

A Life Ideal:

Marriage / Wife

AA Homegroup

AA meetings

Sponsor

Sponsees

Job / Employment / Career / "Dream Business"

Family life with my Father

Family life with my Aunt, Uncle & Grandmother

Family life with "in-laws" / members of K's family

AA Friends (acquaintances)

Closer AA Friends

Non-AA Friends

"Couples" friends

Strangers

Computer / E-mail / Internet

Tapes / CDs / Recording / Converting (includes homegroup tapes and CDs)

AA Activities (i.e.: Conventions, Retreats, etc.)

AA Commitments (i.e.: "service", speaking, weekends)

12-Stepping / 12-Step Calls / One-on-One Step-work

Personal Step-work / Spiritual Exercises (in addition to regular 10 & 11 practices)

11th Step Morning & Evening Practices

10th Step & "All throughout the day" practices

Hobbies & Interests (Including Watching Sports & Soap Operas)

Physical exercise

"Fun-time" / "down-time", with or without Kathy (i.e.: movies, "date-night", etc.)

Couples Group

Marriage Counseling

"Homeowner"

Weight / Physical Health / Medical

Finances (i.e.: monthly bills, savings plan, budget, etc.)

Sex-life / sex conduct

Intimacy (non-sexual)

Automobile

Pets

Other

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Seventh Step Prayer Exercise:

(Day 1) My Creator

(Day 2) I am now willing that You should have all of me, good and bad.

(Day 3) I pray that You now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows.

(Day 4) Grant me strength,

(Day 5) as I go out from here, to do Your bidding. Amen.

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-from "Drop The Rock" - As I look back over my last year of sobriety (my seventh), I realize it was my best year ever. It was linked inextricably with the Seventh Step and with the unshakable law in the Universe that says that what isn't growing is dying.

Dr. Silkworth pointed out in the Big Book that unless an alcoholic can "experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery." "An entire psychic change" is nothing short of continual growth. Growth is almost always uncomfortable for me.

Last year I was frequently confronted with pain and the need to change. I resisted a lot of this change because it is difficult for me. I'm addicted to my comfort zone. When I am confronted with yet another character defect, I usually find pain. I usually try to rationalize the defect away, then try to blame it on somebody else (this is one of my favorite ways of denying), and finally I resort to promises that I'll never give this up totally.

Last week, I came up against a defect that took me to that point. So, I decided to go to a meeting. It was on exactly what I needed to hear (funny how that works out) - Step Seven. As I listened to the members of the group share their practical experience with this Step I became increasingly aware that I didn't want to give up this particular defect because I was afraid - afraid of what would become of me, afraid of what God might change me into. What if I didn't like what happened?

When it came my turn to talk, I found myself unburdening my soul to the group. And I shared my first real experience with Step Seven that had happened during my third year of sobriety. I'd been working on Six and Seven for a long time and was getting nowhere with it. My sponsor realized I was stuck and wrangled an invitation for me to talk at a speakers meeting about the Sixth and Seventh Steps. I spent the rest of the week in a panic, knowing I had the words but lacked a true understanding of the Steps because of my fear of change.

The morning of the Friday I was going to speak I was met at the back door of the college where I work. Two of my students were waiting for me with big grins on their faces and an air of secrecy. Part of an assignment I'd given them was to supply examples of poetry in action. They obviously felt they had a good one.

They led me into my desk, where a vase was sitting with a string attached, and floating above the vase was a big yellow balloon. It was a very nice looking arrangement, with a juxtaposition of balloon for flower in the composition. They had written a poem on the balloon. Both of the students were brimming with fun and confidence. Then, they told me to pop the balloon!

I couldn't. I hate to pop balloons! I hate the noise. It really bothers me to see a balloon pop. It scares me. Usually I let out a little screech when it happens. They handed me a hatpin and said, "Pop it." They weren't going to take no for an answer. Finally, I took the pin, put one hand over my ear and closed my eyes. I lunged forward with the pin and heard the balloon pop. I didn't screech.

I opened my eyes and saw an amazing sight. Concealed inside the now disintegrated balloon was a flower. I had no idea how they got it inside the balloon. I felt my eyes fill with tears of joy.

At last I understood the Seventh Step. I am just like that balloon. I am so full of hot air, I am afraid to let God pop the balloon and let the flower out. My pride and fear keep me from discovering my own flower and the flowers of others. That night I shared my story with a roomful of grateful drunks and saw lots of flowers in the room. It was like being in God's garden. I, too, am part of that garden.

I have learned to look at others and see the flower. I may not always see my own, yet through trusting God and practicing the Six and Seventh Steps I can change and grow. By seeing how my fellow travelers in recovery continue to blossom and grow I can develop faith that I, too, am growing and changing.

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I have incorporated the act of asking for the strength of taking away a defect and replacing it with an asset. At first it was a chore to remind myself and soon became second nature. I do it one defect at a time. I stay focused and when I have a good handle on it, I give thanks and ask for help and guidance as I move on to the next.

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Seems there was this group of 12 Step members taking a boat ride to this island called SERENITY, & they were truly a happy bunch of people. As the boat pulled away from the dock, a few on board noticed Mary running down the street trying to catch up with the boat. One said, "Darn, she missed the boat." Another said, "Maybe not. Come on, Mary! Jump in the water! Swim! Swim! You can make it! You can catch up with us!"

So Mary jumped into the water & started to swim for all she was worth. She swam for quite a while, & then started to sink. The members on board, now all aware that Mary was struggling, shouted, "Come on, Mary! Don't give up! Drop the rock!" With that encouragement, Mary started swimming again, only to start sinking again shortly afterward. She was going under when she heard all those voices shouting to her, "Mary, drop the rock! Let go, & drop the rock!"

Mary was vaguely aware of something around her neck, but she couldn't quite figure out what it was. Once more, she gathered her strength & started swimming. She was doing quite well, even gaining a little on the boat, but then she felt this heaviness pulling her under again. She saw all those people on the boat holding out their hands & hollering for her to keep swimming & shouting, "Don't be an idiot, Mary! Drop the rock!"

Then she understood, when she was going down for the third time. This thing around her neck, THIS was why she kept sinking when she really WANTED to catch the boat. This thing was the "rock" they were all

shouting about: self-centeredness, resentment, fear, dishonesty, self-pity, intolerance & anger, just some of the things her "rock" was made of. "God help me get rid of the rock," she prayed. "Now! Get rid of it!" So Mary managed to stay afloat long enough to untangle a few of the strings holding that rock around her neck, realizing as she did that her load was easing up; and then, with another burst of energy, SHE LET GO. She tore the other strings off & DROPPED THE ROCK.

Once free of the rock, she was amazed how easy it was to swim, & she soon caught up with the boat. Those on board were cheering for her & applauding & telling her how great she was, & how it was so good having her with them again, & how now we can get on with our boat ride & have a nice time. Mary felt great & was just about to indulge in a little rest & relaxation when she glanced back to shore. There, a ways back, she thought she saw something bobbing in the water, so she pointed it out to some others. Sure enough, someone was trying to catch the boat, swimming for dear life but not making much headway. In fact, it looked like they were going under. Mary looked around & saw the concern on the faces of the other members. She was the first to lean over the rail & shout, "Hey, friend! Drop the rock!"

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Humility is realizing the "all-ness" of God and the nothingness of self.

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Sometimes our readiness to have our character defects removed depends on what we call them. If misnaming our defects makes them seem less "defective," we may be unable to see the damage they cause. And if they seem to be causing no harm, why would we ever ask our Higher Power to remove them from our lives?

Take "people pleasing;" for example. Doesn't really sound all that bad, does it? It just means we're nice to people, right? Not quite. To put it bluntly, it means we're dishonest and manipulative. We lie about our feelings, our beliefs, and our needs, trying to soothe others into compliance with our wishes. Or perhaps we think we're "easygoing" But does "easygoing" mean we ignore our housework, avoid confrontations, and stay put in a comfortable rut? Then a better name for it would be "laziness;" or "procrastination;" or "fear".

Many of us have trouble identifying our character defects. If this is the case for us, we can talk with our sponsor or our program friends. We clearly and honestly describe our behavior to them and ask for their help in identifying our defects. As time passes, we'll become progressively better able to identify our own character defects, calling them by their TRUE names.

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The trouble some of us have with Step Seven, humbly asking God to remove our shortcomings, is that we really do want to be rid of our troublesome traits, but not until we've wrung everything we can from them. There are plenty of reasons we may give for not being in any hurry: we're too young; we haven't lived enough; there are things we haven't done yet; we haven't really hurt people that much. What are we so afraid of losing?

We don't have to be saints to please God. God knows we're only human. Maybe God just wants us to be free of the things that come between God and us.

Someone has said that humility is to see ourselves as God sees us. God loves us as we are, so what is there to lose except false pride?

I ask for freedom from the shortcomings that come between God and me.

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The chief activator of our defects has been self-centered fear -- primarily fear that we would lose something we already possessed or would fail to get something we demanded. Living upon a basis of unsatisfied demands, we were in a state of continual disturbance and frustration.

The Seventh Step is where we make the change in our attitude which permits us, with humility as our guide, to move out from ourselves toward others and toward God.

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When Michelangelo was asked how he created a piece of sculpture, he answered that the statue already existed within the marble. God Himself had created the Pieta, David, and Moses. Michelangelo's job, as he saw it, was to get rid of the excess marble that surrounded God's creation.

So it is with you. The perfect you isn't something you need to create, because God already created it. Your job is to allow your Higher Power to remove the shortcomings that prevent your real self from shining through, just as excess marble surrounded Michaelangelo's perfect statue.

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In Step 7 (Big Book, page 76) it says: "I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows." Then Step 9 (Big Book, page 77) says: "At the moment we are trying to put our lives in order. BUT THIS IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF. Our REAL purpose is to FIT OURSELVES to be of MAXIMUM service to God and the people about us." So our making amends is part of how God (Love) brings fulfillment to what we're praying for in Step 7!

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One of the key words in the Eighth Step is the word "all" (which is mentioned twice!). I am not free to select a few names for the list and to disregard others. It is a list of all persons I have harmed. I can see immediately that this Step entails forgiveness because if I'm not willing to forgive someone, there is little chance I will place his name on the list. Before I placed the first name on my list, I said a little prayer: "I forgive anyone and everyone who has ever harmed me at any time and under any circumstances." It is well for me to contemplate a small, but very significant, two-letter word every time the Lord's Prayer is said. The word is "as". I ask, "Forgive us our trespasses, AS we forgive those who trespass against us." In this case, "as" means, "in the same manner." I am asking to be forgiven in the same manner that I forgive others. As I say this portion of the prayer, if I am harboring hatred or resentment, I am inviting more resentment, when I should be calling on the spirit of forgiveness.

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The cheerful little girl with bouncy golden curls was almost five. Waiting with her mother at the checkout stand, she saw them, a circle of glistening white pearls in a pink foil box. "Oh please, Mommy. Can I have them? Please, Mommy, please?"

Quickly the mother checked the back of the little foil box and then looked back into the pleading blue eyes of her little girl's upturned face. "A dollar ninety-five. That's almost \$2.00. If you really want them, I'll think of some extra chores for you and in no time you can save enough money to but them for yourself. Your birthday's only a week away and you might get another crisp dollar from Grandma."

As soon as Jenny got home, she emptied her penny bank and counted out 17 pennies. After dinner, she did more than her share of chores and she went to the neighbor and asked Mrs. McJames if she could pick dandelions for ten cents.

On her birthday, Grandma did give her another new dollar bill and at last she had enough money to but the necklace.

Jenny loved her pearls. They made her feel dressed up and grown up. She wore them everywhere, Sunday school, kindergarten, even to bed. The only time she took them off was when she went swimming or had a bubble bath. Mother said if they got wet, they might turn her neck green.

Jenny had a very loving Daddy and every night when she was ready for bed, he would stop whatever he was doing and come upstairs to read her a story. One night as he finished the story, he asked Jenny, "Do you love me?"

Oh yes, Daddy. You know that I love you."

"Then give me your pearls."

"Oh Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have Princess, the white horse from my collection, the one with the pink tail. Remember, Daddy? The one you gave me. She's my very favorite."

"That's okay, Honey, Daddy loves you. Good night."

About a week later, after story time, Jenny's Daddy asked again, "Do you love me?"

"Daddy, you know I love you."

"Then give me your pearls."

"Oh Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have my baby doll. The brand new one I got for my birthday. She is beautiful and you can have the yellow blanket that matches her sleeper."

"That's okay. Sleep well. God bless you, little one. Daddy loves you." And as always, he brushed her cheek with a gentle kiss.

A few nights later when her Daddy came in, Jenny was sitting on her bed with her legs crossed Indian-style. As he came close, he noticed her chin was trembling and one silent tear rolled down her cheek.

"What is it, Jenny? What's the matter?"

Jenny didn't say anything but lifted her little hand up to her Daddy. And when she opened it, there was her little pearl necklace. With a little quiver, she finally said, "Here, Daddy, this is for you." With tears gathering in his own eyes, Jenny's Daddy reached out with one hand to take the dime-store necklace, and with the other hand he reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case with a strand of genuine

pearls and gave them to Jenny. He had them all the time. He was just waiting for her to give up the dime-store stuff so he could give her the genuine treasure.

So it is with God. He is waiting for us to give up the cheap things in our lives so that He can give us beautiful treasures.

Isn't our Higher Power good? Are you holding onto things that our Creator wants you to let go of. Are you holding on to harmful or unnecessary relationships, habits and activities that you have come so attached to that it seems impossible to let go? Sometimes it is so hard to see what is in the other hand but do believe this one thing:

God will never take away something without giving you something better in its place!

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People sometimes accept the idea that a change of thought, plus turning to God in prayer, will transform their lives into harmony and freedom. The logic of this principle appeals to them, and they set to work upon it in earnest. Then, after a few days, they say, "Nothing has happened after all," and they drop back into their old negative thinking. That is extremely foolish. The results of many years of general negative thinking are seldom corrected in a few days. No one who goes upon a new physical diet or medical regimen expects to reap the advantages in so short a time. You must keep up the new way of thinking and refuse to be discouraged by seeming failures at first. The right motive for adopting right thinking is that it is right, and that wrong thinking is wrong; and we should do right whether it seems to pay dividends or not. Of course, it does pay dividends - fabulous dividends - but it usually takes a little perseverance in the face of preliminary slowness.

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I needed to lay all of myself at God's feet, and I needed to say to my Higher Power, "God, I don't know where we are, I don't know how we got here, and I sure don't know where we're going or how to get there. But what I am going to do even though I'm feeling scared to death, I'm going to put my hand in Yours and I'm going to act like I trust that You're going to show me just where to take the very next step and I'm going to walk along with You one step at a time without trying to figure out that map, because I think I finally got it that the map is none of my business and I don't have the capacity to comprehend the map." The problem with this Sixth and Seventh Step thing is that it is SO SIMPLE that it is almost IMPOSIBLE for most of us to grasp it. When you let go of the ideas of who you're suppose to be, of what you're suppose to be, and just start concentrating really, really hard on the next thing that God wants you to do, even though your brain may be screaming, "Wait a minute! I'm looking at the pattern down the line and this is going to be terrible. I'm going to loose something that I don't want to loose, or I'm not going to get something that I want so terribly bad." But your part of this job is that you're going to try real, real hard to just do the next RIGHT thing instead of what YOU want to do. You quit trying to figure out what you need to do relationship-wise, you quit trying to figure out how you're going to get out of the hole financially, etc., and you just start trying real, real hard to do the next RIGHT thing and it will work out just fine. It's hard to talk about because it really wasn't the beginning of action as much as it was the cessation of frantic activity, of stopping fighting, of trying real hard to just do the next RIGHT thing and letting my God lead me where He or She wanted me to go, by doing the next right thing. And then I was told that as life goes on, ANY time I start thinking that ANY of this is ANY more complicated than my doing the next right thing instead of my doing what I want to do, that I should call my support group because the insanity has returned. I needed to let go of the pattern of trying to play God. And I want to tell ya folks, it's worked beyond my wildest dreams!

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Step 5 - Admitted to God, to ourselves and another human being the exact nature of wrongs.

I was very nervous after I had written my resentments, guilt, fears, and sexual conduct. I arranged a time and I went to my sponsors house, and I shared with him over a few sessions, my moral inventory, not a life story but a moral inventory. In other words all the stuff that made me feel dis-eased!. It was painful, at times I felt I was going to burst out crying and run away!.

But courage my held me. Courage as a soldier, I saw bravery, people being involved in violence after the event, there was no reaction just, "Well, I did my job". Courage is going into a situation with the heart racing, the mouth dry, the sweat and a new panic experience, but still doing it. Well, I did it and today I am glad, it was like getting rid of a Cancer!. Cancer of the emotions, caused by resentment, guilt and fear. My sponsor gave me a lot of feedback and never once criticized. He kept saying "you too?". What that meant was, he had done a lot of the things I had done!. When I finished he said to me, "Well, Billy,

everything you shared I have heard before, you shared nothing I have not heard before from my other sponsees”

It was a burden carrying all the resentment, guilt and fear. Dave was my sponsor, but I know people who have used Priests, Rabbi's, Mullah's, Counselors etc. What is important is not to see it as an act of confession but as a learning of your character

When I admitted to God, I admitted it to my creator, I prayed that what I had learnt may be of use to my fellow humans!.

My creator wants me to be happy, joyous and free!. If I am full of resentment, guilt and fear, then it speaks for itself. I could not be truly happy; maybe I was pretending to be happy in the past!. Always behind that, the fear of impending doom!

What I also learnt from my step 4 and step 5 was to write a gratitude list. I had always been obsessed by what I did not have and what I wanted, never looked at what I had.

I had always been obsessed with people I resented, and never the people I liked!. I had always been obsessed with guilt, my badness, my self loathing. Well, after step 5 I realized I was a human being. The only person saying I was bad was me!. All I had to do was to be willing to make amends (no, it says willing!), I did not have to hurt the world, I had seen things in a different light, what it meant was; If I could go back, I would change the event. I was willing!

All my needs have been met since I did my inventory. I realized I was not happy running my business, so I stopped, it paid my taxes. The problem was that I had brothers working for me. To be happy, joyous and free meant I had to have courage and look at the long-term problems if I stayed in business. Sure, I did not want to effect my brother's finances, but I had to put myself first! I had to remember “The man who asked a question feels a fool for twenty minutes. The man who does not ask a question is a fool for the rest of his life”. I felt guilty, what would my brothers think of me, but I prayed and realized that my intentions were not to harm them. So, I had to be at ease with my intentions and not their reactions!. I stopped being a prisoner of people's opinions. I realized I was in an unhappy relationship and I had to do something about that.

I never wanted to hurt my partner when I left and I had to be comfortable with that, again.

INTENTIONS

Happy, joyous and free! Did not mean that I had to put up with the unbearable, it meant getting into a way of life, which was blameless. Sure you might think that walking out of a relationship is cruel, but my intention was not to hurt. I was sure that in my step 4, that I resented a woman for finishing with me, after listing that resentment I realized she had the right to do what was best for her. Just like I had the right to do what is best for me, again I state it was not my intention to harm!. After knowing how I hated that woman for finishing with me because I wanted to be liked, I stayed in an unhappy relationship, which led to resentment and unhappiness. A vicious circle!

Step 6 - We're entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character!

After writing what I did in Steps 4 and 5, and seeing the exact nature of my wrong, it is obvious that I would want those defects removing just like a cancer!. Remove, well, replace is another way of looking at it, if you have problems with God and don't know how God is going to remove those defects. Well you could start to add things to your character such as tolerance, patience, gratitude, honesty, courage, humility, etc these lead to a blameless life. Sure people will get pissed off with you, whatever you do, but to live a blameless life, where you mind your own business, get on with your own life, stop people pleasing, stop arguing (does it matter?), help, be caring, listen and learn. Let people be your teacher, not your master! Who would you sooner be stuck in a lift with, an arrogant self-centered person, or a caring gentleperson?. Dave helped me so much, he was a devout Catholic and I was on the Buddhist path. I asked him why I should do step 4, and he replied “In your case, Billy, to become a Gentle-man”. I had heard that word a million times; I understood a gentleman in word, deed and nature. So I could not see any good reason why I should hang on to my defects, so, yes, I was ready.

If I think the same, expect the same, react the same, want the same, say the same, do the same, resent the same, hate the same, I will feel the same!

All I had to do was **PRACTICE OPPOSITES!**

Step 7 - Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.

When I was writing my defects, I would burst out laughing at time, when I would see these defects that were causing me and the people around me so much pain!. These defects were so obvious they stood out like a light in the dark. I had brought on so much of my pain by my reactions and in other ways by my lack of action.

So humility was not a case of being ridiculed, but a sense of humility, “Yes, I am the problem”. So all I had to do was do what my creator wanted, and that was to use what I had learnt from the first 6 steps to practice opposites, simple, practice opposites. In doing so, you are getting your shortcomings removed. Today I know how my creator designed me. I have started to use the, “User handbook”, “The makers instructions pamphlet”. It designed me to love other people as well as myself, to care about other people, “To do unto others as you would have done unto yourself”. To be polite, gentle, caring, loving, tolerant, patient, humble, honest, courageous, gratitude and to try your best to live a blameless life. In doing so I will have peace of mind, knowing I am trying my best and that is all that I can do, my best. If I don’t follow how my creator designed me, then I will suffer and those around me will suffer.

So all I had to do was practice opposites !

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Step 5 - I admit to God, to myself and to another human being the exact nature of my wrongs

After working through the fourth step questions, what do you realize about your limitations and capabilities?

Describe any person who has helped you to see yourself more clearly and objectively in your process of recovery and of life.

What qualities would you like to have in a sponsor? How do the people in the list of possible sponsors measure up to these criteria?

Write down the names of the most trustworthy people that you know. Do you think that they would be willing or interested in being a sponsor for you?

Describe your feelings and expectations about sharing your fifth step with your sponsor.

List people that you can think of that you might share your story with. Write whether you think that they are a safe, risky or a bad choice to work your 5th step with.

Person	Safe, Risky or Bad choice

Describe who you have chosen to be your sponsor and how they reacted when you approached them.

Describe what it was like in sharing the fifth step. How did you feel before, after and during the process?

Are you glad that you have done this?

Describe any celebrations or activities that you have done in honor of completing the fifth step.

Step 6 - I become entirely ready to have God remove all of these defects of character

Do you have any fairy tales or myths that you feel a special affinity with? Why?

Describe situations and events where you have been full of pride. What has this brought into your life that you like or enjoy? What problems has it caused you?

Describe the kind of activities do you really enjoy (of course, NOT your addictive behavior).

What are some healthy eating or exercise habits that you could start?

What are some unhealthy eating habits that you could give up?

Describe some secret GOOD deeds that you have done or would like to do.

Describe situations and events where you have been greedy, overly needy or materialistic. What has this brought into your life that you like or enjoy? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to give these attitudes over to the care of God?

Describe situations and events where you have given in to lust without regard for others or any morality.

What has this brought into your life that you like or enjoy? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to give these lustful feelings over to the power of God?

Describe situations and events where you have been dishonest. What has this brought into your life that you like or enjoy? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to depend upon God to keep you from dishonesty?

Describe situations and events where you have given into excessive eating, drinking, shopping or covetousness. What has this brought into your life that you like or enjoy? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to let God take control of these behaviors and attitudes?

Describe situations and events where you have been very envious or jealous of others. What has this brought into your life that you like or enjoy? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to turn these situations over to God?

Describe situations and events where you have avoided responsibility for your actions or lack of actions. What has this brought into your life that you like or enjoy? What problems has it caused you? Are you ready to allow God to help you take responsibility for your actions?

List your major defects of character.

What do you plan to do when these major defects of character begin to become evident? List each defect individually along with the proposed preventative behavior and how you will allow God to help you in your battle against these defects.

Step 7 - I humbly ask God to remove my shortcomings

What defects will be most difficult to give up? In what order do you plan to give them up?

What kind of situations, stressors or pressures cause you to regress back into your defects of character?

What can you do to lessen the likelihood of that stress occurring?

Where do you feel most supported and helped in your strivings for recovery?

What makes you lose hope? Can you avoid such situations? If so, then how?

What (person, situation, event, thought) restores your hope? Is there a way to maximize those influences? If so, then how?

What would you like to recapture in your life?

Describe in detail what you think that your life will be like with your defects of character removed from you.

What are you grateful for?

When do you think that life has been especially good for you? When did you have the greatest joy?

Describe your typical day's activities in terms of how much time you spend on each type of activity.

Describe your typical day's activities if you knew that you had only one year to live.

Have you made the correct decisions about how to spend time with loved ones, in solitude and with your discretionary time? If not, how would you like to change it?

What would you do if you were granted three wishes?

What do you think that you can do to leave the world a better place and accomplish your mission in life?

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Step 5 Reflection Questions

After prayerful consideration, write out the answers to the following questions:

- 1) Am I willing to reveal what I have written – totally; transparently?
- 2) Can I really be honest with someone; with myself?
- 3) Have I already made a decision to withhold something by not writing it down?
- 4) Is there any dark cranny in which I have not directed the light?
- 5) Am I willing to reveal all my secrets, shame, and guilt?

Step 6 Reflection Questions

After prayerful consideration, write out the answers to the following questions:

- 1) What is the most prominent obstacle I use to shut out the sunlight of the Spirit?
- 2) How is it manifested in thought/attitude?...feeling/emotion?...behavior/activity?
- 3) What is its source? What purpose does it serve? What is its value to me? Is it a compensation for a need or deficiency I perceive I have?
- 4) What do I fear might happen if I let go of this behavior?
- 5) How does this behavior protect me from pain?
- 6) What feeling does this behavior help me avoid?
- 7) Am I REALLY ready and willing to have it removed? If not, am I willing to pray for the willingness?

Step 7 Reflection Questions

After prayerful consideration, write out the answers to the following questions:

- 1) Am I willing to pray the defect removal prayer (Seventh Step Prayer, page 76 in the Big Book)? Without reservation?
- 2) If I have a particularly stubborn character defect, am I willing to pray for its SPECIFIC removal?
- 3) Meanwhile, am I willing to stop, or at least modify, the behavior – the outward manifestation of this character defect?

Do I believe my Higher Power CAN remove this obstacle and restore sanity? Do I believe my Higher Power WILL?

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STEP 5

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

I knew I had to tell someone someday how and why I had become who I was. I was so fearful. When I did it to the best of my ability, I felt good. I was so worried what the person listening to my fifth step would think and yet that person I did it with fell asleep.

QUESTIONS:

1. Did you ever make a fifth step?
2. Why are we afraid of the fifth step?
3. Do you really believe you are admitting to God, yourself and another the exact nature of your wrongs?
4. What do you think is needed for a good fifth step?
5. Have you ever listened to another making a fifth step?
6. How did you feel?
7. What are the benefits of doing a fifth step?
8. How would you coach someone who is terrified about doing a fifth step?

STEP 6

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

When I was drinking and in trouble, I wanted God to do everything for me. I was willing and able to do nothing. Now I realize that I have to turn it over but I have to do my part.

QUESTIONS

1. Do my character defects still have me do things I do not want to do but I do them anyway and get into trouble?
2. Are some of my character defects enjoyable because they give me pleasure?
3. Do I really want to be able to manage my character defects or do I want to continue to be managed by them?
4. Which character defects am I ready to give up?
5. Can I ask God for the willingness to do what I have to do, to rid myself of the character defects I am ready to give up?
6. Which character defects am I still unwilling to give up?
7. Am I ready to ask God for the willingness to give up the character defects I still want to keep?

STEP 7

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

In the past I thought I was alone. At times I felt rejected and abandoned. I never asked for help. Now I realize God can do for me and with me what I could not do by myself. I open up to God now and humbly ask him to change what needs changing in me.

QUESTIONS

1. What are your fears about changing? Can you share these fears with anyone?
2. How have you already seen yourself changed?
How much of this did you actually have to do?
How much were you empowered to do?
3. Writing letters can be a great help. Can you write a letter to God, as you understand God and talk about what bothers you and what you would like to see changed about you? Can you ask God to help you change those things in yourself and your life that need changing?
4. If you are in doubt about what character defects to work on now, can you ask God to show you clearly what issues in your life would be improved if you would work the Sixth and Seventh Steps on them?
5. Can you picture yourself as you would like to become? Can you see yourself doing and being what you would like to do and be? Can you honestly and humbly ask God to help you become that person?

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6th Step Components

Give the defect of character a name.

Describe its common manifestations in the various areas of your life.

List the problems in your life both past and present that the defect has caused or worsened

List the benefits you have derived both past and present from each defect under review.

Identify the behaviors that are related to each of the defects under review that you can eliminate as an offering to the God of your understanding.

Identify the behaviors that you can initiate to counter-act the lure of the defect.

Present your plan to God and another human being who will help you to monitor your progress along the way.

*

5th Step Prayer (John E.):

God – Please be with us in this room today

Please guide us and fill us with love, fearlessness and honesty

That we may be compassionately free of judgment,

That we may forgive ourselves and others,

That we may be free of feelings of guilt.

That we may have confidence in our own essential goodness,

To dare embrace ideals of purity, unselfishness, honesty and LOVE

God – keep us aware of Your Presence here with us now.

*

6th Step Prayer from the book "Drop The Rock" (which is all about Step 6 & 7):

God, I don't care what I sound like, or look like, who my partners are, or where I live. I just don't want to be like this anymore. On Your terms, in Your time, PLEASE remake me as You will. Thank you.

*

Teach me gently and help me listen. Today I will list five ways that I get in the way of my own learning.

*

Keep me free of gossip, character assassination and judgment. Remind me that although I have humbly asked, my character defects and shortcomings arise when I least expect them.

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