

STEP TEN

"Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

Beginning with Step Four, we commenced to search out the acquired character defects that brought us to physical, moral, and spiritual bankruptcy. Step Five allowed us to share with God and another person the exact nature of our wrongs. Steps Six and Seven made us aware that God *may* remove these defects and shortcomings if we are so willing. Step Eight continued the house-cleaning by our listing of all the people we had harmed. In Step Nine we then made those direct amends to such people except when to do so would injure them or others. Thus, if Steps Four through Nine have been completed honestly, then the past has been laid to rest.

Step Ten is concerned with the present and is a maintenance step. The past is done with - now we are ready to really practice living the principles of SA -- one day at a time. Step Ten will keep us on the straight and narrow and keep us from accumulating wreckage from the present. However, in order to do this we must take a daily personal inventory and admit when we are wrong. We will be practicing Steps Four through Nine each day if we are honestly willing to do Step Ten.

The first portion of Step Ten is to "continue to take personal inventory." Although we have a searching and fearless moral inventory from Step Four, it is not enough. Step Ten suggests that we take a personal inventory daily. The greatest awareness of the acquired character defects and how they still cause havoc in our daily lives is what we are after. The personal inventory is of three types. The "spot check" inventory finds its chief application in situations which arise daily. In these situations we need self-restraint, honest analysis of what is involved, a willingness to admit when the fault is elsewhere.

The second inventory, done at the end of each day allows us to carefully examine our motives in each thought or act. Here we recognize that we did act or think negatively, try to see how we might have done better, resolve with God's help to carry these lessons into tomorrow, and make any amends still neglected.

The third type of inventory involves, when we are alone with our sponsor, a careful review of our progress. This is a periodic house-cleaning, much like the Fourth and Fifth Steps, except we sweep away the wreckage of the immediate past.

The remainder of Step Ten asks us "when we are wrong promptly admit it." This practice will become easier as we become aware that all people, including ourselves, are to some extent emotionally ill as well as frequently wrong. The false self will resist admitting its wrongs. The only way to decrease the control of the false self is to defeat the ego. We can defeat the ego by continually admitting the wrongs done. When we harm others, we must promptly admit it -- to ourselves always -- to others when the admission would be constructive progress. We continually ask ourselves, "Am I doing to others as I would have them do to me -- today?"

In the daily practice of living Step Ten, we are developing self-restraint. We can neither think nor act to good purpose until the habit of self-restraint has become automatic. The idea that we can love a few, ignore many, and continue to fear and hate anybody, has to be abandoned. Practicing daily to spot, admit and correct the acquired defects is the essence of good character building and good living.

The purpose of writing the tenth step is to help us acquire the habit of accurate self-appraisal and on a daily basis admitting our wrongs, to ourselves first, then to others when the admission would be helpful. Our continued sobriety is dependent on how well we practice this step.

Go through the following examples and be as honest and specific as you are able to at this time. You are out to develop self-restraint, honest analysis, willingness to admit your wrongs, and a willingness to forgive when the fault is elsewhere.

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QUESTIONS

1. What does "continued to take personal inventory" mean to you?
2. Explain the three different types of personal inventories as outlined in Step Ten.
3. Do you think you have acquired the habit of self-appraisal? Why or why not? If not, how do you acquire it?
4. Why is the development of self-restraint our first objective?
5. Why is it important to *promptly* admit when you are wrong?
6. Have you ceased fighting anything and anybody? If not, what or who are you still fighting.
7. For the next week, keep a diary of an accurate self-appraisal for each day.