

STEP SIX

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Principle	Theme	Action	Defect	Result
Willingness	Willingness	Do something different	Stubbornness	Improved attitude

PRAYER

- God, help me to be willing {BB, p. 76}
- Dear God, I am ready for Your help in removing from me the defects in character which I now realize are an obstacle to my recovery. Help me to continue being honest with myself and guide me toward spiritual and mental health.

REWARD - SELF-CONFIDENCE instead of helplessness.

NOTES

- STEP SIMPLIFIED: *Want to change.*
- Pre-AA STEP: *I sought through alcohol to remove all my responsibility and to escape the responsibility that is life.*
- Steps 4, 5, 6, and 7 “Get Right with SELF”
- HOW TO WORK THE STEP: **BB page 76:** para. 1, lines 3-5
- “Bam Bam” step; AA literature discusses principles but only alludes to how. Need outside help (sponsor, spiritual advisor) to find your way to do 6-7.
- AA's way of stating the best possible attitude one can take. We aim at perfection, and move toward God's will for us. But only Step One can be practiced perfectly. The remaining eleven steps state perfect ideals.
- “If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at Step Six. We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now willing to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all - every one? If we still cling to some-thing we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.”*
- Our “defects” are an excess of instincts
- Original taking of this step is a beginning of a lifetime practice
- Other literature discusses practical methods for 6-7, e.g.:
 - Spirituality of subtraction – stop doing what is objectionable and the mirror-opposite good emerges to take its place (**Steps We Took**)
 - Meditation to open channel to the unconscious roots of our disease (**Divine Therapy & Addiction**)

REFERENCES: - BB - Chapter 6 - Into Action p. 76

Step Six

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing. {BB, p. 76}

I was stuck on Step Six . . . I saw a huge bird rising in the sky. I watched it suddenly give itself up to the powerful air currents of the mountains . . . It was an example of a fellow creature "letting go" to a power greater than itself. I realized that if the bird "took back his will" and tried to fly with less trust, on its power alone, it would spoil its apparent free flight. {Daily Reflections, p. 163}

So Step Six . . . is AA's way of stating the best possible attitude one can take in order to make a beginning on this lifetime job. This does not mean that we expect all our character defects to be lifted out of us as the drive to drink was . . . we shall have to be content with patient improvement. The key words "entirely ready" underline the fact that we want to aim at the very best we know or can learn. {12 & 12, p. 65}

This is the step that separates the men from the boys . . . the difference between "the boys and the men" is the difference between striving for a self-determined objective and for the perfect objective which is of God . . . we ought to become entirely willing to aim toward perfection . . . This is the exact point at which we abandon limited objectives, and move toward God's will for us. {12 & 12, p. 63, 68, 69}

Only Step One, where we made the 100 percent admission we were powerless over alcohol, can be practiced with absolute perfection. The remaining eleven Steps state perfect ideals. They are goals toward which we look, and the measuring sticks by which we estimate our progress. . . The only urgent thing is that we make a beginning, and keep trying. {12 & 12, p. 68}

Whatever you practice you become good at . . . This is certainly the way we [have accumulated] our defects of character . . . We'll use the same practice in changing that we've used in developing [them] . . . Once we see them as objectionable, we will become ready to let go of them . . . we will begin to practice something different to take the place of our defects. . . we can remove any objectionable idea from our minds by overriding it with better ideas . . . Step 6 is based on this truth: if you want to change, you don't do what you want to do {Steps We Took, p. 90-92}

We look at the Twelve Steps as just simple principles, without a lot of instructions. And people show you how to use those principles. {Steps We Took, p. 94}

Ideas, emotions, & attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, & a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them. {BB, p. 27}

I have often said that when intellect is restored to its proper place, which is one of predominating over our emotions, then it should be used. Adults function rationally; what else is there to say? And rational people prepare before they act. So what we must do here is prepare in Step Six for the action of Step Seven.

{Father Joe Martin, ASHLEY}

Self-searching is the means by which we bring new vision, action & grace to bear upon the dark, negative side of our natures. With it comes to the development of that kind of humility that makes it possible for us to receive God's help. . . we find that bit by bit we can discard the old life - the one that did not work - for a new life that can & does work under any conditions whatever. {As Bill Sees It, p. 8, 10}

How in the world can I get rid of habits that I have built up over a lifetime? . . . Human nature is what it is; and, if I still have these faults after a lifetime of trying with the help of God Himself, where in the world would I be without that help? {Father Joe Martin, ASHLEY}

You were ENTIRELY ready (not almost, not just about, not partially) to have God remove ALL (not some) of these defects. He cannot remove things that have already happened. You are ready to get rid of ALL of them, even the ones that are fun. REMEMBER, YOU TURNED YOUR WILL AND LIFE OVER TO GOD IN STEP THREE. Now comes...[Step Seven] {Clarence Snyder 1944 - A.A. Sponsorship Pamphlet}

BB

1. Look at our defects and ask are we ready to give them up
2. If we cling to something, ask God to help us be willing

12x12

1. The step that separates the Men from the Boys (those that strive for God's perfection vs. self-determined goal)
2. If we can surrender alcohol problem to God, why not other defects?
 - Drinking is an unnatural act defying self-preservation; other defects don't - just instincts taken to excess.
 - Humbling beating from drinking enables grace of God to enter
3. Our "defects" are an excess of instincts
 - God forgives but does not make us perfect – WE must be willing to work *toward* perfection – make progress building character
 - Step 6 defines target [quote (c), **12 & 12, p. 65**] [1] [2]
 - "Practically no one" becomes entirely ready – always something you don't want to give up [3]
4. Defects severity:
 - Easy to surrender big defects through self-will, when it avoids punishment
 - Less severe – easy to deny we have them . . . and some we really love!
 - Examples of less severe defects we enjoy keeping [**ME: self-righteous anger used to cover inferiority with false veil of superiority – the "spiral of denial" again**]
5. We don't tend to "get ready" until we become miserable – seek only the perfection needed to "get by"
6. Only Step One is worked perfectly; rest are ideals [quote (e), **12 & 12, p. 68**] [2]
7. How to work it:
 - Define a goal – how you should be (a value) [3]
 - Target perfection, begin walking in that direction and keep trying
 - Catch yourself if you say "this I'll never give up" – *Never say Never!* [3]
 - Some delay pardonable on some defects – but only while work on the worst ones

The Steps We Took (6 & 7)

1. Work these steps by process of removal, to allow opposites to surface once no longer blocked
2. These steps we take beside each other (over time we see defect, become willing, and ask God)
3. We accumulated defects thru practice; we override them the same, by practicing something different (see quote)
4. How? Do something different. The "spirituality of subtraction":
 - don't do what you want to do (e.g. gossip)
 - as we don't do what we want, we force doing what we don't want to do (love, tolerance, patience). We get rewards (people in our lives, self-esteem). We start to like doing it. We develop true concern for self (first) and for others.
 - The new, good stuff – not something you have to learn; it was always there because it was of God. Just comes.
 - To go out and do things for others without self-love is a token; just covering up your hollowness.
 - God abhors a vacuum (quote)
 - The sliding scale:
 - if you have too much resentment, you can't express the real powers (fear => courage; resentment => love/tolerance/patience)
 - you have to express either one or the other
5. Metaphors:
 - Changing your car – start by giving up on the old car (objectionable)
 - Changing your body – start by giving up on food you really like (objectionable)
 - Start eating what you don't like; body changes, begin to like self, begin to like this food you didn't like, don't even want the old foods
 - Stripping the rocking chair of gunk to reveal the beauty always there
6. It's a program of getting rid of things, not getting anything . . . We don't have to go out and look for them. All we have to do is convince ourselves that they are already there, our God-qualities . . . this is a life-time task . . . Patience is accepting God's timing in life . . . the ability to allow the time for things to work.

Divine Therapy and Addiction

1. Consequences of the human condition:
 - Illusion – the false-self in pursuit of happiness
 - Concupiscence – looking for happiness in the wrong places
 - Weakness of will
2. Commentaries & unconscious frustrations – cycle of escalating commentaries
3. How? Meditation to free repressing “afflictive emotions” stemming from false search for happiness:
 - Wrestle self over you want the defect, and you want to give it up
 - You decide you want to give it up – then find you can’t
 - Then you become humble and ask
 - Meditation allows unconscious crud to come out; beware of too deep, or may plunge you into depression
 - Use of active prayer sentences, e.g. “*I put all my trust in you, my God; all my trust is in your mercy*”, which thru repetition becomes automatic.
4. *The diseased roots of our inner tree are the excessive energy that we put into finding happiness through the gratification of unlimited and unreal demands for the symbols in the culture of affection/esteem/approval, power/control, and safety/security.*
5. Depression
 - divine therapy is only thing that gets to these roots
 - psychotherapy helps as an aid to divine therapy;
 - drugs necessary for clinical depression to allow other therapy to work
 - Bill: 14 year depression tied to desire for approval; lifted when he realized this

Language of the Heart – Humility: see Step 7