

## **STEP FIVE**

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

In making the Fourth Step inventory, we put into an organized form all the chaos, confusion, and trouble of our past. We made an extensive review of our life. Now what?

Step Five was getting rid of the old stuff. It was the biggest spring housecleaning of our life, and its aim was to get rid of all the cobwebs, dust balls and other junk and debris that accumulated during the long winter of our addiction. It was getting into position to replace the old garbage with positive new thoughts and ways. It was getting free -- getting free of what had not worked, getting free of what had trapped us in the deathly grips of nicotine for so long. It was taking out the trash.

The success of cleaning out the old garbage in Step Five depended on having dug it out and put it in piles in Step Four. It was not enough, however, just to have written the inventory. Some of our old stuff was on the list, but buried -- swept under the carpet. We knew it was there, but we hoped that nobody else would find it. Nonetheless, if we really wanted to clean house, the old dirt could not stay hidden under the rug.

Thus the objective of Step Five was to admit what we had found. We may even have found that we had wrongly denied or had not acknowledged certain good qualities about ourselves. We made a private admission to ourselves. To make certain that we were not cheating, we also admitted everything to our Higher Power. It mattered not that a wiser God already knew. It was our act of admission and humility that mattered.

Step Five also required us to share our inventory with another human being. For many of us, this was even more frightening than the admission to our Higher Power. Admitting all of the details of our past torments to another person was so concrete, so real, and so humbling. It required swallowing our pride.

Humbleness was the core of Step Five. Becoming humble was what it was all about. The Fifth Step was about getting conscious of our shortcomings. It was about becoming modest and not proud or arrogant. It was about not pretending and not running and hiding anymore. It was about getting real and becoming very human.

The Fifth Step involved sharing intimate personal details with a trusted person and getting humble in the process. We shrank down to our core and to who we really were. Through sharing our deepest secrets with another person, we opened ourselves up. In that way, we made it possible to be healed from our addiction to nicotine.

Becoming honest was a way to get free to be who we were. We stripped naked and stood in all our bare glory without any of the disguises that had hidden us when we were nicotine addicts. When we admitted to ourselves, to our Higher Power and to another human being who we were, we became free of our past sufferings and free to love ourselves and to stop trying to destroy ourselves.

We were very careful in selecting the other person with whom we chose to open ourselves up during the Fifth Step. The object of the experience was candor and honesty, trust, and openness. The other person had to be someone who would allow us to feel as absolutely free and open as possible. For some of us, it was our sponsor or another person from Nicotine Anonymous. For others it was clergy, a therapist, or a friend. Whomever we selected, it was someone we thought would let us be totally honest and open.

As we candidly shared our secrets, we discovered that we were not as terrible as we thought. Somehow in the process of describing "the worst thing we've ever done," the terribleness of it all was lessened. The most terrible things really were not so awful after all.

We also discovered that all of our fears, troubles and supposed shortcomings were not unique. In the process of opening ourselves up, our confidants frequently shared with us many of the same things that we were telling them. We discovered that our troubles and tribulations were just part of the human condition. We were not awful. We were humbled to realize that we were normal -- and just very human.

Step Five. Cleaning up our lives. Gratefully letting go of the past to get ready for the present. We can have a new spiritual awareness of our membership in the human race and let that be quite all right.

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