

Step Five: Admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs

In following the Big Book's action plan for step four, we made an inventory of ourselves. In three columns, we listed:

1. The names of the people and institutions that we feel have wronged us
2. Why exactly you're resentful of that person
3. The self-centered ego-state from which your resentment grew



Now in step 5 we must reveal our lies to another.

Until You Fully Complete Step Five, You Risk Returning to an Alcoholic Life of Insanity

The fifth step is a powerful step. It is one thing to admit our own wrong-doings to ourselves, but it is life changing to fully reveal those wrong in all of their tangled depth to another person. Be prepared. The person you reveal your wrongs to will see through your justifications if you haven't been honest with yourself in step four.

Revealing your flaws to someone whose reactions you have no control over, is part of the process of the fifth step. One of the main goals of the fifth step – and throughout all of the twelve steps – is to learn that you cannot control your environment; you can only control how you react to it.

Mark's Personal Experience with the Fifth Step

"Over time I have come to understand that the process of writing the three inventories revealed to me that a selfish, self centered life generates a mind and body that is full of resentments and fears. My capacity to 'blame' the world and the people around me for my problems and take no responsibility for my life was in full gear. It is the process of writing the fourth step and then sitting down with a close mouthed, understanding friend and telling them what I have written that I begin to rid myself of those fears and resentments."

Are You Ready to Come Clean?

It's difficult to admit to yourself, let alone another, about all of your darkest fears and justifications for resentment. It's humbling. You'll feel weak at first but then will feel overcome with a sense of empowerment. When you come clean with your wrong-doings, it is as if a lifetime of debilitating weight has instantly been lifted from you. There is no turning back after step five. This is the moment when you must decide if you will kill yourself and your innermost dreams by returning to a life-long obsession with alcohol, or if you will break free and live a life full of possibility. What will you do?