

WLCNA#9, FIRST DRAFT; JAMISON, PENNSYLVANIA; NOVEMBER 11, 1983

STEP SIX: "We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

We have put ourselves down on paper. We have shared ourselves with God and another. We have admitted to ourselves the nature of our wrongs. We see ourselves as we really are. We see ourselves as never before. We are relieved to know that we are human. We are amazed that we do have positive traits in our personality, but we want to be rid of our defects. We want to be free of these personality traits that are standing in our way of recovery.

We hear some of the people in the program say "We are not ready to give everything up yet." We say to them to go back and take a good look at the basic surrenders in the 1st and 3rd steps and see if the sincere surrender is there and if not to go back and strengthen them before even looking at this step. This is where an experienced sponsor is very important, because they know by now by taking us through the first five steps our readiness and willingness for step six. They know by a fearless and thorough inventory we are no longer worried how to battle our defects but in turn just let them go.

We are now more aware of who we are, possibly more so than at any other time in our lives. But what are we to do with this knowledge of our character defects? Our awareness is so acute that we can't possibly live with it. We need to have these defects removed.

Awareness implies change and action. When we are aware of something, we have found that we have to act. We feel a need to get rid of our defects of character because we don't want to go back to how we have been feeling before. Having had a taste of freedom, we are ready to become willing.

We have acquired an awareness of ourselves as a result of our 4th and 5th steps that has built our self-esteem and made us uncomfortably aware of where we have been wrong. The longer we have waited to approach step six, the more uncomfortable we have probably become. We have discovered we are just human beings, not God, and as such are not perfect.

God will remove our defects of character if we become entirely ready. Many of us felt that we were our character defects. We feared that if we gave them up, there would be no person left afterward. The remedy for fear is faith.

This fear will be taken from us by our Higher Power. All we need to do is to ask and this faith will see us through this step.

We became entirely ready when we were aware of how much these defects were making our lives unmanageable or miserable.

We become ready to have these defects removed so that we may feel more comfortable with ourselves, closer to God, and more a part of the world in which we live.

We have come to believe that God does have a plan for us, but God will not force it upon us unless we choose it for ourselves. The sixth step suggests the attitude for us to take toward our defects of character: that we be entirely ready to have them removed. What could be more simple? Only an addict could object to the removal of character traits that have "caused pain and suffering all of our lives."

As addicts it is very important that we surrender completely to step six and become entirely ready to have God remove ALL those defects of character.

Entirely ready to have defects removed is more than thinking about it or intending. It is actively preparing or demonstrating the desire for their removal. We became entirely ready because we found we had

to be completely willing for this step to work. Half-hearted reasoning would not work for us. Entirely ready suggests becoming totally willing.

Some of us could see that if we did not become willing, we would not grow spiritually. Willingness to try is one foundation of our recovery. Willingness is the spiritual principle of step six.

How do we become willing? Some of us have become entirely willing when we have hurt bad enough. But we do not have to hurt to become willing. We have a choice today. We can simply pray for the willingness we need.

For some of us it is our nature to hold to, and nurture our defects. This is a practice that will kill addicts. However, a lot of us still continue this mask of self-denial. Why, if we have truly turned our will and our lives over to the care of God, do we even question letting go our defects? After all, from the 3rd step on, they are in God's care. Nevertheless, we still tend to hold on to our favorite ones. Here is where we miss the point. The defects are not in our possession. It is not up to us which, or how many are removed. It is up to God in his time, not ours!

Step six does not say, "We were entirely ready to work very hard to remove our own defects of character." Step six deepens our surrender to a Higher Power. It suggests that we are not powerful enough to remove our own defects of character. If we were, there would be no need for this step. Why should we ask God to do something that we can do ourselves? We cannot do it ourselves. Alone, we are powerless over our own defects of character. We need the help of a Higher Power.

This realization was a long time in coming for many of us. Many of us have skipped over this step, or missed its full significance. We tried and tried and tried to fix ourselves, to apply willpower to our addictive personalities to combat obsessions with people, places and things.

After experiencing complete emotional defeat, frequently more painful than anything we ever experienced in our addiction, we became willing to turn to our Higher Power for help.

We need to remember that GOD removes our defects of character, we cannot. We could not stop using on our own. Our will did not work then, and will not work now.

We may turn step six into a question to help us realize its implications. We became entirely ready to have WHO remove these defects of character? The answer of course is God. We have admitted our powerlessness and inability to manage our own lives. We cannot remove our own defects of character. How many time have we tried to change our own loneliness and fear? How often has it worked? Just as we failed to solve our own drug problem, we failed to remove our own defects.

The fact that we need to have ALL of our defects removed speaks for itself. We cannot pick and choose which defects we want to be rid of when we finish our 5th step. We know our positives and negative traits (good and bad). We want to keep the positive ones, to build upon. We want to be rid of the negatives, the defects. We know what our defects are, the parts of our personalities that make our lives miserable.

We found we must become ready to have God remove all our defects of character. They are what block our path to freedom and understanding we are looking for.

Until we let go of ALL of our defects, we will not experience the full freedom from self that this step offers us.

We all have character defects; areas of our lives where we could stand some changes.

Anything taken to an extreme is a defect of character.

We have been so busy playing games with our character defects that we have begun to confuse them with reality. All we know is playing games. We are afraid to let go of these games. We need faith in a Higher Power to carry us through this difficult transition. The change we are working on cannot happen all at once. But we must be willing to start the process.

Step six tells us that God can remove our defects of character, while step seven permits us to have God remove our shortcomings. This leaves us with a new peace and serenity as restoration of spiritual health begins.

We are starting to enjoy freedom in our new way of life. If we return to our former isolation, we are little better off than before. To continue to work the steps is the only means for growth in our recovery.

When we are ready to have GOD remove all our defects of character we must quickly move on to step seven, where we can experience more freedom from our old self.



MID-SOUTH REGIONAL SERVICE COMMITTEE
OF
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

POST OFFICE BOX 41323 • MEMPHIS, TN 38104

ARRIVALS ON THE DRUG FIEND-SCENE.

Eddie, from Pensacola, Florida Flying 10:30 Thurs. morning

Randy McGraw and Mona Parr, Indiana Thanksgiving Day

Hank and Bryant from Atlanta, Georgia Tuesday at 8:00 p. m.

Bo and Co. from Atlanta Georgia Tuesday at 10:00 p. m.

STEP ONE

(Portion from Basic Text will be quoted here)

It makes little difference how or when we realized that our addiction had become a problem for us. More importantly, is the acknowledgment that we felt so miserable we just couldn't go any further without help. We needed some relief - now.

Surrender did not come swiftly or easily for most of us. Our pride, ego and dishonesty blocked our ability to come to terms with the failure to control our using. The "bottom line" is we couldnot stop using. Only through surrender, faith and committment can addiction be arrested and recovery begin.

Powerlessness indicates an absolute incapacity to control events in our lives; we were forced to clean up at different times by lack of money, fear and jails. But some of us saw temporary periods of abstinence as evidence of our ability to control drugs. We told ourselves that we could stop if we wanted to, yet we denied the times we wanted to stop and couldn't. Powerlessness means using against our will. Learning that help was available and that we could once again live with some semblance of sanity was great news to us. We were tired of using drugs and of the pain they brought us. Drugs had stopped working the way we wanted them to.

The admission of powerlessness is central to recovery. Our addiction had been pointed out to us numerous times by others, but we denied that there was a problem. Clearly, we were unable to change old habits. Our addiction demanded that we justify and rationalize how life had dealt us a bad hand.

Unmanageability is the direct result of addiction. It is one of the symptoms of the disease. While practicing our addiction, we did not realize that through our actions we were trying to manage the outcome of each situation in our lives. We did not realize that when we didn't

pay our bills or were late with our rent, and when we pushed people away, it was a direct result of our addiction. We stole, cheated and lied to get drugs. We somehow couldn't manage to control our own feelings. We lived in the dark reality of fear!

We lived in self-pity because we thought no one understood us, let alone understanding ourselves. Our unmanageability drove us deeper into depression and hopelessness.

Admit powerlessness? Once we get through our denial we see our powerlessness. The admission of powerlessness is but a feeling that materializes within ourselves. Often it is only realized with the help of an experienced sponsor who will guide us through the twelve step recovery process.

In N.A., we treat the cause of the problem: addiction, not the apparent symptoms: drugs. We get and stay clean so we may recover from the disease of addiction. Our goal is not just simple abstinence, it is recovery. After admitting we were powerless over our addiction, and our lives have become unmanageable, we are then ready for Step Two.

~~Orig same~~
~~5th Rd. Eval. Hand out to people~~
~~for comments.~~

confused about Rd. - Eval. -
- underst. at 2nd stage copy's
handed out to conf. about
elit. ? Y or N.

3rd stage - input as well as
edit ? Y or N

4th stage - read^u about
on floor for
grp. conse.?



"QUIDO"

MATERIAL IN PROGRESS - FIRST DRAFT WORKSHOP - WLCNA IX

STEP TWO

"WE CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY."

(Portion from Basic Text will go here)

After working the first step we found ourselves in a hopeless state. We are now forced to seek a power greater than ourselves, with hopes of bringing order into our lives.

Many of us have been acquainted at some time in our lives with a Creator or Power Greater Than Ourselves, but because of feelings of guilt or fear associated with our actions, chose to ignore or forget entirely any belief in this power. When our actions and feelings in recovery began to cause us more pain than we could cope with, we were then willing to recognize and ask for help.

Still others came to Narcotics Anonymous with an idea of a revengeful God that controlled our lives through reward and punishment. One of the most difficult tasks was to change that conception to one of a Power which was loving and forgiving. This became easier as we talked with others who had experienced the many benefits from acceptance of the Second Step.

Some of us upon joining this fellowship had little difficulty with the First Step. Although not comprehending it fully, we knew we were addicts and out of control. Going back to the First Step and comprehending our powerlessness over our addiction seemed to help.

We can't tell you in simple words how we came to believe. For each of us it's been different. For some it was a magic moment of realization, profound and even mystical. Most of us built a foundation of belief in a Higher Power a little bit at a time. For many of us this belief was long in coming because of our lost ability to have faith in anyone or anything other than ourselves. To believe there is

some power that can restore us to sanity is all that is asked of us by this step.

Many of us arrived here beaten by the life we had been living. We felt hopeless and desperate until we realized that our attitudes and old ways of thinking were the source of our unhappiness.

~~OFTEN WE~~ have seen our insanity in terms of denial. Most of us come to this fellowship denying that we have a problem with drugs. Denial is one of the most outstanding symptoms of our disease.

Another common aspect of our addiction is the belief that we are all our own little islands. We felt cut off and isolated from other people. We saw ourselves as being different. Often this insanity of isolation occurred well before we ever took our first drug. When we started using, we seemed to have some relief from the pain we felt in our loneliness. But as our disease progressed, our isolation simply got worse, and using drugs no longer stopped the pain. Seeing our disease in these terms gives the opportunity to consider "restoration to sanity" as the experience of "coming home."

Very few addicts come to Narcotics Anonymous with the belief that a power greater than themselves can restore them to sanity. In our experiences, we have learned a power greater than ourselves is necessary. Many of us have tried outside things to achieve some form of sanity: doctors, jobs, different towns, friends, lovers, and the list can go on. Yet the results were nil. Our understanding of a Higher Power is up to us, thus leaving the door open for agnostics or atheists. N.A. is a spiritual not religious Fellowship. We only suggest a loving and forgiving power. Some of us were able to see this power by looking at a group of clean and happy addicts. This was a beginning to believe one day we could achieve that happiness.

We have already admitted that alone we are unable to exert any power over our addiction. Thus, this is the compelling reason we offer the newcomer who asks why he or she should be willing to believe in a Higher Power and have faith and sanity.

There seem to be as many definitions of sanity and insanity as there are individual members of this program. Each of us, as a result of our own experience, has a different idea of what these words mean. We have found, however, that we can choose to see sanity as freedom from the obsession to use. Just for today not using is made possible by this freedom. This sanity comes from believing that some power greater than ourselves exists and can produce this change in us. The preceding step furnishes the essential base that is necessary to continue the process through which our lives are made whole and new. We therefore suggest working them in the order in which they were written. Having worked the first two steps to the best of our ability, we are ready for Step Three.

STEP THREE-" Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."

Step three offers no compromise, reservation or delay. It calls for a decision here and now. With promptness and determination, we give up our control and surrender our lives to the God of our understanding which alone can provide us with the daily strength to stay clean and recover.

To make a decision is to start a course of action. We are not turning our will and our lives over to the care of God; rather we can make a decision to do that which will result in our actually surrendering to our Higher Power.

Major decisions often require the faith that no matter which choice we make, everything will be alright.

Most of us have suffered before we became willing to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. Becoming honest enough to admit to ourselves the need to surrender is painful. Our pride and denial have kept us dishonest and unable to see the need to surrender to make room for a better way.

"Surrender means not having to fight anymore." Surrender is one of the underlying principles of the first three steps. For some people it brings up a whole host of negative images: defeat, loss, and failure. Yet we say in Narcotics Anonymous that to surrender is to win. How can this be?

One answer to that question is that our experience has demonstrated that when we surrender our will and lives over to the care of God, we gain a way of living in the world that provides us with much happiness and peace within. For most of us this new way of life is unlike any kind of experience we have ever known. We win when we surrender because what we give up is our attempt to control our addiction, our delusion that we can manage our lives

alone, and our insanity. We receive the power, strength and guidance that make it possible for us to recover and lead responsible and productive lives. When we surrender to our Higher Power, our recovery accelerates.

Step three identifies our spiritual illness and helps us see clearly that any life run on self-will can only suffer. Our unhappiness fills our horizons.

Addicts who fail to incorporate a belief in a Power greater than self often return to active addiction. Honest and sincere attempts in active pursuit of a Higher Power will usually clear our confusion over time.

Willingness is all that is needed to start working on Step Three. If necessary one can pray for this willingness. When first trying to make a decision to turn over our will we need only look back at our destructive past and the willingness should come easily.

Turning our will over to this Higher Power creates the space for feeling that serenity we all strive to attain. This means we no longer struggle with situations that we are powerless over. We find ourselves letting go of the things we cannot handle. We no longer play God. Total surrender is the key to Step Three.

We have found that we cannot manage our lives without help. We have been unable to live whole in health, happiness and harmony. We receive the strength, power and guidance we need by making the decision to allow a Power greater than ourselves to care for us.

"Turning it over" simply means "letting go" of our old ideas and allowing our Higher Power to take charge. By using this spiritual principle, we often find new ways to deal with problems that were previously hard to solve. In this way we gain a new found freedom by which we can share our burdens with this Power we've learned to trust. This reliance continues to grow if we place faith in our Higher Power. We step aside, we give up attempts at control, we let a Higher Power shape our reality--these are some of the

ways we can "turn it over."

Turning it over relieves us from our obsessive concern with ourselves and releases us from the burden of managing our lives alone. If we say to ourselves, "Please help me, I am willing to be helped," then this is a way of working the Third Step. Although we may not have used these particular words, it was the expression of this idea to our own individual conception of a Higher Power that made it possible for us to develop a working relationship with that Higher Power that has revolutionized our lives.

The relationship is important; the conception is not. We can have a relationship with a person and not understand them. We understand God to the best of our ability and trust that all will come out all right. We do our part, the Higher Power does the rest.

Step Three allows us to grow in our understanding of spirituality. Our ability to use Step Three is not hindered by an incomplete or vague sense of a Higher Power. Our understanding right now is good enough. As it changes and grows, we develop room and opportunity to change our way of putting it to use in our lives.

It would be easy for many of us to avoid altogether any further mention of God, Higher Power or any spirituality whatsoever. But, to do this would flagrantly lack honesty, for without the help of an understanding God, all willingness for future growth would virtually disappear.

Belief in a Higher Power and a decision to turn our will and our lives over to this power enabled us to experience personal freedom. We had time and energy for real life. We found something to replace our obsession with drugs.

Many of us feel that Step Three is the key that opens our hearts and minds to let this Higher Power enter. Through this step, we are slowly fulfilling a spiritual need through trust and faith, in something other

than ourselves. It is through this spiritual fulfillment that a foundation is built for recovery.

Ultimately we need to live a spiritual program of recovery. That's what keeps us clean.

Working the Third Step makes it possible to work the remaining steps. The extent to which we decide to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, will determine our willingness and ability to work the other steps. If we decide we want to turn our lives over to a Higher Power we can then approach Step Four with the assurance that we will be guided through it.

TOPIC OUTLINE FOR STEP THREE

- I. Introduction
- II. Decision
- III, Surrender (Trust in Fellowship and God)
- IV, Self-Will
- V. Turning it over
- VI. Our will and our lives
- VII. God as we understand Him
- VIII. Results
- IX. Conclusion

STEP - 4

Denny J.

Dear Fellow Trusted Servants,

This discussion of the 4th Step contains, you will note, many questions. We suggest you consider these carefully in your review of this draft to see if they are representative of 4th Step material.

We feel this draft is an improvement over what we started with.

We included a personal experience that we felt was an excellent example of how such a story could be included in each Step successfully. It is our group conscience that WLCNA#9 consider this format for the Step and Tradition draft, as a whole.

We also have a rough outline which shows how we structured this draft.

First Draft

Step 4,5,6 Workshop

WLCNA#9

4th Step Draft Outline

1. Introduction:
 - A.) 1st three Steps solve the fourth
 - B.) Reliance on our Higher Power
 - C.) Sponsorship

2. Self-honesty

3. Why a written inventory?

4. Things to include:

Liabilities:

- A.) Relationships
- B.) Resentments
- C.) Self-pity
- D.) Dishonesty
- E.) Pride
- F.) Fear
- G.) Self-centeredness

Assets:

- A.)
- B.)
- C.)
- D.)
- E.)
- F.)
- G.)

5. Results:
 - A.) Freedom
 - B.) Self-knowledge

6. Personal experience

STEP FOUR: "We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

The time has come to look at how we felt about people, places, and things in our lives.

We cannot be comfortabel with unresolve feelings about the past. We need not be apprehensive when we begin this Step as it will clearly relieve the years of pent-up guilt many addicts experience. There is no real danger for us in this Step. None of these Steps were designed to make life more uncomfortable.

The Fourth Step suggests that we make an inventory of our liabilities, the character defects that stand in the way of our emotional and spiritual growth.

We hear over and over about the importance of the Fourth Step. Most of us in the beginning had a hard time understanding how one step could be that much different than any of the others.

Too often, we approach this step as if we were not good enough or clever enough to take an inventory. The job may look too big for us. If we have become willing to work the first three Steps, faith in a Higher Power is enough to get us through this step. Our present faith can give us the courage to explore thoroughly the patterns of our behavior. This Step applies to what we did before and after we stopped using as well as what we did in our active addiction.

When we say we make a "moral inventory", what do we mean? A moral inventory means an inventory of our character, our minds, or, if you like, our will. We have rationalized every possible form of deviant behavior and thought. Our problem was not only the

behavior but also the rationalization. We go on doing what we have always done. We need to bring our patterns of behavior out into the open so that we can examine them. We need to look at ourselves and our behavior to see what is unproductive and blocks our recovery.

If we are as honest as we can be, many of our previous fears will be cast aside. We remember that we have made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to a Higher Power that cares; with our Higher Power's help, we are guided through that maze of confusion that confronts many of us at first.

Before sitting down to write, we will want to talk to our sponsor. Our experience suggests that we review our first three steps to insure our foundation is secure and that we are ready to take this step. A sponsor in Narcotics Anonymous can share their experience with you as you reach this important phase of your recovery. We will be able to identify with our sponsor as we put on paper those things which caused us pain in our lives. Before taking pen in hand, we pray that God's will, not ours, be done.

Some of us have tried to make do with a simple self-examination. We have even tried to talk our problems out with another person. We have tried many ways to avoid a written inventory and some of these methods have brought temporary relief from our more pressing problems. However, the written inventory suggested here is the only means we have found to assure real self-honesty. Writing things down gives them a reality they can gain in no other way. We may begin to see patterns that will tell us the truth about ourselves and our underlying motivations. This is also a tangible demonstration of our commitment to the program.

It makes no difference at this point in our recovery how small problems seem to be or how often we have thought or talked about them. What is important is to write down everything that comes to mind within the process of the Fourth Step without regard to apparent significance. We are as thorough as we can be in recollecting past thoughts, deeds and actions.

Honesty is a key word here. This step calls upon us to be searching and fearless and to look at the many deceptions we used. It is as if we are entering a dark room with a single candle to guide us with the intention of moving ahead despite our resistance to the darkness. We need to be willing to illuminate every corner of our minds as if our life depended upon it, for in fact it does.

We discover what liabilities in our character motivate our actions in all of our personal dealings with people, places, and things. We examine our motives in all our actions to see where we were resentful, angry, fearful, full of self-pity and most important where we were wrong.

These are only some examples of emotions and behaviors we need to consider for our inventory. We need to examine ourselves in detail and carefully consider those things that did not work for us. We are trying to build a life in recovery.

The other side of the Fourth Step is taking inventory of our assets. Through our addiction we have developed a distorted sense of self. Our inability to recognize our assets is a form of self-deception. We are full of self-hatred and insecurities, and feel that we are the absolutely worst people in the world. We have trouble honestly seeing our virtues. We may think that we are the

absolutely worst people in the world. We have trouble honestly seeing our virtues. We may think that we are the biggest and the best, but this is grandiosity, not humility. The Fourth Step enables us to see ourselves as we really are - both the bad and the good. As part of our inventories, we need to examine the virtues: humility, forgiveness, tolerance, patience, kindness, honesty, faith, unselfishness, willingness, openmindedness, thinking positively, and being loving. Taking a Fourth Step can be overwhelming at times, and taking a look at assets helps to offset the pain of looking at our liabilities. None of us has perfected these assets, however, these are the spiritual principles that we are striving for in our lives.

We have found that fear controlled our lives and created some of our negative feelings of frustration, self-pity, resentment, intolerance, arrogance, criticism, anger, jealousy.

Dishonesty and self-deception are patterns of fear. For fear that situations would not suit us or that our self-centered desires would not be satisfied, we attempted to control others. Our self-deception was the denial of our attempts to control. Where have we been dishonest with other people? Where have we lied to get our own way? When have we blamed others for our decisions?

Anger is an area we did not handle maturely. Little things, accidents occurring in everyday living, brought displeasure, yes, but to react with rage exemplified many an addict. Unrealistic expectations resulted in furious displays of childish behavior. We were full of contempt for the most minor of offenses. Could we distinguish the important from the unimportant? Did we use anger to manipulate situations? What are the situations that we always react to angrily?

What are some of the old patterns that did not work for us? One was resentment. We kept our mental grudge list. Everything annoyed us. We were mad about what happened in the past and we never let go. We regretted the clever things we had not said; we planned conversations that would never take place. We were obsessed with the past and the future, and therefore had no energy to devote to the present. There was no real satisfaction for us in any of this. Our resentments caused us discomfort and so we formed still more resentments. We thought none of this was our fault and that other people were doing these things to us. As long as we thought our resentments were the fault of others and that we were not responsible, we could do nothing. We need to write about these resentments in order to see what part we played in forming them. Had we turned our lives over to other people, as if they were gods? Had we given control of our emotional stability to others? Had we been so demanding that no one could have measured up? Were we hurting ourselves with someone else's defects? Did we understand that everyone has problems or did we expect perfection? Do we resent our own defects?

We can list the many ways each of us had been intolerant. At times, we refused to allow others the privilege of voicing or even having an opinion. This attitude caused frequent episodes of either indifference or hostility. We had a need, generated by fear, of "always being right." We were unnecessarily critical of others, yet when constructive criticism was directed towards us - we were less than receptive. Every suggestion was met with either irritation or despair. Did we only listen to ourselves? When have we been intolerant of others? When have we felt superior to others and felt the need to correct them?

When have we had to have agreement? Did we always have to convince others we were right?

On our list we must avoid time spent on the wrongs others had done. We focus on our mistakes and concern ourselves with areas where self-centeredness seemed to prevail. We must look within and honestly appraise our motives. This is our inventory and if it is to succeed, we need to list our faults, not others!

Self-pity is one example of the way we manipulated things for our "benefit". When we indulge in self-pity, we are asking others to change or to bow to our demands, or we are looking for a way to avoid our responsibilities. When did we feel sorry for ourselves rather than take action? When did we use self-pity to get attention? Did we lie to make ourselves look pathetic? Did we make others feel guilty by feeling sorry for ourselves?

All of us get depressed at times, but addicts can ill-afford to feel sorry for themselves. When we didn't get "what we wanted when we wanted it," we chose to pout or whine. We were so consumed with self and our own suffering that we had very little perspective and therefore little understanding. We must find a way out of this situation or be driven back to active addiction. Did we over exaggerate our problems? Could we feel any sympathy for others when so consumed with self? Were others frustrated by our negativity?

Realizing that the past has no power over our present lives other than the power we give it, can give us the courage to face our pasts honestly so that we can be freed from it.

We have been discussing many issues from our own experience that

we have written about ourselves in inventories that we have made. Answering these questions we have posed can serve as the basis for writing a 4th Step. We suggest strongly the use of your sponsor's experience as a guide. Having worked the first 4 steps ~~XXX~~ to the best of our ability, we are ready ~~XXX~~ for Step Five.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Our Fourth Step means honesty to me. The result is freedom from my past.

I started writing with what hurt me the most. As I wrote, memories I thought I had buried inside me began to reappear on the paper - it must have been the prayer. I couldn't do this on my own. My God was revealing to me the experiences, thoughts and feelings my diseased mind was using to program my self-destruction. I was amazed, intimidated, and frightened, but as my life spilled out on the paper in front of me, old ideas began to lose their power over me. I saw the intricate traps I had built for myself. I saw my talents and began to realize that they were gifts from my God that I had selfishly twisted into tools for pleasure. I listed my anxieties, fears, angers, resentments and guilts. I honestly began to see how sick I was. Denial forced me to stop time and time again, but pain, faith and commitment to live allowed me to continue each time. Honesty forced me to balance my defects, shortcomings and liabilities with my assets. Seeing my assets and admitting that I wasn't hopelessly bad was real hard. Praise has always embarrassed me. Sometimes when I'm caught up in ego it still does today. I've learned to simply say thank you and it's getting easier each time. As I neared the end I had to force myself to continue writing. I "reached" deep inside myself as honesty set me free to see myself. My heart lightened. I came to know myself as never before and began to let go. Here was my past. I had allowed

it to control me. I choose to let go of it and live in the now.
Real freedom became possible for the first time in my life.

STEP FIVE: FIRST DRAFT
WLCNA#9, Jamison, Pennsylvania
November 10, 1983

Dear Fellow Trusted Servants,

Here is the completed draft of Step Five.

We feel we need more input especially on the following:

- the exact nature of our wrongs
- how do we actually do our 5th step
- moving on to the sixth step immedialtely
- countless personal experiences in "I" form from which to choose one outstanding example

We feel that we have substantially improved the draft.

We are beginning work on step 6.

Respectfully submitted,

Step 4, 5, 6, Workshop
WLCNA#9

FIRST DRAFT: WLCNA#9, JAMISON, PENN.

STEP FIVE WORKING OUTLINE

I. Introduction.

A.]st 4 steps the foundation.

II. Definition of the word admitted.

IIA. Rationalization.

III. Admitting it to God

IV. Admitting it to ourselves.....

V. Admitting it to another human being

A.) Choosing another human being

B.) Sponsorship

VI. Exact nature of our wrongs.

VII. Results.

A.) End of isolation

B. Relief

C.) Self Esteem

D.) Self-Acceptance

VIII. Conclusion

A.) Move immediately to Step Six

IX. Personal Experience.

STEP FIVE: "We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

Basic Text Inserted here, Chapter 4, Step 5 discussion.
FIRST DRAFT: WLCNA#9, JAMISON, PENNSYLVANIA; NOVEMBER 10th

When we have made a moral inventory, what are we to do with it? We have listed our resentments, fears, dishonesties and other problems. We have brought all this material out of the private parts of our lives and put it down on paper. We now know ourselves better than we have ever known ourselves before. We may have mixed feelings about our inventory. It is important to move on to Step Five quickly. We have gained much knowledge of ourselves and we feel alone with that knowledge.

We need to be willing to release the problems we have spent our lives alone with. Through the process of sharing our inventory with God, ourselves and another human being, we end our isolation. We have been alone with our problems for far too long. We have a choice today to escape this isolation.

We all experience anxiety about this step. We are not used to being honest with ourselves, and now we are asked to be honest about ourselves with another.

We've completed the previous four steps to the best of our ability. With this basic foundation toward our ongoing spiritual recovery, we can look forward to the relief that completion of our Fifth Step may bring. The weight of our guilt, hostility and anger lift from us. Many of us were able to accept ourselves for the first time.

If we do not go on with Step Five and reveal our new findings to God, ourselves and another human being, the process of self-justification will continue. Our recovery will halt and our egos will take over. The longer we hold on to our Fourth Step, the longer the insanity will go on.

The key word of this step is "admitted". The first time that word occurs in the steps is in Step One. We admit to God, ourselves and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs because it is the only way we can continue in our recovery.

A frequently neglected aspect of this step is the process of making our admission both to God and to ourselves. Doing so is not supposed to be an afterthought. Rather, it is the necessary preparation that makes it possible for us to go through with the third phase of our admission: sharing ourselves with another human being.

Rationalization is a trap we can easily fall into. We may ask, "Is it really necessary to admit these wrongs to God?" Some may feel that their Higher Power already recognizes these defects. We share our inventory with God so we may more fully accept God in our lives. When we admit to God our wrongs, our trust in God becomes stronger. Also, it would be easy to rationalize that, "I know my defects. I wrote my 4th Step." Most of us feel that in making these rationalizations we would be cheating ourselves of the full benefit of the Fifth Step.

How we share our inventory with God will depend on the nature of our relationship with the God of our own understanding. We have found the guidance and experiences of a sponsor very helpful. Attending step meetings on this topic can also provide many useful insights. Some of us have read our inventories aloud with our Higher Power in mind. Others of us have held silent discussions with our Higher Power about ourselves and our fears about going through with the rest of this step. Surrendering our inventory to our Higher Power enables us to admit to ourselves, and another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.

The most powerful method we have found of admitting to ourselves our inventory has been to read to ourselves before a mirror what we have written. The process of ego reduction and self-acceptance that this involves, however, does not end. It is not isolated. It runs throughout this step.

Many of us have found that since we had already admitted our past in taking the first two parts of the fifth step, sharing with another in the third part was not as difficult.

We have spent years in building walls around ourselves. Drugs were only part of the material we used to keep people out of our lives. If we allowed anyone into our lives, it was strictly on our terms. All our relationships were conditional. We could not trust people. We have had years of practice at shutting people out. We must make an enormous effort now to let someone in. We start with just one person.

We admit to another person the exact nature of our wrongs because it lessens the overwhelming burden many of us feel upon getting here. We must first recognize our deficiencies in order to do anything to correct them. We can not wish them or will them away. We must be willing to take advice and accept direction to expect any change in our lives. When we are willing to ask for the guidance we soon gain clear recognition of what and who we are.

When we are ready to take this step, we look for that "special" person with whom we are willing to share our experience without reservation. We wish to make no requirement about this personal decision, however most of us, in fact, suggest a sponsor in Narcotics Anonymous as the best person to do this step with. One who has already had the

experience for themselves who can share their own personal experience and identify with our own. A sponsor already knows much about us, and this personal relationship will provide depth and perspective in taking this 5th step. As addicts we have found it difficult to trust anyone, including ourselves. We now had the opportunity to develop a trusting attitude which had always been missing from our lives. We share our entire Fourth Step with one person.

Now we are ready to share, to bring things to the surface with all the honesty that we can possibly muster. Before we start, we suggest saying a prayer together to ease the tension. This is a good opportunity to turn our fear and anxiety over to our Higher Power. We can also talk about this with our sponsor.

If we leave something out of our inventory because we are afraid to tell another person about it, we are the ones who suffer. The other person is not affected by our omissions. It is all too easy to walk in, read the Fourth Step to someone, and walk out. We are preparing ourselves for the future. We are trying to break out of our isolation and move into the real world.

Successful completion of our Fifth Step allows for continued growth in our program and permits us to experience a new spirituality.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

After taking my fourth step I procrastinated taking the fifth due to my fear of sharing it with another human being. My sponsor told me that we take the fifth step with God first, then ourselves, before we take it with another human being.

My sponsor suggested that I get in a humble position, then pray and read my fifth step out loud while looking myself straight in the eye in a mirror. This seemed very strange to me to say the least, but I had made a decision to do as my sponsor suggested. This was a very scary but revealing experience. It was as if I were seeing a person in the mirror whom I had never known before. I was truly coming to know myself.

After taking the first two parts of the fifth step, admitting my character defects to another human being, my sponsor, was much easier.

I learned from my fifth step that I was not as bad nor as good as I had always thought. I learned that I was a basically good human being with a few shortcomings.

The three parts of the fifth step also gave me an extremely acute awareness of those shortcomings which led me right into step six where I began to get relief from these defects of character.

STEP 6

"We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

- I. Introduction
 - A. Awareness
- II. Fear of Loss of Self
- III. Were entirely ready
 - A. Willingness
 - B. Readiness/preparation
 - C. Why
 - D. How?
 - E. What do we do?
- IV. God Remove
- V. Why "All" our defects?
- VI. Defects of Character
- VII. Conclusion

(Portion from Basic Text will go here) STEP SEVEN

"Humbly" is obviously a key word in approaching Step Seven. Most of us do not want to learn about humility. We want to live a life free of drugs. We may be willing to say that we want to live a spiritual program, but humility? Is that part of the program? Most of us do not even know what the word means. If it has any association for us at all, it usually connotes being lowly, groveling, meek, or subservient.

Humility means, among other things, a realistic evaluation of ourselves. Humility is not a denial of good qualities, for in truth it is the admission of all qualities both good and bad. We admit our faults and work to remedy them; we admit our abilities and accept and use them as a gift from our ^{HIGHER POWER} God. If we are absolutely truthful in the estimation of ourselves, we are humble. Humility is self-honesty and the absence of false pride. Humility is the root of faith, hope and tolerance. We find that each spiritual principle is fortified and reinforced through true humility.

Humility is recognizing that we are not perfect. It is something we strive for, never fully achieving. Humility is being able to accept things as they are, and when we cannot change them, seeking God's help in ^{OUR HIGHER POWERS} changing the things we can.

Becoming humble is a gradual change in attitude. We learned through sometimes painful experiences that we could not make it alone. It has to do with letting go of our false pride and self-aggrandizement. It is changing from a life of self-centeredness and self-gratification toward a life of spiritual growth and progress.

In this step, we ask God ^{OUR HIGHER POWER} humbly. We are in need of what only God can supply. We cannot remove our character defects, and for our purposes in this step, character defects and shortcomings are the same thing. We need to be free of these shortcomings or we cannot develop spiritually. We ^{OUR HIGHER POWER} ask God for what we need - the freedom that ^{OUR HIGHER POWER} only God can provide.

OUR HIGHER POWER

When we ask God to remove our shortcomings, we are asking for freedom from any shortcomings which limit our recovery. We are asking our Higher Power to help us be better persons and to help us continue to live free from the obsession to use. We ask for help because we found that we could not do it alone. "I can't, We can." is the message. We tried and failed and it hurts to admit defeat. The more we can apply the spiritual principles of surrender, the faster the healing will take place. Do your best, but remember you are human.

In many ways, we are standing in our own light. We are afraid to change. We know our problems and our solutions. They may not work very well, but they're familiar. We often prefer the familiar pain and dissatisfaction to the growth that could lead us out of our old pain. We may rationalize our shortcomings. Are we not merely human? Is it not only human to be as we are? Are we asking more from our friends than we are willing to give? We put up with them, can they not put up with us? Of course this is not true. We are selfish, demanding, and intolerant, but these arguments serve our purposes.

Of course, our shortcomings are human failings. We are only human. But we must be willing to work a spiritual program and move toward our goal of recovery. We must move forward or retreat. We cannot stand still. We must change our attitudes. We must accept ourselves as we are and try to develop ^{OPE} spiritually. This means we will accept ideals that we cannot meet. We need to recognize our human needs and realize that we will never finish our process of spiritual growth. Only a well-grounded realistic view of the world will enable us to do this. That is humility.

STEP SEVEN: PAGE THREE

HIGHER POWER

Why do we ask our God to remove our shortcomings? If we tell Him, we're in control, and it's been our experience that it doesn't work when we start telling a Power greater than ourselves what to do. Though it may seem we are degrading ourselves by these admissions, the truth is, we're letting go of painful and destructive obsessions and opening new doors. What turns out is freedom and that's what we need in order to change. There is something paradoxical in this step; we are asked to be humble although false pride is surely one of our shortcomings. We muster as much humility as we can and become willing to work this step. We are embarked on a spiritual path and the reconciliation of opposites, such as false pride and humility, is our goal. We do our best here, knowing that God is with us.

Our experience has shown that the spiritual principles of this step are necessary in everyday living. We need the freedom we get from this step if we truly desire a change in our character. It's an inside job. We humbly ask our Higher Power to keep our defects as they are taken from us. Once in awhile we panic and grab the wheel, and when we do, our shortcomings are handed back intact and ready to put us back in the ditch again.

Losing faith can be a danger. We may grow impatient with our growth and progress. Old defects seem to leave us slowly, and we see new ones far too often. If a shortcoming isn't removed, it simply means we have more work to do. We have not asked God humbly, or we aren't really willing to let them go. We aren't being punished; it just means that we have to work a little harder on one or more of the previous steps. We change slowly, day by day, not all at once and not without help from God, as we understand Him, and from our friends in the Fellowship. We will never be perfect, but we do change! We do the best we can, always remembering who we are and where we came from.

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HIGHER POWER
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We have asked our God to remove our defects by acting differently than our defects would have us act. This active demonstration is a most powerful prayer - we believe we can become new people and act differently, but only some power greater than us can change our nature. As we realize we can only change our actions, we become humble. A Higher Power can remove our defects and shortcomings, if we humbly ask through our actions and prayer.

STEP EIGHT

"WE MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WE HAD HARMED AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL."

(Portion from the Basic Text will go here)

Step Eight begins the process of freeing ourselves from our past. When we made a searching and fearless moral inventory, it became apparent where we had done harm. One of the biggest benefits of the previous steps was in seeing and admitting our faults. This helps us to become willing to begin the process of amending all the harm we have done to people. We cannot continue to carry the guilt and fear of our past in our new life.

Many of us were so fearful when we reached this step that we were at first unwilling to write a list. We need to remind ourselves that working the steps will not lead to using drugs and that not working them will. In trusting to the care of our higher power, we need to proceed as fearlessly as we did in our fourth step. It's time to put down the names of the persons we have harmed. All the thinking in the world won't get the list written, we need to sit down and write it.

These people were our friends, neighbors, family, and employers. They were close to us. What have we done to them? Have we turned these people against us? Some have, and with very good reason, shut us totally out of their lives. One member put it this way:

"I had a lot of fear about working Step Eight. When I was finally convinced to begin the Steps, my sponsor had to convince me that we would begin with Step One, proceed to Step Two, and so forth. By the time I got to Step Eight, I would be able to see the necessity for working this step. There were some concrete instances where I had harmed people and desired to make amends.

I had to face the fact honestly that I had hurt another human being in some way. Some of the ways I hurt people were obvious: stealing from them, not paying bills, insulting and belittling them, breaking promises and using people. Some of the more subtle ways included: going to work high, not doing my best, lying to people who loved me. But most importantly, I harmed myself. I shut myself off from God and the love of other people. I forced myself to do things I really didn't want to do in the name of drugs. I drove myself compulsively, always trying to make up for feeling inadequate."

Many of us had difficulty seeing how we harmed anyone other than ourselves. When we honestly look within, we recognize the value making amends to others can do for us. We commence this Step by first acknowledging the harm "we did to others". Have we been, for instance, exploitive, distant, or judgemental? In our relations, have we taken advantage of others or abused the trust others have placed in us? Have we deceived others or withheld affection? We need to ask ourselves these questions as well as other questions like them. It helps very little to blame situations for our behavior. Our addictive personalities did much to initiate these events and now that we are clean we choose to make restitution for our past abuses.

Once we have made our list of persons we had harmed, it's time to begin the process of becoming willing to make amends to them all. If we look at ourselves, we see that by just making the list we were willing to face the problem of people we had harmed. Now we should look at it and become willing to make amends to them all.

Just as the process of our second step worked, where we came to believe over a period of time in a power greater than ourselves, so too do we eventually become willing to make amends to those we've harmed. Many of us had to pray for this willingness. We found that after we had worked the first step, we were committed to our

recovery, and that commitment included going on to the next step. We were willing to do whatever was necessary for our recovery. By praying to the God of our understanding we reaffirmed our decision to place our will and lives into his care and found we need not fear. We had found faith and freedom. In this same spirit our willingness grew until we were ready for Step Nine.

STEP NINE

"WE MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHENEVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS."

(Portion from Basic Text will go here)

With the willingness we have from our eighth step, we are now ready to get "into action" and make direct amends. Since this was new to many of us, starting with the easiest amends and moving up the list helped prepare us for those more difficult to make. We found we had to be as direct and thorough as possible; skirting the issue just wasn't enough. Part of our active addiction was ignoring the consequences of our actions. We do Step Nine so we never have to fear our past again.

As we make our amends, we need to have faith in our Higher Power to guide us. We agreed at the beginning to "go to any lengths" to stay clean. We should not be evasive when making amends or delay because of fear. We ask God to remove our self-seeking behavior and stick to a discussion of our own faults. We begin to take responsible action towards the well-being of others, though we realize some wrongs can't ever be corrected.

Our families and loved ones usually top the list. It helps to remember that just by staying clean, we are making amends to them. We should also consider that being too direct can hurt them. We need to exercise the utmost caution in making our amends to those close to us.

This is why Step Nine states "except when to do so would injure them or others." With our newfound honesty, it is still not our intention to bring up events and statements that would hurt, injure, or harm others. We must be considerate of other people's feelings and lives, and avoid creating new harm or unnecessary pain in their

lives today.

We recommend exercising prudent judgement in approaching all we have harmed. We proceed carefully, realizing that not everyone is as pleased as we are about our getting clean.

Our employers, businesses, and co-workers suffered as a result of our addiction. We obviously didn't work up to par or handle our responsibilities efficiently while we were loaded! Some of us robbed our employers of productivity and may have wrecklessly abused expense accounts and other privileges. Clearly, we were using the company for our own selfish pursuits, with little regard for resulting profits or losses.

Financial amends were difficult for most of us who had spent money foolishly. Instead of making car payments, handling credit cards wisely, or paying the rent on time, we chose to buy more drugs. We cared about little else as long as we could maintain that constant high. We found many excuses to justify our behavior. We lied about payments "in the mail" or neglected to answer the phone without a signal or code. Some creditors found it necessary to repossess our belongings. We needed to reach this kind of humiliation and embarrassment to see how dependent we were on that almighty drug!

Some of us owed such astronomical debts, we froze at the aspect of facing these and making amends. We must be reminded that we need to be responsible for our past actions. Our addiction precipitated our actions; it doesn't excuse them. We need also be reminded that we live a day at a time. Just as our recovery began one step at a time, we have to go on and take the first steps toward repaying past debts. In paying back money we owe, we should also be reminded "except when

to do so would injure them or others." We should not hurt ourselves financially at the expense of present responsibilities. But, we should make a reasonable start that we can afford. By informing creditors of our intentions to make good on our debt, we can arrange a payback system that won't threaten our existence. Some of us took years to clear our debts, but that small amount we paid each month added up, until one day we woke up and made that final payment!

We find many are willing to work with us once we make a commitment to change our old ways. Others will have difficulty understanding why we did these things, but that's okay. We need to face these people and be willing to accept their reaction. If we've been thorough about the Ninth Step to the best of our ability, we will gain a clear conscience as a result. It's not important that we be forgiven, but that we are willing to change or rectify past wrongdoings. In recovery, we soon learn the distinction between right and wrong and just how important it is to come clean with God and with ourselves.

Whatever excuses we may have had, we find we must get honest and stop rationalizing. This step is for us and for our benefit. By working this step and making amends, we are severing any links or ties that could bring up guilt or remorse from our past. We will finally be free of the past, free to live in the here and now, without fear or guilt. Completion of this step has left many of us feeling good about who we are and where we are going. From this point on, we need to practice daily maintenance in order to insure that history doesn't repeat itself.

STEP TEN

"WE CONTINUED TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY, AND WHEN WE WERE WRONG, PROMPTLY ADMITTED IT."

(Portion from Basic Text will go here)

If we want to reap the benefits of staying clean, we find it necessary to take continual inventories of ourselves. Hidden fears and needs are still potential driving forces. Just because we don't recognize fear or anger doesn't mean that it isn't influencing our lives. We find it's important to examine places where we grow angry or our beliefs are tested. The areas we don't want to question are usually those that most need to be examined.

We addicts suffer from a problem deeper than the drugs we took. Because of this, we must live by spiritual principles. Step Ten and all the steps are to be applied to every area.

There is no area the disease does not affect. The truth is that fear is present in every aspect of our lives. So, from our experience, we conclude the program can and must be worked continuously. The process of taking inventory of ourselves is essential. As addicts, we are prone to fear, anger, vanity, complacency, and doing the wrong thing at the wrong time. These character defects can drive us into a place where we fear we cannot remain clean.

We do what the N.A. way of life suggests. It's the only way we know for addicts such as ourselves to change. For us, we must change or die. We learn to accept others because resentments or impatience can kill us. Acceptance and working the program are big changes from denial and fighting everything. As time goes by, we grow in spiritual health. Our old ways of selfishness and fear are being replaced with love in this Fellowship. Again, the main event

is to stay clean. We don't use drugs, one day at a time.

The effectiveness of an inventory depends on the willingness to apply it. We look at our actions during the day and we practice the art of looking at where we were wrong, considering what we could have done differently, and the amends we need to make. We find it helpful to admit to another human being where we were wrong.

Continuing the inventory process in each phase of recovery helps us monitor ourselves. It gives us a way to deal with any grief we bring upon ourselves. It helps create stability in our lives because we learn to pay attention to the little things so they don't get blown out of proportion or build up to a relapse.

We ask ourselves some of these questions. Are we doing our best? Are we staying honest? Are we still growing, or are we slipping back into the old fears and resentments? It is the purpose of the Tenth Step to answer these and similar questions. Those defects of character which we found in the Fourth Step are deeply ingrained in us. We check for the surfacing of defects early on by working Step Ten regularly.

We also find it's important to examine the other side of the coin; the good qualities about ourselves. Often, we include in our continuing inventories a "gratitude list." Someone once said that it is impossible to be unhappy and grateful at the same time. The point is that as we dwell upon resentment or upset in our lives, so do we begin to feel and act in disharmony with our surroundings. Recognizing blessings for which we are grateful automatically gives us a step towards spiritual fitness and freedom from guilt and self-centered fear.

There is value in relating a daily inventory verbally to another. We have found a sponsor or spiritual advisor to be of great assistance when we need guidance. Often, when sharing with this person, we learned that we were not alone in our efforts to achieve recovery.

A quick inventory taken as needed does bring results. This inventory is targeted at daily events and situations which seem to throw us off balance. Practicing the Tenth Step, which emphasizes examining ourselves, prevents an accumulation of our shortcomings. When problems arise, we have a spotcheck process by which we can maintain recovery. We have the tools we need to get through the present moment.

Prompt admission of our wrongs, whether intentional or not, has an immense value. We are freed from developing unnecessary problems. The results of continuing our personal inventory are shown as we become more patient and tolerant human beings. Then we become more willing to give rather than take from life, and more able to love our fellows. By practicing a personal inventory, we assure ourselves a measure of serenity and peace of mind.

A key word in Step Ten is "continued", so therefore this is an ongoing process. Only by the continuous applications of this Tenth Step will we begin to receive the benefits of the accumulated effect. This effect is the lessening of self and provides more room for spiritual growth. We saw it as a beginning to becoming responsive toward spiritual principles.

STEP ELEVEN

"WE SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE OUR CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD, AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM, PRAYING ONLY FOR KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL FOR US AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT."

(Portion from Basic Text will go here)

There are many forms of prayer to seek the guidance and direction of God's will for us. We accept His power with humility, acknowledgment, surrender, and gratitude. We recognize the selfishness and fear in our thoughts, motives, and actions; and appeal to Him for help. Seeking God is a personal experience. Now we're about to embark on a life based on higher spiritual principles through prayer and meditation.

In the beginning of the day, some of us ask God to direct our thoughts. We may pray: "God grant me the honesty, open-mindedness and willingness to seek Thy will, to accept Thy will and the power to carry it out." As prayer and meditation are applied repeatedly and with sincerity, the most wonderful things begin to happen. A peace and serenity unlike any we have ever known begins to take hold. Life becomes less of a burden.

Spontaneous prayer throughout the day is just as important as beginning and ending each day with prayer. There are many times we find ourselves praying. It feels good, because it brings us peace and restores our confidence and courage, along with many other benefits. It helps us to live a life of faith and stay away from the old ways of fear and distrust.

In the Eleventh Step, our program of recovery that we've been practicing so that we could stay away from drugs suddenly begins to come alive and to have more meaning. We should not pretend to be able to tell anyone how, when, or where to pray. There are some

STEP TWELVE

The first part of the 12th Step describes a process, a spiritual awakening that is the result of working the preceding 11 steps. Most of our efforts in working the steps has been a process. In the second step, we eventually, over time, came to believe a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. We who were hopeless had found hope. We became entirely ready to have God remove our defects of character. In time we became willing to make amends to those we'd harmed and found freedom as a result. We went through a process and grew. We found hope, gratitude, faith, humility and freedom from addiction. This is a spiritual awakening.

The idea of a spiritual awakening may seem like nonsense to a newcomer, but it is a most profound promise. Most of us come to the program full of resistance, defiance and an inner conviction that there is no way we can really become spiritual. We were never much for accepting things on blind faith. Those who preceded us receive that spiritual way of life and accompanying peace of mind that we so desperately wanted. Through this step, life takes on a new meaning, a new joy and a quality of being and feeling worthwhile. In time, we have been guided to a new life and place in the world and in our hearts. We become spiritually refreshed and are glad to be alive.

The steps bring us closer to a Higher Power. The 12th is the one that opens us up to living. The steps seem to hold many answers for us that we can use. In living these steps, we first begin to let go of character defects. With the help of a Higher Power, we began to lose the fear of facing ourselves and of facing other people. Eventually, when we sincerely use this program of action in our daily lives, we will be

members whose way of life suggests that many of their actions and even their attitudes are a form of prayer. We're referring to their ability to give of themselves and their attitude of gratefulness. Many of us have sought more through prayer than we did meditation, until we have learned the practice of meditation.

The work of all the preceding steps clear the way for meditation. We find ourselves changing as we continue to work our program, with the reality of ourselves. As active addicts, our every action was intent on avoidance of our real selves. Reality was uncomfortable and our actions were sometimes unacceptable. We often sought to alter and falsify any awareness and consciousness through using drugs. To maintain our recovery on a daily basis, we use the principle on which this step is based: the practice of prayer and meditation.

The quality of our meditation is in direct proportion to the amount of effort put forth. Utilizing quiet time in whatever method we might choose, we can learn to journey to that place inside where we can listen to the whispering of spiritual wisdom. This brings us the peace and comfort we need to go on with faith and hope. We all have the capacity to practice meditation; the key is to make the time and the willingness to allow it to happen.

The more we improve our conscious contact with God via prayer and meditation, the more often we pause when doubtful and say, "God, I don't know what to do. Please show me which way to go." When we finally get our own selfish motives out of the way, even just once in a while, and pray for guidance, really meaning it, we begin to find peace. We begin to feel a calm joy. We begin to experience

an awareness and an empathy with other people that would never be possible under the influence of a drug.

One way to develop our conscious contact with God is to practice accepting conditions as they are, and trust that they will improve. We strive to practice prayer and meditation several times a day, until these become a routine part of our lives. In this way, we begin to face life on God's terms, and that gives us the necessary sense of peace for us to live clean successfully.

As a result, we have a continuing conscious contact with a personal God of our understanding. We enjoy an increasing assurance of God's will for us and the spiritual power necessary to effectively carry out that will. When we pray for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out, a remarkable thing happens: we find the means, the ways and the energies to perform tasks far beyond what we believed possible. By the apparent surrender of our own power, we gain a far mightier power that will see us through every conceivable trial or trouble so long as we keep faith and renew it through daily prayer.

The Eleventh Step has come to be an attitude of always looking for God's will for us in the circumstances of our lives. Instead of giving a lot of thought to why things happened to us, or what we could have done differently, we now ask to be shown what the lesson is. In the course of our daily lives, we usually tend to forget to keep things simple, and we build our problems into unmovable mountains. Patience is not exactly one of our strong points either. We want everything settled yesterday to our satisfaction. We are experts at making ourselves so frustrated that we lose perspective completely. Cultivating

the Eleventh Step in our daily lives gives us an inner strength to deal with the problems we face.

Being openminded allows us to hear something that might save our lives. It allows us to listen to opposing points of view, and come to conclusions of our own. Openmindedness leads us to those very insights that have eluded us during our lives. It is this principle--openmindedness--which is acquired through prayer and meditation. This allows us to participate in a discussion without jumping to conclusions or predetermining who is right and who is wrong. We no longer have to make fools of ourselves by standing up for old ideas that may not be applicable today. We have learned that it is okay not to know everything, for then we are teachable and can learn how to live our new life successfully. Staying teachable is a product of practicing the Eleventh Step. When we use the capacity to recognize compassion and beauty in others, and accept the miracles in every form of life, we begin to experience a Power greater than ourselves as we understand Him.

We see that God's love was there all the time, just waiting for us to accept it. Life finally begins to get better, even though we still face all the heartaches and tragedies that are the lot of mankind. Few supposedly normal people are able to face hardships with the strength and calm shown by N.A.s who truly work this step.

We come into N.A. initially a broken segment of humanity seeking for ourselves a relief from our problem of drug addiction. Upon taking the steps through admission, submission, and restitution, we come to the construction phase of our new lives. We are then ready to live each day guided by God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

The Eleventh Step is right where it should be; it took working the other steps for us to arrive at the Eleventh Step in spiritual shape to accept how good it enables us to feel.

able to face our Higher Power, ourselves and our loved ones. We develop a solid base to work from, which assures us that we can go anywhere and do anything, with complete assurance that we can handle whatever we have at hand. With this kind of attitude, we are able to be of help to the addict who still suffers, and have a real basis for happy living.

Usually, by the time we achieve this state of mind, no one has to tell us to share our new life with the still-suffering addict; we are more than eager to help that person, giving away that which has been given to us. All we have is our experience, strength, and hope. We are recovering addicts. The closest we ever become to being saints is when we're helping another addict. One of the most spiritual acts we can do is to share what only we as recovering addicts can offer the still-suffering addict: ourselves. We call it "carrying the message" and we do it in any number of ways.

The first way in which we carry the message is by staying clean with the help of God and the N.A. program. Our new way of life speaks for itself better than our words ever could. We gradually come alive as we regain our physical health and continue to recover,

By sharing our experience of recovery with newcomers, both by sponsorship and at meetings, we help ourselves stay clean. As a result of this, we find ourselves being constantly reminded of things that help us want to stay clean. Being able to serve as an instrument of a loving God and participating in the recovery of others keeps a sense of wonder and gratitude in our lives. Giving comfort and hope to others encourages and comforts us. Today, we have people in our lives who stand by us when it's rough. We no longer feel like we have to run from anything. We do not retreat when called upon to carry the message. We carry the message to the still suffering addict to remind ourselves where we came

from. We learn that if we do not use what we have, we will lose what we have. We've got to give it away to keep it. By helping the newcomer, we are reminded of where we could be. Just as we go to meetings to remind ourselves that we're addicts and that we can't use, we help the still suffering addict to remind us of the pain of active addiction. Both people can gain from a 12th Step call. A person who has worked the twelve steps is able to help a newcomer in his first few days by answering many questions. The more we work the steps in our lives, the more we are able to share with addicts who reach out for help.

Doing the twelfth step is putting love and commitment into action. There is no drug on earth that can give us the same good feeling as sharing our experience, strength and hope, and being able to watch someone choose the path of freedom from addiction.

When we share with someone, we may say, "Lord, make me an instrument of your Will." To insure our own recovery, we should never go on a 12-step call alone. Active addiction is something we should never face alone. When going on a 12-step call, we should always bring another member. The added experience, strength and hope of 2 or more recovering addicts not only protects us, but it also gives the suffering addicts different experiences to relate to.

Whenever we talk to someone about the steps of the program, we do it as one friend sharing their experience with another. We try to avoid the arrogance of self-righteousness, because it is one of the deadliest forms of self-deception. We avoid pushing any ideas on anyone, but we do suggest, strongly, that each person make an honest attempt to give themselves a break! We don't set ourselves up as God. We share our experience with them because that's all we have. We tell them what happened and how we got clean in this fellowship. We share that our problem was not stopping but staying stopped. We found that in N.A.

just for today, we never have to use again. At this point, we take them to a meeting. We are simply an instrument of God's will in action.

Someone said once that he had never made an unsuccessful 12-step call. This sounds pompous until we consider what success really means. Regardless of the outcome, we have planted the seed of recovery. Experience also shows that carrying the message ensures our own recovery. We bear in mind what our own limitations are and make no expectations for the other person to do or be anything. One twelve step call of this nature can make a life worthwhile. There are plenty of such calls for those of us in N.A. In the course of carrying the message, each of us comes to our own understanding of the twelfth step. If we have difficulties, we trust our groups and the principles of the program to guide us.

The twelfth step also suggests that we practice these principles in all of our affairs. As long as we stay clean and live these principles, we are doing twelfth step work. We are attracting people to us and the N.A. fellowship by our example of being clean. We no longer wish to participate in the problem. We now serve God. In this manner of service, we renew our vow to turn our will and lives over to the care of God. Even if we have no such understanding, we will acquire it through seeing others recover. Fellow addicts show that God is loving and we will know a life free of drugs that we never dreamed possible.

We re-evaluate our old ideas, so that we can become acquainted with the new ideas that lead to a new way of life. We believe that the old self-destruction and self-centeredness can only be replaced with spiritual principles. The three basic spiritual principles are honesty, open-mindedness and willingness to try. We say that they are the "HOW" of our program. One of the principles of the program is an attitude of acceptance. Working the basic tenets of being honest, openminded and

-willing to change our detrimental ways affords us the opportunity of never-ending growth and spiritual achievement. We can't run the world or control our addiction. As often as we choose to work the steps on any problem we have, that is how often we will be successful in resolving that problem. The rewards of working the steps are ultimately realized in that rich feeling of completion that comes from working and continuing to work the twelfth step.

However, open-mindedness without willingness will get us nowhere. We must be willing to go to any lengths to get our recovery. We never know when the time will come when we must put forth all the effort and strength we have to stay clean. Honesty, openmindedness and willingness to try work hand in hand. The lack of one of these principles in our programs can kill us. Living a personal program without these principles will make recovery difficult and painful for us when it should be beautifully simple.

We attend meetings regularly and make ourselves visible and available to serve the fellowship. We give freely and gratefully of our time, our services, our resources and our experience. There is a spirit or an energy that can be felt in the meetings, and it is sometimes the newcomer's first perception of God. This spirit relaxes and helps us to get honest with each other. We let go of our egos and learn from our fellow addicts. Honest sharing enhances our recovery and shows us that this spirit is taking care of us and working for our good. We no longer blame God and others for our problems. We see that they have been of our own making.

The last part of the 12th step, "to practice these principles in all our affairs", means to work the steps in our everyday lives. We find that by doing this we are able to live, work and handle all the situations in the real world outside of N.A. We have found that by doing the steps

in order, we are able to apply them to our daily affairs. If we try to practice these principles on a continual basis, we never have to use drugs again. The old habit of using drugs is replaced by the new habit of not using, and helping others to get clean.

As a result of our spiritual awakening, a transformation takes place within us. We find a new source of strength which we can use. Now we can realistically begin to practice spiritual principles in our daily affairs. We reach the end of isolation of self. Our fear turns into faith. God becomes a source of nurture, and we seek him for strength rather than condemnation. Self-esteem supplants our poor self image. We learn to appreciate and develop the talents which God has given us. We're willing to admit when we are wrong. We become willing to strive for self improvement and as a result, take responsibility for our actions. We learn how to love ourselves and others. We see ourselves more honestly and in a more realistic light, rather than wasting our time on delusions and fantasies. We learn to take better care of our health through proper diet and exercise. We forgive ourselves for our imperfections, developing a more balanced view of ourselves. We become more open-minded towards other peoples opinions, rather than worrying about what people think of us. As we learn to be more assertive, others come to respect us for who we truly are. We can respect and love others who are close to us without obsessively seeking their approval. We learn how to follow through on commitments at work and in school. We become willing to be a part of our community, letting our neighbors get to know us as we really are. The more we practice these principles in our daily lives, the more positive results we will find happening each day. The most wonderful feeling we can know is that of being a part of humanity, after our many years of isolation! A surge of well-being rises within us, assuring us that we are right where we're supposed to be.

What we have today is the wonderful reality of our recovery and all that it means to us. Each day we live clean awakens us to the freedom we had all along but failed to realize. We succeed now, where we had known only failure before. Many of our dreams, forgotten and obscured by our addiction, return and help us regain the sense of wonder and excitement at the miracle of living clean. A great many things become possible for us. Since we live clean and grow, we are able to take our place in the world. "The steps do not end here, they are a new beginning."