

“Into Action”, which is the title of Chapter Six in the Big Book, begins with the information and directions for taking Step Five. Over and over again, ten times as I count it, the book warns us to be SURE that we are NOT withholding ANYTHING from our Fifth Step experience. The chapter opens like this and then I number the warnings:

“Having made our personal inventory (Step 4), what shall we do about it? We have been trying to get a new attitude (Step 2), a new relationship with our Creator (Step 3), and to discover the obstacles in our path (Step 4). We have admitted certain defects; we have ascertained in a rough way what the trouble is; we have put our finger on the weak times in our personal inventory (all Step 4). Now these are about to be cast out (which is the result of THOROUGHLY doing Steps 5 through 9). This requires action on our part, which, when completed, will mean that we have admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our defects. This brings us to *the Fifth Step* in the program of recovery mentioned in the preceding chapter.

“This is perhaps difficult, especially discussing our defects with another person. We think we have done well enough in admitting these things to ourselves. There is doubt about that. In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient. Many of us thought it necessary to go much further.

- 1) We will be more reconciled to discussing ourselves with another person when we see good reasons why we should do so. The best reason first: If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking. (Are you holding ANYTHING back?)
- 2) Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. (Are you keeping ANYTHING to yourself that should be included?)
- 3) Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to easier methods. (Are you trying to turn to easier methods and avoid this humbling experience by not telling me EVERYTHING?)
- 4) Almost invariably they got drunk. Having persevered with the rest of the program, they wondered why they fell. We think the reason is that they never completed their housecleaning. (It says that you are going to get drunk if you don't complete your housecleaning so are you SURE you are COMPLETE?)
- 5) They took inventory all right, but hung on to some of the worst items in stock. (Are you SURE that you haven't withheld some of the worst items about your past?)
- 6) They only *thought* they had lost their egoism and fear; they only *thought* they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else *all* their life story. (Are you telling me ALL your life story of resentments, fears, and harms without leaving out ANYTHING?)
- 7) We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. (So you've been ENTIRELY honest with me leaving out NOTHING?)
- 8) We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, (Have you shared EVERY twist of character?)
- 9) every dark cranny of the past. (Have you shared EVERY dark cranny of the past?)
- 10) Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. (This is the last time I'm going to ask you, are you SURE that you have withheld NOTHING?)