It is a great honor to be asked to listen to someone’s *re:generation* inventory. To be asked means that this person is willing to trust you with some of the deepest parts of his or her life. Usually this type of request only comes when your care and concern for this individual in the past has established trust.

During Step 4 of *re:generation*, your friend recorded an inventory which surveyed sin’s damage in his or her life. Now, in Step 5, this person shares aloud (with trusted people) an honest, detailed confession about the impact of sin in his or her life. It is a step of honesty toward healing, relief, and freedom.

**STEP 5 says: We confess to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our sins.**

Your role is to be an active listener, showing encouragement, support, and Christ like love as an individual works through Step 5. You are not expected to fix or heal the participant—that is God’s job. Future steps will direct your friend to seek biblical resolution for what is listed in inventory, but the purpose of this confession is healing (James 5:16). Listening with care, love, and truth is the way to help bear this person’s burden as he or she moves towards freedom in Christ. Galatians 6:2 says to *“Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”*

Thank you for your willingness to be a part of your friend’s recovery journey. The most effective way to continually bless your friend as he or she continues through recovery is to pray daily, trusting God to bring healing. Below are some tips for how to be a good listener during Step 5:

**ACTIVELY LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND: Your role is to listen and try to understand, not to fix or heal the person**. Your friend is taking a step to confess sin to another person, perhaps for the first time. This step allows him or her to be fully known and loved despite the ugliness of sin. Listen without unnecessary interruptions or distractions, ask questions when clarity is needed, observe potential patterns and idols:

* **Begin with prayer.**
* **Keep sharing focused on the inventory worksheet(s).** Help your friend stay on track by avoiding questions that shift focus off the inventory. Try not to interject too many of your own experiences.
* **Don’t be surprised by sin.** We are all capable of great evil. Don’t be shocked by your friend’s sin. Show empathy, love, concern for the person who is trusting you to hear his or her darkest moments.
* **Notice patterns or recurring themes**. Write down your own observations or ask your friend to highlight certain things you see. Revisit these when the person is finished sharing the inventory.
* **Listen for what’s not shared**. Take note and mention it if your friend does not include key people: both parents, any siblings, their spouse or ex-spouse (if applicable), themselves, and even God.
* **Offer suggestions** when necessary. For example, if you sense that a particular topic needs more attention, suggest the person spend more time on it. Or, if he or she is taking responsibility for an abuse suffered, you could say, “You may consider writing something else there.” (Note: “The Nature of My Response” in the case of an abuse suffered is always, “I was not the cause of my abuse.”)
* **Ask if anything has been omitted.** Give the person the opportunity to honestly review and share what may have been omitted. Be gracious if he or she skipped something the first time.
* **Encourage, love and support your friend** when he or she has finished sharing. Remind your friend of 1 Corinthians 6:9-1—we are washed, sanctified and justified through the blood of Christ. Romans 8:33-35 is another great passage to read when the meeting is coming to a close.
* **Close in prayer, thanking God, and taking Him at His Word.** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)