

Section E

When You're at Fault for a Transgression ...and When You're Not

Step 2.2 of this process calls you to consider your level of personal involvement in a transgression/sin and to accept personal responsibility on account of it.

This process of life change and spiritual transformation assumes that there are (basically) two different levels on which you can be guilty or at fault for your actions—the level of outward, civic life, and the level of inward life—the life of your mind, spirit, or character. Accepting responsibility for actions on the level of *outward* life means you acknowledge that you (and no one else) are the one who has actually said or done those things. Accepting responsibility on the level of *inward* life—the life of your mind, spirit, or character—requires some explanation:

This process assumes that a human mind and spirit are one and the same thing, and that the mind or spirit is made up of two basic parts—the knowing, understanding, thinking part, and the loving, willing, intending part—similar to the two hemispheres of the brain, also to dual body parts or organs. What's more, this process assumes that you are personally, spiritually responsible for your actions when *both* parts of your mind are engaged in what you're doing—such that you *know* what you're doing at a given moment in time, and you intentionally, purposely, *willingly* act on that knowledge. Any time these two conditions are met, you are fully, personally, spiritually engaged in what you're doing, and you're therefore fully responsible for your actions in mind, spirit, and character.

On the other hand, this process assumes that you are *not* fully, *spiritually* responsible for your actions when either or both parts of your mind are *not* fully engaged. In other words, you are *not* spiritually guilty, responsible, or at fault for an action if you didn't know what was going on at the time, and/or if you did it in a moment of overwhelming feeling, emotion, desire, etc. Under either of these circumstances (or both) your mind isn't fully engaged in what you've done: It isn't something you support or justify, and/or you haven't done it on purpose. You may be guilty, responsible, at fault, and accountable on the level of outward life or in the eyes of the law, but not on the level of your mind, spirit, and character.

Here are some examples of when you're not spiritually responsible or at fault for a transgression/sin that you've committed (notice that each of these examples falls under one or both of the general conditions mentioned above):

- You do something harmful or destructive, but you don't know any better, or you're blind to what you're doing at the time.
- You do or say something harmful based on a false idea, false premise, or false impression that you honestly believe is true.

- You do something damaging, but you aren't in your right mind at the time due to a mental or physical illness, biological imbalance, or the like.
- You do something hurtful or destructive, but you're delirious, deluded, intoxicated, or otherwise irrational at the time.
- You commit a transgression or sin, but your action is a learned behavior from the example of others, before you realize it's a hurtful, destructive thing to do.
- You do something harmful or destructive, but you were forced, seduced, or threatened into it. In other words, you were an unwilling participant.
- You've done something harmful, but you didn't mean to—you didn't intend harm.
- You do or say something hurtful or destructive, but you do so impulsively, without thinking (often thought of as a "knee-jerk reaction," similar to blind instinct).
- You lose your composure or "fly off the handle," and you do or say something you later regret.¹
- You did something damaging or destructive in your childhood or youth, before your adult, rational mind was fully open and accessible.²

What matters under these circumstances (or others like them) is what you choose to do "after the fact"—once you know that a thing is against God, and when your mind is fully free to choose. For example, do you ("after the fact") *justify* what you've done, or are you clear that it was destructive and against God? Do you *persist* in the behavior, even when you're able to choose against it? How you conduct yourself—once you know that something is against God and you're fully free to choose—is what determines the level of personal responsibility for a given action.

Knowing these things can help you with a balanced perspective during Step 2.2 of this process—when you're called on to accept personal responsibility for your actions.

¹ See the Bible, Deuteronomy 19:5.

² The twentieth year according to the Bible (see Exodus 30:14).