

Alcoholics Anonymous Step 7

Humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings

How It Works

“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*.”

-A.A. Big Book p.76

Comments from Web Sites and Publications

Step 7 is similar to step 3. It is more specific, however, because now I have completed my personal inventory and so I have a better idea of the roots of my addictive behaviors. I do my best to not play games about these defects of character. In this step I surrender to the "surgery of God" and ask God to remove these defects of character. I do this with a sincere and humble heart, knowing that only in such a way can I find my path to true sanity and peace.

This may also mean action on my part in getting rid of sources that lead me to addictive behaviors. If it is my pride that makes me believe that I can still live with these sources of temptation, then the sources need to go along with my pride. I rid my life of those things, people or situations that are causing me to fall or stumble as far as I can do so in a responsible manner.

- From 12Step.org

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. The whole emphasis of Step Seven is on humility. It is really saying to us that we ought to be willing to try humility in seeking the removal of our shortcomings just as we did when we admitted that we were powerless over alcohol, and came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. If that degree of humility could enable us to find the grace by which such a deadly obsession could be banished, then there must be hope of the same result respecting any other problem we could possibly have.

- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 76

Taking Step Seven was for many of us the greatest act of authentic humility we have ever been asked to commit: to transfer control of our recovery to God...

...according to the Twelve and Twelve, humility is a clear recognition of who we are followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be. That is, humility is *seeing ourselves as we actually are*, good and bad, strong and weak, and acting authentically on those truths. This is not a naive attitude suggesting we have in some way already "arrived." It is a sincere attempt to state the positive truth that when we face the truth of our shortcomings and the fact that we are powerless to change and begin to let God take our defects away, we have entered the pathway of humility. ...It is on this pathway, where we humbly ask God to remove all these defects of character that the tools of recovery bring the healing, happiness, and security we have dreamed of. But once more it is only powerlessness and pain that can force us to take the seventh Step into humility.

- *A Hunger for Healing*, p. 116-117

Humility is as much a part of staying clean as food and water are to staying alive. As our addiction progressed, we devoted our energy toward satisfying our material desires. All other needs were beyond our reach. We always wanted gratification of our basic desires.

...The word humble applies because we approach this Power greater than ourselves to ask for the freedom to live without the limitations of our past ways. Many of us are willing to do it without reservations, on pure blind faith, because we are sick of what we have been doing and how we are feeling. Whatever works, we go all the way.

- *Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text*, Chapter 4/Step 7

We need humility for three reasons:

1. *So that we can recognize the severity of our character defects.* One aspect of our addictions is that we tend to deny and minimize the pain they inflict. Therefore as we try to assess our character defects, we may, unless we take a very humble approach, underestimate their severity.
2. *So that we can acknowledge the limits of human power in addressing these character defects.* We cannot do it on our own. We cannot do it by sheer willpower. We cannot do it by our own intellect and reasoning.
3. *So that we can appreciate the enormity of God's power to transform lives.*

... Although Step 7 is the shortest step in terms of wording and is perhaps the least discussed in recovery groups, it is probably the most potent of the twelve. It embodies the miracle of transformation as we turn over to God our broken, defective personalities in order that He might mold them into healthy, effective instruments of His will.

- *Serenity, A Companion for Twelve Step Recovery*, p. 54-55