

HOPE FOR RECOVERY

Step 5
Linda Larson Schlitz

I John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (New King James Bible)

James 5:16 "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. A prayer of a righteous person, when it is brought about, can accomplish much." (New American Standard Bible)

Step 4 was challenging I am sure! Having to think about and writing down the things that you have done and left undone was hard but I hope you also made a really long list of the things that you have done that were a blessing to others as well as the great qualities you have.

Step 5 is about unloading all the things that you put on the list in step 4. Here are a few things to be aware of before you do this

1) The first part of this step is admitting to God the exact nature of your wrongs. I suggest that if you do not have a journal yet that you start one that you can continue to use to keep your conversations with God in, like I did with my meditation book. Looking back at what God speaks to you is a real encouragement. Perhaps it is only a word or two but think of a time when you felt you heard God speak to you or give you direction.I

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2) You decide how you want to structure this conversation but have your 4th step inventory with you. Some people like to use an empty chair to imagine Jesus sitting there talking with you. If that works for you then use that. There will be a time in another step where you begin to make amends for these things to the people you may have harmed. How does it feel to think of telling God first about the errors you have made.

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3) Right now is the time for you to admit that you messed up so let God know why you are troubled by what has happened. In other words. Practice I John 1:9… confess the exact nature of your wrongs (sins.) And then get a pen or your computer and write down what you hear God saying to you after you have finished. Listen for His voice. If He was sitting there what do you think He would be saying to you. Listen. He will tell you. List your feelings about starting this part of the process

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4) After you have had your conversation with God you need to talk to yourself. You have already said it all to God, now you have to look yourself in the mirror, take responsibility and then forgive yourself. If you don't take that extra step of looking yourself honestly and admit that you are no longer want to be that person and you are willing to change that you may stay stuck in guilt and shame. After you are done you need to decide. Will you forgive yourself? If you choose to forgive yourself it will be much easier to confess it all to another person.

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5) Who are people that you feel safe with that you could share your 4th step with? Why do you feel safe with them? If you do not have anyone please contact me.

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6) Who are people that you feel safe with that you could share your 4th step with? Why do you feel safe with them? If you do not have anyone please contact me.

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7) This will take time so when will you block off at least an hour or two to share your 5th Step with someone? Don't procrastinate. Set this up as soon as possible. Put down times that may work for you or them. I am more that willing to do the 5th step with you. You can choose whoever you feel comfortable with.

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8) Where would be a place you would feel comfortable going through this? It may be emotional. It could be done virtually if it's not possible to do it in person and it also can be done in more than one session if needed. Offer options to the person you are going to ask to do this.

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9) Do you have any hesitations about this next part of the process? If so what are they? Why?

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Once this step is done most people feel a real sense of freedom and relief Many of us have been carrying around these bad thoughts, feelings and memories for a very long time. It is good to finally get them out. As you confess each one of these things visualize releasing it and imagine God catching it and dissolving it in His loving arms. He is faithful to forgive you and cleanse you from everything you have done wrong if you ask Him. What joy!!

Here is a song by 10th Avenue North that I always like to listen to when I am struggling with beating myself up. YOU ARE MORE THAN THE CHOICES THAT YOU MADE!

Francesca behind the song If We're Honest