

STEP ONE

"We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable."

As addicts, we have each experienced the pain, loneliness, and despair of addiction. Before coming to N.A., most of us tried every available means to control our use of drugs; none of them were successful. We switched drugs, thinking that with another substance we might find more control. We swore we would never do the things we watched other addicts do, then found ourselves doing those very things. Despite our best schemes and plans, we found ourselves in a continuing downward spiral. At every turn our disease progressed, overpowering our best intentions.

We found that when we used, we set up a craving for drugs which could never be satisfied. Our self-centered thinking fed this obsession--no power on earth could stand in the way of our finding more drugs. We could neither take enough drugs to make us feel right, nor could we stop using on our own. We found that, no matter how much we used, we could not escape the overwhelming loneliness of our addiction. Trapped in a self-destructive cycle, we could no longer avoid the tightening grip of our disease.

We often told ourselves that, given the right set of circumstances, we might still be able to bring our lives under control. Always skillful at defending our actions, we refused to accept responsibility for the damage done by our addiction. We believed that if we tried long and hard enough, altered our use of drugs, switched friends, or changed our living arrangements or our occupations our lives would improve. These rationalizations had failed us before, yet we continued to cling to them.

*nonverbal
may relate to
problem less
than disease.*

25 Denial is a big part of our disease, manifesting itself in many ways in our lives.
26 In our addiction, we used denial as a survival technique to protect ourselves against
27 the reality of our lives. Denial let us tell ourselves, despite evidence to the contrary,
28 that we didn't have a ~~disease~~ ^{problem}. It let us tell ourselves that we could use again
29 successfully. It allowed us to justify our actions, despite the wreckage around us
30 resulting from our addiction. Eventually, however, we could no longer fool
31 ourselves. Our emotions surfaced; no matter how we tried to forestall them, we
32 were forced to feel them.

33 No matter how we tried to deny the disease, we continued to paint ourselves into
34 a corner of utter despair. Often some crisis brought us face-to-face with the results
35 of our addiction. But many times, it was simply the overwhelming emotional pain of
36 our addiction that brought us to our knees. We knew that we could not remain in
37 the anguish and the insanity of our disease. What brought us to Narcotics
38 Anonymous was an all-consuming emptiness that no substance could fill. We were
39 terrified of what our future held for us. Often alone, definitely humbled, we
40 approached the rooms of N.A.

41 Perhaps we arrived in N.A. without seeing the problems we had left in our wake.
42 Because of our ~~total~~ ^{delete} self-centeredness, we are often the last ones to realize that we
43 are addicts. Sometimes the wreckage we had avoided in the past becomes the
44 wreckage we must deal with in the present. No matter how it occurs, the illusion
45 that we carried about our lives for so long must be shattered so that we can face the
46 truth of our addiction.

47 Many of us recall that "moment of clarity," the time when we came face-to-face
48 with the truth of our addiction. All the lies, all the pretenses, all the rationalizations

*add somewhere in here: concept that many of
us were forced to these rooms, (counts, ~~the~~ family)
not believing we were addicts.*

49 we had used to justify where we stood as a result of our drug use stopped working.
 50 Who and what we were became more clear. We could no longer run from the truth
 51 of our addiction.

*end of
using*

52 When we finally turned to *Narcotics Anonymous* the Twelve Steps, we began to find relief from our
 53 addiction. We reached a point of acceptance all addicts in recovery have found--the
 54 point of surrender. We admitted to ourselves, *admission of* *surrender*, that despite
 55 repeated attempts to control our addiction we could not do so. We finally admitted
 56 we were powerless over our addiction, and that our lives had become
 57 unmanageable.

58 With the help of other recovering addicts, we stop using, for we have found only
 59 one way to begin treating our addiction. That way is through total abstinence from
 60 all drugs. Only when we interrupt the progression of our disease by not taking that
 61 first drug can we begin to glimpse just how much damage we have done to ourselves
 62 and those around us. We know with certainty that countless addicts have found
 63 relief from active addiction in Narcotics Anonymous. They have done so because
 64 we treat addiction as a disease--progressive, incurable, and fatal. Regardless of how
 65 we define it, we know that addiction has touched us in every area of our lives--
 66 physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. *"we"*

67 As we work the First Step, an honest look at our lives distinctly shows us the
 68 destructive force of addiction. We begin to get a clearer picture of just what
 69 addiction is, and what it has done to our lives. Only after we focus on our
 70 powerlessness and unmanageability can we begin to recognize our self-deception.
 71 Over and over again, we had lied to ourselves about who and what we were. We
 72 had lost the ability to be honest about almost any aspect of our lives. *how to*

*add , and delete
this
sentence*

73 ~~people well acquainted with rigorous self-examination.~~ ^{how to} [An honest appraisal of just
 74 where we stand is indispensable, for our lives hang in the balance.]

75 At this point, it is important to ask ourselves some basic and personal questions. ^{how to}

76 Can I control my use of drugs, in any form? Am I willing to stop using? Am I

77 willing to go to any lengths? Given a choice between the ^{pain} ~~death~~ we face by

78 continuing in our addiction or ^{finding} ~~the commitment to~~ a new way of life in N.A., recovery

79 begins to make sense. We must surrender to this simple program in order to

80 recover, for in surrender we find relief from the crushing weight of our disease.

81 Why surrender? Because our only hope for a life free from active addiction is a

82 profound emotional and spiritual change. ^{And surrender will bring about these} Our experience shows it is necessary to

83 be willing to go to any lengths to receive this precious gift of freedom. ^{change}

84 Many of us begin the process of surrender the first time we identify ourselves at

85 an N.A. meeting with our name and the words, "I am an addict." ^{switch these sentences} [But we not only

86 make a verbal admission; we also surrender with our hearts.] [This initial surrender

87 opens our hearts and minds so that we can begin seeing ourselves honestly.] Often

88 the first time we acknowledge our addiction is the hardest, for we interrupt the

89 progression of our disease. Once we admit to our addiction and the fact that we

90 cannot stop using on our own, we are able to stay clean, ^{J.F.T.} ~~one day at a time.~~ The

91 paradox of this admission is evident once we take the First Step, for there is a

92 strength that goes hand-in-hand with admitting our addiction. We don't know why

93 we are given a freedom from active addiction. We only know that we have been

94 graced by a strength born of our admission of powerlessness. This reprieve is

95 perhaps the most profound gift we can receive, for it saves our very lives. As a result

96 of our admission, just for today, we find we ~~never have to use drugs again.~~

^{don't have to use}

97 ~~A "we" program~~

98 When we have admitted our powerlessness, it becomes necessary for us to seek
 99 help from other addicts in Narcotics Anonymous. If we are to grow ~~as spiritual~~ *deliberate*
 100 ~~human beings~~ by working the steps, we cannot afford to continue our lives of
 101 alienation. Through our collective experience, we have found that together--one
 102 addict helping another--we can accomplish what we cannot on our own.

103 In working the First Step, we find the aid of a sponsor an important part of our
 104 recovery. Our sponsor is someone with whom we can relate *and trust*, someone who works
 105 the kind of program we admire. Our sponsor becomes our guide through the
 106 Twelve Steps, helping us develop a daily program of recovery in Narcotics
 107 Anonymous. In working with a sponsor, we lay the groundwork for new dimensions
 108 of growth.

109 As we learn to trust our sponsor, we can begin to trust others. Our circle of
 110 confidence *will widen if we attend meetings regularly* ~~and~~ *and* we become more at ease with accepting direction, ~~we~~ *capit. I will* begin
 111 to allow other addicts to play a vital part in our recovery. We find great comfort in
 112 the experiences of the many addicts who are traveling this path with us. Perhaps for
 113 the first time, we find others just like us in the rooms of N.A. *and more emphasis on meeting attendance here*

114 The love and acceptance we find in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous
 115 begins to allow us to recover from the consequences of our addiction. We begin to
 116 learn a new, more sound way to live. The emptiness from which we suffered begins
 117 to be filled through working and living the Twelve Steps. We start to find a solution
 118 to our hopelessness. *we begin to learn that our* ~~Our~~ addiction is addressed in all its complicated aspects by this
 119 simple program. *being*

120 The spiritual journey

121 There is a deeply spiritual nature to this process called recovery. The Twelve
 122 Steps of Narcotics Anonymous will take us on a journey that will far exceed our
 123 expectations. Working and living the steps will lead us to a spiritual awakening.
 124 Step One is the beginning of this spiritual journey. To embark on this personal
 125 quest, we must become willing to humble ourselves to this program and its
 126 principles. One of the most important elements in the First Step is the principle of
 127 surrender, for spiritual growth involves making great changes in every part of our
 128 lives. Our future hinges on our willingness to grow spiritually. The pain,
 129 unmanageability, and suffering we experience in our lives make us teachable and
 130 bring us again and again to surrender. Our surrender is demonstrated in our
 131 admission and acceptance of our disease on an ongoing basis. We have found the
 132 foundation of our spiritual growth is in our willingness to surrender to the principles
 133 found within the Twelve Steps.

134 Abstinence from drugs is ^{JUST THE BEGINNING OF} ~~not~~ recovery. ^{OUR Recovery will continue} ~~Recovery occurs~~ when we extend
 135 ^{surrender the} acceptance and other principles found in the steps to all areas of our lives. []] We start
 136 to struggle less with our need to control. We begin to have a better attitude toward
 137 events that occur, for we find that part of the principle of acceptance means that we
 138 have a more positive attitude toward life, no matter what events may transpire. The
 139 longer we stay clean, the more we understand what a profound concept acceptance
 140 is, and how much it strengthens our recovery.]

141 Even after long periods of abstinence, the symptoms of our disease can return.
 142 We develop new awarenesses of how our disease manifests itself. No matter how it
 143 displays itself, we take into account the deadly nature of our disease. Over time, it

*This is good but belongs in 3rd step.
 Keep 134 abstinence... recovery then go to
 1st. Even after...*

rewrite

144 becomes easier for us to recognize the unmanageability in our lives. We find we are
 145 powerless in ways we would never have imagined. This is a natural part of the
 146 recovery process.

147 ~~It is crucial that we remember we have only a daily reprieve from our addiction.~~
 148 ^{if} ~~We may find~~ we have stopped admitting our powerlessness on a daily basis. We
 149 may find ourselves isolating from others. We may have stopped attending meetings,
 150 or find ourselves becoming intolerant. Our spirit of rebellion, a companion when
 151 we used, may reappear. Once we move away from our compulsive activity, we may
 152 again be left with feelings of emptiness and despair. We learn that if we act on our
 153 addiction in any form, we often pay a steep price. ~~Suffering can result when we~~
 154 ~~choose to live out our addiction.~~ When troubling signs of unmanageability appear,
 155 we have found it helpful to avoid acting impulsively and to seek guidance from our
 156 sponsor, our Higher Power, or other recovering N.A. members. ~~We make the~~
 157 ~~choice to move ahead, for we know what lies behind us.~~

158 We all experience times when we feel overwhelmed by the emotions we
 159 experience in ^{recovery. This happens because we've been} ~~staying clean and coping with the situations life presents us.~~ The
 160 ^{isolated from our feelings, by our addiction} ~~drugs we used for so many years often stopped us from feeling the consequences of~~
 161 ^{pain is, after all, just a} ~~our actions.~~ We find pain an inevitable part of life. Together in N.A., we find the
 162 courage to walk through our pain rather than run from it. Perhaps for the first time,
 163 ^{experience our feelings} ~~we allow ourselves to feel our feelings.~~ Because we are changing as a result of
 164 working the steps, we become able to identify more quickly what isn't working in our
 165 lives. Rather than trying to avoid pain, we turn again to surrender, a powerful tool
 166 we can use in all areas of our lives. Through practicing the Twelve Steps, these
 167 times eventually do pass.

168 No recovering addict will tell us that this path is an easy one for, that clearly
 169 would not be true. Many have embarked on it and have given up. It takes great
 170 courage to continue in recovery, day after day, year after year. Part of the ~~recovery~~
 171 process is to move forward in spite of the pain. Long-lasting change in recovery
 172 happens slowly, and we will turn to the First Step again and again.

173 As we return to the First Step, we know that there is a Higher Power, one that
 174 can help us when our lives again become unmanageable. Because we want to align
 175 ourselves more closely with what we believe our Higher Power wants for our lives,
 176 we begin to have the courage to seek change and growth. This personal
 177 transformation is the path of recovery.

178 The need for a thorough First Step is crucial, for before we can begin our recovery
 179 we must interrupt the progression of our disease. On a daily basis, we surrender to
 180 the fact that we cannot use ~~drugs~~ successfully.

181 But there is more to recovery than simply existing without the use of drugs. With
 182 Step One, we are on the brink of a new life. We don't always believe that something
 183 better awaits us in our surrender, ^{but} Through working the Twelve Steps, we discover
 184 that a better quality of life does await us. We have found an answer in the program
 185 of Narcotics Anonymous, for no longer must we die from our disease. We have
 186 found hope, for together we can, and do, recover.

187 With drugs gone from our lives we have no choice but to look beyond ourselves
 188 for help. The emptiness which drove us to use ~~drugs~~ is now at the forefront. How
 189 do I live? What do I do now without drugs in my life? This search leads us to Step
 190 Two.

Muller
needs
statement
that the stop ⁱⁿ ~~action~~
the insanity leaves a void
that is filled by 3d step

STEP TWO

We came to believe that a Power greater
than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Our Basic Text tells us that "we had to have something different, and we thought
we had found it in drugs." We still have to have something different, ^{and the drugs}
^{have been removed, so} ~~but the drugs~~
~~no longer work for us.~~ What can fill the emptiness we experience after taking our

First Step? What is it we seek? The answer is spiritual in nature; we find it through
working the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.

Through honesty in the First Step, we break through our denial and see just how
hopeless our lives have become as a result of addiction. We cannot linger in
hopelessness if we are to continue in our recovery. Once we have admitted our
powerlessness and unmanageability, we have no choice but to seek help outside
ourselves. Our hope lies in developing a relationship with a Power greater than
ourselves, for our recovery hinges on our spiritual condition. We must change, and
we have found that we can't do it alone.

Step Two does not come easily ^{Wally} ~~to all addicts.~~ In fact, it calls for a deepened
surrender, one that can be achieved only if we are open-minded. It requires a
willingness to try a new approach. We may have to let go of our old attitudes and
beliefs about a Power greater than ourselves. It definitely requires a change in our
relationship with that Power. If we are willing to build this relationship, we can find
a way out of our despair.

We have found an open mind indispensable when we approach this step. The
principle of open-mindedness is essential because we have run out of choices. An

I think the changes help to focus
on "coming ~~to~~ behind" / sanity vs the
whole recovery process.
A

24 open mind allows us to rethink our old ideas about a Power greater than ourselves.
 25 Only with the help of this Power can we begin seeking a restoration to sanity.

26 **Restored to sanity**

27 Step Two introduces the hope that, over time, we can be restored to sanity,
 28 ^{and} **What is a restoration to sanity?** Few of us have much experience with living a sane
 29 life; ^{what} what most of us do have is a lot of experience with insane behavior and
 30 thinking. In fact, some members state that it was their best thinking that brought
 31 them to the rooms of Narcotics Anonymous.

32 Before we can understand what it means to be restored to sanity, we need to
 33 look honestly at examples of our insanity. In our addiction we acted irrationally,
 34 regardless of the consequences. How we perceived the world around us was
 35 anything but sane. We lived lives of isolation and self-destruction, ^{acting} **We acted** in
 36 ways that caused us shame, guilt, and low self-esteem. Often we acted at the
 37 expense of others. ^{Using} **Our drug use** was the top priority in our lives, despite obligations
 38 we may have had at home or at work. Some of us found ourselves ruined
 39 financially. Many of us continued to use despite **how sick it made us, choosing to**
 40 **destroy our own** ^{the destruction of our} emotional and physical well-being. We often found ourselves in
 41 utter despair, yet we continued to seek relief with drugs. **No matter how much**
 42 **worse we knew we would feel later, we sought relief in still more drugs.** Despite the
 43 warning signs that ^{we were} **our drug use was** out of control, we continued to rationalize and
 44 justify our actions. All too often, the result was that we could no longer face
 45 ourselves. Relying on self-will had failed us. When we looked back over our lives, it
 46 was clear that we had been anything but sane.

In the process of being restored to sanity, we seek progress, not perfection. This transition does not occur overnight, and a precondition to this process is a belief in a Power greater than ourselves that *can* restore us to sanity. We each come to our own understanding of what sanity means for our lives. But perhaps at first, a restoration to sanity simply means that we don't pick up that first drug. Each day we stay clean, we are a day closer to sanity. When we practice the steps, we experience our first inklings of hope, faith, and trust, three elements in the bedrock of a solid recovery. If we are to continue staying clean, the Twelve Steps are the tools we must use in our recovery.

As more is revealed to us through working the steps, *attending meetings, reading N.A. literature, sharing w/a sponsor, and reading N.A. lit.* ~~attending meetings, and working with a sponsor,~~ *we learn alternatives to our ~~insane~~ behavior.* we learn new tools to use in living our lives differently. Our thinking slowly begins to change as a result of taking simple steps to safeguard our recovery. Progress toward sanity occurs when we move away from our total self-centeredness and practice *living* ~~thinking~~ based on the principles we learn in the steps.

Often, by watching the example of other N.A. members, we discover what works for us and what doesn't work. If we *can* learn from their experiences, *we'll* ~~we can~~ apply those lessons to our own recovery. *In addition to observing other N.A. members,* many of us find it helpful to ~~go one step further,~~ *questioning* addicts with long-term recovery about how they achieved it. *How was the drug what was the process that removed insanity from their lives?* How did they manage to stay clean for all those years? Some of the answers we receive are surprisingly simple, such as staying clean *one* ~~one~~ day at a time, working the Twelve Steps, regular meeting attendance, getting a sponsor, following good, orderly direction, and developing a belief in a Power greater than ourselves. *J. F. T*

71 **Coming to believe**

72 "We *came* to believe" implies a process. For some, this process is simple,
 73 *and for others the process takes time.* bringing immediate results. Some of us arrived in N.A. so completely defeated that

OK 74 we were willing to seek help from a Power greater than ourselves immediately. For
 75 others, however, the process of coming to believe can be difficult, even painful. For
 76 many of us, our history of a Power greater than ourselves may not have been
 77 beneficial. If we have ideas of an angry, punishing God lingering from our
 78 childhoods, we no longer need to believe what we were once told.

79 It is not necessary that we define the entire concept of a Power greater than
 80 ourselves right now. Those of us with many years of recovery continue to strengthen
 81 our belief in a Higher Power. This is a big part of the ongoing process of recovery,
 82 for just as a flower blossoms from a tightly closed bud, so our coming to believe
 83 often unfolds over time.

84 We addicts come from various walks of life and experience, so it is natural that
 85 we bring with us differing concepts of spirituality. In N.A., no one is forced to
 86 believe any dogma or doctrine. This is a program of spirituality, not a religion. In
 87 N.A., we cultivate our own beliefs about a Power greater than we are. However we
 88 define this Power, its help is available to all.

89 All that is essential to this process is a reexamination of our old ideas and
 90 beliefs. Over time, as we rethink just what we believe our Higher Power to be, we
 91 find we can forge a new understanding of what miraculously brought us into the
 92 rooms of N.A. Many of us who have scorned the notion of a Higher Power find that,
 93 as we surrender our old ideas, we gradually develop our own concept of a ~~force~~ that

power

94 guides us in our recovery. All it requires is open-mindedness, and a *willingness* to
95 believe.

96 Our Basic Text states, "There is one thing more than anything else that will
97 defeat us in our recovery; this is an attitude of indifference or intolerance toward
98 spiritual principles." The fatal nature of addiction doesn't afford us the luxury of
99 this stance. If we want to stay clean, Step Two cannot be a barrier to our recovery.
100 Our experience has shown that we must take a leap of faith,

101 This leap of faith needn't be too demanding--a small amount of open-
102 mindedness works wonders. If we look around us, we find many reasons to believe.
103 Our belief may be simply that we can recover from our lives of active addiction.
104 The freedom from the obsession to use may be our first experience of a Power
105 greater than ourselves, *and a removal of our insanity*. Perhaps for the first time in many years, our obsession with
106 drugs no longer controls our every waking moment. Knowing we are no longer
107 destined to die from our disease is a powerful belief in itself.

108 Many of us turn to the group, or the love we encounter in Narcotics Anonymous,
109 as our Higher Power. The group is a powerful example of a Power greater than
110 ourselves. Often in desperation, we enter a room full of addicts who share their
111 experience, strength, and hope with us. As we listen, we know with certainty that
112 they have felt the hopelessness *guilt* and remorse from which we, too, have suffered. But
113 there is a difference. *a* They are staying clean. Through their experience, we find
114 hope--but we find much more.

115 As we observe other addicts practicing a new way of life without the use of drugs,
116 we may come to believe that we, too, can recover. Watching the miracle of other
117 addicts staying clean is compelling proof of a Power greater than ourselves. We

notice the acceptance that recovering addicts practicing this new way of life show each other. We watch as addicts celebrate lengths of clean time that seem impossible for us to attain. Perhaps someone hugs us and tells us to "keep coming back." Other members offer us their phone numbers. We feel the collective spiritual energy of the group, and ~~this helps us start to heal.~~ *Again, the insanity lessens.*

As newcomers, we sit in meetings and listen, often with suspicion, as addicts freely share their experiences of addiction and recovery. Over time, we observe members rebuilding their lives, a constant reminder of the strength of our Higher Power. Coming to N.A. has been described by many members as "coming home." We find ourselves welcomed and accepted by other recovering addicts. We finally find a place where we belong. Through the Fellowship of N.A., we rejoin the human race.

As we undertake our search for this Power greater than ourselves, talking with our sponsor and with other recovering addicts can help us. We ask them what their idea of a Higher Power is, and how they have arrived at it. *What process took place as they "came to believe"? How was sanity restored to sanity manifest itself in their lives? What process did they use in coming to believe?* *For many of us the ~~an~~ beginning of sanity was simply, stopping our insane behavior.*

While it is useful to question others about their spirituality, we must remember that it is a personal search we are embarking upon. Others can help us, pointing us in the direction their paths have taken. We cannot, however, depend entirely upon another's experiences in this area. We must come to believe for ourselves. The need for our own sense of spirituality is too vital to our recovery for us to neglect this highly personal process.

141 Some of the strongest directions we may receive from other addicts who have
142 traveled this path before us are to ask others for help, and to pray, even if we don't
143 believe. Taking these actions may be the beginning of faith--complete trust and
144 confidence which requires no proof. Our experience has shown us that belief in a
145 Higher Power leads us ^{to the restoration of sanity} ~~in the direction of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous~~. Where
146 we once lived lives of despair, today we have hope that we, too, can recover with the
147 help of the Twelve Steps.

148 **The journey continues**

149 The longer we stay clean, the more evident it becomes that our addiction goes
150 much deeper than the drugs we used. Much of our problem seems to center in our
151 search for something to make us feel whole. It is a tremendous struggle to turn from
152 reliance on our own reasoning to ask for help, especially given the self-centered
153 nature of our disease. To achieve ongoing balance in our lives, however, we have
154 found it important to surrender to this process in order to recover. It takes humility
155 to admit, even after years clean, that some of the actions we take may no longer be
156 comfortable for us. Humility, then, is vital to our recovery.

157 Sometimes the paths we choose to follow in our recovery take us away from our
158 spiritual goals. There are times when we may choose to act regardless of the
159 consequences. The price we may pay for these actions often breaks through our
160 denial, and we discover anew that our old ways don't work. While we have found
161 that we always have freedom of choice in our lives, we learn that part of the
162 recovery process is letting go of the struggle. As we get a new perspective on our
163 lives and our thinking, we make different choices and begin to take better care of

164 ourselves. Although at times we may feel defeated, there is no cause to falter. We
 165 need only search for a way that better suits our growth at the time. These detours
 166 may be a part of the path of self-acceptance we travel in our journey. If we seek
 167 help, our sponsors and our loving Higher Power can, and will, provide us with the
 168 love and guidance that we need to continue in our recovery. Members whom we
 169 admire can be a source of inspiration to us, teaching us how to walk through life
 170 with all its joys and sorrows.

171 During difficult times, relying on the Second Step provides us with the choice of
 172 abstaining from impulsive action. If things don't feel right, we take time to think
 173 and seek direction. We trust that, with help from our Higher Power and others, we
 174 can be restored to sanity in all areas of our lives. We draw upon what we have
 175 learned in our years of going to meetings and following directions. We do not act on
 176 our insanity. Although we may feel despair, there is hope; our Higher Power is
 177 always with us. We have found that change can be painful and difficult, but we trust
 178 that whatever event or feeling comes also passes.

179 Especially during troubled times, it is important for us to take stock of where we
 180 stand in the maintenance of our program. We may find that we have stopped
 181 working the steps, praying, going to meetings, or following suggestions. We may
 182 have become unwilling to do the things we once did in early recovery. What worked
 183 for us in the beginning ^{works for us now,} remains applicable, no matter how many years we have been
 184 clean. We have found it helpful to return to the basics of this program. As more is
 185 revealed, we ^{can} once again ^{move away from our insanity,} ~~become comfortable, but not complacent, in our recovery.~~

186 Even if we are not complacent in our recovery, these uncomfortable cycles can
 187 occur. The principle of ^{faith} acceptance comforts us. We ^{can} accept that life on life's terms

188 may not always be to our liking or, more importantly, to our understanding.
 189 Sometimes we accept that sanity means simply that we don't act until we have a
 190 clearer direction in our lives.

191 Another important principle, open-mindedness, means that we become
 192 teachable, that we allow others ~~who have traveled this path~~ to share with us what
 193 has worked for them. This takes a deepened humility, for we can ask for help only
 194 when we are not afraid of how we may appear to others. We experience a growing
 195 surrender. Once we accept that we don't have all the answers, we become willing to
 196 try different solutions to the same problems. We learn that we can't depend upon
 197 our own self-knowledge and willpower for serenity, so we begin to look to a loving
 198 and caring Higher Power.

199 After years clean, even though we have been working a program of recovery and
 200 seeking change, we sometimes experience periods when ~~life seems meaningless~~ *the insanity returns*. We
 201 may experience a loss of self, a sense of alienation too painful to ignore. The
 202 ~~anguish~~ *pain* that we feel at these times may be the old self dying. ~~At such times, we may~~
 203 ~~find ourselves moving away from sanity, not toward it.~~ ~~We may begin to question~~
 204 ~~our commitment to recovery.~~ ~~We can become obsessed with self-destructive~~
 205 ~~thoughts.~~ ~~For years, our old self-image worked for us, but we no longer need this~~
 206 ~~old self. As painful as it seems, we must change~~ *include this*

207 Over time, we gain acceptance of these periods, ~~of suffering~~, for they are
 208 evidence that we are growing. We sense that we are undergoing a fundamental
 209 transformation, even though we may not yet understand its full implication for our
 210 lives. If we trust that there is growth despite the pain, we can walk through these
 211 difficult periods more readily. We begin to realize that, in recovery, new concerns

212 will constantly arise. As we work the steps, more will be revealed to us. We work
213 ~~even harder to integrate these realizations into our everyday lives, making ourselves~~
214 ~~better human beings in the process.~~

215 Our spiritual hunger takes us on a continuing search for a deepening
216 relationship with God. Our concept of a Higher Power can be whatever we want it
217 to be, and there are many ways to develop it. We don't quit before the miracle
218 occurs. We trust that in God's time, not ours, more will be revealed to us. We go
219 through the steps again and again, for each time we do, we discover more about
220 ourselves and our relationship with our Higher Power. Those discoveries will surely
221 guide us on our journey.

222 **Step Two** gives us hope for an improved way of life. It is the beginning of a
223 spiritual solution to our problem. By being open-minded enough to accept that
224 there is a Power capable of supporting us in our search for recovery, we are led to
225 Step Three, where our relationship with this Power deepens.

look for
H.A.O other
than standard
concept of

STEP THREE

*We made a decision to turn our will and our lives
over to the care of God as we understood Him.*

The heart of the Third Step is our willingness. We have discovered that we must make a commitment to change or we will use again. The surrender we experience in Step One, coupled with the hope and acceptance we find in Step Two, are the catalysts that make us willing to continue on the path toward freedom in Narcotics Anonymous. We have learned that the decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a Power greater than ourselves is critical to our recovery. In making that decision, we commit ourselves to finding new alternatives to old situations.

Willing
Strong

This decision is not a simple matter. Although we make the Third Step decision initially, it is a decision we will reaffirm over time. Nor is it something we can do perfectly either the first time, or when we have been clean a long while. The decision to completely turn over our wills and lives is an ideal toward which we strive. It is the beginning of a profound change in who we are, and how we relate to the world around us.

Decide
I like

For us, this change requires that we move away from our self-will. We have found that certain characteristics such as closed-mindedness, unwillingness, and outright defiance describe our self-will. Our self-centered obsession, and its accompanying insanity, have made our lives unmanageable. Conducting our lives in this manner has kept us trapped in a perpetual cycle of self-centered fear, pain, and anxiety. When motivated by self-will, we are constantly alert to insure that our best plans are materializing and that others are behaving as we expect them to. Our attempts at control lead us, again and again, to failure. With the Third Step in our

25 lives, though, we no longer have to be obsessed by our fear. If we accept that
 26 recovery means more than abstinence from drugs, then we must work the Third
 27 Step. By doing this, we will embrace the Power necessary for us to lead sane and
 28 productive lives. The Third Step decision is not always easy, but it is an essential
 29 part of the challenge of walking a spiritual path--the path intended by the Twelve
 30 Steps.

31 The Third Step is our commitment to our own emotional, **physical** and spiritual
 32 well-being. When we trust that there is growth in taking action despite our fear, we
 33 are able to begin Step Three. Even though we do not know how our lives will
 34 change after we work this far-reaching step, we can trust that our Higher Power will
 35 care for our lives more compassionately than we could care for ourselves.

36 Why must we work the Third Step? Simply put, without the transformation this
 37 step can produce in our lives, there is **no chance** for recovery. For many of us, the
 38 Third Step is a turning point in our recovery. We admit that we can't do for
 39 ourselves what our Higher Power can, and we invite this Power into our lives. The
 40 Third Step builds upon what we have come to understand in the Second Step--that
 41 there is a Higher Power that can restore us to sanity, if we decide to get out of the
 42 way. The rest of the steps build upon and enhance this life-changing decision.

43 Turning our will and our lives over to the care of **God** is a revolutionary
 44 decision. Seeking **God's** will, not ours, is an incredible change from our lives of
 45 active addiction. The process used in this search is **often** guided by a more
 46 experienced N.A. member and always by a loving Higher Power. With the help of
 47 our sponsor, we attempt to shift our focus away from self-will and toward something
 48 more God-centered.

Step Three intensifies our spiritual journey, for now we are asked to reflect on our relationship with the ^{power} God we will ask to guide our recovery. There can be many questions, even an element of fear in surrendering our will and our lives. We might wonder why we need a God of our understanding. Or we wonder what will happen to us if we place ourselves in God's care. What will happen to me if I work this step? What will be left of me?

The God of our understanding

concepts other than standard H.P.

Each of us will find our own process of coming to understand and trust a Higher Power. In N.A., addicts come from a variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds. Our perceptions of a Higher Power vary according to each individual. Therefore, no one concept of a ^{great spirit} God can work for all our members. If we have worked Step Two, we have, at least to some extent, come to believe in a Power greater than ourselves, one capable of restoring us to sanity. ^{It is in the 2d step that} Our relationship with this Power deepens as our understanding of our Higher Power unfolds.

Initially, our individual search for a God of our understanding may mean that we simply reach out to something we don't understand. The search we undertake for a Higher Power is one of the most important endeavors in our recovery. This is a private, internal exploration, and a matter of some sensitivity. We have complete personal choice and freedom in how we conduct this search. While the way we search may differ, we ^{can} each find a Higher Power that does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. ^{through} *add: It is the actions of reaching out that we develop this understanding of a H.P.*

It is important that we allow ourselves time to mature spiritually. As we progress in our recovery, as we grow and change, our relationship with our Higher

Power will evolve. Many of us believe the fact that we survived our active addiction to arrive at an N.A. meeting is a miracle. Both our survival and the fact that we were searching for some Power greater than ourselves, many times, were our first instances of spiritual awareness, and instrumental to our recovery from active addiction. Our first spiritual awakenings ^{open the door for} are just as significant as those that occur later in our recovery, for the beginning of the spiritual path is just as important as any stop along the way.

If we reflect on the spiritual experiences we may have had, we will begin to see that more is being revealed to us the longer we stay in recovery. Over time, what began as an exploration of our concept of a Higher Power can serve as a springboard to a fuller relationship with ^{that power} God. The decision that we make in the Third Step, and the relationship that begins as a result, revolutionizes our existence.

Making the decision

What does the Third Step decision mean, in practical terms? Step Three asks only that we make a decision; the rest of the steps are where the change resulting from this decision will be achieved.

Step Three is where we begin to learn how to make sounder decisions. It is where we learn how to stop struggling. We learn to let go, and live with the results. If we take time to think, and seek direction before acting, we no longer have to run on our own self-centered will. When we accept that we don't have all the answers, we begin to see that others' opinions and needs are often as valid as our own. Turning our will and our lives over to the care of our Higher Power can provide a solution to a life based in self-centered fear, worry, and control.

95 In Step Three, we decide to turn more than our addiction over to the care of our
 96 Higher Power, ~~We know from working the First Step that our lives are~~
 97 ~~unmanageable. Step Two gives us a belief that we can be restored to sanity by a~~
 98 ~~Power greater than ourselves.~~ ^{in fact,} In Step Three, we broaden our belief in ^{that} our Higher
 99 Power by making ^{this} a decision. ^{your} We decide to ask God into our lives. ^{emphasize} ~~In fact,~~ ^{our H.P.} this
 100 invitation asks us for a surrender that can change the way we live our lives. As we
 101 continue to work the steps, ^{3d} we find the Power we have lacked, ~~and~~ the direction
 102 necessary to build a sane life, ~~When we continue to take the action suggested in~~
 103 ~~Step Three,~~ ^{if} our relationship with our God deepens. As we begin to see the benefits
 104 of this decision, we find that our Higher Power can achieve results where we, relying
 105 on our own will, have failed. Recovery is more ^{serene} ~~comfortable~~ when we make
 106 decisions based on our understanding of what our Higher Power would want for us
 107 in our lives. ^{We work the Third Step with}
 108 ~~Our Third Step can be worked in solitude or with our sponsors.~~ ^{we combine working the 3d step our sponsors & in solitude, although} Initially,
 109 working it with our sponsor seems to formalize our decision. No one ^{else} can do it for
 110 us, ~~however,~~ The Third Step is a decision we try to embrace with our hearts, not just
 111 our minds.

112 We have found it extremely helpful to remember to ask our Higher Power,
 113 through prayer on a daily basis, for direction in our lives. Only we, perhaps with the
 114 guidance of our sponsor, can determine how simple or how complicated our prayers
 115 must be. Many N.A. members have used our Third Step prayer from the Basic Text.
 116 It reads: "Take my will and my life. Guide me in my recovery. Show me how to
 117 live." The Serenity Prayer also sums up our Third Step well; it asks ^{our H.P.} ~~God~~ to help us
 118 determine what we can, and cannot, change. The form of the prayers we use to turn

our will and our lives over to the care of our Higher Power is of little consequence.

What matters is our sincerity.

Our relationship with our Higher Power grows stronger as we practice faith bolstered by daily action in prayer. It is our experience that prayer works. When we are having trouble in a particular area of our lives, or when we feel unable to stay clean, our Higher Power can help. All we need to do is ask. With our prayers, we invite ^{the spirit we believe in} God to care for us. Each time we take this action, we strengthen our faith and our decision to rely on ^{our H.P.'s} God's care.

While Step Three doesn't free us from having to do the footwork, it does liberate us from excessive worry about the results. No longer do we need to be paralyzed by ^{lack of control or} fear, for now we have begun a relationship with ^a our Higher Power that can provide us with new direction and the courage we need to continue on the path of recovery. When we align our actions with what we believe ^{this power} God would want for us, we find it easier to accept that the results of these actions are out of our control.

~~Our lives will be enriched when we allow our Higher Power to extend its care to all areas of our lives.~~ Often we are confused about what action to take, and are fearful of the consequences. In times like these, a thorough examination with our sponsor of the pros and cons of the conduct, then a plea to our Higher Power for direction in the matter, can help us determine the path we need to take. We find our decisions become easier ~~and our fear is lessened~~ through this practice. When our hearts and our heads say the same thing, we can be reasonably certain that we are heading in the right direction.

Even during difficult times in our recovery, we trust that our Higher Power is still working in our lives. ~~When we are experiencing difficulties, we often delay~~

143 ~~working this step until we are in great pain~~ Our experience tells us that there is no
 144 point exhausting ourselves by trying to change things over which we are powerless.
 145 Allowing ourselves to become overwhelmed with the chronic struggle against
 146 people, places, and things only endangers our recovery. With the simple decision
 147 Step Three affords us, we can allow our Higher Power to work in any area of our
 148 lives. We can cease questioning why ~~painful~~ things happen and ~~trust that walking~~
 149 ~~through the difficult times in our recovery~~ *accepting these occurrences* can lead us in the direction of God's will
 150 for us. We focus less on our problems, and begin to see them as lessons on the road
 151 to a greater spiritual understanding.

152 ~~We~~ We begin to see positive results from the changes we have made. Because we
 153 have made the decision to allow God to work in our lives, and have begun to stop
 154 acting on our compulsion to control, our lives have improved. Letting go of the
 155 orchestration of our lives allows a relationship with a Higher Power to unfold.
 156 When we stop acting solely on our own self-centered thinking, we trust that our
 157 individual actions will fit into the larger scheme of things. How we react to
 158 situations and others around us starts to change. "Life on life's terms" becomes a
 159 reality. We accept that we are in a continual process of surrender and are better
 160 able to live in the moment. We make a commitment to follow through with our
 161 Third Step, even when we are tempted to manipulate a situation. Relinquishing
 162 control is never easy. With our sponsors, or alone with our Higher Power, we make
 163 the decision that, no matter what happens, ~~one day at a time~~ *J.F.T.* we will strive to follow *JFT*
 164 through on our commitment to ~~a better way of life~~ *turning over our will & our lives.*

165 Step Three sends us on a continuous search for guidance in our lives. It is the
 166 beginning of a bond with a Higher Power that will deepen as we work the rest of the

steps. Our confidence in a loving God becomes our guiding beacon as we travel the road of recovery.

The journey continues

Practicing Step Three commits us to continuing on the journey of recovery. Do I want to grow and change? Do I want to commit to my own emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being? If the answer is yes, then the Third Step is our commitment to this new way of life.

Sometimes, the Third Step decision can mean establishing new priorities in our lives. It can mean we put our responsibility to the still-suffering addict ahead of our own desires. Often, it means we must make sweeping changes in how we react to those around us. Just as we must work at our relationships with others, so we practice this same level of commitment to our relationship with the God of our understanding.

This commitment implies regular action. We will learn more about the role of the Third Step ^{plays a role} expands in our lives as we continue working the other steps. Step Eleven asks us to pray for the knowledge of God's will for us, and the power to carry it out. Step Three begins this process; it is here that we start to seek ^{own H.P.'s} God's will for us. Often God's will requires us to change profoundly. This change is advanced when we examine our shortcomings in Steps Six and Seven.

The Third Step decision yields results in all areas of our lives. When we turn our wills over to the care of a God of our understanding, we begin to make better decisions. The longer we stay in the solution, the greater is our ability to face problems in our recovery. Because we are freed by our decision to allow God to

care for our lives, we are able to reflect and focus our thoughts on improving our recovery and helping others find a new way of life.

As the spiritual aspects of our lives expand, we begin to realize that we have been given a fragile gift--the gift of life ^{in recovery.} ~~and the added benefit of recovery!~~ We ^{can begin to} learn to trust, a new experience for most addicts. We develop new relationships that open the doors to intimacy. Where once we focused only on ^{NOT} using ~~drugs~~ we now ^{focus on & appreciate} can ~~appreciate~~ the many things that make our lives so valuable. We appreciate the laughter and the joy we hear expressed so abundantly in our meetings. ~~We begin to~~ ^{see the world through a new set of eyes} ^{our N.D.} As ~~God~~ becomes more central in our lives and we ^{learn to live} ~~internalize~~ the principles embodied in the steps, our perceptions change profoundly. As our perceptions and awareness expand, so does our appreciation and faith in our Higher Power. ^{Through our acceptance, we begin to see our world differently.}

Although we strive to trust our Higher Power absolutely, we often offer our faith with reservations. We may hesitate working Step Three in all areas of our lives, especially in matters we seem to control sufficiently. Our experience has been that we tend to compartmentalize our lives, perhaps thinking, "I can control my finances just fine," or "My relationship is working, why do I need to turn that over to the care of my Higher Power?" Perhaps we choose to turn over some parts of our lives to our Higher Power while still wrestling with the issues we think we can handle ^{Our sponsors can help us make decisions about what we can} ourselves. Working Step Three only in certain areas of our lives short-circuits our spiritual development. We have found that our recovery benefits when we practice the principle of ^{acceptance} ~~surrender~~ to the best of our ability. We strive to work this step thoroughly.

this HP needs to say the we may need help in control decisions, and our sponsors can help.

As we move away from self-will, we become more God-reliant. We are freed from expectations, from insisting that others live up to our standards. We no longer need to allow others' actions to have so much impact on our lives. Perhaps at times, taking no action at all is the only way to truly let go. Through a simple decision, Step Three allows us to find the courage necessary to allow others into our lives without great fear of emotional turmoil. We can be free to value others for their uniqueness. As our need to control others lessens, our inflexibility diminishes. We no longer need to insist that our way is the only way. As our spiritual path unfolds, we begin to be freed from the problems our closed-mindedness creates in our lives. Self-centeredness, the essence of our disease, begins to fade. As our spiritual disorder is slowly brought into remission, we allow ^{our H.D.} God to weave the intricate tapestry of our new lives.

As we stay clean and experience the profound sense ^{of Acceptance} of love and relief we receive from opening our hearts to our Higher Power, we become willing to turn more and more over to God's care. If we let go of the outcome, keeping a sense of humor and a positive attitude toward life, we can experience incredible joy and freedom in our recovery.

When we are sincere in our desire to allow God to care for our lives, we see tremendous changes. We begin to gain a new sense of serenity. Slowly, our old ways of thinking are replaced by new values, and our lives are guided by our emerging integrity. ~~Even though we may stumble on the road of recovery, we become more willing to take responsibility for our actions.~~ When our Higher Power is in charge of our lives, we are free to become who we were intended to be. ~~Recovery is a process of discovery; our essence awaits us.~~ We learn that we can live

237 out our everyday lives and still be spiritual. When we work Step Three with an open
238 mind and heart and do the footwork in our lives, ^{our H.P.'s} God's grace will provide beyond
239 our expectations.

240 If we pause to reflect on our lives at this stage of our recovery, we will see that we
241 have experienced dramatic personal growth. While we may have arrived at our first
242 N.A. meeting in ^{total} spiritual and emotional crisis, the first three steps have provided the
243 basis for long-sought relief from our lives of chronic misery. This relief is only a
244 glimpse of the growth possible through working the Twelve Steps.

245 The spiritual principles in Step Three will continue to guide us in our recovery.
246 Our willingness, often reached through faith in a Higher Power that we have only
247 just begun to understand, provides us with more than a newfound freedom from
248 active addiction. Our willingness to work the steps changes our lives. Willingness
249 paves the way for us to continue our commitment to long-term recovery.

250 With this willingness, and with the help of our loving Higher Power, we are
251 ready to move forward in our journey. This is a twelve-step program, not a three-
252 step program. Step Three means everything, but without the rest of the steps, it
253 means nothing. There is more work to do. We must move on to Step Four if we are
254 going to stay clean, for we have found that the spiritual path set forth in the Twelve
255 Steps is the only way to recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. Putting our commitment
256 to recovery into action, we work Step Four.

STEP FOUR

We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

By working the first three steps, we have formed a solid foundation for our recovery. Our active addiction cannot remain arrested, however, unless we build upon this foundation. As we took the Third Step, many of us were puzzled how ~~we~~^{can} ~~can~~^{we} make sure we were really turning our will and lives over to the care of God. The answer is simple: we work the remainder of the steps, starting with Step Four.

Why ~~take~~^{work} the Fourth Step? After all, we've been able to stay clean so far. But some of us are still haunted by a driving obsession to use drugs. Others find they aren't sleeping very well at night and continue to be uncomfortable with themselves during the day. Still others may think they're doing just fine without a Fourth Step--until it catches up with them. Our experience as a fellowship has shown that, sooner or later, we usually lose our members who don't take this crucial step.

For many of us, our motivation to take the Fourth Step is quite simple: We're working a recovery program and we want to continue. Because our disease involves much more than our drug use, recovery involves more than simple abstinence from drugs. The solution to our problem is a profound change in our thinking and our behavior. We need to change how we perceive the world and alter what our role has been in it. We need to change our attitude. We need to change *ourselves*. Whether our motivation stems from a desire to move away from our addiction or to move toward recovery doesn't really matter.

23 The Fourth Step is a turning point in our journey of recovery. It is a time for
24 deep personal reflection. The confusion that we attempted to mask with self-
25 deception and drugs is about to end. We are about to embark on a search for
26 insight into ourselves, our feelings, our fears, our resentments, and the patterns of
27 behavior that make up our lives.

28 We may be very frightened at the prospect of examining ourselves so
29 thoroughly. We don't know ourselves very well, and we may not be sure we want to.
30 Our fear of the unknown may seem overwhelming at this point, but if we recall our
31 faith and trust in our Higher Power, our fear can be overcome. We believe that part
32 of ^{our} God's will for us is to work the steps, and ^{our H.P.} God's will simply cannot be bad for us!
33 We trust that the final outcome of working the Fourth Step will be the continued
34 healing of our spirits, and we go on. Our Higher Power is at our side to light our
35 way on this search.

36 The principles of recovery that we have already begun to practice are the
37 prerequisites for taking the Fourth Step. The honest acceptance of our addiction
38 that we've brought with us from Step One will help us to be honest about other
39 aspects of our addiction. We've developed a level of trust and faith in a Power
40 greater than ourselves, and that glimmer of hope we've been feeling is growing with
41 each day clean. We've paved the way to recovery with our willingness, and we find
42 the courage necessary to take the Fourth Step through living these principles.

43 Honesty is an essential part of this step. Our years of living a lie must end. If
44 we sit down and become very quiet with ourselves, our developing conscience will
45 speak truth to us. What we currently know to be true, we put on paper, holding

46 nothing back. Telling the truth is a brave act, but with our faith and trust in the God
47 ~~and the direction of our sponsors.~~ of our understanding, we find the courage we need to be searching and fearless.
48 With our courage, we'll find that we are able to put on paper those things we
49 thought we'd never tell.

50 What is meant by a "searching and fearless moral inventory?" We take stock
51 of our assets and liabilities. We try to get at the bottom of who we are, to expose
52 the lies we have told ourselves about ourselves. For years, we became whoever we
53 needed to be to survive our addiction. After living a lifetime of lies, we began to
54 believe those lies. The Fourth Step separates fantasy from reality. We can begin to
55 stop being the person we have invented and find the freedom to be who we are.

56 If the word "moral" bothers us, we have found that talking with our sponsors
57 about our reservations can ease our discomfort. A moral inventory has nothing to
58 do with making a harsh judgment of our values. In reality, the inventory process is
59 one of the most loving things we can do for ourselves. We simply look at our
60 instincts, our desires, our motives, our tendencies, our likes and dislikes as they
61 relate to others, and the compulsive routines that kept us trapped in our addiction.
62 No matter how many days or how many years we have been clean, we are still
63 human and subject to defects and failings. An inventory allows us to look at our
64 basic nature with its flaws and its strengths. We look not only at our imperfections,
65 but also at our hopes, our dreams, our aspirations, and where they may have gone
66 astray. Step Four is a big step forward on the path toward becoming a whole,
67 functional human being. Our booklet, *Working Step Four in Narcotics Anonymous*,
68 can provide ~~us with~~ more avenues to explore.

good

Good

69 Some of us may want to write our inventory all at once; others spend some
70 time writing each day. Any time we sit down to write, we ask our Higher Power for
71 the courage and honesty we need to be thorough. We ask the God of our
72 understanding to reveal what we are searching for. In most cases, we are relieved to
73 find that once we begin, the words seem to flow naturally. We need not worry about
74 what we are writing. Our Higher Power will reveal no more to us than we can
75 handle.

76 Most of us don't have much experience with the type of self-appraisal we are
77 about to do, and we need the guidance and support of our sponsors in order to
78 understand what we're doing. They may give us a format to follow, certain subjects
79 or points to concentrate on, or just general guidance. Whatever direction they may
80 give, it's imperative that we ask for their help before beginning. Not only can our
81 sponsors provide direction for the actual inventory, they can encourage us to be
82 courageous, remind us to pray, and be emotionally supportive throughout this
83 process. We often strengthen our relationship with our sponsor by relying on their
84 experience at this time.

85 Consistent action on our Fourth Step is important. We can't afford to delay
86 work on our inventory. There is no right or wrong way to proceed, except *not* to
87 proceed. If we have a tendency to procrastinate, it is a good idea to set aside a
88 certain amount of time each day to work on our inventory. Such a routine
89 establishes our inventory as a high priority in our lives. If we put our Fourth Step
90 away once we have begun, we run the risk of never returning to it. ~~We must~~
91 ~~remember that if we are not moving forward in our recovery, we're probably moving~~

backward. Once we begin writing, we need to continue our inventory until we are done.

We are painstaking and detail-oriented in our inventory. We systematically examine all aspects of our lives. We begin to see and understand the truth about ourselves, our motives, and our patterns. It is important that we look at more than one dimension of our experience. What motivated us to act the way we did? What repercussions did our behavior have in our lives? How did our behavior affect those around us? How did we harm others? How did our actions, and others reactions, make us feel? While these are only a few of the points we address in our inventories, we have found them and others issues like them to be inherent parts of our addiction.

In the Fourth Step, it is important to take a good hard look at how fear has worked in our lives. Our experience tells us that self-centered fear is at the core of our disease. Many of us have put on a facade of fearlessness,, when, in fact, we were terrified. Fear has driven us to act rashly in trying to protect ourselves. We have often been paralyzed into inaction because of our fears. We may have resorted to scheming and manipulating because of our fear of the future. We went to extremes to protect ourselves from what we saw as potential loss, disaster, and a constant lack of what we needed. Not having faith in a Power that we believed would provide for us, we stepped out and took control. We used people, we manipulated, we lied, we plotted, we planned, we stole, we cheated, then we lied more to cover up our schemes. From these actions, we experienced envy, jealousy, and deep, gut-wrenching insecurities. We were alone. As we drove away the people who cared

115 about us, we used more drugs, trying to cover up our feelings. The more lonely we
116 felt, the more we tried to control everything and everybody. We suffered when
117 things didn't go our way, but so strong was our desire for power and control that we
118 couldn't see the futility of our efforts to manage events. In our new lives, we have
119 faith in a loving God whose will for us is better than anything we could manipulate
120 or control for ourselves. We need not fear what might happen.

121 ²⁰ We assess the emotional effects of our addiction. Some of us became skilled
122 at shutting down our feelings with drugs or other distractions, that by the time we
123 came to our first meeting, we had lost touch with our own emotions. In recovery, we
124 learn to identify what we are feeling. ²⁰ It is important that we don't become
125 overwhelmed by how we feel. We can avoid this by putting names to our feelings.
126 We identify how our bodies feel when we are afraid. We realize that when we feel
127 our faces flushing, it's probably because we are ashamed or embarrassed. Naming
128 our feelings is important, for once we can label them we don't need to be ~~so~~ afraid
129 of them. Rather than panicking over how we feel, we can say "I'm angry," or "I'm
130 sad." This gets us away from the "good" or "bad" way in which we are so accustomed
131 to viewing things.

132 ^{IN OUR LIVES} We make a list of our resentments, for they often play a large part in making
133 our recovery uncomfortable. We cannot allow ourselves to be obsessed with
134 hostility toward others. We look at the institutions that may have affected us: our
135 families, schools, employers, organized religion, the law, or jails if we went there.
136 We list the people, places, social values, institutions, and situations against which we
137 bear anger. We examine not only the circumstances surrounding these resentments,

138 but we look at the part we played in them. What in us was so threatened that we
139 experienced such deep emotional torment? Often, we will see that the same areas
140 of our lives were affected again and again.

141 We look at our relationships as well, particularly the manner in which we
142 related to our families. We don't do this to place blame for our addiction on our
143 families. We keep in mind that we are writing an inventory of *ourselves*. We write
144 about how we felt about our families and the way we acted on our feelings. If there
145 was no love in our homes, we search for the ways we tried to find it. On the other
146 hand, if our homes were loving and healthy, we search for the effect this had on our
147 behavior. In most cases, we'll find that patterns of behavior we established early in
148 life are what we've carried with us up to the present. Some of our patterns and
149 choices have served us well, while others have not. Through the inventory, we
150 search for the patterns we want to continue and those we want to change.

151 The same applies to our friendships and romantic relationships. Many of us
152 come to N.A. never having had a successful relationship or a long-term friendship.
153 Whether we ran from close relationships because of fear or because we had been
154 hurt over and over again, we search out the common threads that appear in all of
155 our relationships. We ask ourselves if our sexual behavior has been based in
156 selfishness or in love. We may have used sex to fill the yawning spiritual void we felt
157 inside. This is a very uncomfortable topic for most of us. However, if we want
158 something different than what we've had, it's necessary that we begin the process of
159 change by writing about it.

The quality of our lives depends, to a large degree, on the results of our decisions. As we write our inventory, we look for the times when we made decisions that hurt us, and also for those times when we made decisions that worked out well. If we lived our lives by default, refusing to make any choices, we write about that, too. Those times when we procrastinated until opportunities were missed and gone, the times when we abdicated all responsibility, the times when we withdrew and refused to participate in life--all are inventory material. Most of us had hopes and dreams for ourselves at some point in our lives, but we abandoned those in the pursuit of our addiction. In our inventory, we try to recall those lost dreams and find out how our choices ruined our chances of having our dreams come true. We ask ourselves when we stopped believing in ourselves. Through this process, our lost dreams may reawaken.

We dig deep to learn how we lived in conflict with our own morals and values. If we believed it was wrong to steal and we ^{were} stealing everything we could get our hands on anyway, what ^{did} ~~do~~ we do to quiet our anguish? If we believed in monogamy but were unfaithful to our partners, what did we do so that we could live with our compromised principles? Certainly we used more drugs, but what else? We explore how we felt about ignoring our deepest beliefs. In the process, we discover our lost values and begin to rebuild them.

To experience serenity, we must begin to alter the self-defeating patterns that have prevailed in our lives. The Fourth Step helps us identify those patterns. We begin to see how we have maneuvered through life, perhaps not consciously planning our own misery but setting ourselves up for it nevertheless. Most of us

183 have blamed various people for the prices we paid for our addiction. We didn't
184 want to accept that our addiction had a negative impact that we alone were
185 responsible for. Some of us committed crimes and then complained about the
186 consequences the law imposed. Some of us were irresponsible at work and then
187 objected loudly when we were held accountable. We beat a hasty retreat whenever
188 life caught up with us. Our inventories will help us identify our responsibility for our
189 actions and find those circumstances where we tend to place blame elsewhere.

190 Some of us were actually abused. We had terrible childhoods of deprivation
191 and neglect. However painful and sad, the past cannot be changed. However, the
192 warped beliefs we have developed about ourselves and others *can* be changed with
193 the help of our Higher Power. We write about events like these so that we can free
194 ourselves of our most painful secrets and get on with our lives. We don't have to be
195 the lifelong victims of our past.

196 Often, our sponsors will direct us to look at our assets. With most of us being
197 unaccustomed to looking for our character strengths, we might have some trouble
198 with this task. But if we examine our behavior with an open mind, we're sure to find
199 situations where we persevered in the face of adversity, or showed a concern for our
200 *our* fellows, or even where our spirit triumphed over our addiction. We begin to
201 uncover the pure and loving spirit that lies at the core of our being as we look for
202 our character assets. We begin to shape strong values. We learn what we can do
203 and, more importantly, what we can't do if we want to lead productive and fulfilling
204 lives. What we did in our active addiction will not work for us in recovery. Step
205 Four allows us to chart a new course for our lives.

206 The Fourth Step provides us with the initial insight we need to grow. Whether
207 we are writing our first inventory or our tenth, we are starting a process that takes us
208 from confusion to clarity, from resentment to forgiveness, from spiritual
209 confinement to spiritual freedom. We can turn to this process again and again.
210 When we are confused, when we are angry, when we have problems that don't seem
211 to disappear, an inventory is a good way to take stock of just where we stand on the
212 path to recovery. After we have written a number of inventories, we may discover
213 that our first Fourth Step merely scratched the surface. As more unproductive
214 attitudes and behaviors become apparent to us in later recovery, we'll want to renew
215 the process of change by taking the Fourth Step again.

216 The steps are tools we use over and over on our spiritual path. In the process
217 of our recovery, God will reveal more to us as we have the maturity and the spiritual
218 strength to understand it. Over time, the nature of the work we have to do ~~here~~ is
219 disclosed to us. As we continue in recovery, we begin to resolve some of the basic
220 conflicts contributing to our addiction. As the pain of old wounds begins to fade, we
221 begin to live more fully in the now.

222 The Fourth Step allows us to find out who we are and, perhaps most
223 importantly, who our Higher Power intends us to be. We have identified the
224 patterns, behaviors, and beliefs that make up the exact nature of our wrongs. We
225 have written an inventory of ourselves, which revealed what we can change with
226 God's help. To continue the process of change, we move on, making our admissions
227 in Step Five.

228 *f:\steps\adhdraft\draft03\sahs4-03.doc*

DRAFT-NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

STEP FIVE

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

Now that we have completed our written inventory, it is essential that we share it promptly. The sooner we take our Fifth Step, the stronger the foundation of our recovery will be. We've built this foundation on honesty, trust, willingness, and courage, and with each step forward in our recovery, we strengthen our commitment to these principles. We reaffirm our commitment to recovery by immediately taking Step Five.

Despite our desire to recover, we may find that we're feeling pretty frightened at this point. This fear is only natural. After all, we're about to confront the exact nature of our wrongs and candidly admit our secrets to another human being. But if we allow our fears of change, rejection, and shame to stop our progress, our problems will only be compounded. If we stop moving forward in our recovery, if we cease making every possible effort to recover from our addiction, we will start slipping backward. Abandoning our efforts to seek recovery means we have given in to the disease of addiction.

We must overcome our fear and take this step if we are to make any significant changes in the way we live. We muster our courage and go on. We call our sponsors for reassurance. Usually, a reminder that we don't have to face our feelings alone makes all the difference in easing our fears. Taking this step with the support of our sponsors and a loving God is a way of putting into practice our

develop

23 decision to allow God to care for our will and our lives. Our spiritual program is
 24 enriched by our developing relationship with the God of our understanding.

25 All of the spiritual principles we have practiced in the first four steps will be
 26 enhanced by taking the Fifth Step. We experience honesty on a more profound
 27 level by making an admission, just as we did in Step One. The admission we are
 28 about to make in Step Five is especially important. Not only do we open up to
 29 another human being and tell the truth about ourselves, we also hear this admission
 30 from our own lips, breaking the pattern of denial that has plagued us for so long.

31 We find new levels of honesty, especially self-honesty, when we squarely face the
 32 results of our addiction and see the reality of our lives. The risk we take in this step
 33 increases our trust in God and nourishes the faith and hope we first experienced in
 34 Step Two. We take our willingness a step further, thereby renewing the decision we
 35 made in Step Three. We draw on the courage we acquired in Step Four and find
 36 that we are capable of demonstrating more bravery than we ever dreamed possible.

37 This bravery is demonstrated not by the absence of fear but by the action taken in
 38 spite of our fear. We call our sponsors; we set a time to read our inventory; and
 39 then we show up and ^{show} read at the scheduled time. The principles of honesty, faith,
 40 hope, willingness, and courage provide us with the necessary foundation for working
 41 the Fifth Step.

42 We become aware of a new principle to practice as we take this step: the
 43 principle of humility. As we read our inventory out loud, we catch a glimpse of the
 44 big picture and realize that we are only one human being. Through working the
 45 Fifth Step, we find that few of our actions deserve exaggerated attention. Through

our self-disclosure, we feel connected with humanity, perhaps for the first time in our lives. As we share our most personal feelings and our most carefully guarded secrets we may experience anguish. But when we look up and see unconditional love in the eyes of the person hearing our Fifth Step, the feelings of acceptance and belonging we experience warm us to the very bottoms of our hearts.

The knowledge that we are about to face feelings we have avoided for a long time may cause a rise in our anxiety level, but we go on, encouraged by our sponsors to trust in God. The first thing we must realize is that the Fifth Step is not a quick fix for a painful situation. If we take this step expecting our feelings to go away, we are expecting the steps ^{to} numb us the way drugs did. We ^{never} mentally go over our first four steps and see that their purpose is to awaken our spirits, not deaden our feelings.

Authn?

budge to 68.

Although we know we are going to derive meaningful benefits from taking this step, we may still need a sort of "spiritual boost" before we actually begin this process. Immediately before we sit down to read, we take a moment to reaffirm our surrender and the decision we made in the Third Step. We ask a Power greater than ourselves for the courage and willingness to take this step. We may want to say a prayer inviting God into this process. After all, we make this admission not just to ourselves and another human being, but also to God. We may even find that our sponsor wants to join us as we say this prayer. The prayer can be anything that reaffirms our commitment to recovery. If said with the person hearing our Fifth Step, such a prayer can be a profoundly intimate experience.

Prayer section a bit unclear

expand

68 The person who is to listen to our Fifth Step should be someone who
 69 understands the process of recovery we are involved in and who is willing to help us
 70 through it. An ideal listener will have enough compassion to honor our feelings,
 71 enough integrity to respect our confidences, and enough insight to help us keep the
 72 exact nature of our wrongs within our field of vision. Our listener, knowing that we
 73 are reading *our* inventory, will help us not to get sidetracked by blaming others for
 74 the things we've written about in our Fourth Step.

75 Although there is no requirement that the listener must be our sponsor or
 76 even another recovering addict, we are most likely to benefit from the full range of
 77 spiritual experience that another addict has to share. After all, who can better
 78 understand what we are attempting than someone who has experienced it for
 79 themselves? An addict more experienced in recovery than we are will already have
 80 dealt with the matters we are just beginning to face. Such a person can share with
 81 us his or her experience and the solutions they have found through working this step.
 82 The bond we share with another member of Narcotics Anonymous will strengthen
 83 our connection with the program and increase our sense of belonging.

84 We may be surprised by the intensity of this developing partnership with
 85 another human being. If we've never really been listened to before, we may be
 86 shocked to discover that we are being asked questions about some fine point of our
 87 personal history or that our listener is jotting down notes while we read. If we
 88 happen to look up, we may see tears in our listener's eyes and know that they share
 89 our pain. Our self-esteem increases as we realize that what we have to share is
 90 worth another's attention. By actively demonstrating their attention, our sponsors

91 are telling us that we are important enough to be listened to. The compassion
 92 shown us is one more assurance of the presence of a Power greater than ourselves.

93 As we read our inventory, our sponsors will sometimes share parts of their own
 94 inventories with us. They may cry with us or smile in recognition at some of the
 95 struggles we are now sharing. We may laugh together as we share some of the more
 96 comical aspects of our addiction and the ridiculous lies we told ourselves so that we
 97 could continue to live as we were living. As we see how similar we are to our
 98 sponsor, we realize that we're just like other people. We're human beings, nothing
 99 more, nothing less. Our self-obsession blinded us to this, making us feel unique.
 100 Suddenly we understand that other people have painful problems too, and that ours
 101 are no more significant than anyone else's. Healing takes place when we see a
 glimpse of ourselves in the eyes of another. We find humility in that moment and a
 103 reason to hope that the serenity and peace we have been striving for are within our
 104 reach at last.

105 Our feelings of alienation fade as we experience an emotional connection with
 106 another human being. We are allowing someone entryⁱⁿ to those places we've never
 107 before opened to another person. This may be the first time we've ever trusted
 108 another ^{person} ~~human being~~ enough to tell them about ourselves and allow them to get to
 109 know us. If all our relationships in the past were based on dishonesty and insecurity,
 110 we may be surprised at the closeness that develops between us. We're developing a
 111 give-and-take relationship based on equality and mutual respect. We are forming a
 112 friendship based on honesty, and such friendships may last for a lifetime.

Not only do we form a close bond with our listener, but the risk we take in trusting this person will help us develop close relationships with others as well. We've risked trusting one person with our secrets and our feelings, and we haven't been rejected. We ^{begin} now have the freedom to risk trusting others. Not only do we ^{start to} find out that others are trustworthy and deserve our friendship, we find that we are trustworthy and deserving, too. We may have thought we were incapable of loving or being loved. We may have thought there was something wrong with us that prevented us from having friends like other people. We discover that these beliefs were unfounded. We learn, from the example of our listener, how to be a more caring friend.

After taking our Fifth Step, we may feel a little ~~raw or~~ emotionally tender for a few days. We've taken a major step in the healing process of recovery. What we've done could easily be thought of as "surgery of the spirit." We've opened up old wounds. We've exposed our most carefully constructed lies for the deceptions that they were, and we've told ourselves some painful truths. We've dug around inside ourselves and found that we still hold dear the values we compromised in our active addiction. We've dropped our masks in the presence of another person.

At this point, we may experience a dangerous urge to run from our new awareness and return to the safe misery of the past. We may feel tempted to avoid our sponsor because now they know all about us. It is very important that we resist such impulses. We must talk with other recovering addicts about our fears and feelings so we can hear the experience they have to share. We'll find that what

Continued sharing w/ sponsor will allurate the fears of rejection.

135 we're going through is not unique, and feel relieved when others tell us they went
136 through the very same struggles after they took their Fifth Step.

137 Step Five provides us with a new perspective on our lives. We have looked
138 back and seen how repeating the same patterns over and over again has kept us
139 stuck in the same place. We've seen examples of our dishonesty in many different
140 areas of our lives. We've been shown how our obsession to use drugs has destroyed
141 everything we ever believed in. This "no-holds-barred" self-appraisal has clearly
142 outlined our part in the conflicts of our lives and helped us to see that, by doing
143 things differently, we could perhaps have had fewer conflicts.

144 Our awareness of our patterns of relating with others, and the risk we have just
145 taken in admitting them to another, brings about a momentous breakthrough in our
146 relationships. No longer convinced that we're much too odd to fit in anywhere, we
147 extend ourselves to others with confidence. We reach out to others and find
148 common ground to meet on. We can meet the gaze of our fellows because we're not
149 ashamed of who we are anymore.

150 All of our relationships can change after this step, including the one we have
151 with the God of our understanding. Throughout the process of the Fifth Step, we
152 turned to that Power when we were fearful, and we received the courage we needed
153 to complete the step. Our belief and our faith grow as a result. Because of this,
154 we're willing to put more of ourselves into building our relationship with God.

155 The healing process turns outward as we realize how tired we are of living the
156 way we have been. We no longer have to injure ourselves and others in the pursuit
157 of drugs and self-obsession. We finally understand that we share the world with

DRAFT-NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

*Now
level
of
summit*
*recognizing growth
as we cover
problems that are
no longer
issues.*

158 others, and we want to approach our companions and acquaintances with respect
159 and kindness.

160 The process we have undertaken so far has made us aware of the exact nature
161 of our wrongs. The *exact nature* of those wrongs are our character defects. We now
162 know that the patterns of our lives were rooted in such defects as dishonesty, fear,
163 selfishness and many others. We've seen the whole spectrum of our defects, and are
164 ready for something new. With this readiness, we move on to Step Six.

165
166
167 f:\steps\adhdraft\draft01\sahs5-01.doc

more
than
this

reading this draft I became involved
w/piece and developed a picture of
draft.

STEP FIVE

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

Now that we have completed our written inventory, it is essential that we share it promptly. The sooner we take our Fifth Step, the stronger the foundation of our recovery will be. We've built this foundation on honesty, trust, willingness, and courage, and with each step forward in our recovery, we strengthen our commitment to these principles. We reaffirm our commitment to recovery by immediately taking Step Five.

Despite our desire to recover, we may find that we're feeling pretty frightened at this point. This fear is only natural. After all, we're about to confront the exact nature of our wrongs, candidly admitting our secrets to another human being. If we allow our fears of change, rejection, and shame to stop our progress, our problems will only be compounded. If we stop moving forward in our recovery, if we cease making every possible effort to recover from our addiction, we will start slipping backward. If we abandon our search for recovery, we will have given in to the disease of addiction.

We must overcome our fear and take the Fifth Step if we are to make any significant changes in the way we live. We muster our courage and go on. We may call our sponsors for reassurance. Usually, a reminder that we don't have to face our feelings alone makes all the difference in easing our fears. Taking this step with the support of our sponsors and a loving God is a way of putting into practice our decision to allow God to care for our will and our lives. That decision, like any other decision we make, must be followed with action. For instance, if

DRAFT--NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

not
necessarily
true

25 we've made a decision to go on vacation, we would follow that decision by
26 making travel arrangements, setting an itinerary, and packing for the trip.
27 Following our Third Step decision with action will lead to a closer relationship with
28 our Higher Power.

29 Our understanding of the spiritual principles we have practiced in the first four
30 steps will be enhanced by taking the Fifth Step. We experience honesty by
31 making an admission just as we did in Step One, but we experience it on a more
32 ^{deeper} profound level. The admission we are about to make in Step Five is especially
33 important. Not only do we open up ~~to another human being~~ and tell the truth
34 about ourselves, we also hear this admission from our own lips, breaking the
35 pattern of denial that has plagued us for so long. We find new levels of honesty,
36 especially self-honesty, when we squarely face the results of our addiction and
37 see the reality of our lives. The risk we take in this step increases our trust in God,
38 nourishing the faith and hope we first experienced in Step Two. We take our
39 willingness a step further, thereby renewing the decision we made in Step Three.
40 We draw on the courage we acquired in Step Four and find that we are capable of
41 demonstrating more bravery than we ever dreamed possible. This bravery is
42 demonstrated not by our lack of fear but by the action we take in spite of our fear.
43 We set a time to share our inventory, then, we show up and share at the
44 scheduled time. The principles in the previous steps provide us with the
45 foundation we need to work the Fifth Step.

46 We gain a new understanding of the principle of humility as we take this step.
47 We've most likely been under the impression that we are somehow bigger or
48 more visible than other people. Through working the Fifth Step, we find that few

49 of our actions deserve exaggerated attention. Through our self-disclosure, we
50 feel connected with humanity, perhaps for the first time in our lives.

51 As we share our most personal feelings and our most carefully guarded
52 secrets, we may experience anguish. However, many of us have looked up and
53 seen unconditional love in the eyes of the person hearing our Fifth Step. The
54 feelings of acceptance and belonging we experienced at that moment warmed us
55 to the ~~very~~ bottoms of our hearts.

56 The knowledge that we are about to face feelings we have avoided for a long
57 time may cause a rise in our anxiety level, but we go on, encouraged by our
58 sponsors to trust in God. The first thing we must realize is that the Fifth Step is
59 not a quick fix for a painful situation. If we take this step expecting our feelings to
60 go away, we are expecting the steps to numb us the way drugs did. We review
61 our first four steps and see that their purpose is to awaken our spirits, not deaden
62 our feelings. We will need support and understanding to cope with our feelings. If
63 we choose an understanding individual to make our admissions to, we should
64 have all the support we need.

65 The person who is to listen to our Fifth Step should be someone who
66 understands the process of recovery we are involved in and is willing to help us
67 through it. An ideal listener will have enough compassion to honor our feelings,
68 enough integrity to respect our confidences, and enough insight to help us keep
69 the exact nature of our wrongs within our field of vision. Knowing that we are
70 ~~reading~~ ^{ok} our inventory, he or she will help us not to get sidetracked by blaming
71 others for the things we've written about in our Fourth Step.

72 Although there is no requirement that the listener must be our sponsor or even
73 another recovering addict, we are most likely to benefit from the full range of
74 experience that another addict has to share. After all, who can better understand
75 what we are attempting than those who have done it ~~for~~ themselves? Addicts
76 more experienced in recovery than we are will already have dealt with the matters
77 we are just beginning to face. Such people can share with us their experience
78 and the solutions they have found through working this step. The bond we share
79 with another member of Narcotics Anonymous will strengthen our connection with
80 the program and increase our sense of belonging.

81 Although we know we are going to derive meaningful benefits from taking this
82 step, we may still need a sort of "spiritual boost" before we actually begin this
83 process. Immediately before we sit down to read, we take a moment to reaffirm
84 our surrender and the decision we made in the Third Step. We ask a Power
85 greater than ourselves for the courage and willingness to take this step. To invite
86 God into this process, we may want to say a prayer. ~~Our sponsor may want to~~
87 ~~join us as we say this prayer.~~ ^{pray} The prayer can be anything that reaffirms our
88 commitment to recovery. Praying with the person hearing our Fifth Step can be a
89 profoundly intimate experience.

90 Why is it so important that we formally invite God into this process? Because
91 the admission we make to God is just as significant as the admission we make to
92 ourselves and another human being. When we reveal something about
93 ourselves, we draw closer to whoever or whatever we are making the admission
94 to. Though our Higher Power already knows the exact nature of our wrongs, our
95 own voluntary admission of those wrongs is still meaningful. Our own admission

96 indicates that we are willing to be more open with this Power. And when we admit
97 our wrongs to our Higher Power, we experience the unconditional love and
98 understanding which springs from that Power.

99 We may be surprised by the intensity of the partnership we are developing
100 with another human being as we share our inventory. If we've never really been
101 listened to before, we may be startled to discover that we are being asked
102 questions about some fine point of our personal history, or that our listener is
103 jotting down notes while we read. Our self-esteem increases as we realize that
104 what we have to share is worth another's attention. If we happen to look up, we
105 may see tears in our listener's eyes, telling us that they share our pain. That kind
106 of compassion is one more assurance of the presence of a Power greater than
107 ourselves.

108 Of course, we may feel somewhat nervous about being listened to so closely.
109 Looking at and sharing the exact nature of our wrongs is not likely to be a
110 comfortable activity. We have looked back and seen how repeating the same
111 patterns over and over again has kept us stuck in the same place. And we
112 haven't just seen the surface behavior; we've seen the defects of character that
113 have been behind our behavior all along. We realize that there is a difference
114 between our actions and the exact nature of our wrongs. For instance, we may
115 see example after example of situations where we lied in a vain attempt to make
116 everyone like us. But those examples aren't the nature of our wrongs. The
117 nature of our wrongs is the dishonesty and manipulation we were demonstrating
118 each time we lied. If we look beyond the dishonesty and manipulation, we'll most
119 likely find that we were afraid no one would like us if we told the truth.

120 As we share our inventory, our sponsor will sometimes share ^{some} parts of his or
 121 her own ^{experience} ~~inventory~~ with us. He or she may cry with us or smile in recognition at
 122 some of the struggles we are now sharing. We may laugh together as we share
 123 some of the more comical aspects of our addiction and the ridiculous lies we told
 124 ourselves so that we could continue to live as we were living. As we see how
 125 similar our feelings are to our sponsor's feelings, we realize that there are other
 126 people like us. We're human beings, nothing more, nothing less. Our self-
 127 obsession blinded us to this, making us feel unique. Suddenly we understand
 128 that other people have painful problems too, and that ours are no more significant
 129 than anyone else's. Healing takes place when we see a glimpse of ourselves in
 130 the eyes of another. We find humility in that moment and a reason to hope that
 131 the serenity and peace we have been striving for are within our reach at last.

132 Our feelings of alienation fade as we experience an emotional connection with
 133 another human being. We are allowing someone entry to those places we've
 134 never before opened to another person. This may be the first time we've ever
 135 trusted another person enough to tell him or her about ourselves and allow that
 136 person to get to know us. ~~If all our past relationships were based on dishonesty~~
 137 ~~and insecurity~~ we may be surprised at the closeness that develops between us.
 138 We're developing a give-and-take relationship based on equality and mutual
 139 respect, the kind that can last for a lifetime.

140 After taking our Fifth Step, we may feel a little raw or emotionally tender ~~for a~~
 141 ~~few days~~. We've taken a major step in the healing process of recovery. What
 142 we've done could easily be thought of as "surgery of the spirit." We've opened up
 143 old wounds. We've exposed our most carefully constructed lies for the

144 deceptions they were, and we've told ourselves some painful truths. We've
145 dropped our masks in the presence of another person.

146 At this point, we may experience a dangerous urge to run from our new
147 awareness and return to the safe misery of the past. We may feel tempted to
148 avoid our sponsors because they know all about us now. It is very important that
149 we resist such impulses. We must talk with other recovering addicts about our
150 fears and feelings so we can hear the experience they have to share. We'll find
151 that what we're going through is not unique, and feel relieved when others tell us
152 they went through the very same struggles after they took their Fifth Step.

153 *[Our awareness of our patterns of relating with others, and the risk we have just*
154 *taken in admitting them to another, brings about a momentous breakthrough in*
155 *our relationships.]* ~~*(No longer convinced that we're much too odd to fit in*~~
156 ~~*anywhere, we extend ourselves to others with confidence. We reach out to others*~~
157 ~~*and find common ground to meet on. We can meet the gaze of our fellows*~~
158 ~~*because we're not ashamed of who we are anymore.**~~

*delete
8.9.12774
stop*

159 Not only do we form a close bond with our listener, but the risk we take in
160 trusting this person will help us develop close relationships with others as well.
161 We've risked trusting one person with our secrets and our feelings, and we
162 haven't been rejected. We begin to have the freedom to risk trusting others. Not
163 only do we find out that others are trustworthy and deserve our friendship, we find
164 that we are trustworthy and deserving, too. We may have thought we were
165 incapable of loving or being loved. We may have thought there was something

* This paragraph is in italics for two reasons. First, there is some question about the appropriateness of this paragraph in this step. It describes a process which may occur in a later step. Second, it is jarring at this point and may be removed without hurting the draft. Discussion regarding this paragraph is not within my notes, and I can't find any mention of it in the tapes. Steve Lantos.

166 wrong with us that prevented us from having friends like other people. We
167 discover that these beliefs were unfounded. We learn, from the example of our
168 ^{Sponsor} listener, how to be a more caring friend.

169 All of our relationships can change after this step, including the one we have
170 with the God of our understanding. Throughout the process of the Fifth Step, we
171 turned to that Power when we were fearful, and we received the courage we
172 needed to complete the step. Our belief and our faith grew as a result. Because
173 of this, we're willing to put more of ourselves into building a relationship with God.
174 Just like any other relationship, the one we develop with our Higher Power calls
175 for openness and trust on our part. When we share our most personal thoughts
176 and feelings with our Higher Power, letting down our walls and admitting we are
177 less than perfect, intimacy develops. The God we come to understand through
178 working the steps can become our best friend--a best friend who is always with
179 us.

180 The process we have undertaken so far has made us aware of the exact
181 nature of our wrongs. The *exact nature* of those wrongs is our character defects.
182 We now know that the patterns of our lives were rooted in dishonesty, fear,
183 selfishness, and many other defects of character. We've seen the whole
184 spectrum of our defects, and are ready for something new. With this readiness,
185 we move on to Step Six.

186

187

188

189 f:\steps\adhdraft\draft02\sahs5-02.doc

1 **STEP FIVE**

2 *"We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another*
3 *human being the exact nature of our wrongs."*

4
5 Now that we have completed our written inventory, it is essential that we
6 share it promptly. The sooner we take our Fifth Step, the stronger the foundation
7 of our recovery will be. We've built this foundation on honesty, trust, willingness,
8 and courage, and with each step forward in our recovery, we strengthen our
9 commitment to these principles. We reaffirm our commitment to recovery by
10 immediately taking Step Five.

11 Despite our desire to recover, we may find that we're feeling pretty
12 frightened at this point. This fear is only natural. After all, we're about to confront
13 the exact nature of our wrongs, candidly admitting our secrets to our Higher
14 Power and another human being. If we allow our fears of change, rejection, and
15 shame to stop our progress, our problems will only be compounded. If we stop
16 moving forward in our recovery, if we cease making every possible effort to
17 recover from our addiction, we will start slipping backward. If we abandon our
18 search for recovery, we will have given in to the disease of addiction.

19 We must overcome our fear and take the Fifth Step if we are to make any
20 significant changes in the way we live. We muster our courage and go on. We
21 may call our sponsor for reassurance. Usually, a reminder that we don't have to
22 face our feelings alone makes all the difference in easing our fears. Taking this
23 step with the support of our sponsor and a loving God is a way of putting into
24 practice our decision to allow God to care for our will and our lives. That decision,

25 like most other decisions we make, must be followed with action. For instance, if
26 we've made a decision to go on vacation, we would follow that decision by
27 making travel arrangements, setting an itinerary, and packing for the trip.
28 Following our Third Step decision with action will lead to a closer relationship with
29 our Higher Power.

30 Our understanding of the spiritual principles we have practiced in the first
31 four steps will be enhanced by taking the Fifth Step. We experience honesty by
32 making an admission just as we did in Step One, but we experience it on a deeper
33 level. The admission we are about to make in Step Five is especially important.
34 Not only do we open up and tell the truth about ourselves, we also hear this
35 admission from our own lips, breaking the pattern of denial that has plagued us
36 for so long. We find new levels of honesty, especially self-honesty, when we
37 squarely face the results of our addiction and see the reality of our lives. The risk
38 we take in this step increases our trust in God, nourishing the faith and hope we
39 first experienced in Step Two. We take our willingness a step further, thereby
40 renewing the decision we made in Step Three. We draw on the courage we
41 acquired in Step Four and find that we are capable of demonstrating more
42 bravery than we ever dreamed possible. This bravery is demonstrated not by our
43 lack of fear but by the action we take in spite of our fear. We set a time to share
44 our inventory; then, we show up and share at the scheduled time. The principles
45 in the previous steps provide us with the foundation we need to work the Fifth
46 Step.

47 We gain a new understanding of the principle of humility as we take this
48 step. We've most likely been under the impression that we are somehow bigger

49 or more visible than other people. Through working the Fifth Step, we find that
50 few of our actions deserve exaggerated attention. Through our self-disclosure,
51 we feel connected with humanity, perhaps for the first time in our lives.

52 As we share our most personal feelings and our most carefully guarded
53 secrets, we may experience anguish. However, many of us have looked up and
54 seen unconditional love in the eyes of the person hearing our Fifth Step. The
55 feelings of acceptance and belonging we experienced at that moment warmed us
56 to the bottoms of our hearts.

57 The knowledge that we are about to face feelings we have avoided for a
58 long time may cause a rise in our anxiety level, but we go on, encouraged by our
59 sponsor to trust in God. The first thing we must realize is that the Fifth Step is not
60 a quick fix for a painful situation. If we take this step expecting our feelings to go
61 away, we are expecting the steps to numb us the way drugs did. We review our
62 first four steps and see that their purpose is to awaken our spirits, not deaden our
63 feelings. We will need support and understanding to cope with our feelings. If we
64 choose an understanding individual to make our admissions to, we should have
65 all the support we need.

66 Although there is no requirement that the listener must be our sponsor,
67 most of us choose to share our inventory with him or her. We are most likely to
68 benefit from the full range of experience that another recovering addict has to
69 share. After all, who can better understand what we are attempting than those
70 who have done it for themselves? Addicts more experienced in recovery than we
71 are will already have dealt with the matters we are just beginning to face. Such
72 people can share with us their experience and the solutions they have found

73 through working this step. The bond we share with another member of Narcotics
74 Anonymous will strengthen our connection with the program and increase our
75 sense of belonging.

76 The person who is to listen to our Fifth Step should be someone who
77 understands the process of recovery we are involved in and is willing to help us
78 through it. An ideal listener will have enough compassion to honor our feelings,
79 enough integrity to respect our confidences, and enough insight to help us keep
80 the exact nature of our wrongs within our field of vision. Knowing that we are
81 reading *our* inventory, he or she will help us not to get sidetracked by blaming
82 others for the things we've written about in our Fourth Step.

83 Although we know we are going to derive meaningful benefits from taking
84 this step, we may still need a sort of "spiritual boost" before we actually begin this
85 process. Immediately before we sit down to read, we take a moment to reaffirm
86 our surrender and the decision we made in the Third Step. We ask a Power
87 greater than ourselves for the courage and willingness to work this step. To invite
88 God into this process, we may want to say a prayer. The prayer can be anything
89 that reaffirms our commitment to recovery. Praying with the person hearing our
90 Fifth Step can be a profoundly intimate experience.

91 Not only do we pray to ask for strength and courage, we also ask our
92 Higher Power to listen as we make our admission. Why is it so important that we
93 that we also make our admission to God? Because this is a spiritual program and
94 our whole purpose is to awaken spiritually. Our willingness to approach our
95 Higher Power openly with our past and who we are is central to our recovery. In
96 the past, some of us have felt that we weren't worthy of a relationship with God.

97 Our secrets kept us apart from God, and blocked our ability to feel any
98 acceptance or love from that Power. When we reveal something about ourselves,
99 we draw closer to our Higher Power and experience the unconditional love and
100 acceptance which springs from that Power. The feeling that our God accepts us
101 no matter what we've done enhances our acceptance of ourselves. The positive
102 relationship we are building with our Higher Power carries over into our
103 relationships with others as well.

104 We may be surprised by the intensity of the partnership we are developing
105 with our sponsor as we share our inventory. If we've never really been listened to
106 before, we may be startled to discover that we are being asked questions about
107 some fine point of our personal history, or that our sponsor is jotting down notes
108 while we read. Our self-esteem increases as we realize that what we have to
109 share is worth another's attention. If we happen to look up, we may see tears in
110 our listener's eyes, telling us that they share our pain. That kind of compassion is
111 one more assurance of the presence of a Power greater than ourselves.

112 Looking at and sharing the *exact nature* of our wrongs is not likely to be a
113 comfortable activity. We have looked back and seen how repeating the same
114 patterns over and over again has kept us stuck in the same place. And we
115 haven't just seen the surface behavior; we've seen the defects of character that
116 have been behind our behavior all along. We realize that there is a difference
117 between our actions and the exact nature of our wrongs. For instance, we may
118 see example after example of situations where we lied in a vain attempt to make
119 everyone like us. But those examples aren't the nature of our wrongs. The
120 nature of our wrongs is the dishonesty and manipulation we were demonstrating

each time we lied. If we look beyond the dishonesty and manipulation, we'll most likely find that we were afraid no one would like us if we told the truth.

As we share our inventory, our sponsor will sometimes share some of his or her own experience with us. He or she may cry with us or smile in recognition at some of the struggles we are now sharing. We may laugh together as we share some of the more comical aspects of our addiction and the ridiculous lies we told ourselves so that we could continue to live as we were living. As we see how similar our feelings are to our sponsor's feelings, we realize that there are other people like us. We're human beings, nothing more, nothing less. Our self-obsession blinded us to this, making us feel unique. Suddenly we understand that other people have painful problems too, and that ours are no more significant than anyone else's. Healing takes place when we see a glimpse of ourselves in the eyes of another. We find humility in that moment and a reason to hope that the serenity and peace we have been striving for are within our reach at last.

Our feelings of alienation fade as we experience an emotional connection with another human being. We are allowing someone entry to those places we've never before opened to another person. This may be the first time we've ever trusted another person enough to tell him or her about ourselves and allow that person to get to know us. We may be surprised at the closeness that develops between us and our sponsor. We're developing a give-and-take relationship based on equality and mutual respect, the kind that can last for a lifetime.

After taking our Fifth Step, we may feel a little raw or emotionally tender. We've taken a major step in the healing process of recovery. What we've done could easily be thought of as "surgery of the spirit." We've opened up old

145 wounds. We've exposed our most carefully constructed lies for the deceptions
146 they were, and we've told ourselves some painful truths. We've dropped our
147 masks in the presence of another person.

148 At this point, we may experience a dangerous urge to run from our new
149 awareness and return to the safe misery of the past. We may feel tempted to
150 avoid our sponsor because they know all about us now. It is very important that
151 we resist such impulses. We must talk with other recovering addicts about our
152 fears and feelings so we can hear the experience they have to share. We'll find
153 that what we're going through is not unique, and feel relieved when others tell us
154 they went through the very same struggles after they took their Fifth Step.

155 Our awareness of our patterns of relating with others, and the risk we have
156 just taken in admitting them to another, brings about a momentous breakthrough
157 in our relationships. Not only do we form a close bond with our listener, but the
158 risk we take in trusting this person will help us develop close relationships with
159 others as well. We've risked trusting one person with our secrets and our
160 feelings, and we haven't been rejected. We begin to have the freedom to risk
161 trusting others. Not only do we find out that others are trustworthy and deserve
162 our friendship, we find that we are trustworthy and deserving, too. We may have
163 thought we were incapable of loving or being loved or ever having friends. We
164 discover that these beliefs were unfounded. We learn, from the example of our
165 sponsor, how to be a more caring friend.

166 All of our relationships begin to change after this step, including the one we
167 have with the God of our understanding. Throughout the process of the Fifth
168 Step, we turned to that Power when we were fearful, and we received the courage

we needed to complete the step. Our belief and our faith grew as a result. Because of this, we're willing to put more of ourselves into building a relationship with God. Just like any other relationship, the one we develop with our Higher Power calls for openness and trust on our part. When we share our most personal thoughts and feelings with our Higher Power, letting down our walls and admitting we are less than perfect, intimacy develops. We develop a certainty that our God is always with us and that we are being cared for.

The process we have undertaken so far has made us aware of the exact nature of our wrongs. The *exact nature* of those wrongs is our character defects. We now know that the patterns of our lives were rooted in dishonesty, fear, selfishness, and many other defects of character. We've seen the whole spectrum of our defects, and are ready for something new. With this readiness, we move on to Step Six.

f:\steps\adhdraft\draft03\sahs5-03.doc

STEP SIX

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

The insight we gained in Step Five as to the exact nature of our wrongs, while valuable, is only the beginning of the striking changes that take place in our lives as we move into Step Six. The admission we made of the nature of our wrongs, our character defects, is a necessary prerequisite for our readiness to have them removed. Profoundly shaken by our part in the past, we can expect to be profoundly changed by taking the Sixth Step.

Although the Sixth and Seventh Steps are sometimes referred to as "the forgotten steps," the Sixth Step is a necessary ~~move~~ in the course of action that must be taken if we expect to make any significant and lasting changes in our lives. We cannot simply say, "Yes, I'm ready. God, please remove my defects" and go on to Step Eight. If we gloss over the Sixth and Seventh Steps and go on to make our amends, we will only wind up owing more amends by repeating the same destructive patterns as before.

The lifelong process of the Sixth Step is just that--a process. We've started the process of becoming entirely ready, and we will strive to increase our readiness throughout our lifetime. We will need to intensify our state of readiness each day in order to deal effectively with our defects. Our job is to become entirely ready, and to open our hearts and minds to the deep internal changes that can only be brought about by the touch of a loving God.

DRAFT-NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

23 We've already had experience, in the Third Step, with what we must do now in
 24 the Sixth Step. Just as we surrendered our will and lives to the care of a Power
 25 greater than ourselves because we could no longer go on managing our own lives,
 26 we now prepare to surrender our defects of character to a loving God because we
 27 have exhausted our attempts to change on our own willpower. This process is
 28 difficult and often painful.

29 Our growing awareness of our defects often causes us pain. We've all heard
 30 the expression "ignorance is bliss," but we're no longer ignorant of our character
 31 defects, and awareness hurts. All of a sudden, we'll notice a wounded look in the
 32 eyes of a friend after we've acted on one of our less endearing traits. We'll hang our
 33 heads in shame, mumble an apology, and probably beat ourselves inwardly for being
 34 so callous one more time. We feel sick inside, knowing how our actions adversely
 35 affect the people in our lives. We are sick and tired of being the people we have
 36 been, but this feeling provides a remarkable impetus for change and growth. We
 37 want to be different, and the good news is that we already are. Being able to see
 38 beyond our own interests and be concerned about the feelings of others is a striking
 39 change, considering that the core of our disease is our raging self-obsession.

40 We are likely to feel very frustrated as we notice that our defects are still
 41 present. We may attempt to suppress them ourselves by either denying their
 42 existence or hiding them from others. We may think that if no one knows about our
 43 more unattractive characteristics they'll go away. What we must do, rather than try
 44 to exert power and control over our defects, is step out of the way and allow a loving
 45 God to work in our lives. We do this by becoming responsible for our behavior.

46 When we are confronted with our character defects, either by our own insight
 47 or by someone we hurt, we ^{can} begin by taking complete responsibility for our actions.
 48 We don't avoid responsibility by saying something like, "Well, God hasn't removed
 49 that defect yet" or "I'm powerless over my defects and that's just the way I'm going to
 50 be." We own our behavior--good, bad, or indifferent. We no longer have our drug
 51 use or our ignorance as an excuse to be irresponsible.

*Good
respon*

52 Again, we find humility when we honestly admit our wrongs. The taste of
 53 humility we experienced in Step Five grows as we again sense our humanness and
 54 realize that we are never going to be perfect. We accept ourselves a little bit more,
 55 we surrender, and our willingness to change increases dramatically. We have
 56 already experienced astonishing changes in our emotional and spiritual nature
 57 through our continuous efforts to live by the principles contained in the previous
 58 steps. Despite our lack of familiarity with the realm of the spirit, we must
 59 remember that, in Steps One through Three, we were given the basic tools we need
 60 to negotiate the path of recovery. We carry within us the honesty it took to make
 61 our initial surrender, the faith and hope we developed in coming to believe in a
 62 Power greater than ourselves, and the trust and willingness required from us when
 63 we made our decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of that Power. Our
 64 spirits were ^{are} touched by the humility of believing in that Power, and our courage
 65 grew with the knowledge our desire to fulfill God's will protected us from the
 66 destructiveness of self-will.

*w/our
growing
familiarity*

*I
need to
use these
principles
to become
entirely
ready*

67 On this spiritual foundation we lay the principles of commitment and
 68 perseverance as we take the Sixth Step. We need the willingness to make a

69 commitment to pursue our recovery despite the continued presence of character
70 defects in our lives. We mustn't give up, even when we think no change has taken
71 place. We are often blind to our own internal changes, but we can rest assured that
72 what's happening inside us is evident on the outside to our fellows. We trust that
73 even though our vision may be blocked by the disease of addiction, God is hard at
74 work on our spirits. Our job is to keep on walking, even though it may feel as
75 though each step requires more strength than we can muster. We may imagine that
76 we're struggling through a chest-high snowdrift, but there's quicksand beneath the
77 snow. No matter how difficult our progress, if we stop we will surely sink. We can
78 make use of the sheer grit and tenacity it took to maintain our addiction, applying
79 those abilities to our recovery.

80 Having written our inventory and shared it with ourselves, our God, and
81 another human being, we've become painfully aware of our defects of character.
82 With the help of our sponsors, we write a list of those defects and focus on how they
83 manifest themselves in our lives. Our character defects are basic human traits that
84 have been distorted all out of proportion by our self-centeredness. They have taken
85 on a life of their own, causing enormous pain to us and those around us.

86 Take a defect such as self-righteousness, for example, and imagine it in its
87 normal, uninflated state. Strong, confident, and well-rounded people have formed
88 values and principles to live by and believe deeply in their rightness. Such people
89 live what they believe, and share those beliefs with others in a non-critical way when
90 asked. Confidence in our beliefs is essential. Without it, we would be wishy-washy,
91 unsure of our decisions, and probably somewhat childlike in our dealings with the

world. Confident belief becomes ugly self-righteousness when we insist that others live by our values, attempting to enforce our insistence by manipulating or exploiting others.

Or consider fear. The absence of fear in the face of a personal attack, catastrophic illness, or potential injury would signal insanity rather than serenity! We may react well to fear, or not so well, but some sort of reaction is certain. We all have fears--of being alone, of not having enough money, of dying, etc. But when our fears become obsessively self-centered, when we spend all of our time protecting ourselves from what *might* happen, we can no longer deal effectively with them.

As we take Step Six, traversing the vast gulf that lies between fear and courage requires a great deal of willingness and trust on our part. Our fears of what we will be like without relying on the destructive behavior of our past must be overcome. We'll have to trust our Higher Power to do a good job on our character. We'll have to believe that God knows best what we need. And we'll have to be absolutely convinced that our present state of being is not conducive to staying clean. We must be willing to take a chance that what lies beyond the Sixth Step is going to be better than our current stock of fears, resentments, and other agonies of the spirit. When the pain of remaining the same becomes greater than our fear of change, we will surely let go.

We may wonder what will happen to us without the use of what we may see as "survival skills." After all, in our active addiction, our self-centeredness protected us from feeling guilt and enabled us to continue our drug use without regard for those

115 around us. Our dishonesty protected us from seeing the wreckage of our lives. Our
116 selfishness made it possible for us to do whatever it took to continue on our path of
117 madness. But we no longer need these "survival skills." We have a set of principles
118 to practice that are much more appropriate to our new way of life.

119 As we write our list of defects and see how they have been at the root of our
120 troubles, we might want to imagine how our lives would be without these defects. If
121 one of our character defects is dishonesty, we can imagine how it would feel to tell
122 the truth for a change. If we put some effort into this exercise, we may feel slightly
123 giddy with excitement at the possibility of a life free from having to cover small
124 deceits with major fabrications and all the complications inherent in dishonesty. Or,
125 if we find defects based in laziness and procrastination, we can visualize leaving
126 behind our marginal existence and trading up to a life of ambition, new horizons,
127 and thrilling possibilities.

128 In addition to our hopes and dreams for the future, we might find a more
129 concrete example of what we are striving for in our sponsor or others whose
130 recovery we admire. If we know a member who is exhibiting the spiritual assets we
131 want to attain, we can use them as an example for ourselves. What we hope to
132 become is evidenced all around us in recovering addicts living by spiritual principles.
133 Our sponsors share the freedom they have found from their defects of character,
134 and we dare to hope that what happened for them can also happen for us.

135 Even so, we may still go through a period of mourning over the loss of our
136 illusions and old ways. Sometimes giving up those outdated "survival skills" feels
137 like giving up our best friend. This is where we really let go of any reservations we

138 may have about returning to the life we left behind. We leave behind our excuses,
139 rationalizations, and self-deceptions, to go forward into recovery with our eyes wide
140 open. We are completely aware that there's no turning back because we can never
141 forget the miracle that's begun to happen to us. Our bruised and battered spirits
142 have started to heal in the course of working the steps. We wouldn't want to undo
143 the healing we've already experienced by repeating the mistakes of our past.

144 We begin to forgive ourselves for those mistakes when we realize how much a
145 part of our addiction those mistakes were. In Step One, we accepted our
146 powerlessness over our addiction. In this step, we begin to accept all the behaviors
147 connected with our disease. What we did in the past isn't who we are today. We
148 learn to honestly accept ourselves for exactly who we are at this moment, and we go
on, knowing there's hope for change.

150 Because we now understand and recognize our destructive behaviors, we'll
151 find the freedom and ability to practice constructive behaviors instead. For
152 instance, if we're hurt somehow, we don't have to curl up in a ball of self-pity,
153 complaining about what a rotten deal we got. Instead, we can accept what is and
154 work toward finding solutions. The more we do this, the more we form a habit of
155 thinking constructively. It becomes natural to begin examining alternatives, setting
156 goals, and following through in the face of adversity. Nary a minute do we spend
157 sulking or pointlessly complaining about circumstances beyond our control. We may
158 even surprise ourselves with our cheer and optimism at times and it's no wonder,
159 considering how foreign such attitudes of this sort have been to most of us!

160 There may still be times when we feel that entirely too much is being asked of
161 us. More than one of us has exclaimed, "You mean I even have to tell the truth
162 about *that*?" or "If only I could still steal, lie, or cheat, it would be so much easier to
163 get what I want." We're torn between the unprincipled ways of our addiction and
164 the character-building principles of recovery. While, at first glance, it may seem
165 easier to manipulate outcomes or avoid consequences, we know that we cannot
166 afford the price we would have pay. The resulting shame, regret, and loss of
167 spiritual contentment would far outweigh anything we might possibly gain by
168 compromising our principles.

169 Through upholding the principles of recovery, we seek a life of harmony and
170 peace. The energy we once put into the care and feeding of our character defects
171 can now be put into nurturing our spiritual goals. The more attention we focus on
172 our spiritual nature, the more firmly entrenched it will become in our lives.

173 We will not, however, achieve a state of spiritual perfection, regardless of how
174 diligently we apply the Sixth Step to our lives. At best, we'll catch a glimpse of
175 humility, and begin to understand the other spiritual ideals we strive for. We will
176 most likely see the defects we deal with today crop up in a myriad of manifestations
177 throughout our lifetimes. We may feel devastated at the reappearance of some old
178 defect we thought had been removed. We are humbled by our imperfection--but let
179 there be no mistake, ^q humility is the ideal state for an addict to be in. Humility
180 brings us back down to earth and plants our feet firmly on the spiritual path we are
181 walking. We smile ruefully at our delusions of perfection, and keep on walking.

We're on the right path, headed in the right direction, and each step we take brings progress.

We gain more tolerance for the defects of those around us as we work this step. When we see someone acting in one of the ways that has caused us to feel pain ourselves, we feel compassionate rather than judgmental, for we know just exactly how much pain such behavior causes. We understand that our fellow recovering addicts are just as sick and tired of their defects as we are. We know that they are trying to become entirely ready to have those defects removed, just as we are. And having experience in forgiving ourselves, we can extend that forgiveness to others.

Rather than condemning the behavior of another, we look at ourselves. We renew our readiness to have our own defects of character removed. We set our sights on our path, open our spirits to the healing Power we've found in Narcotics Anonymous, and use the resources of our recovery to do our best each moment. Although the process lasts a lifetime, we only live in the present day. We've taken a giant step forward in the process of recovery, but it must be followed with another to be truly lasting. With the readiness we have at hand today, we go on to Step Seven.

f:\steps\adhdraft\draft01\sahs6-01.doc

1 **STEP SIX**

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

4 The insight we gained in Step Five as to the exact nature of our wrongs, while
5 valuable, is only the beginning of the striking changes that take place in our lives
6 as we move into Step Six. The admission we made of the nature of our wrongs,
7 our character defects, is a necessary prerequisite for our readiness to have them
8 removed. Profoundly shaken by our part in the past, we can expect our attitudes
9 to be profoundly changed by taking the Sixth Step.

10 Although the importance of the Sixth and Seventh Steps is sometimes
11 downplayed, they are a ^{critical} ~~necessary~~ move in the course of action that must be
12 taken if we expect to make any significant and lasting changes in our lives. We
13 cannot simply say, "Yes, I'm ready. God, please remove my defects" and go on
14 to Step Eight. If we gloss over the Sixth and Seventh Steps and go on to make
15 our amends, we will only wind up owing more amends by repeating the same
16 destructive patterns as before.

17 The lifelong process of the Sixth Step is just that--a process. We've started the
18 process of becoming entirely ready, and we will strive to increase our readiness
19 throughout our lifetime. We will need to intensify our state of readiness each day
20 in order to deal effectively with our defects. Our job is to become entirely ready,
21 and to open our hearts and minds to the deep internal changes that can only be
22 brought about by the touch of a loving God.

23 We've already had experience, in the Third Step, with what we must do now in
24 the Sixth Step. Just as we surrendered our will and lives to the care of a Power

— 25 greater than ourselves because we could no longer go on managing our own
26 lives, we now prepare to surrender our defects of character to a loving God
27 because we have exhausted our attempts to change on our own willpower. This
28 process is difficult and often painful.

29 Our growing awareness of our defects often causes us pain. We've all heard
30 the expression "ignorance is bliss," but we're no longer ignorant of our character
31 defects, and awareness hurts. All of a sudden, we'll notice a wounded look in the
32 eyes of a friend after we've acted on one of our less endearing traits. We'll hang
33 our heads in shame, mumble an apology, and probably beat ourselves inwardly
34 for being so callous one more time. We feel sick inside, knowing how our actions
35 adversely affect the people in our lives. We are sick and tired of being the people
36 we have been, but this feeling compels us to change and grow. We want to be
37 different, and the good news is that we already are. Being able to see beyond our
38 own interests and being concerned about the feelings of others are striking
39 changes, considering that the core of our disease is our raging self-obsession.

40 We are likely to feel very frustrated as we notice that our defects are getting in
41 the way of our recovery. We may attempt to suppress them ourselves by either
42 denying their existence or hiding them from others. We may think that if no one
43 knows about our more unattractive characteristics they'll go away. What we must
44 do, rather than try to exert power and control over our defects, is step out of the
45 way and allow a loving God to work in our lives. We do this by becoming
46 responsible for our behavior.

47 When we are confronted with our character defects, either by our own insight
48 or by someone we hurt, we begin by taking complete responsibility for our

49 actions. We don't avoid responsibility by saying something like, "Well, God hasn't
50 removed that defect yet" or "I'm powerless over my defects and that's just the way
51 I'm going to be." We own our behavior--good, bad, or indifferent. We no longer
52 have our drug use or our ignorance as an excuse to be irresponsible.

53 Again, we find humility when we honestly admit our wrongs. The humility we
54 experienced in Step Five grows as we again sense our humanness and realize
55 that we are never going to be perfect. We accept ourselves a little bit more, we
56 surrender, and our willingness to change increases dramatically. We have
57 already experienced remarkable changes in our emotional and spiritual nature
58 through our continuous efforts to live by the principles contained in the previous
59 steps. Despite our lack of familiarity with the realm of the spirit, we must
60 remember that, in Steps One through Three, we were given the basic tools we
61 need to negotiate the path of recovery. We carry within us the honesty it took to
62 make our initial surrender, the faith and hope we developed in coming to believe
63 in a Power greater than ourselves, and the trust and willingness required from us
64 when we made our decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of that
65 Power. Our spirits were touched by the humility of believing in that Power. Our
66 courage grew with the knowledge that our desire to fulfill God's will protected us
67 from the destructiveness of self-will.

68 On this spiritual foundation we lay the principles of commitment and
69 perseverance as we take the Sixth Step. We need the willingness to make a
70 commitment to pursue our recovery despite the continued presence of character
71 defects in our lives. We mustn't give up, even when we think no change has
72 taken place. We are often blind to our own internal changes, but we can rest

73 assured that what's happening inside us is evident on the outside to others. We
74 trust that even though our vision may be blocked by the disease of addiction, God
75 is hard at work on our spirits. Our job is to keep on walking, even though it may
76 feel as though each step requires more strength than we can muster. We may
77 imagine that we're struggling through a chest-high snowdrift, but there's
78 ~~quicksand beneath the snow~~. No matter how difficult our progress, if we stop we
79 will surely sink. We can make use of the sheer grit and tenacity it took to maintain
80 our addiction, ^{by} applying them to our recovery.

81 Having written our inventory and shared it with ourselves, our God, and
82 another human being, we've become painfully aware of our defects of character.
83 With the help of our sponsors, we write a list of those defects and focus on how
84 they manifest themselves in our lives. Our character defects are basic human
85 traits that have been distorted all out of proportion by our self-centeredness.
86 They have taken on a life of their own, causing enormous pain to us and those
87 around us.

88 Take a defect such as self-righteousness, for example, and imagine it in its
89 normal, uninflated state--confident belief in one's own values. Strong, confident,
90 and well-rounded people have formed values and principles to live by and believe
91 deeply in their rightness. Such people live what they believe, and share those
92 beliefs with others in a non-critical way when asked. Confidence in our beliefs is
93 essential. Without it, we would be wishy-washy, unsure of our decisions, and
94 probably somewhat childlike in our dealings with the world. Confident belief
95 becomes ugly self-righteousness when we insist that others live by our values.

96 Attempting to enforce our insistence by manipulating or exploiting others makes
97 this defect even uglier.

98 Or consider fear. The absence of fear in the face of a personal attack,
99 catastrophic illness, or potential injury would signal insanity rather than serenity!
100 ~~We may react well to fear, or not so well, but some sort of reaction is certain.~~ We
101 all have fears--of being alone, of not having enough money, of dying, and many
102 others. But when our fears become obsessively self-centered, when we spend all
103 of our time protecting ourselves from what *might* happen, we can no longer deal
104 effectively with them.

105 As we take Step Six, traversing the vast gulf that lies between fear and
106 courage requires a great deal of willingness and trust on our part. Our fears of
107 what we will be like without relying on the destructive behavior of our past must be
108 overcome. We'll have to trust our Higher Power to do a good job on our
109 character. We'll have to believe that God knows best what we need. ~~And we'll~~
110 ~~have to be absolutely convinced that our present state of being is not conducive~~
111 ~~to staying clean.~~ We must be willing to take a chance that what lies beyond the
112 Sixth Step is going to be better than our current stock of fears, resentments, and
113 other agonies of the spirit. When the pain of remaining the same becomes
114 greater than our fear of change, we will surely let go.

115 We may wonder what will happen to us without the use of what we may see as
116 ~~survival skills.~~ After all, in our active addiction, our self-centeredness protected
117 us from feeling guilt and enabled us to continue our drug use without regard for
118 those around us. Our dishonesty protected us from seeing the wreckage of our
119 lives. Our selfishness made it possible for us to do whatever it took to continue

on our path of madness. But we no longer need these "survival" skills." We have a set of principles to practice that are much more appropriate to our new way of life.

As we write our list of defects and see how they have been at the root of our troubles, we need to be open-minded about how our lives would be without these defects. If one of our character defects is dishonesty, we can think about situations in our lives where we normally lie and imagine how it would feel to tell the truth for a change. If we put some effort into this exercise, we may feel a sense of relief at the possibility of a life free from having to cover small deceits with major fabrications and all the complications inherent in dishonesty. Or, if we find defects based in laziness and procrastination, we can visualize leaving behind our marginal existence and trading up to a life of ambition, new horizons, and unlimited possibilities.

In addition to our hopes and dreams for the future, we might find a more concrete example of what we are striving for in our sponsor or others whose recovery we admire. If we know a member who is exhibiting the spiritual assets we want to attain, we can use them as an example for ourselves. What we hope to become is evidenced all around us in recovering addicts living by spiritual principles. Our sponsors share the freedom they have found from their defects of character, and ^{FAITH} ~~we dare to hope~~ that what happened for them ^{will} ~~can~~ also happen for us.

Even so, we may still go through a period of mourning over the loss of our illusions and old ways. Sometimes giving up those outdated "survival skills" feels like giving up our best friend. This is where we really let go of any reservations we may have about returning to the life we left behind. We leave behind our excuses,

144 rationalizations, and self-deceptions, to go forward into recovery with our eyes
145 wide open. We are completely aware that there's no turning back because we
146 can never forget the miracle that's begun to happen to us. Our bruised and
147 battered spirits have started to heal in the course of working the steps.

148 We begin to forgive ourselves for our mistakes when we realize how much a
149 part of our addiction those mistakes were. In Step One, we accepted our
150 powerlessness over our addiction. In this step, we begin to accept all the
151 behaviors connected with our disease. Our character defects do not define who
152 we are. We learn to honestly accept ourselves for exactly who we are at this
153 moment, and we go on, knowing there's hope for change.

154 Because we now understand and recognize our destructive behaviors, we'll
155 find the freedom and ability to practice constructive behaviors instead. For
156 instance, if we're hurt somehow, we don't have to curl up in a ball of self-pity,
157 complaining about what a rotten deal we got. Instead, we can accept what is and
158 work toward finding solutions. The more we do this, the more we form a habit of
159 thinking constructively. It becomes natural to begin examining alternatives,
160 setting goals, and following through in the face of adversity. Hardly a minute do
161 we have to spend sulking or pointlessly complaining about circumstances beyond
162 our control. We may even surprise ourselves with our cheer and optimism at
163 times and it's no wonder, considering how foreign such attitudes have been to
164 most of us!

165 There may still be times when we feel that entirely too much is being asked of
166 us. More than one of us has exclaimed, "You mean I even have to tell the truth
167 about *that*?" or "If only I could still lie, steal, or cheat, it would be so much easier to

7TH
STEP

7/11/2
168 get what I want." We're torn between the unprincipled ways of our addiction and
169 the character-building principles of recovery. While, at first glance, it may seem
170 easier to manipulate outcomes or avoid consequences, we know that we cannot
171 afford the price we would have pay. The resulting shame, regret, and loss of
172 spiritual contentment would far outweigh anything we might possibly gain by
173 compromising our principles.

174 Through upholding the principles of recovery, we seek a life of harmony and
175 peace. The energy we once put into the care and feeding of our character
176 defects can now be put into nurturing our spiritual goals. The more attention we
177 focus on our spiritual nature, the more firmly entrenched it will become in our
178 lives.

179 We will not, however, achieve a state of spiritual perfection, regardless of how
180 diligently we apply the Sixth Step to our lives. We will most likely see the defects
181 we deal with today crop up in a myriad of manifestations throughout our lifetimes.

182 We may feel devastated at the reappearance of some old defect we thought had
183 been removed. We are humbled by our imperfection--but let there be no mistake,
184 humility is the ideal state for an addict to be in. Humility brings us back down to
185 earth and plants our feet firmly on the spiritual path we are walking. We smile
186 ruefully at our delusions of perfection, and keep on walking. We're on the right
187 path, headed in the right direction, and each step we take brings progress.

188 We gain more tolerance for the defects of those around us as we work this
189 step. When we see someone acting in one of the ways that has caused us to feel
190 pain ourselves, we feel compassionate rather than judgmental, for we know just
191 exactly how much pain such behavior causes. Rather than condemning the

192 behavior of another, we look at ourselves. Having experience in accepting
193 ourselves, we can extend compassion and tolerance to others.

194 We ask ourselves if we are entirely ready to have God remove all of our
195 defects--every single one. If any reservation exists; if we feel the need to cling to
196 any defect, we pray for willingness. We set our sights on our path, open our
197 spirits to the healing Power we've found in Narcotics Anonymous, and use the
198 resources of our recovery to do our best each moment. Although the process
199 lasts a lifetime, we only live in the present day. We've taken a giant step forward
200 in the process of recovery, but it must be followed with another to be truly lasting.
201 With the readiness we have at hand today, we go on to Step Seven.

202

203

204 f:\steps\adhdraft\draft02\sahs6-02.doc

1

2

3

4

10

17

22

lives, we now prepare to surrender our defects of character to a loving God because we have exhausted our attempts to change on our own willpower. This process is difficult and often painful.

Our growing awareness of our defects often causes us pain. We've all heard the expression "ignorance is bliss," but we're no longer ignorant of our character defects, and awareness hurts. All of a sudden, we'll notice a wounded look in the eyes of a friend after we've acted on one of our less endearing traits. We'll hang our heads in shame, mumble an apology, and probably beat ourselves inwardly for being so callous one more time. We feel sick inside, knowing how our actions adversely affect the people in our lives. We are sick and tired of being the people we have been, but this feeling compels us to change and grow. We want to be different, and the good news is that we already are. Being able to see beyond our own interests and being concerned about the feelings of others are striking changes, considering that the core of our disease is our raging self-obsession.

We are likely to feel very frustrated as we notice that our defects are getting in the way of our recovery. We may attempt to suppress them ourselves by either denying their existence or hiding them from others. We may think that if no one knows about our more unattractive characteristics they'll go away. What we must do, rather than try to exert power and control over our defects, is step out of the way and allow a loving God to work in our lives. One part of this process involves becoming responsible for our behavior.

When we are confronted with our character defects, either by our own insight or by someone we hurt, we begin by taking complete responsibility for our actions. We don't avoid responsibility by saying something like, "Well, God hasn't

49 removed that defect yet" or "I'm powerless over my defects and that's just the way
50 I'm going to be." We accept responsibility for our behavior--good, bad, or
51 indifferent. We no longer have our drug use or our ignorance as an excuse to be
52 irresponsible.

53 Again, we find humility when we honestly admit our wrongs. The humility we
54 experienced in Step Five grows as we again sense our humanness and realize
55 that we are never going to be perfect. We accept ourselves a little bit more, we
56 surrender, and our willingness to change increases dramatically. We have
57 already experienced remarkable changes in our emotional and spiritual nature
58 through our continuous efforts to live by the principles contained in the previous
59 steps. Despite our lack of familiarity with the realm of the spirit, we must
60 remember that, in Steps One through Three, we were given the basic tools we
61 need to negotiate the path of recovery. We carry within us the honesty it took to
62 make our initial surrender, the faith and hope we developed in coming to believe
63 in a Power greater than ourselves, and the trust and willingness required from us
64 when we made our decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of that
65 Power. Our spirits were touched by the humility of believing in that Power. Our
66 courage grew with the knowledge that our desire to fulfill God's will protected us
67 from the destructiveness of self-will.

68 On this spiritual foundation we lay the principles of commitment and
69 perseverance as we take the Sixth Step. We need the willingness to make a
70 commitment to pursue our recovery despite the continued presence of character
71 defects in our lives. We mustn't give up, even when we think no change has
72 taken place. We are often blind to our own internal changes, but we can rest

73 assured that what's happening inside us is evident on the outside to others. We
74 trust that even though our vision may be blocked by the disease of addiction, God
75 is hard at work on our spirits. Our job is to keep on walking, even though it may
76 feel as though each step requires more strength than we can muster. No matter
77 how difficult our progress, we must persevere. We can make use of the sheer grit
78 and tenacity it took to maintain our addiction by applying them to our recovery.

79 Having written our inventory and shared it with ourselves, our God, and
80 another human being, we've become painfully aware of our defects of character.
81 With the help of our sponsors, we write a list of those defects and focus on how
82 they manifest themselves in our lives. Our character defects are basic human
83 traits that have been distorted all out of proportion by our self-centeredness.
84 They have taken on a life of their own, causing enormous pain to us and those
85 around us.

86 Take a defect such as self-righteousness, for example, and imagine it in its
87 normal, uninflated state--confident belief in one's own values. Strong, confident,
88 and well-rounded people have formed values and principles to live by and believe
89 deeply in their rightness. Such people live what they believe, and share those
90 beliefs with others in a non-critical way when asked. Confidence in our beliefs is
91 essential. Without it, we would be wishy-washy, unsure of our decisions, and
92 probably somewhat childlike in our dealings with the world. Confident belief
93 becomes ugly self-righteousness when we insist that others live by our values.
94 Attempting to enforce our insistence by manipulating or exploiting others makes
95 this defect even uglier.

Or consider fear. The absence of fear in the face of a personal attack, catastrophic illness, or potential injury would signal insanity rather than serenity! We all have fears--of being alone, of not having enough money, of dying, and many others. But when our fears become obsessively self-centered, when we spend all of our time protecting ourselves from what *might* happen, we can no longer deal effectively with life.

As we take Step Six, traversing the vast gulf that lies between fear and courage requires a great deal of willingness and trust on our part. Our fears of what we will be like without relying on the destructive behavior of our past must be overcome. We'll have to trust our Higher Power to do a good job on our character. We'll have to believe that God knows best what we need. We must be willing to take a chance that what lies beyond the Sixth Step is going to be better than our current stock of fears, resentments, and other agonies of the spirit. When the pain of remaining the same becomes greater than our fear of change, we will surely let go.

We may wonder what will happen to us without the use of what we may see as survival skills. After all, in our active addiction, our self-centeredness protected us from feeling guilt and enabled us to continue our drug use without regard for those around us. Our denial protected us from seeing the wreckage of our lives. Our selfishness made it possible for us to do whatever it took to continue on our path of madness. But we no longer need these "skills." We have a set of principles to practice that are much more appropriate to our new way of life.

As we write our list of defects and see how they have been at the root of our troubles, we need to be open-minded about how our lives would be without these

120 defects. If one of our character defects is dishonesty, we can think about
121 situations in our lives where we normally lie and imagine how it would feel to tell
122 the truth for a change. If we put some effort into this exercise, we may feel a
123 sense of relief at the possibility of a life free from having to cover small deceptions with
124 major fabrications and all the complications inherent in dishonesty. Or, if we find
125 defects based in laziness and procrastination, we can visualize leaving behind our
126 marginal existence and trading up to a life of ambition, new horizons, and
127 unlimited possibilities.

128 In addition to our hopes and dreams for the future, we might find a more
129 concrete example of what we are striving for in our sponsor or others whose
130 recovery we admire. If we know a member who is exhibiting the spiritual assets
131 we want to attain, we can use them as an example for ourselves. What we hope
132 to become is evidenced all around us in recovering addicts living by spiritual
133 principles. Our sponsors share the freedom they have found from their defects of
134 character, and we have faith that what happened for them will also happen for us.

135 Even so, we may still go through a period of mourning over the loss of our
136 illusions and old ways. Sometimes giving up those outdated survival skills feels
137 like giving up our best friend. We do, however, need to surrender our
138 reservations, excuses, rationalizations, and self-deceptions, and go forward into
139 recovery with our eyes wide open. We are completely aware that there's no
140 turning back because we can never forget the miracle that's begun to happen to
141 us. Our bruised and battered spirits have started to heal in the course of working
142 the steps.

Part of the process of becoming entirely ready involves practicing constructive behavior. Because we now understand and recognize our destructive behaviors, we'll find the willingness to practice constructive behaviors instead. For instance, if we're hurt somehow, we don't have to curl up in a ball of self-pity, complaining about what a rotten deal we got. Instead, we can accept what is and work toward finding solutions. The more we do this, the more we form a habit of thinking constructively. It becomes natural to begin examining alternatives, setting goals, and following through in the face of adversity. Hardly a minute do we have to spend sulking or pointlessly complaining about circumstances beyond our control. We may even surprise ourselves with our cheer and optimism at times and it's no wonder, considering how foreign such attitudes have been to most of us!

There may still be times when we feel that entirely too much is being asked of us. More than one of us has exclaimed, "You mean I even have to tell the truth about *that*?" or "If only I could still lie, steal, or cheat, it would be so much easier to get what I want." We're torn between the unprincipled ways of our addiction and the character-building principles of recovery. While, at first glance, it may seem easier to manipulate outcomes or avoid consequences, we know that we cannot afford the price we would have pay. The resulting shame, regret, and loss of spiritual contentment would far outweigh anything we might possibly gain by compromising our principles.

Through upholding the principles of recovery, we seek a life of harmony and peace. The energy we once put into the care and feeding of our character

166 defects can now be put into nurturing our spiritual goals. The more attention we
167 focus on our spiritual nature, the more it will unfold in our lives.

168 We will not, however, achieve a state of spiritual perfection, regardless of how
169 diligently we apply the Sixth Step to our lives. We will most likely see the defects
170 we deal with today crop up in a myriad of manifestations throughout our lifetimes.
171 We may feel devastated at the reappearance of some old defect we thought had
172 been removed. We are humbled by our imperfection--but let there be no mistake,
173 humility is the ideal state for an addict to be in. Humility brings us back down to
174 earth and plants our feet firmly on the spiritual path we are walking. We smile
175 ruefully at our delusions of perfection, and keep on walking. We're on the right
176 path, headed in the right direction, and each step we take brings progress.

177 We gain more tolerance for the defects of those around us as we work this
178 step. When we see someone acting in one of the ways that has caused us to feel
179 pain ourselves, we feel compassionate rather than judgmental, for we know just
180 exactly how much pain such behavior causes. Rather than condemning the
181 behavior of another, we look at ourselves. Having experience in accepting
182 ourselves, we can extend compassion and tolerance to others.

183 We ask ourselves if we are entirely ready to have God remove all of our
184 defects--every single one. If any reservation exists, if we feel the need to cling to
185 any defect, we pray for willingness. We set our sights on our path, open our
186 spirits to the healing Power we've found in Narcotics Anonymous, and use the
187 resources of our recovery to do our best each moment. Although the process
188 lasts a lifetime, we only live in the present day. We've taken a giant step forward

189 in the process of recovery, but it must be followed with another to be truly lasting.

190 With the readiness we have at hand today, we go on to Step Seven.

191

192

193

194 Q:\steps\adhdraft\darft03\sahs6-03.doc

