

What's the Difference Between Just "Asking" and "Humbly Asking"?

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Step Seven says, "Humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings" so I'd like to attempt explaining the difference between just ASKING, and HUMBLY asking. Being humble is becoming aware of the littleness of ourselves, compared to the bigness of God. Did you ever think that your only problem is not getting your way? Being a servant of God is the highest attainment in AA. We CLIMB our way, all the way to servant. That's what a winner is - a servant. We're just out there doing what God gives us the intuition to do. And when this transformation takes place, our needs are being met from the inside, so we don't have to go out and get anything to get fixed, we're ALREADY fixed because we already have everything we need, and we're simply moving through life, just looking for ways to be of service to God. So humility is an awareness that we are willing to go through whatever it takes to become God-centered. That means we're going to have to go through the pain of often not getting our way and voluntarily go through this transforming discomfort. We'll use the following story as an illustration:

A lump of gray clay was sitting on the shelf next to beautiful teacup. The clay says to the teacup, "Is this all there is to life, just sitting here not doing much of anything? Why can't I be just like you, a teacup that people love, and say is very beautiful?" The teacup says, "Not too long ago, I was just like you. One day soon you will be a teacup too, and people will say that you too are very beautiful and they will also want to take you home with them." "Yes, I would LOVE that," says the lump of clay, "Can you ask the Master to make me into a beautiful teacup?"

Right HERE, in THIS part of the story, the clay is just ASKING to become a teacup. But HUMBLY asking is a little different than that, as will be shown by the REST of the story.

The teacup continues: "Let me tell you what it takes to become the most gorgeous, the most beautiful little teacup that everyone admires and loves.

"I didn't always look like this. There was a time in my life when I too was just a hard cold lump of gray clay. Well, one day my Master came along and He picked me up and He began to pat me and roll me and I said, 'What are you doing, stop it, quit, that hurts, don't do that, ouch, leave me alone.' And He simply said, 'Not yet.'

"And then He put me on this wheel and began to spin me around and around and around and I said, 'I'm getting dizzy, getting sick to my stomach, let me off of here, I can't stand this, oh, oh, what's happening, my whole shape is changing, stop it, stop it.' And He said, 'Not yet.'

After my shape had changed, He began to paint me all over. I said, 'Eew, cough, cough, that stuff stinks, stop it, stop it.' And He still said, 'Not yet.'

"Then He put me in this oven and closed the door. The oven had a little window and He kept just looking at me. And I said, 'I can't stand this heat, let me out of here, cough, cough, don't You love me, let me out of here, why are You just looking at me?' And He simply looked at me through the door and said, 'Not yet.'

"Then, finally, He opened the door, took me and dried me on the shelf for a while and put another coat of that awful paint on me (cough, cough). And then He turned that oven back on seven times hotter than it was before and put me back in there again, and I said, 'What are you doing, I can't stand this, You don't understand, I can't do this, I can't take it, let me out of here,' He just looked through the glass at me and said, 'Not yet.'

"Finally one day, He opened the door, took me out and set me on the shelf, let me cool off for a while and then came by with a mirror and He held it up in front of me and I couldn't believe it. I was so beautiful, I was so changed, I was so different. I didn't even look like that old lump of gray clay any more. And now people EVERYWHERE appreciate and love me."

NOW, if you ask, you're HUMBLY asking. You KNOW what's involved, you KNOW that it's not going to be easy, but you want it ANYWAY. Spirituality is about changing our attitude about pain and discomfort. It is looking THROUGH the pain to see the beauty of what is coming. The transformation is just on the OTHER side of the willingness to experience not getting my way. And as soon as we go through it, it wasn't even painful, it merely becomes a little effort. It's kinda like when you're OUT of shape and you want to get back IN shape. It's hard at first. Remember that first week in the gym when you go home and everything hurts, everywhere? But as you keep it up, a month later, it's no longer painful, it merely becomes a little effort. And it's wonderful because you know the great results it's going to produce. After a while, you LOVE pushing yourself because of the wonderful results. And the same thing can happen in the spiritual world. I UNDERSTAND that at times I'm going to be uncomfortable, but I'm willing to go through with it anyway because I trust my Higher Power. That's the difference between just ASKING, and HUMBLY asking.