

The 5th Step

The Twelve Steps

Step-Working Guide · The Recovery Files

In this workbook

1. **The 5th Step** — key ideas, worksheet

Each topic's scored self-assessment and mind map are in the app.

TOPIC

The 5th Step

KEY IDEAS

The 5th Step

Admission of Wrongs

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

The 5th Step represents a crucial transition from the private, internal work of the 4th Step to the vulnerable act of sharing our deepest truths. It is about breaking the cycle of isolation created by secrecy, shame, and fear.

Shame and Concealment

The Barrier of Secrecy

Shame convinces us that certain parts of our story are too fundamentally unacceptable to share.

This barrier thrives on the belief that full disclosure will lead to rejection or abandonment. We hide to protect ourselves, but this hiding keeps us sick.

Spiritual Disconnection

The Fear of Judgment

Difficulty believing that a Higher Power can accept us fully when our complete truth is known.

We may experience God as judgmental rather than loving, fearing that our wrongs separate us from spiritual help just when we need it most.

Perfectionism & Control

The Illusion of Self-Fixing

Wanting to 'clean up our act' before admitting wrongs to avoid appearing weak or flawed.

This creates a barrier where we try to fix ourselves through willpower before seeking the help that comes through honest admission.

Trust Barriers

Fear of Betrayal

Struggling to identify someone safe enough to hear our inventory without judgment or betrayal.

Past hurts may make it hard to believe another human can offer confidential, compassionate listening, leading us to prefer surface-level sharing.

Minimization

Downplaying the Truth

Reducing the severity of our defects or focusing on external circumstances instead of internal patterns.

We might intellectualize our inventory or compare our wrongs to others' to make them seem less significant, avoiding the emotional reality of our actions.

Isolation

The Trap of Self-Reliance

Believing we can process our moral inventory alone or that admitting to others is unnecessary.

Addiction thrives in isolation. The 5th Step forces us to connect, breaking the delusion that we can heal fully on our own.

Fear of Consequences

The Cost of Honesty

Worrying about the legal, social, or relational fallout of being completely honest.

While valid, these fears often become excuses to avoid necessary truth-telling. We fear the cost of honesty more than the cost of continued secrecy.

Courage & Vulnerability

Principles of Healing

Viewing vulnerability not as weakness, but as the courageous pathway to freedom.

By moving forward despite fear, we practice faith. Trusting that honesty leads to healing is the core act of the 5th Step.

Freedom & Relief

The Promise of Step Five

The profound lightness that comes from having no more secrets and being fully known and accepted.

When we admit the exact nature of our wrongs, we often find that the rejection we feared is replaced by grace, connection, and a deep sense of peace.

WORKSHEET

Step Five Worksheet

Reflection & Action

PROFILE

Understanding Your 5th Step Profile

1. Which barrier (shame, trust, etc.) affects you most powerfully?

2. What specific experiences surprise you with their intensity?

3. How has your relationship with vulnerability evolved?

4. What situations increase your resistance to disclosure?

PSYCHOLOGY

The Psychology of Your Approach

5. How does understanding resistance as normal affect your approach?

6. How might your addiction history shape your barriers?

7. How do your barriers interact (e.g., shame increasing control)?

PRACTICE

Developing Your Practice

8. What helps you address your most challenging barrier?

9. How do you prepare for authentic disclosure?

10. How might you deepen your practice in your toughest area?

MAP

Personalized 5th Step Map

List specific examples for each category:

Shame & Concealment:

Spiritual Disconnection:

Perfectionism & Control:

Trust Barriers:

Minimization:

Isolation:

Fear of Consequences:

ACTION

Action Plan

Primary Barrier to Address:

Clear Goal:

Action Steps:

Accountability & Timeline:

Potential Challenges & Solutions: