

## PREPARING FOR THE SEVENTH STEP

### **THE SEVENTH STEP: “Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings”**

Read the second paragraph on p.76 of the “Big Book” and pages 70-76 of the “12 & 12.”

To prepare for our next meeting, let us select from the following list the three shortcomings that are most troublesome to us. Let us rank them in order of their seriousness.

#### **Spiritual shortcomings**

1. Lack of Humility (Pride)
2. Lack of Generosity (Greed)
3. Lack of Purity of Intention (Lust)
4. Lack of a Loving Attitude (Anger)
5. Lack of Discipline (Gluttony)
6. Lack of Gratitude (Envy)
7. Lack of Action (Sloth)

“UNITY INSURES RECOVERY THROUGH SERVICE”  
MEETING OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

**THE SEVENTH STEP:**  
**“Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings”**

Homework: Writing Inventory on the Seventh Step  
By Dennis F.

Read the third paragraph on p. 76 of the “Big Book” and pp. 70-76 of the “12 & 12.”

It was impossible for step seven to work in my life until I sincerely sought humility in approaching God. Humility is a desire to place God’s will ahead of my own. “A great turning point in our lives came when we sought for humility as something we really wanted rather than something we must have.” (“12 & 12,” step seven, p. 75).

I knew from step six that I was powerless over my defects. I knew I had to change my self centered approach to living for a more humble approach. “It was only by repeated humiliation that we were forced to learn something about humility.” (“12 & 12,” step seven, p. 72).

Fear resulted whenever my goals were directed toward self. “The chief activator of our defects had been self-centered fear – primarily fear that we would lose something we already possessed or would fail to get something we demanded” (“12 & 12,” step seven, p. 76).

Whenever I took inventory on my fears, and found what was self-centered in my fear, the fear was removed. For example, when I found that these fears no longer had power over me when I became willing to accept God’s will for me whatever it was. My pride had triggered my fear. When my pride was removed, so was my fear.

Humility turns obstacles into opportunities for God to act through me. I had to choose spiritual values over material values. I had to choose between character and comfort. “We had lacked the perspective to see that character-building and spiritual values had to come first, and that material satisfactions were not the purpose of living” (“12 & 12,” step seven, p. 71).

I had to lessen my demands upon God, others and myself. “Living upon a basis of unsatisfied demands, we were in a state of continual disturbance and frustration” (“12 & 12,” step seven, p. 76).

I found humility was a healer of pain. “We began to fear pain less, and desire humility more than ever.” (“12 & 12,” step seven, p. 75).

## Step 7

I have a note written on my desk to guide me through my work day. It reads: “How would a humble person handle this situation?” When I mix self-centeredness with a situation, a problem results. When I remove it, I only have a situation to deal with, not a problem.

The seventh step is not a one-way street, though. God will remove my defects to the degree that I am willing to practice the spiritual shortcomings that lay behind them. I believe that this is why the word “defect” is used in the sixth step while the word “shortcoming” is used in the seventh step.

The more I dwell on “Anger” for instance, the worse it gets. I don’t agree with current psychological thinking that states that to be free of an emotion, I have to express it directly to the person concerned. Inventory is the place for my negative emotions. I need to express “love” to others, not “anger.”

The question is, “Am I willing to pray for a loving attitude when I feel the emotion of anger come upon me?”

The seventh step gives me the choice to pray to be free of my defect rather than obsessed with it as I was before the seventh step.

I believe that my right to choose to pray or not is the only choice I have in life. I used to think that I was 50% responsible for “efforts” and God was 50% responsible for “results.” I don’t believe this anymore because when I am too worn out to continue any more, God supplies me with the power to make more “efforts.” He was giving me his power all along.

Now, I think that I do 1% and God does 99%. This 1% I do is to choose to pray for help.

Being entirely ready to surrender a defect also means that I am willing to undergo a period of “withdrawal” before my new spiritual state becomes a habit. I have discovered there is a period of withdrawal behind every defect I am willing to give up, whether it is smoking or a lack of patience.

Withdrawal is a holy time. It is a time of bonding with my Maker. It is a time when all outside distractions are removed so that I can become one with my new closer relationship with God. It is like being in a spiritual desert. It is a time when I must rely on God for strength to overcome my defect. It is a time of “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

Does the seventh step mean that we will not have any defects, once God removes them? Self-centered fear will still trigger our defects. The difference is that we now have a choice to follow our lust, for example, or not. We will be given a divine nudge at the onset of our defects to pray to God to change us, and he will, whereas, before steps six and seven I had no choice over my defects and was obsessed by them. It is the same parallel with drinking and step one. Before God intervened I had no choice but to drink. When I asked him to rescue me and admitted my powerlessness in step one, he gave me a choice to drink or not.

## Step 7

Step six and seven provide me with the miracles I need to be free of my other obsessions in the same way that step one freed me from my obsession with drinking.

Nothing is impossible with the seventh step. Through the sixth and seventh step, I have been able to practice principles over appetites. I take no credit. By the third year of my sobriety, God had removed my compulsive gambling, smoking, coffee, white sugar and white flour, salt, twenty-five pounds, and lust!

Last week we suggested that we select from the following list, three of our shortcomings that are most troublesome to us and rank them in order of their seriousness.

### Spiritual Shortcomings

1. Lack of Humility (Pride)
2. Lack of Generosity (Greed)
3. Lack of Purity of Intention (Lust)
4. Lack of a Loving Attitude (Anger)
5. Lack of Discipline (Gluttony)
6. Lack of Gratitude (Envy)
7. Lack of Action (Sloth)

Working a step, tradition or concept to me means that I am willing to take inventory and allow it to surrender something within me. Let us write inventory on our most serious shortcomings.

### INVENTORY EXAMPLE - (Try to condense to three sentences.)

- a) The Story: I will criticize someone and make a self serving statement.
- b) What did I do wrong: Spiritual pride.
- c) What would God have me do instead the next time?: Act as a humble person would and be content knowing that God needs me to carry the message and that God approves of me and loves me.

If I am ready now to practice the shortcomings behind my defects and I know specifically what they are from my inventory list. I am ready to take the seventh step by saying the seventh step prayer given in the “Big Book” (p. 76, second paragraph).