

Step Six: "We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."	
Principle	Willingness: freely making a choice; cheerful agreement.
Theme	Willingness: Will I?
Defect	Stubbornness/ willfulness "I will!"
Action	To be willing to change our behavior
Process	Detailed look at the acquired character defects that aware of at this point in program
Experience	Becoming entirely ready to have God remove all our newly revealed defects of character
Result	Feel humility: a deep experience of personal powerlessness.

Step 7 "Humbly asked Him to remove your shortcomings."	
Principle	Humility: having a clear perspective and respect for one's place in context. Respect: Sensitivity to the feelings and honor of another person.
Theme	Surrender
Defect	False pride/ arrogance
Action	Pray the 7 th step prayer specifically for the removal of defects of character that stand in the way of usefulness to God and others.
Process	Allow God to change us.
Experience	Surrender ego by willingness to be responsible and accountable for behavior
Result	Peace of mind; sobriety; humility. Commitment to living according to God's will.

The objectives of Step Six and Seven are:

1. To become honest and humble. To willingly seek God's help without reservation.
2. To perfect ourselves in the practice of unselfish prayer.
3. To be aware of our defective character traits.
4. To desire their removal.
5. To surrender completely all defects of character.
6. To believe God can remove them.
7. To ask Him to take them all away. Little Red Book page 74

The results we expect from the pursuit of these objectives are:

1. A reconciliation to God's way of doing business. We become "fed up" with our way and with further practice of trying to run the show ourselves.
2. A willingness to work out a plan for suppression of self-centeredness through faith and conscious contact with God.
3. To experience dissatisfaction as a result of our alcoholic practices and to seek a spiritual inspiration that will bring us an inner sense of peace and security.
4. Increased faith, clean hearts and minds, ability to offer unselfish prayer.
5. A spiritual courage that is fearless in its outlook on life; a desire to make restitution to those our drinking has harmed.
6. A desire to quit bluffing and honestly give God a chance to remove from our lives all that stands in the way of our usefulness to Him and others; True humility.
7. Elimination of our defective character traits, acquisition of peace of mind, and sobriety.

The Little Red Book page 74

The goal of the 12 Steps in 4 Hours Back to Basics workshop is provide an introduction on the fundamentals of program. Taking the steps, as we are doing now, is not a substitution for going further by working and growing daily.

This means, after we **do** the steps, we still need to:

- Carefully read and re-read the AA Big Book
- Attend meetings
- Study the program
- Daily practice of the program through prayer, meditation, and a daily inventory
- Participate in our Fellowship by talking and sharing daily with other people

To truly understand steps 6 & 7, we need to look at how program is structured and examine our work up until now.

Historically, in early AA literature, as seen in The Table Mate, the steps were divided into 4 broad categories:

1. Admission phase: step 1
2. The spiritual phase: steps 2,3,5,6,7 and 11
3. Inventory/ restitution phase: step 4 & 10; steps 8 & 9
4. Service/ Active Work: step 12

There is a description of the 6 step program as practiced by the AA pioneers in the AA Big Book:

The six steps were:

1. Complete deflation (which later became Step 1).
2. Dependence and guidance from a Higher Power (which later became Steps 2,3,6,7 & 11).
3. Moral inventory (which later became Steps 4 & 10).
4. Confession (which later became Step 5).
5. Restitution (which later became Steps 8 & 9).
6. Continued work with other alcoholics (which later became Step 12). (291:6)

So, Steps 6 and 7 are surrender steps and part of the spiritual phase of the program, which we began when we took step 2. We begin to see the damage of self in our 4th and 5th steps. In step 6, we take all that we have learned in the preceding steps and become willing to let God remove our defects of character. In Step 7, we humbly – respectfully – ask Him to remove the defects of character we found while doing our inventory to the extent that they stand in the way of our usefulness to Him and our fellows. We let go of self-will and commit to living in God's will. We become willing to change.

How do we change? **CHANGE = SURRENDER + ACTION**

The formula for change is the combination of surrender and action. Once we become aware of our defects in our inventory, we are left with a decision. Do we act out and fix the discomfort, or do we take action and look for a solution?

In our inventory, we learned that this is how we react to people who we feel injured us:



PEOPLE DO US WRONG + WE RESENT THEM + WE STAY SICK + WE DRINK/EAT = WE LOSE

Now, we begin to apply the process below that over time will change our character defects into character assets:



PEOPLE DO US WRONG + WE TAKE OUR INVENTORY + WE MAKE CHANGES + WE STAY CLEAN = WE LIVE

Simple, but not easy! This is deep and powerful work (step 7).

As it says in the AA Big Book, after we do these steps:

13 :5 My friend promised when these things were done I would enter upon a new relationship with my Creator; that I would have the elements of a way of living which answered all my problems. Belief in the power of God, plus enough willingness, honesty and humility to establish and maintain the new order of things, were the essential requirements.

14:1 **Simple, but not easy**; a price had to be paid. It meant destruction of self-centeredness. I must turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all.

In the AA Big Book, Steps 6 and 7 are only briefly described. When the AA big book was written in 1939, the AA pioneers were sober no more than 3 years. A spiritual awakening as THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS or any spiritual experience is deeply unique and personal and defies intellectual explanation. So, we need to take the steps and have our own personal spiritual awakening. (Definition of a Spiritual awakening is to see the true reality; become concerned with your spirit.)

One of the descriptions of going through steps 6 and 7 in the early days is described in Earl T.'s story:

"Dr. Bob led me through ALL of these steps. At the moral inventory (Steps 4 & 5), he brought up some of my bad personality traits or character defects, such as selfishness, conceit, jealousy, carelessness, intolerance, ill-temper, sarcasm and resentments. We went over these at great length and then he finally asked me if I wanted these defects of character removed (Step 6). When I said yes, we both knelt at his desk and prayed, each of us asking to have these defects taken away (Step 7).

When Bill W. first worked through the steps with Ebby T., his spiritual awakening occurred immediately following steps 6 and 7.

13:2 There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction. I admitted for the first time that of myself I was nothing; that without Him I was lost. I ruthlessly faced my sins and became willing to have my new-found Friend take them away, root and branch. I have not had a drink since.

If we have taken steps 4 and 5, the AA Big Book promises us these results:

75:2 We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past. Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience. The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.

When do we do steps 6 and 7?

We are ready to begin step 6 immediately after completing step 5. Step 5 however, has not been worked until we have thoroughly reviewed our work to day. The AA Big Book puts it this way:

75:3 Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done. We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better. (Step 5 Prayer) Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand?

This paragraph means:

Appreciate that you know God better. Feel gratitude. This is the 5th step prayer.

Review each of the first 5 steps and ask yourself if you have omitted anything:

Have I admitted that I am powerless over alcohol, that my life has become unmanageable?

- DIB that God could restore me to sanity?
- DIB that I made a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God?
- DIB I made a searching and fearless moral inventory?
- DIB that I admitted to God, to myself and to another human being the exact nature of my wrongs?

Has your work been genuine?

Have you done the work correctly?

Will your work serve as a foundation for the other steps? Have I tried to take the rest of the steps without really being convinced of the first step?

Have you been completely honest?

76:0 If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at *Step Six* -- "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

The AA big book authors repeatedly emphasize the importance of willingness to being able to successfully work the program.

76:0 We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready 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 something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing. (6th step prayer)

This step asks us whether or not we are entirely willing to have God remove all our defects of character. Are we willing, in other words, to behave differently from the way we have in the past?

If we are not willing, we are faced again with self-will. We are once more insisting on our own way, even when that way is destructive. "I will!"

What is willingness?

The role of willingness is subtle. It's basically an open mindedness, humility and cheerfulness – a willing, cheerful consenting as opposed to will power and trying to control ourselves. “Will I?” compared to “I will!”

Taking step 6:

Are you willing to let God remove and take away the character defects (defective thinking) that you found in your inventory? Be specific.

If not, are you willing with prayer to ask God to help you to be willing?

(Make a list of these character defects and include them in step 10 and 11 work, as part of your daily and spot check inventory)

Observe a moment of silence.

After this, we take step 7, “humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings.”

In the original manuscript, step 7 read:

Humbly, on our knees, holding nothing back, emphasizing complete surrender to the God, of our understanding. This was changed by Bill W. fearing that it might be too controversial.

So, taking whatever position you use when praying that expresses humility to God, as we understand Him.

When ready, we say something like this: "My Creator, I am now **willing** that you should have all of me, good and bad. 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**. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen." We have then completed *Step Seven*.

Saying the 7th step prayer is the conclusion of all the work we did to get to this point.

Humility = respectfully: sensitive to the feelings and honor of another person.

Say the 7th step prayer.

Read Dr. Bob's Prayer.

Original Seventh Step Prayer as used by Dr. Bob

Dear God,

I am coming to You on my knees in all humility to humbly ask You to forgive all my past wrongs and to remove all my defects of character.

I want to start a new life today, and I ask You to help me do so and to keep helping if I keep asking.

In Step Three, I turned my will and my life over to Your care.

Thank You for taking complete control of my life, and thank You for this opportunity to wipe my slate clean and start my life anew.

In Steps Four, Five and Six I have completed my moral inventory and admitted to myself and another person the exact nature of my wrongs. I now admit these wrongs to You, God.

I am entirely ready to ask and pray now that You please remove from me every single defect of character. Specifically, I ask You to remove the following shortcomings listed in my Fourth Step moral inventory: (Read aloud here those defects from your list.)

Thank You, God, for this opportunity for a new beginning in my life and a chance to be a part of the solutions in life instead of the problems. Please grant me wisdom, knowledge and strength as I go out from here to do Your work and live the Victorious Life You designed for me.

Thank You, God, for the steps which will make Your plan for my life clear to me. Thank You and praise Your name. Amen.

Step 7: I _____ have humbly asked God to remove my shortcomings.

Steps 6 and 7 are never completed. We apply them daily in our lives. The removal of some of our character defects and the reduction of others is a lifelong process.

Through continuing to incorporate the remaining 5 steps, making amends where needed, taking a daily inventory, daily prayer and meditation, and working with others -- our very lives will become the answer to the 7th step prayer. We will have a new awareness of self and our place in the world. This new awareness is the beginning of God consciousness.

At this point it is time to clear away the wreckage of our past. We do this by making amends and restitution to others.

Willing and Trying to be Abstinent

To be abstinent is about **willingness**, not struggle. If you are willing to be abstinent, this is a state of great humility.

If you are trying to be abstinent, this is a state of confusion.

A **willingness** for abstinence means that you don't know how to do it but are willing to learn.

Trying to be abstinent implies you should be able to do it, but are struggling with it.

Willingness to be abstinent involves acceptance.

Trying to be abstinence involves condemnation.

Willing to be abstinent you are open to receive.

Trying to be abstinent, you are closed to guidance.

If you have been trying to give up the old ways and have condemned yourself for failure to do so, simply be **willing** to learn how the old ways may be replaced with ways of peace.

If you are trying to be abstinent you will fear failure.

If you are **willing** to be abstinent, even failure may be used as a teaching device.

If you are trying to be abstinent you will fear not being able to be abstinent. You will judge yourself a failure.

If you are **willing** to be abstinent, no setback becomes a problem for you know you will be shown.

If you are trying, you are attempting to be abstinent by yourself.

If you are **willing** to be abstinent you are asking for guidance.

Trying to be abstinent places the responsibility on you.

Willing to be abstinent places the responsibility on God.

Willingness to be abstinent is, in a sense, a prayer.

Trying to be abstinent is an act of separation from your higher power. When you try, there is resistance.

When you become **willing**, there is acceptance.

If you are trying to be abstinent, everything is interference.

If you are **willing** to be abstinent, everything is of assistance.

The freely made choice to be abstinent is the most important decision you make each day, because it speaks for your **willingness** to be abstinent each day.

Abstinence is a voluntary restraint from indulging a desire or appetite for certain bodily activities that are widely experienced as giving pleasure. Not engaging in the problematic behavior connotes increased self-control in the hope of improved social interactions and personal help as a consequence.

We are dealing with a very serious illness and with a very beautiful solution.

Author unknown.

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