

**Step One: We admitted we were powerless over addiction—that our lives had become unmanageable.**

*Embracing Honesty and Surrender*

Step One is the gateway to recovery. It requires a courageous acknowledgment of the truth about addiction and the chaos it brings to our lives. This step is not about judgment or failure but about creating a foundation for change. In admitting our powerlessness over addiction, we open the door to healing.

Addiction has a way of taking over our thoughts, behaviours, and decisions. It isolates us from those we love, erodes our health, and leaves us feeling trapped in an endless cycle of shame and regret. Many of us have tried to regain control—through sheer willpower or by blaming others—but these efforts often lead to deeper despair. Step One invites us to let go of this exhausting struggle and to face the reality of our situation with honesty.

This admission does not mean we are weak or incapable. On the contrary, recognising powerlessness is an act of strength. It takes courage to look in the mirror and say, “I cannot do this alone.” By doing so, we begin to dismantle denial, which is a major barrier to recovery. Denial convinces us that things aren’t as bad as they seem or that we can stop anytime we want. Step One breaks through this defence, allowing us to see the impact addiction has had on our relationships, health, and overall wellbeing.

The concept of “unmanageability” is central to this step. Addiction does not just disrupt our lives; it creates chaos. This might look like broken trust in relationships, financial struggles, legal troubles, or a deep sense of hopelessness. Recognising this chaos provides motivation for change. It’s not about shaming ourselves but about seeing clearly where addiction has led us so we can take steps in a new direction.

Surrender is a key element of Step One. This is not about giving up on life but letting go of old ways of thinking and behaving that no longer serve us. It is about reaching out for help, whether through the Kindr fellowship, therapy, or other support systems. This surrender creates space for growth, for learning new ways to live, and for beginning the journey of recovery.

For LGBTQ+ individuals, Step One can be especially empowering. Many of us have faced societal pressures to hide our truths, leading to feelings of shame or rejection that fuel addiction. Step One offers an opportunity to embrace authenticity and to begin dismantling internalised shame. It reminds us that recovery is not only possible but that we are worthy of it.

Questions for reflection in Step One include:

- In what ways has addiction made your life unmanageable?
- How have your attempts to control your addiction impacted you and others?
- What fears or resistance do you feel about admitting powerlessness?

Through honesty, surrender, and fellowship, Step One marks the first courageous step toward freedom, healing, and hope.

**Step Two: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

*Finding Hope and Trust*

Step Two introduces the idea of hope. After the honest admission of powerlessness in Step One, this step invites us to believe that change is possible and that we are not alone. It speaks to the need for a guiding force—something greater than ourselves—to help us heal and restore balance to our lives.

Sanity, in the context of Step Two, means freedom from the destructive behaviours, thoughts, and patterns that addiction creates. Addiction thrives on isolation and chaos, distorting our sense of self-worth and reality. By opening our minds to the idea that a Power greater than ourselves can help, we take the first steps toward regaining clarity and stability.

For some, this Power might be a traditional understanding of God. For others, it could be the collective strength of the group, the laws of nature, or simply the idea of love and kindness. This step does not demand that we adopt a specific belief system. Instead, it invites us to consider the possibility that help is available if we're willing to seek it.

Many of us arrive at Step Two feeling sceptical or doubtful. Perhaps we've experienced rejection or judgment from religious institutions or struggled to reconcile spiritual concepts with our personal identities. For LGBTQ+ individuals, these wounds can run deep. Step Two encourages us to redefine spirituality on our own terms. It's not about conforming to a doctrine but about discovering a sense of connection and purpose that feels authentic to us.

This step also challenges the idea that we must solve our problems alone. Admitting we need help is not a sign of weakness but an act of courage. It allows us to move beyond the isolation of addiction and to begin trusting in a process of recovery that is bigger than any one individual.

Questions for reflection in Step Two include:

- What does “sanity” mean to you, and how has addiction taken it from you?
- What are your current beliefs about a Power greater than yourself?
- What would it mean to you to trust in a process of recovery?

Through Step Two, we begin to replace despair with hope, scepticism with curiosity, and isolation with connection.

### **Step Three: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.**

#### *Letting Go and Trusting the Process*

Step Three builds on the hope and trust established in Step Two by asking us to make an active decision: to turn our will and lives over to a Higher Power, as we personally understand it. This step is about surrendering control and placing faith in a process or power that can guide us toward healing.

For many, the idea of “turning over” our will can feel daunting. It’s natural to want to hold on to control, especially when life feels uncertain. However, addiction thrives on self-will run riot—when we try to manage everything ourselves, often driven by fear, anger, or pride. Step Three invites us to step away from this struggle and to trust in something greater.

This decision doesn’t mean abandoning responsibility or becoming passive. Instead, it’s about aligning our actions with principles of honesty, humility, and love. It’s a commitment to follow a path of recovery, trusting that this path will lead to greater peace and fulfilment.

The phrase “as we understood Him” is crucial here. It reminds us that spirituality is personal and flexible. Your Higher Power could be God, the universe, the group, or simply the values of love, compassion, and integrity. What matters is that you find a source of guidance that feels meaningful and supportive to you.

For LGBTQ+ individuals, this step can be a chance to reclaim spirituality. Many of us have been told we don’t belong in certain faith communities or that our identities are incompatible with spiritual growth. Step Three offers a new perspective: that we are worthy of care, guidance, and love, exactly as we are.

Making this decision is not a one-time event. It’s an ongoing process, repeated daily through prayer, meditation, or conscious intention. Each time we let go of self-centred thinking or trust in the support of others, we are practising Step Three.

Questions for reflection in Step Three include:

- What fears or resistance do you feel about turning your will and life over?
- What qualities would you like to see in a Higher Power?
- How can you begin to practise trust and surrender in your daily life?

Step Three is a leap of faith that sets the tone for the rest of the journey. It teaches us to trust, to let go, and to believe in the possibility of a life guided by care and love.

## **Step Four: We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

### Facing Ourselves with Courage and Honesty

#### Introduction

Step Four is often seen as one of the most challenging steps in recovery, but also one of the most transformative. It invites us to examine ourselves with courage, honesty, and an open mind. This step is about self-discovery, uncovering patterns of thought, emotion, and behaviour that have shaped our addiction and relationships. It requires us to be both searching, digging deep into our past and present, and fearless, confronting what we might usually avoid.

#### Purpose of Step Four

The purpose of Step Four is to shed light on the causes and conditions of our struggles. Addiction thrives in secrecy, denial, and avoidance, so this step serves to bring clarity and awareness. It is not about self-condemnation but about understanding ourselves better to make room for healing and change.

#### Conducting a Searching Inventory

The "searching" aspect of Step Four means looking at all areas of life—resentments, fears, relationships, and behaviours. We explore not only how others have harmed us but also the harm we have caused. This step helps us see patterns in our actions and attitudes, especially those that have blocked us from growth and connection.

#### Overcoming Fear.

Fear is a natural response to the self-examination required in Step Four, but it is not insurmountable. Facing our truths, however uncomfortable, is an act of courage and self-respect. By writing our inventory, we give ourselves the opportunity to name what we fear and begin to disempower it.

#### Exploring Resentments.

Resentments are a significant focus of Step Four, as they often fuel addiction. Writing down who or what we resent and why, as well as how it affects us, helps us to see the impact of holding onto these feelings. The goal is not to dwell in negativity but to understand and release these burdens.

#### Examining Fears.

Addiction and fear are often deeply connected. Step Four helps us identify the fears that have driven our actions or paralysed us. Recognising these fears is the first step to addressing them, allowing us to live with greater confidence and freedom.

## Acknowledging Harm Done

Step Four also asks us to examine harm we have done to others, particularly in relationships. This is not about self-shaming but about taking responsibility. By acknowledging these actions, we prepare ourselves for future steps where we make amends.

## The Role of the Kindr Fellowship

The Kindr Fellowship provides vital support in Step Four. Hearing others share their experiences with this step helps us feel less alone and more capable of confronting our truths. Fellowship members can also offer guidance, encouragement, and examples of how to approach the inventory process.

## Reflection Questions

- What resentments are you carrying, and how have they affected your life?
- What fears influence your decisions or behaviours?
- How have you harmed others, intentionally or unintentionally?
- What patterns do you notice in your relationships and choices?

## Conclusion

Step Four is a profound act of self-honesty and courage. By taking a searching and fearless moral inventory, we uncover the roots of our struggles and begin to dismantle them. For LGBTQ+ individuals, this step is an opportunity to affirm self-worth by facing internalised shame, societal pressures, and personal wounds with honesty and compassion. Through this process, we set the stage for healing, accountability, and freedom.

## **Step Five: We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

### Finding Freedom in Sharing the Truth

Step Five builds upon the work of Step Four by inviting us to share the inventory we have created. This step is about confession and connection—admitting our wrongs to God (or a higher power), to ourselves, and to another person. It helps us release the burden of secrecy and shame, replacing them with honesty, humility, and a sense of relief.

### The Purpose of Step Five

The purpose of Step Five is to bring what we uncovered in Step Four into the open. Addiction thrives in isolation, but healing begins when we share our truths. This step helps us connect with others, deepen our spirituality, and foster self-acceptance.

### Admitting to God

Admitting our wrongs to a higher power is an act of surrender and trust. It is a way of acknowledging that we are not alone in our struggles and inviting spiritual guidance into the process of recovery. For LGBTQ+ individuals, this can also be a healing opportunity to redefine a relationship with spirituality in an affirming and inclusive way.

### Admitting to Ourselves

Honesty with ourselves is crucial in Step Five. By acknowledging the exact nature of our wrongs, we take responsibility for our actions without minimising or justifying them. This self-awareness fosters growth, helping us move beyond denial and self-deception.

### Admitting to Another Human Being

Sharing our inventory with another person can be one of the most powerful aspects of Step Five. This act requires vulnerability but offers profound rewards. By speaking our truths to someone we trust, we experience acceptance, understanding, and connection. It helps us realise that we are not alone in our imperfections and that we are still deserving of love and respect.

### Choosing the Right Person

It is important to choose someone who will listen without judgment and maintain confidentiality. This could be a sponsor, a trusted friend, or a spiritual advisor. For LGBTQ+ individuals, finding someone who affirms and supports your identity is essential.

### The Relief of Letting Go

Many people find Step Five liberating. By sharing our truths, we let go of the



burden of secrecy and the fear of being judged. This process helps us forgive ourselves and creates space for healing and transformation.

### Building Trust Through Fellowship

The Kindr Fellowship plays a crucial role in Step Five. Knowing that others have walked this path and found freedom through sharing their truths provides encouragement and strength. Fellowship members can also offer guidance on how to approach this step.

### Reflection Questions

- How does it feel to share your inventory with someone you trust?
- What fears or resistance do you have about admitting your wrongs?
- How has secrecy or shame affected your life?
- What do you hope to gain from completing Step Five?

### Conclusion

Step Five is a transformative step that deepens honesty, trust, and connection. By admitting our wrongs to God, ourselves, and another person, we release the weight of secrecy and create space for healing. For LGBTQ+ individuals, this step can also be an opportunity to affirm identity and dismantle internalised shame. Through vulnerability and acceptance, Step Five opens the door to freedom, self-compassion, and a stronger sense of community.

## **Step Six: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**

### *The Readiness to Change*

Step Six is about preparation. After identifying our character defects in Step Four and acknowledging them in Step Five, we now take the crucial step of becoming entirely ready to let them go. This readiness is not passive—it involves deep reflection and willingness to change the behaviours, thoughts, and attitudes that keep us stuck.

Character defects are those traits or patterns—like selfishness, fear, resentment, or dishonesty—that have harmed us and others. They are often rooted in survival mechanisms we developed to cope with life's challenges. While they may have served us at some point, they no longer serve our growth or recovery. Step Six invites us to recognise this and to open ourselves to transformation.

The key word in this step is "entirely." Partial readiness is not enough. This step challenges us to let go of excuses, self-justifications, and half-measures. It asks us to confront our resistance and fears: What would life look like without these defects? Who would we be if we no longer relied on these old patterns?

For many of us, this can feel uncomfortable. Change is rarely easy, and we may cling to certain defects out of fear or habit. Step Six is not about achieving perfection or eliminating every flaw overnight. It's about developing a mindset of openness and a willingness to trust that change is possible with the help of our Higher Power.

For LGBTQ+ individuals, this step can be particularly liberating. Many of us have internalised shame or self-doubt due to societal judgment or rejection. Step Six allows us to let go of these burdens and to embrace a healthier, more authentic sense of self.

Questions for reflection in Step Six include:

- What character defects are holding you back in your recovery?
- Are there any defects you are reluctant to let go of? Why?
- How can you cultivate willingness and readiness for change?

Step Six is a turning point. It prepares us to release what no longer serves us and to move forward with humility and courage.

## **Step Seven: Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.**

### *The Act of Surrender*

Step Seven is where we take action on the readiness developed in Step Six. Having prepared ourselves to let go of our defects of character; we now humbly ask our Higher Power to remove them. This step is about humility, trust, and surrender.

Humility is central to this step. It means recognising that we cannot change ourselves through willpower alone. True transformation requires the help of a Power greater than ourselves. By asking for this help, we acknowledge our dependence on a loving force that can guide us toward growth.

This step also reminds us that change is a process, not an event. Asking our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings does not mean they will disappear instantly or completely. It's about placing trust in the journey and being patient with ourselves as we grow. Progress, not perfection, is the goal.

The word “shortcomings” highlights that we are asking for help with the deeper root causes of our behaviours, not just the behaviours themselves. For example, we might ask for relief from the fear that drives dishonesty or the insecurity that fuels anger. As we work this step, we begin to notice subtle shifts in our attitudes and actions.

For LGBTQ+ individuals, this step offers an opportunity to let go of internalised shame, self-criticism, or feelings of unworthiness. It reminds us that we are deserving of love, healing, and acceptance, both from ourselves and from the world around us.

Step Seven is also about gratitude. By asking for help with humility, we open ourselves to the gifts of recovery—self-awareness, peace of mind, and the ability to live more authentically.

Questions for reflection in Step Seven include:

- What does humility mean to you in the context of recovery?
- What shortcomings are you asking your Higher Power to remove?
- How do you notice your Higher Power working in your life as you practise this step?

Through Step Seven, we surrender our struggles and invite a Higher Power to guide our growth. It's an act of faith that allows us to live with greater freedom, peace, and authenticity.

**Step Eight: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.**

*The Path to Reconciliation*

Step Eight is about preparing for the healing process between ourselves and those we have harmed. By this point in recovery, we've done significant internal work—acknowledging our faults, taking responsibility, and seeking guidance from a Higher Power. Now, we turn outward, taking the first steps to repair the damage caused by our past behaviours.

Making a list of those we've harmed can feel daunting. It requires honesty and courage to face the pain we've caused others. The harms may include lies told, relationships damaged, trust broken, or selfish actions that caused others to suffer. In creating this list, we do not dwell on our guilt or shame but rather aim for clarity and accountability.

Step Eight also asks us to become willing to make amends. This willingness is key, as it sets the stage for genuine reconciliation. It's not about rushing to apologise or seeking forgiveness for our own relief. Instead, it's about being ready to take responsibility and to mend what can be repaired.

For LGBTQ+ individuals, this step can involve unique challenges. We may have hurt others while coping with our own struggles, or we may need to address conflicts related to identity and acceptance. Step Eight invites us to approach these situations with honesty and humility, while also recognising where we may need to forgive ourselves.

It's important to note that Step Eight is about preparation, not action. We do not reach out to anyone yet; that will come in Step Nine. This step is about identifying who we have harmed and reflecting on the nature of those harms.

Questions for reflection in Step Eight include:

- Who have you harmed through your actions, words, or attitudes?
- What specific harms have you caused, and how have they affected others?
- Are there any individuals you feel reluctant to make amends to? Why?

Step Eight is an exercise in courage and humility. By taking this step, we open the door to healing relationships and freeing ourselves from the weight of our past actions.

**Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**

*The Healing Power of Amends*

Step Nine is where the preparation of Step Eight becomes action. We take responsibility for our past actions by making direct amends to those we've harmed. This step is about more than saying "I'm sorry." It's about taking ownership of our behaviour and actively working to repair the damage we've caused, wherever possible.

Making amends can take many forms, depending on the situation. Sometimes it involves a heartfelt apology; other times, it may require restoring something we've taken, rebuilding trust, or addressing a financial or emotional harm. Each situation is unique, and we approach this step thoughtfully and with guidance from a sponsor or trusted mentor.

The phrase "wherever possible" acknowledges that making amends is not always feasible or appropriate. If reaching out would cause further harm—to the other person, ourselves, or others—we do not proceed. Step Nine is about healing, not creating new wounds.

For LGBTQ+ men, this step can bring unique opportunities for growth. It may involve addressing strained family relationships, resolving conflicts within our community, or apologising to those we've hurt while navigating our own journey of self-acceptance. Step Nine encourages us to approach these amends with authenticity and compassion, both for others and ourselves.

Fear is a common barrier in this step. We may fear rejection, confrontation, or reopening old wounds. But Step Nine reminds us that we are not seeking to control the outcome; we are simply doing our part to take responsibility and to contribute to healing.

Questions for reflection in Step Nine include:

- How can you make amends in a way that is meaningful and appropriate?
- Are there any amends you are reluctant to make? What is holding you back?
- How do you feel about the process of making amends?

The spiritual principles of courage, humility, and accountability guide us through this step. By making amends, we free ourselves from the burden of guilt and regret. We also create the possibility of healing relationships and finding peace, regardless of how others respond

## **Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.**

### *Living with Integrity*

Step Ten is about maintaining the progress we've made in recovery and living a life of accountability and integrity. Unlike the earlier steps, which focus on clearing away the wreckage of the past, this step is about staying present and ensuring that our actions align with the values we're striving to live by.

Taking a personal inventory means regularly reflecting on our actions, thoughts, and behaviours. It's not about perfection but progress—recognising when we fall short and promptly addressing it. This step helps us avoid slipping back into old patterns and ensures that we continue growing spiritually and emotionally.

The key to Step Ten is consistency. Whether done daily or as situations arise, this practice helps us stay mindful of our impact on others and our own emotional wellbeing. When we identify that we've been wrong—whether through impatience, selfishness, or dishonesty—we promptly admit it. This prevents guilt or resentment from taking root and keeps our relationships healthy and authentic.

For LGBTQ+ people, Step Ten can be particularly empowering. By continuing to take stock of our behaviours and interactions, we build resilience and self-acceptance. It's an opportunity to cultivate relationships that honour our true selves and to confront societal or internalised shame that may linger.

Questions for reflection in Step Ten include:

- How do you currently take stock of your actions and their impact on others?
- When was the last time you admitted you were wrong? How did it feel?
- Are there areas in your life where you've avoided accountability?

Step Ten is about progress, not perfection. It helps us to stay grounded in the principles of honesty, humility, and integrity, allowing us to live more peacefully and authentically.

**Step Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.**

*Deepening Spiritual Connection*

Step Eleven focuses on nurturing our spiritual life. By this stage of recovery, we've come to understand the importance of a Higher Power in guiding us. Now, we actively seek to strengthen that relationship through prayer and meditation.

Prayer, in this step, is not about asking for specific outcomes or favours. Instead, it's about seeking alignment with our Higher Power's will. We ask for guidance, clarity, and the strength to live according to spiritual principles.

Meditation complements prayer by creating space for stillness and listening. It allows us to quiet the noise of daily life and connect with our inner selves and our Higher Power. Through meditation, we cultivate awareness, patience, and a sense of peace.

For many LGBTQ+ men, Step Eleven can be a transformative practice. It offers a way to reclaim spirituality, which may have been complicated by experiences of rejection or judgment. This step reminds us that spirituality is deeply personal and inclusive, centred on our unique understanding of a Higher Power.

Questions for reflection in Step Eleven include:

- How do you currently pray or meditate, and how does it help you feel connected?
- What does "God's will" mean to you in your daily life?
- How can you create more space for spiritual practices in your routine?

Through Step Eleven, we develop faith and trust in something greater than ourselves. This connection guides us as we navigate life's challenges, helping us to act with intention and grace.

**Step Twelve: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practise these principles in all our affairs.**

*Sharing the Gift of Recovery*

Step Twelve is both a culmination and a new beginning. By working the steps, we've experienced a spiritual awakening—a shift in how we see ourselves, others, and the world. This awakening isn't necessarily dramatic; it's often a quiet, profound change marked by greater peace, purpose, and connection.

With this transformation comes responsibility. We share our experience, strength, and hope with others who are still struggling. Carrying the message doesn't mean preaching or forcing our recovery on anyone. Instead, we lead by example, offering support, encouragement, and understanding to those who seek help.

Practising these principles in all our affairs means applying the values of recovery—honesty, humility, compassion, and accountability—in every aspect of life. Recovery isn't confined to meetings or interactions with other addicts; it becomes a way of living.

For LGBTQ+ individuals, Step Twelve provides an opportunity to create and nurture inclusive recovery spaces. By sharing our stories, we help others feel seen and understood, especially those who may feel isolated or marginalised.

Questions for reflection in Step Twelve include:

- How has your spiritual awakening changed your life?
- In what ways can you carry the message of recovery to others?
- How do you incorporate the principles of recovery into your daily life?

Step Twelve reminds us that recovery is a gift we pass on to others. By sharing our journey and living authentically, we contribute to a cycle of healing and hope that extends far beyond ourselves.