

PREPARING FOR THE SIXTH STEP

THE SIXTH STEP:

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

Read the top paragraph of page 76 in the “Big Book” and pages 63 through 69 in the “12 & 12.”

What is the main defect of character that I presently have that I would like to have removed? Is it a dependency I have that is on other than a Higher Power? (i.e., overeating, approval, loneliness, etc.)

Or am I doing anything I would be ashamed of doing in the presence of my Higher Power?

“UNITY INSURES RECOVERY THROUGH SERVICE”
MEETING OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

Read the “Big Book” (p. 76 top paragraph) and the “12 & 12” (pp. 63-69)

To determine a “one-phrase” list of character defects, let us answer the following questions:

1. Do I have dependence on any powers in my life other than a Higher Power (Example: my lover, “high” from smoking and coffee, overeating, money, etc.)
2. Am I doing anything I would be ashamed of doing in the presence of my Higher Power (Example: masturbation, hiding from problems, chasing women, stealing, etc.)
3. What are the other defects and patterns that were revealed to me from inventory?
 - a) Am I afraid I will lose something I possess?
 - b) Am I afraid I will fail to get something I demand?
4. Am I entirely ready to let go of each of these defects?
5. Do I really believe I am powerless to remove each of the defects?

Working a step, tradition or concept to me means I am willing to take inventory and allow it to surrender something within me.

The sixth step is a call to perfection. It separates those who are working the program and those who drift through the program. “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.” (“12 & 12,” p. 68).

This is a step where we can permit our perfectionism full rein. “We shall need to raise our eyes toward perfection, and be ready to walk in that direction.” (“12 & 12,” p. 68).

It is true that “we are not saints” and that “we claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection” (“Big Book,” p.60) but that doesn’t mean that we are not called to be saints or called to be perfect like our Father in heaven. “It is suggested that we ought to become entirely willing to aim toward perfection” (“12 & 12,” p. 69).

The fourth step or nightly tenth step inventory will point up our worst character defects. Let us review the following list given in Step Six in the “12 & 12” (p. 66 and 67) to see what our worse defects are:

Step 6

1. (Pride-lack of Humility) Do we do or say things that will make us feel a little (or a lot) superior to someone else?
2. (Greed-lack of generosity) Does our greed masquerade as ambition?
3. (Lust-Lack of purity of intention) Do our dreams of romance really cover up imaginary sex excursions?
4. (Anger-Lack of love) Do we use justified resentments as an excuse to criticize others and enjoy self-righteous anger?
5. (Gluttony-Lack of discipline) Do we enjoy milder forms of gluttony that are not totally ruinous?
6. (Envy-Lack of gratitude) Do we wish for what we do not have rather than working for it? Are we angry over attributes we do not have rather than accepting that fact?
7. (Sloth-Lack of Action) Do we procrastinate? When we do work hard, is our motive to be secure and slothful later on when we retire?

The degree of my dedication to working the sixth step is measured by my willingness to give up my worst defects now and not wait until they cause an excessive misery. Am I willing to give up that defect I said I never would?

Let us write an inventory of our worst defect. "At the very least, we shall have to come to grips with some of our worst character defects and take action toward their removal as quickly as we can." ("12 & 12," p. 69) Let us examine our life in A.A., relationships, and work.

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

- a) The Story: I work hard and become fearful when I feel my standard of living threatened.
- b) What did I do wrong? My motive for working hard is so I can be secure and slothful.
- c) What would God expect me to do instead? Dedicate my hard work for the purpose of accomplishing God's work-will for me a day at a time by being of service as He seems fit.

If I am really convinced that my efforts alone are powerless to remove my own defects, then I am entirely ready to have God remove my defects of character.