

## STEP FIVE

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

It was at Step Five that we were offered the chance to have shame and guilt transformed into humility.

In Step One we admitted our powerlessness. In Step Two we became willing to acknowledge that our self-will was out of control. With Step Three we turned our will over to God's care. Step Four guided us to put our predicament on paper. Step Five gave us the opportunity to make another leap of faith. We would now expose our deepest secrets to God, to ourselves, and to another person.

### ***Admitted to God, to Ourselves, and to Another.***

Most of us spent a lifetime fearing and often defending ourselves against exposure. "If-you-really-knew-me-you-wouldn't-like-me," could have been our collective chorus of shame. Now, in this step, we were being asked to relinquish our protective shields.

Many of us became resistant and this resistance took diverse forms. There was passivity, "I'll do it someday." Others were enraged, "My life is nobody's business but mine!" Many were fearful, "This organization is obviously a cult." Some of us believed we were overworked and tired, "Wasn't that inventory I did enough?!"

At the suggestion of CoDA friends who had already worked these Steps, we decided to risk this exposure we feared in the safest possible way, with our Higher Power. By

admitting first to God, we were reminding ourselves that the primary element in our recovery was spiritual.

Without realizing it, most of us had lived with an undercurrent of constant tension that had sapped our energy and our joy. As we revealed to ourselves, that which we had hidden for so long, we began to experience the feelings we had long suppressed. It was uncomfortable, but not unmanageable. Some of us were surprised at the shame we experienced by just admitting these wrongs to ourselves. Encouraged by other CoDA members, we stuck with this section of Step Five and eventually, the pressing weight of what we had locked inside began to lift. This self-admission had become a vehicle for self-acceptance.

Most of us chose to share our Fourth Steps with a trustworthy and understanding CoDA member, someone who had been in the program long enough to have worked most if not all of the Twelve Steps. It was also important to give this inventory away to someone who was, in our opinion, living the program.

There were others who chose a listener who was a therapist, counselor, or member of the clergy, as long as they possessed knowledge of the Twelve Step process and the purpose of the Fifth Step.

It was also recommended that we avoid choosing a family member, co-worker, or the focus of our obsession.

We set aside sufficient time with our listener and chose what we felt was a safe place.

Before we took this step, we asked for guidance from our Higher Power and expressed our willingness to be open and honest.

Having completed this Step, we shared our feelings about having taken it, particularly the areas of most discomfort. Many of us felt great relief. Others wondered when all our woes would be magically lifted. Some of us felt nothing and were disappointed.

Anxious for change, many of us had to be cautioned that the purpose of this step was only to admit our shortcomings. Further action would come later. We were reminded that this was a process. It worked no matter how we felt. The power of truthfulness would be healing in and of itself.

*In this moment, I will acknowledge myself for doing what was most difficult for me. I will rest in the accepting presence of my Higher Power. I know I have deepened my commitment to the journey of recovery by opening my Self and my heart to a fellow human being.*

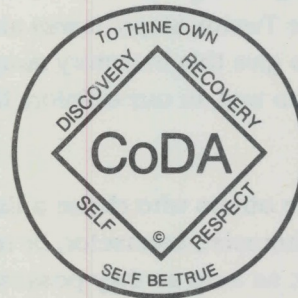
Having completed the work suggested in Step Five we felt ready to continue on to Step Six.

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

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*God,*

*Grant me the Serenity to accept  
things I cannot change, Courage to  
change things I can and the  
Wisdom to know the difference.*



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## CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS

### STEP 5

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