



## LESSON SIX

### STEP FIVE

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

Recovery is often described as a program of ego reduction. Step Five begins that process. It is a Step that disciplines the ego. We cannot live alone with the ghosts of yesterday. Our fear and shame try to dissuade us from doing this. Our secrets hold serious danger to any lasting recovery. Our secrets are barriers that separate us from all other human beings. These walls are the ultimate source of loneliness.

Step Five frees us from that terrible sense of isolation. It is the beginning of a new kinship with our Higher Power and people. This Step takes away the heavy burden of guilt we have always lived with. It gives us an opportunity for a healthy life, a life lived with humility. We gain a sense of our true selves, and the phony self is put to rest.

We are careful of overdramatizing or exaggerating our defects. Our opinions of ourselves might not be true. We have lived a lie so long we have often come to believe it ourselves. We need an objective source to find reality.

We need to take some consideration in choosing the right person with whom to take this Step, since we will share facts that everyone should not hear. Some suggestions follow.

1. This person should be experienced and know what AA is all about. If this person is not in AA, he or she should be briefed as to the nature of what you are doing. You should choose someone who will not pass judgment.

2. This person should be trustworthy not to repeat anything you might tell him or her. You should feel comfortable in this confidence.
3. He or she should be a person you can talk to freely and openly.
4. If in AA, this person should have long-term sobriety. You don't want to worry about this person relapsing.
5. This person should be someone you feel has had similar experiences and can give validation.

### **KEY IDEA 1**

Step Five is a preparatory Step to the restitution that we expect to make as we carry out the provisions of Step Nine, where amends are necessary and we make them.

#### **HARDCOVER**

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#### **PAPERBACK**

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#### **SUGGESTION FOR SELF-STUDY OR GROUP DISCUSSION**

To achieve serenity, we must rid ourselves of the guilt from our past unacceptable behavior. The time we spend right now feeling guilty only uses time that we could spend thanking our Higher Power for the moment we are living now. Gratitude will always make mincemeat out of guilt.

### **KEY IDEA 2**

The humility this Step brings us is necessary to our future welfare.

#### **HARDCOVER**

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**SUGGESTION FOR SELF-STUDY OR GROUP DISCUSSION**

To drink the way we did, we could not allow anyone to tell us anything. Deep down we knew they would point out our alcoholism. We thought we were in control and safe in our secret.

**KEY IDEA 3**

We are unconsciously dominated by our old thoughts.

**HARDCOVER**

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**SUGGESTION FOR SELF-STUDY OR GROUP DISCUSSION**

Do the “old tapes of escape”—which are always ready to play—ever leave us?

**KEY IDEA 4**

For this reason, a clergy member, psychiatrist, counselor, or doctor is our best [resource].

**HARDCOVER**

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**SUGGESTION FOR SELF-STUDY OR GROUP DISCUSSION**

It is critical that the recipient understands what the Fifth Step is all about. We are not asking for forgiveness here. We are simply acknowledging and accepting our past.



**KEY IDEA 5**

If in doubt about when to take Step Five—take it immediately.

**HARDCOVER**

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**SUGGESTION FOR SELF-STUDY OR GROUP DISCUSSION**

There is no wrong way to do this Step. All we have to do is ask ourselves,  
*Is there anything I am deliberately concealing?*

**KEY IDEA 6**

The Step is a direct challenge to our sincerity.

**HARDCOVER**

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**SUGGESTION FOR SELF-STUDY OR GROUP DISCUSSION**

This Step is proof of how far we are willing to go to achieve contented sobriety.

**KEY IDEA 7**

Is our work solid so far?

**HARDCOVER**

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**SUGGESTION FOR SELF-STUDY OR GROUP DISCUSSION**

The mutual support felt within the group is important. What are each member's feelings thus far? Does anyone feel that some topic has not been covered?

