

Reflections on Step 5

Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

“The fifth step is the second of the action steps, which guide us in taking tangible actions toward recovery. As this step tells us, ‘Admitting who we really are to another person is the only way to get a true picture of ourselves.’ My life before EA was littered with immature reactions to life, poor decisions and broken relationships. For me, maybe more than any other step in the program, step 5 provided the chance to begin ‘growing up’ spiritually. It offered the structure I needed to share my burdens with someone else and my Higher Power so I could lighten the load of my past and face the future with hope.” — Colleen C., *EAI Secretary*

“The spiritual principle embodied in step 5 is integrity. According to Google, integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness. I think this trait or quality is developed over time of working the 5th Step and the other steps, though the attribute I needed for the 5th step was trust. Like you have to be honest to come to the admission of step one. Hope is required for step 2. We acquire faith from the third step. We conjure up courage for step four. And now at step 5, I had to trust a fallible human being. Step 5 says, “Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.” The first 2 entities were a breeze because I believed God knew everything already anyway and I was admitting the things to myself as I wrote them down, but this human being thing was the thing of all the steps that was the most terrifying, in fact of anything else in the entire program for me. I stepped out on faith and carefully chose one person to trust. This was a person I watched in my face to face meetings for a while. I was looking for someone I didn't hear gossiping because I knew if she gossiped, that she would share my information too. It feels awesome to be on the other side of step 5! They call it the sunny side. Once I did my step 5, I could listen and be a witness to another person's 5th step. In fact, this was the incentive I needed to complete my 5th step. All of my life, I always wanted to help people. I can't think of many other ways to be of this much service. It's an honor to be confided in. I've been privileged to bear witness to many 5th steps over the years. An honor I don't take lightly. People have shared with me things that they hadn't shared with anyone. And some of these people are in their 50's, 60's, and even 70's. New people, keep coming back! If I can do it, anyone can.”

— Derita P., *EAI Trustee*

“It's easier to point out what other people are doing wrong than it is to admit what I am doing wrong. This is why step 5 is so important.

While I frequently, internally think about the nature of my wrongs, and I believe this to be helpful in making better decisions in the future, admitting my wrongs to God and to another human does something more: it humbles me. Only when I am experiencing humbleness can I truly appreciate how I have wronged others, without my ego trying to stand up for me.

Understanding with real depth the nature of my wrongs is the only path to conducting myself with better emotional integrity as I move forward.” ­— Paul N., *EAI Treasurer*