

Sharing The Journey

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Each of us has a valuable story to tell. We may be shy and feel awkward about speaking. We may wonder if what we have to share is appropriate. Is it actually going to help anyone else? We may struggle to get beyond the shame of our past. We may be hesitant to tell anyone, especially if we think they are better than us. But our recovery story can help others who are trapped in similar difficulties. Are we willing to allow God to use us to help free others? Within each personal story of the journey from bondage to freedom is the essence of the gospel. When people hear our story we are offering them the chance to loosen their chains and grow along their own healing journey with Jesus.

Mark 16:15 -- And then Jesus told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere. Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.

Romans 12:4-5 -- Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of his one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others.

On the other hand, we may be so excited about what God has done for us or so concerned for those in need of recovery that we want to rush right out and tell everyone our story. We all have a valuable story to tell; we just need to learn how best to communicate it. We need to be sensitive to allow God to lead us to someone who is ready and pray for God's Spirit to give us just the right words. We need to listen carefully to what the other individual really wants to know and let the other's person's needs and interests lead us to the part of our story that we share. If we are

sincerely excited about what God has done for us, follow His leading to know when and what to share, and listen attentively to what our listener really wants to know, then we will be able to communicate in a way that people can understand and receive.

Titus 3:1-5 -- We should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. We must not speak evil of anyone, and we must avoid quarreling. Instead, we should be gentle and show true humility to everyone. We, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled by others and became slaves to many wicked desires and evil pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy. We hated others, and they hated us. But then God our Savior showed us his kindness and love. He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit.

We are in a special position to both learn from each other and carry the message to others. Each of us can recognize some warning signs of addictive/compulsive tendencies in others around us, as well as in ourselves. When touching on such deep and sensitive issues, it's important to speak in the language of love, not condemnation. We can love others as we have been loved by God and as we love ourselves. Love goes beyond mere words. Sometimes it is spoken in silence, or attentive listening. Love doesn't just tell others what their problem is or just share our own truth. Love helps to carry the weight of each others burdens and share each others joys, learning from each others successes. We can be a part of a support network to help carry our friends only as we recognize that we are supported and carried by those very same people and the God who walks with all of us.

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

- What was my life like before I encountered God's love through Jesus Christ?
- What kind of a life has God given me today?
- How does Jesus Christ empower me to live in a new way today?
- What have I learned about "telling my story"?
- What's the attitude I need as I share my story with someone?
- What kind of sensitivity do I need when I am sharing with others?