

District 41 Messenger

SPRING – 2019

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The 12 Steps ...STEP FIVE

Editor Note: This series is focusing on the The Twelve Steps of our Fellowship ...One Step at a Time. This month we explore Step FIVE.

**“Admitted to God, to ourselves,
and to another human being
the EXACT nature of our wrongs”**



☞ Step Five is essential for the fundamental change of personality required to remain sober.
“When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time.” (BB 73-75)

☞ We realize we have to quit the deadly business of living alone with our conflicts. We are wrong to hide our positive attributes beneath a blanket of shame and guilt. We have to empty ourselves of our darkest secrets. We find things we could live with in the past ...which we cannot live with any longer.

☞ Our Fifth Step is not simply a reading of our written inventory. It is a discussion with someone who will listen ...someone with wisdom and humility ...and someone who can contribute to the discussion from his or her experience with the 12 steps – and of Life. We discuss our inventory with this person, armed with personal insights about ourselves we discovered during the process of Step Four.

☞ Our Fifth Step brings us out of isolation and we are taught the value of “talking it over” with a valued partner. *“Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up we ask God at once to remove them. We discuss them with someone immediately.” BB 84* We are no longer afraid to face our weaknesses and speak of them out loud.

☞ We must have a relationship with other people, but most of all we must interact with our Higher Power. We must be honest with our God and then turn to another person. With willingness, this process becomes routine. We trust in our Higher Power and deepen our relationships with others. It is here in the Fifth Step where we get our first experience of a new freedom and happiness. The well chosen person who is a part this healing process helps us become aware of our own self-delusions, destructive thoughts and behaviors.

(Continued on next page)

Let it hurt. Let it heal. And let it go.

@iHearts143Quotes #INSTAGRAM

**My story is filled
with broken pieces,
terrible choices,
and ugly truths.
It's also filled with
a major comeback,
peace in my soul and
a grace that saved my life.**

I just saved a bunch of money

By switching to recovery
Steps to recovery

The Beginning of Spiritual Housecleaning

(Continued from first page)

▣ Freedom takes work. Freedom takes responsibility. When we can finally say “this is my problem” we take responsibility for our actions. When we don’t do the daily things we need to live happy and free, when we don’t face life and deal with it on our feet, when we don’t admit our faults, then we give up the precious freedom available to all who are “willing to go to any length.”

▣ We accept our history for exactly what it is. We consciously admit our wrongs. There is a great amount of nobility and humility to the process of Steps Four and Five. It is only when I speak, and am heard by understanding and empathetic ears, that true relief begins. Our failings are common. Our shame is no longer necessary. We are no longer alone.

▣ Sharing at the group level, or privately, is one of the most important ways we can return balance to our life. Clearing up those things we have swept under the rug is emotionally painful and difficult. We do it because we see the benefit in the lives of those who have traveled before us ...and we see the stupidity of hiding in our caves of remorse, guilt and regret.

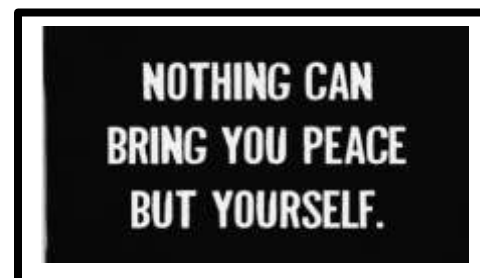
▣ Step Five puts the first crack in our shell. We begin to practice a healthy way of living and fit ourselves into a program of life which really works. We no longer wish to entertain destructive thoughts and actions. Speaking of our demons to God, to Ourselves, and to another Human Being changes everything. We find more connection and more acceptance.

▣ We are sometimes afraid of Step Five because we think if we tug on that little string of Honesty, our whole lives will unravel. And such a thought is exactly the point. Unravel the memories of outrageous and dangerous behavior. Expose ourselves in an intimate and spiritual way. We must come to understand ourselves, our motivations, and destructive impulses. Our layers of self-deception are multiple and we must bring them to light piece by piece. And we can be assured the scattered pieces of our puzzle will be put back together ... in the right order ...by the Grace of God and the Fellowship of AA.

▣ The real test of Step Five – If we sincerely desire to change our ways, God will give us the strength and courage we require to develop our capacity to change our lives. We must make certain our perception of The Truth has not been distorted by our pride and ego. We speak to another because we do not have a good record with honesty. A second opinion is necessary because we have often conned ourselves with a distorted view of reality. We must improve on the truth we have found to ensure our Fifth Step is one of quality. We focus on taking a better look at things,

▣ Consider treating ourselves with the same compassion and understanding as we have been trying to treat others. We are beginning the process of restoring our character by admitting what is wrong with us. It is a process of restoration. We all want, more than anything, to believe in ourselves again. We were all doing the best we knew how, with the awareness we had at the time. Now we know more. We are willing to feel clean again. It is only when we accept responsibility for ourselves that our faulty behavior patterns can be broken. Denial must be rendered useless.

The only way we can be certain our Map of Reality is valid
Is to expose it to the challenge of someone else.



Admitted to God ...

Before we meet with whomever is to hear our story, it is helpful to take some time at a place where we feel God strongly, like a church or synagogue, a place in nature, or even a quiet place in our own home. Share our inventory with God first. We may be given the Grace to find something we did not understand previously. We have a conversation with God, as we understand him, in our own personal way. Here is a story which may help us begin the process of Step Five.

"A wise man used to go into a certain part of the forest to meditate. There he would light a fire, and say a special prayer, and God would make all well.

Many years after his death, his disciple went into the forest too. He had forgotten the ritual of lighting the fire, but he recited the special prayer, and God made all well.

A long time after, his disciple repeated the practice. He had forgotten the fire, and forgotten the prayer, but he was in the right part of the forest, and God made all well.

And many years afterwards, that third man's disciple sat at home and said: 'God, I have forgotten the fire ritual, I have forgotten the prayer, and I do not even know where to go in the forest. All I can do is tell you my story.'

And God made all well, because God loves stories."

(Traditional Jewish, modified)

Step Four is the key which opens the door to a moment-by-moment relationship with our Higher Power. After our honest self-appraisal in Step Four, we realize our life as a practicing alcoholic was governed by fear. Knowing this fact enables us to tell our story openly and honestly to God and another person in Step Five. And this lays the foundation for a routine relationship with our Higher Power in Steps Ten and Eleven.



As Bill Sees It...

Step Five is not a confession or discussion. Our wrongs are not the focus...the EXACT NATURE of our wrongs is important. Where did our resentments, fear and harms to others originate? What is it inside of me that caused the resentments and fears? To God...we accept our history for exactly what it is. To ourselves ...we consciously admit our wrongs and develop the desire and the strength to release them to another human being. We reveal ourselves honestly and without hesitation.

We can no longer pretend.

*Frightened
Self-Seeking
Selfish
Dishonest
Inconsiderate
What Was
Behind this way
Of Acting ?*

GSR Meetings

Monthly GSR Meeting is held on the third Thursday of every month (except July) at 7 pm in Elmhurst Presbyterian Church 367 Spring Rd at St. Charles Rd

56th Anniversary

2,912

Consecutive Meetings

Considered one of the oldest meetings in DuPage County, the Open Speaker Meeting at Elmhurst Presbyterian Church, 367 Spring Road in Elmhurst is hosting a One Night Only Commemoration on Tuesday, April 16, 2019 at 8 PM.

Join Us for Refreshments, Speaker, and Reminiscing.

**LIFE IS NOT ABOUT
WHO YOU ONCE WERE,
IT IS ABOUT WHO YOU
ARE RIGHT NOW,
AND THE PERSON YOU
HAVE THE POTENTIAL
TO BE.**

We Improve On the Truth

The Back Page

AA's twelve step program is built on a foundation of spiritual principles, including surrender, willingness, courage, trust and honesty. Step Five strengthens this foundation and reaffirms your commitment to recovery.

Fear is a natural reaction to confession. Although we might want to recover desperately, confronting the nature of our wrongs and admitting long-held secrets to God and to another human being may be terrifying. If we allow these feelings to stop our progress at Step Five, we stop moving forward, and the disease of alcohol addiction will take over once more.

Step Four has prepared us for Step Five, and by finding the courage to overcome that fear of rejection or shame we experience honesty on a deeper level than in our first step of admission and we break the pattern of denial which plagues us who suffer with alcoholism and all that comes with it.

In the Third Step we ask a power greater than ourselves for honesty, courage and willingness to work on each step of our recovery. Our admission of exact wrongs in the fifth step is part of the spiritual awakening that is the basis of AA's Twelve Steps. Our willingness to approach our Higher Power honestly is critical to our recovery. Many alcoholics feel unworthy of a relationship with God. This revelation to Him enables us to draw closer to God and to experience the love and acceptance He offers. Building a positive relationship with our Higher Power also carries into our relationships with others...and this is essential to our recovery.

Part of our journey is building our self-esteem so we begin to realize what we have to share is worth listening to, and that we are worthy of forgiveness and respect. A sponsor will help us maintain perspective as to the exact nature of our wrongs and will not allow us to slip into denial by blaming others for what we have shared. This vital step helps to remove our egotism and minimize fear. Successful completion of Step Five marks a return to sanity, and a much clearer recognition of who and what we are.

After completing this step we are able to look the world in the eye, let our fears fall away, and feel at perfect peace and ease. We find ourselves "On the Broad Highway, hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe."

District 41 Messenger is published quarterly by District 41 of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is intended as a service letter to inform district members of service opportunities, events, and experiences relevant to carrying the AA message, in and through service. Opinions expressed herein are those of the contributors and do not necessarily express or reflect the thinking of Alcoholics Anonymous, District 41, or the editor. This newsletter is a confidential document. Please do not take it to jails, treatment centers, etc.

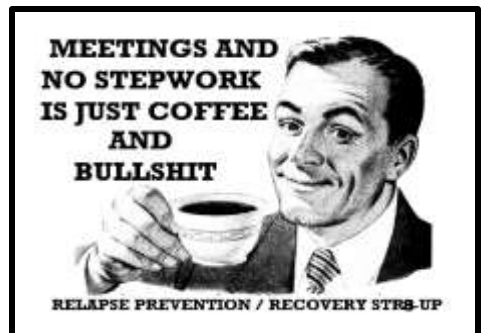
Editor's Note: The words of guidance in this newsletter are taken from years of scribbling in notebooks after listening to meeting comments and reading books. I don't often remember exactly where comments come from, and every paragraph has a little from one place and a little from another to promote fluidity. BUT, I can make a list of some references from my book shelf. "Shift Happens" by Robert Holden, Ph.D. "Drop the Rock" by Bill P. and Todd W. "Carry this Message" by Joe McQ. "The Steps We Took" by Joe McQ "Understanding the 12 Steps" by Terrence Gorski. "Emotional Resilience" by David Viscott, Ph.d "The Spirituality of Imperfection" Kertz & Ketcham, Joe & Charles Big Book Studies and The Twelve & Twelve and The Big Book along with numerous on-line AA sites.

Inside vs. Outside

A practicing alcoholic is trying to live two lives.

"The inconsistency is made worse by the things he does on his sprees. Coming to his senses, he is revolted at certain episodes he vaguely remembers. These memories are a nightmare. He trembles to think someone might have observed him. As far as he can, he pushes these memories far inside of himself. He hopes they will never see the light of day. He is under constant fear and tension which makes for more drinking." (BB73)

An alcoholic is very much an actor with a stage character. He wants a better reputation than he deserves.



(Editor Note) Information on upcoming workshops, reports, contacts, and other information can be found on our D41 website. It is the responsibility of GSRs (Group Service Representatives) to provide flyers and information to their groups. If you do not have a GSR for your group please choose your representative so they may attend the monthly meetings on the Third Thursday of every month (except July).

