

STEP SEVEN

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Principle	Theme	Action	Defect	Result
Humility	Begin work with God	Prayer/Change	False pride	better behavior; reduced self-will

PRAYER

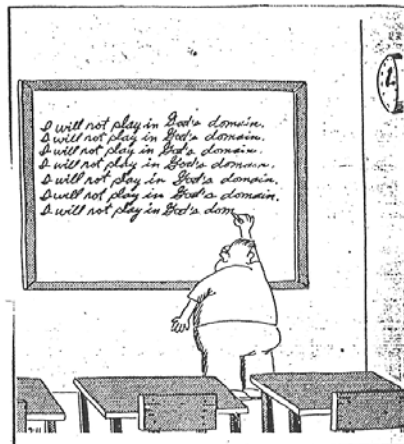
- When ready, we say something like this: “My Creator, I am now willing that You should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that You now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do Your bidding. Amen.” We have then completed Step Seven.

REWARD - The RESPECT of others instead of pity and contempt

NOTES

- a) STEP SIMPLIFIED: *Ask a power greater than I to help me.*
- b) Pre-AA STEP: *I got drunk to remove all these shortcomings.*
- c) Steps 4, 5, 6, and 7 “Get Right with SELF”
- d) HOW TO WORK THE STEP: **BB page 76**, para. 2, lines 1-7
- e) Another “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. Some ideas:
 - Make requests rather than demands (**12 & 12**)
 - Principle of subtraction: stop old behaviors, allowing unblocked good behavior to surface; God abhors a vacuum (**Joe McQ**)
 - Meditation to allow unconscious instinctual demands to surface (**Divine Therapy & Addiction**)
- f) Humbly “on our knees” asked Him to remove our shortcomings “- holding nothing back”. (**original BB manuscript**)
- g) . . . *humility . . . amounts to a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be.* {**12 & 12, p. 58**}
- h) The Goal: when we want humility rather than must have it; move from self toward others & HP (**12 & 12**)

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



STEP SEVEN

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

...the attainment of greater humility is the foundation principle of each of A.A.'s Twelve Steps. For without some degree of humility, no alcoholic can stay sober at all. Nearly all A.A.'s have found, too, that unless they develop much more of this precious quality than may be required just for sobriety, they still haven't much chance of becoming truly happy. {12 & 12, p. 70}

Never was there enough of what we thought we wanted. {12 & 12, p. 71}

We had lacked the perspective to see that character-building and spiritual values had to come first, and that material satisfactions were not the purpose of living. Quite characteristically, we had gone all out in confusing the ends with the means. . . we had taken these satisfactions to be the final end and aim of life . . . most of us thought good character was desirable . . . With a proper display of honesty and morality, we'd stand a better chance of getting what we really wanted. . . Seldom did we look at character building as something desirable in itself. {12 & 12, p. 71-72}

As long as we placed self-reliance first, a genuine reliance upon a Higher Power was out of the question. That basic ingredient of all humility, a desire to seek and do God's will, was missing. {12 & 12, p. 72}

A great turning point in our lives came when we sought for humility as something we really wanted, rather than as something we must have. {12 & 12, p. 75}

. . . we have been making unreasonable demands upon ourselves, upon others, and upon God...no peace was to be had unless we could find a means of reducing these demands. The difference between a demand and a simple request is plain to anyone. {12 & 12, p. 76}

It's a program of getting rid of things to get down to what we want. It's not a program of 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 . . . we're mining for gold! For our innermost selves! . . . 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. {Steps We Took, p. 103}

As we stop doing the things we want to do, we force ourselves to do the things we don't want to do . . . {Steps We Took, p. 93}

It is said that nature abhors a vacuum; I tell you God abhors a vacuum and cannot abide a vacuum anywhere on earth. So, empty yourself of self and you automatically fill with God. (Meister Eckhart, 14th century, from Steps We Took, p. 101)

I still lie, cheat & steal; I just don't do it as much . . . If you want self-esteem, do esteem-able things . . .
Let 5 people off the hook every day. {heard in the rooms}

On your knees you ask that these defects be removed, these shortcomings listed in your inventory... Both on knees, the sponsor says: "Lord, here is your child, ___(name)__. He is coming to you in all humility to humbly ask your forgiveness, believing that anything he asks in prayer, he humbly shall receive. Person repeats after sponsor: "I, ___(name)__, humbly ask you oh Lord, to remove my shortcomings and forgive me, my sins and trespasses, and ask in all humility that you will remove my defects and shortcomings because I am one of your children and I truly believe. Thank you Jesus, Amen." Sponsor: "Your sins are removed in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Both: "Thank you Jesus, Amen." {Clarence Snyder 1944 - A.A. Sponsorship Pamphlet}

BB – Say 7th step prayer [1] [3]

12x12

1. Emphasis is on Humility (see Step 5, **12 & 12** for definition) [2]
 - Foundation principle of each step [2]
 - Can't stay sober without some, or be happy without more [2]
 - Great lack of it in the world – man's pride in his achievements
2. Over-dependence on self and lack of dependence on higher power
 - a) Two bad results:
 - There is **Never Enough**, hence no satisfaction (no one ever made a worse mess of living this way than alcoholics)
 - Working faith in HP impossible . . . basic ingredient of humility, desire to do God's will, missing
 - b) Why?
 - We confused ends with the means (satisfying material needs was our aim, not a way to achieve spiritual goals)
 - Material goals are impermanent and subjective. Hence, lack of permanent goals
 - We did not look at character building as something desirable in itself
3. First see humility as necessity; over time, as we experience some peace working on worst defects, we start to desire it to achieve more peace and serenity (The GOAL, the great turning point – when we want it rather than must have it; this takes most of us a long time) [2]
4. Pain → Humility → Relief → (a) Pursuit of humility; (b) Putting God before self
5. Results:
 - change in attitude toward God . . . Idea of using God as pinch hitter began to evaporate [**ME: change in what I want to mirror what He wants**] [2]
 - move out from ourselves toward others and toward God
 - The Goal, above
6. How to work this step -- Change from making (unsatisfied) demands to requests (quote) [2]
 - Chief activator of defects has been self-centered fear

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, pages 254-259:

1. Seek “humility for today” – balance between guilt and pride [2] [My Name Is Bill W]
2. Pick a definition of humility (Mission Statement), then use step 10 to compare to it