselor. Some of us have gone to another town and some of us take it with our sponsor or someone else we select near at hand. The important thing here is that we choose someone with whom we can be honest and open; that we hold nothing back. To be certain, as time goes by, we will remember things that we did not include in our original Fourth and Fifth Steps. The point is that we disclose all that we do remember, all that we have written. As we do this, most of us feel our burden lighten. It is crucial that we take this Step with an understanding person. Whoever you select, make certain they know what you are doing and why you are doing it. You will be amazed at how willing most people are to help. It is one of the great benefits of this program that we are able, once again, to let people into our lives as we use the tools of the program to "break down the walls of our own loneliness."

Once you have taken this Step, you are practically certain to feel lightened and refreshed. It is such a relief to be rid of the burden of all those "secrets." We share the load and it becomes immeasurably lighter.

S TEP §

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Then comes one of the greatest experiences you'll ever have; for after you get all down on paper, the good, the bad, the indifferent--you get to take the Fifth Step. With the Fifth Step, much of the burden of the past will be lifted from your shoulders.

Here is the Fifth Step:

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

It seemed ridiculous to some of us to admit the exact nature of our wrongs to God. "God already knows all that stuff" was our rationalization. True. God does already know all that stuff. The benefit for you is that now he hears it from you; now you know it too. For years we've avoided seeing ourselves as we are. We were ashamed of ourselves and we did what we could to hide our shame from God, ourselves and the rest of the people. Now we've got this shameful past trapped on paper and we can sweep it out of our lives by admitting it. We don't want to make the mistake of writing it all down and then shoving it in a drawer somewhere. Remember--that stuff grows in the dark, but dies in the light. So turn those lights on full blast.

We must of course be careful about who we take this Fifth Step with, who we tell the truth about our pasta. Many of us have taken our Fifth Step with a total stranger-- a priest or minister or a

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Step  
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5 STEP WE ADMITTED TO GOD TO (13)  
OURSELVES & ANOTHER HUMAN BEING  
THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS

(d). Then we are often asked: "To whom shall I talk, confess--everyone  
meet, or only a few? And how are they to be selected?"

# How It Works (4) B-5 (74)

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

After taking the fourth step, by taking our personal inventory, we have to deal with what we have found. We have to decide first what are defects are and then what to do with them. - If we choose to keep these defects inside of us it could lead to us using again. People might tell you that you look and sound good but if you don't feel it, your nowhere. You might look good from the outside, as far as your appearance and you might sound real confident and strong when you talk, but if you don't feel good deep down inside your heart, you wont grow. So the fifth step allows us to release some of this frustration hurt and anger.

~~The Bible says if we confess our sins to God he is just and will forgive us.~~ Many of us feel God will turn away from us if we admit our defects to Him. But he already knows them. The purpose of the first part of the step is to relise our wrongs than if we ask God to forgive us and trust in Him we can begin to forgive ourselves.

We also have to trust someone else to be able to grow, feel better, and really like ourselves. We will find that we are not alone when we share are defects with another person. More often fear or pride will hold us back, but only in taking this step are we free to grow. In trying to deal with these defects alone, we may find that it is to much to handle. We will find by admitting to another person that things are not as bad as we sometimes think they are. Sometimes we feel that noone else could ever relate or even begin to understand some of the horrible things we have done, but often we will find that we are not alone. Another person may help us understand that we can change if we really want to. Talking to a recovering addict will give us the courage we need to become a stronger person. Obtaining sobriety is hard work but if we stick it out it will get better

# How It Works,

(4) B-5

Only by taking this step can we set ourselves in the path of true sobriety. It will clean our heads of all the garbage which we have collected in the years of our addiction. It will show us humility and bring us in touch with true honesty.

We must be careful not to exaggerate our defects by letting them get blown all out of proportion. We will start to believe that we are worse than what we really are.

When we first came into the program, we felt a love from the acceptance of others. In taking this step we have to learn to accept ourselves. By learning to accept ourselves we became more a part of the program.

Beware of half-stepping, by holding onto old images, this will hold us back from starting a new life. Maybe we did already take a 5th step but we really didn't get honest and hung onto some things. Then we are doing the same thing we did when we were using, first we felt the hurt and then covered it up with drugs. By half stepping we run the risk of repeating our old pattern and getting high again.

A lot of times we try to look good in front of other people, but deep down inside we are really afraid of who we are and where we came from. We try to hold onto these images in order to make people believe that we are something other than ourselves. In suppressing our true feeling and holding onto these false images it will stop us in getting in touch with true reality. People who have held back onto these old ways find that only after letting go can we find true serenity.

Once we begin and are willing to forgive ourselves we can also begin to forgive others and begin to let go of all resentments in order that we may receive inner peace.

In order to grow we must remember that we are the most important person to ourselves and not worry about the opinion of other people. To be able to start a new and true beginning in life we must humble ourselves and become honest.

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How often, when we are presenting a shell of pretense and hypocrisy to the world, we come to feel that people in general are dull, uninteresting, and uninterested. Life itself, our very existence and experience of self, ceases to be meaningful, or even tolerable. How can others interact authentically, validly, meaningfully with us when we are giving them only limited and perhaps systematically distorted data? It is a never-ending delight to see how warmly, intelligently, and helpfully people respond to a previously inauthentic, "neurotic" person when he begins to "come out of his shell." Now others know what his problem is and can become specifically helpful. As long as we let others know only what our "symptoms" are, all they can do in return is "symptom therapy." But when they hear what we have done, and are perhaps still doing, to cause and deserve our symptoms, others--even the most ordinary others--can give us real support and help.

So, if we want basic, enduring change in our lives, let's stop complaining about how much we hurt and try admitting who we are.

Not long ago a small group of people were meeting in my home; and in the course of one man's account of his life, he related an incident about which he felt deep guilt and shame. At this point one or two newcomers to the group tried to reassure this man, with such comments as: "Oh, that wasn't so bad. Lots of people have done worse things than that. Forget it!" The man rightly refused to take comfort from these well-intentioned but idle reassurances. He said that he had been saying much the same sort of thing to himself for years, and it hadn't helped. Now he wished to speak candidly, take full responsibility for his life, and have the transforming power that can come in no other way.

Our earlier point was: don't complain, confess. But, as we now see, there are two ways of confessing: one can confess others' sins, or one's own. Only the latter procedure is likely to be truly helpful. If one is honestly self-critical, the chances are that others will respond with very similar behavior. Paradoxically, the best way to "change" other persons is to change oneself.

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If one talks about one's troubles in the sense of merely complaining about how bad one feels, then others are indeed likely to get bored and withdraw. Why shouldn't they? We're not giving them any information about the real source of our difficulties; and there isn't much they can do to help us, in a basic or lasting way. They may try reassurance, suggest a "drink" (or some more modern type of tranquilizer), or recommend a "good psychiatrist." None of these alternatives is likely to be permanently effective, so our friends, understandably, get discouraged and disappear--physically if they can or, if this isn't possible, they simply stop "hearing" us. Thus it is easy to blame others if nothing comes of our "talking" to them. Can it be that the fault is more nearly ours, in that we haven't talked about the right things, in the right way?

It has been my consistent observation that if, instead of complaining, one tries confessing, others do not get impatient, and genuinely useful things start happening. When we stop talking about how much we hurt and get down to the (good and sufficient) reasons for our discomfort, the effect is

We can go on forever about how bad we feel, but even the wickedest of us can, if we choose, be fairly concise about how bad we have been.

The truth is out, and other's have something to "work on"--and so do we! Although there will be a time of shame and sorrow, peace and strength will ultimately follow, if, after confession, we act as we should.

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