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Step Six - "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

FED UP

In working the Sixth Step, I've become acutely aware of those character defects, shortcomings and negative behavior patterns that I uncovered in my Fourth and Fifth Steps, and the pain and discomfort they created in my life and the lives of those around me. I've become ready to let them go.

Initially, I thought that the Sixth Step was a passive Step. After many trials and tribulations, I have since learned differently. I now believe that my Higher Power removes my defects of character as part of a process, sometimes a long process.

There is no "magic" in the Sixth Step. I just got fed up with the character defects that were creating pain and suffering in my life. Sometimes, I interpret the consequences of my actions as messages from my Higher Power intended to teach me important lessons for my sobriety. If the consequences of my actions result in spiritual growth, sanity, serenity and peace of mind, then I'm reasonably sure I'm on the right track, I'm on the "AA beam," and my Higher Power is blessing my endeavors.

But on the other hand, if my actions and behaviors lead me to unmanageability, pain and insanity, then perhaps my Higher Power is giving me the message that something is amiss, that I need to reexamine my thinking and behavior and change my approach to recovery.

So it's simple, but not easy. In the morning I ask my Higher Power for help, direction and guidance to see what needs to be done, and then I ask for the strength, courage and willingness to do it.

My character defects often drove me into self-defeating thinking and behavior patterns that resulted in painful and problematic consequences. Even in my recovery I sometimes felt compelled to act out in unhealthy and dysfunctional ways. I needed to have the character defects that brought on destructive attitudes and behaviors removed. First I needed to become ready to do so.

With the Sixth Step, I acknowledged that my character defects and shortcomings gave me temporary pleasure that I enjoyed. They gave me a sick satisfaction and a passing gratification, but they also created pain. The Sixth Step enabled me to become ready to let go of those defects and shortcomings that make my sobriety irritable, restless and discontent.

I don't believe my Higher Power whisks away my character defects. My Higher Power gave me a rational brain and volitional consciousness. The Sixth Step for me was, and is, a process of living mindfully and learning from the consequences of my behavior.

My negative attitudes and behaviors could come back quite naturally, almost like second nature. My defects were deeply ingrained; it was going to take time for healing and growth.

But it's worth the effort, because healing and growth does happen. The Twelve Promises have come true for me, and the rewards have been beyond my wildest dreams.

—Gary T., Poughkeepsie, NY

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Concept VI

The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

Tradition Six - "An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose."

It Beats Being a Jerk **Step 6**

It is not easy to write on the Sixth Step. So I shall have to do some sharing. My first response is resistance. I greatly admire and approve of all Twelve Traditions. Although I am not an alcoholic, I have also tried to incorporate Steps Two through Twelve as part of my discipline of daily living--with one exception. I find myself bristling and resisting Step Six. I most certainly do not feel "entirely ready to have God remove all my defects of character." True, I certainly admit to having defects of character, and I am more than ready to rely on a power greater than myself to provide me with the strength to admit them and to provide me with forgiveness. I am more than willing to work Steps Four and Five, but to assert that I am entirely ready to have God remove all my defects of character just goes against my grain.

It goes against my grain for several reasons. First, I feel my defects of character are my responsibility. I would be a wuss to ask for help removing them. Second, we are talking about my underlying defects of character. Over the years I have grown attached to some of them. If I decide to give them up, okay; but I am not sure that I want to have any third party meddling with them. Third, the Sixth Step in its short form just fills me with unbelief and makes me feel hopeless. Acknowledging God's capacity to help me with hope strengthens my faith. My capacity to love and receive love I perceive as largely God's work, as I understand him/her. But, I don't believe God can just remove my defects of character any more than he is about to make the sun shine when it's raining. Thus, although there is a great deal in life that fills me with hope, the Sixth Step is not one of them. I believe that a Higher Power can remove an alcoholic's obsession with alcohol; that belief fills me with hope and explains why, as a physician, I love the Fellowship of AA. But to say that I am ready for "God, as I understand him" to give me release from just being a jerk, just makes me dig my heels in deeper. So the short version of the Sixth Step fills me with unbelief.

But if I am to write on the Sixth Step I can't just stick with the "window shade" version that I am fussing about. I need to dig deeper. Over the years, I have learned that it is helpful to read AA's small print. So I take out my copy of the "Twelve and Twelve," and the first words I read are "This is the step that separates the men from the boys." Oops, and this is the Step I can't handle. Now, I start to worry. Why, in assigning these essays on the Steps to different trustees, did the Grapevine editor choose me to write on the Sixth Step? Perhaps he knew about my defect of character that makes me reject that Step so vehemently. Or, am I just being paranoid? It wouldn't be the first time.

Nevertheless, I keep on reading. The "Twelve and Twelve" goes on to suggest lovingly that alcoholics' "powerful instinct to live can cooperate fully with their Creator's desire to give them new life. . . He asks only that we try as best we know how to make progress in the building of character." So nobody is going to jerk this jerk around after all. This Sixth Step is going to be a cooperative enterprise. I understand cooperation. I "shall have to be content with patient improvement"--a day at a time. Suddenly, and through a power greater than myself, my hopelessness gives way to hope. As I continue to read, I experience a little miracle; and I am completely ready for it. The Sixth Step does fit in with all the others. I just had to keep on reading. My resentment evaporates. Instead, I think, No wonder Class As get involved with this Fellowship. The "Twelve and Twelve" transforms my hopelessness about the Sixth Step into hope. Indeed, the common sense wisdom of Bill's writing so often makes Class As, like me, feel both hope and gratitude--two gifts we cannot give ourselves.

I turn the page, and to my surprise I begin to wonder if not only the Grapevine editor but Bill, too, had been reading my mind. Bill's straw man in the "Twelve and Twelve" is just like me. He grumbles, "I can't give this up yet" and "This I will never give up." Somehow Bill knew that people besides me "exult in some of our defects." Apparently, people besides me, "let greed masquerade as ambition." And people besides me find that "self-righteous anger can be very enjoyable." Drat, I was not singled out to write on Step Six because I am terminally unique. I am not a special case. I am not alone. The Sixth Step intimidates lots of people and so I have plenty of company. Hope continues to return and I read on that, "The only urgent thing is that we make a beginning, and keep trying." That suggestion is very hopeful indeed. I understand living life a day at a time. I really do. Thank you, Grapevine editor. Thank you, Higher Power. Thank you, Fellowship of AA. I think that after going through all this "research," maybe I can begin to include the Sixth Step in my life. It may make me bridle, but it beats being a jerk.

Recovery Word Puzzle

NESTTICD ON
HIVER RA BO
TEIIV AINTI
NAG DUCIE
NICY HA SIP
N OTSFARMSR



Unscramble
the letters.
Answers to
puzzle can be
found on
page 7.

YETILAM RLN
I FECSCPI
STEN DULI
N OPETEMCT
DI SAVDE
CLEEGIR RTFN

Unscramble the red (or underlined) letters to fill in the blanks for a special message...



----- !



Things we cannot change.....

Dan C., Marty M., Juan C., Bruce W.

They will be missed. May they Rest in Peace.



The following groups graciously
contributed baskets to our Banquet Raffle,
but were accidentally left off the list in
last month's newsletter:

**Women's Noontime Boost
New Day Group**

Thank you very, very much!

ASL OFFERED

at the following meetings:

Tuesday in Pembroke Pines: Surrender Group
Wednesday in Hollywood: Happy Destiny (women's)
Wednesday in Ft. Lauderdale: Secular and Sober

Volunteer Opportunities

2019 Gratitude Dinner, to be held in November, has the next planning meeting on

Sunday, June 30th at 1:30 PM

Fourth Dimension Club, 4425 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, FL (rear entry)

Pick up a commitment today!!

SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER



Tradition Six: Enthusiasm Unbounded

I was a little over a year sober when I began answering phones with my sponsor at our local intergroup. During one shift, he overheard a conversation in which I waxed poetic about the virtues of AA and then tried to help the caller with other problems. After the call, he calmly asked, "Have you ever read the Traditions in the 'Twelve and Twelve'?"

My only exposure to the Traditions had been grumbling attendance at a few Traditions meetings.

"No," I answered.

"Well, if you are going to do more service," he said, "you might want to read about them. They're kind of . . . important."

Although I was insulted and defensive--my first reaction to many of his suggestions--I realized that he had about twenty more years of experience than I, so I'd better take the suggestion.

I'm so glad I did. I loved reading about the trials, errors, and misadventures that the early AAs had while developing the Traditions that guide our Fellowship today. I realized that early AAs were just as fallible and, occasionally, as misguided as anyone else. But, by returning to a primary purpose, obstacles could be overcome, and the Fellowship would survive.

As I've continued to do service at the group level and beyond, I've witnessed how our Traditions help the Fellowship navigate through all sorts of situations. It's not always pretty, either, so I really started to appreciate the wisdom that came from the experience of those in the early days.

One Tradition that I've grown grateful for is the Sixth Tradition. At first, it took me a while to see how a Tradition that deals with specific issues--money, endorsement, lending out the AA name--could apply to my own recovery. But the more service I've done over the years, the more I've come to realize how this Tradition really helps our Fellowship to keep it simple.

For a number of years, I took an AA meeting into a detox every other Friday night. The detox is part of a hospital and is run, like many hospital detoxes, by a trained, professional staff.

Early on in my commitment, a patient showed up after the meeting started. She apologized profusely and began telling me why she was late. I realized that because I was leading the meeting, some detox patients might assume that I work for the hospital.

I told her that I appreciated the apology, but it wasn't necessary. From that point on, I made sure I explained, at the beginning of each meeting, that I was neither a member of the hospital staff, nor a professional in the field of alcoholism treatment. I told them that I was simply a drunk, just like them, who found a solution in Alcoholics Anonymous. The speaker and I were there to share our experience in the hopes that it might help another alcoholic--we wanted to give back what had been so freely given to us. We had nothing to do with the hospital, we weren't there to enforce any rules, make money, or sell anything. I found it helpful to make this clear from the beginning, both for the patients and for myself. It helped define the meeting's primary purpose, and it also, perhaps, made it easier for the patients in the detox to see me as a peer, not as a counselor or a doctor.

In my own recovery, Tradition Six reminds me not to overstep my bounds. As my sponsor witnessed that day at intergroup, there are times I get excited and try to fix things I have no business fixing. Whether I'm answering phones, talking to a newcomer at a meeting, or working with a sponsee, my only purpose is to share my experience, strength, and hope, and to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. There are plenty of competent professionals, more qualified than I, who can handle everything else.

-- John G., New York, N.Y.

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District 9 General Service

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Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33310

AA BIRTHDAY'S

June Celebrants

Sunlight of the Spirit

Shannon A. ~ 7 yrs.

Secular and Sober

Laura H. ~ 9 yrs.

Why It Works

Stacey L. ~ 3 yrs.

Broward Men's

Larry D. ~ 4 yrs.

Trevor ~ 3 yrs.

Rob K. ~ 2 yrs.

Mountain Group

Dawn D. ~ 3 yrs.

Gary D. ~ 20 yrs.

Oakland Park

Gene S. ~ 10 yrs.

Westside Men's

Rick R. ~ 24 yrs.



B.A.L.L.S. Group

Drew ~ 6 yrs.

Sober Sisters

Fran G. ~ 35 yrs.

Linda E. ~ 3 yrs.

5:45 Happy Hour

Sandy S. ~ 30 yrs.

Men's Independence

Ken W. ~ 16 yrs.

Free and Easy

Bruce P. ~ 26 yrs.

Friends of Pat C.

Mary Y. ~ 8 yrs.

Hollywood Happy Hour

Patricia B. ~ 15 yrs.

Happy Destiny

Debbie B. ~ 31 yrs.

Straight Talk

Mark O. ~ 29 yrs.

I Came to Stay

Floyd G. ~ 5 yrs.

Meditation at the Rock

Melissa S. ~ 2 yrs.

Ken K. ~ 8 yrs.

Other Notables

Carol W. ~ 25 yrs.

Ray R. ~ 9 yrs.

Ed B. ~ 34 yrs.

Hal D. ~ 24 yrs.

Lee B. ~ 33 yrs.

Kevin M. ~ 26 yrs.

Sharon M. ~ 37 yrs.

Lynda Z. ~ 23 yrs.

Joy of Sobriety

Burt B. ~ 30 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch

Bruce L. ~ 1 yr.

East Naples Men's

Wes R. ~ 31 yrs.

Stan S. ~ 28 yrs.

Pete S. ~ 21 yrs.

Wade B. ~ 19 yrs.

Ralph O. ~ 18 yrs.

Luis F. ~ 16 yrs.

Meeting in Print

Matt M. ~ 10 yrs.

JOIN THE BIRTHDAY CLUB!

Celebrate your sobriety by sending \$1 per every year sober to your local Intergroup office to show your gratitude and give back once a year.

(Birthday listings are not contingent upon contributions...we just like to celebrate sobriety.)

BRIDGING THE GAP

has a new number

724-680-0430

BCIC - Broward County Institutions Committee

Next Meeting:

June 8th - 10:00 a.m.

Twelve Step House

205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale

Next Intergroup Meeting

Twelve Step House

205 S.W. 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale

**SUNDAY, June 23rd
at 1:00 p.m.**

May Celebrants not previously mentioned

Broward Men's

Jason R. ~ 1 yr.

Andre ~ 5 yrs.

Pride 5:45

Ed F. ~ 48 yrs.

Eye Opener

Barbara S. ~ 35 yrs.

Serenity Altogether

Charlie ~ 1 yr.

Paul K. ~ 6 yrs.

Hollywood Men's

Leo H. ~ 48 yrs.

Oakland Park

Alex ~ 2 yrs.

Ed ~ 1 yr.

Mountain Group

Andrea O. ~ 12 yrs.

Margaret B. ~ 15 yrs.

East Naples Men's

Frank S. ~ 57 yrs.

Randy G. ~ 39 yrs.

Walter B. ~ 29 yrs.

Noel H. ~ 27 yrs.

Mike G. ~ 13 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch

John S. ~ 29 yrs.

DC A. ~ 30 yrs.

Meeting in Print

Craig C. ~ 33 yrs.

Carl H. ~ 34 yrs.

Bill G. ~ 17 yrs.

Westside Men's

Chris O. ~ 28 yrs.

Dave M. ~ 19 yrs.

Mark W. ~ 13 yrs.

B.A.L.L.S. Group

Jeff I. ~ 2 yrs.



The Path to Self-awareness

Step Four - Through a Step Four inventory, "we quit being aliens to ourselves"

FOR SOME TIME, I couldn't understand the purpose of Step Four. It appeared to me that it would do more harm than good. I felt my past would be better forgotten, since I had committed acts that opposed things I held sacred, and often compromised on principles that I believed in fervently. To intentionally delve into the garbage of my past would only create a lot of unnecessary stress, it seemed.

After attending a great many AA meetings, I began to grasp the value of this Step, the effect it could have on one's life as the result of doing it honestly. So I began to take a close look at my past behavior.

When I was in treatment, a situation arose where I did not get my way because of my primary nurse. Until this time, I had believed I had the nurses conned and could manipulate them to my choosing. In this instance, however, I failed to do so. I was hurt, angry, and seeking revenge. At the next opportunity I had to talk with my psychiatrist, I explained that I had been wronged and that the nurse was incompetent. I told him that she should immediately be advised as to her error.

He said something that he might not recall; but without doubt, I will remember it the rest of my natural life. His reply was: "You have the staff confused. They don't know how to treat you. One day you act like an adult, and the next day you act like a child."

It was not until after my release that I realized he had spoken the truth, identifying a pattern very familiar to me. The defeating part of the matter was that he knew me better than I knew myself.

That, to me, is what Step Four is all about: We quit being aliens to ourselves; we identify and accept truths about ourselves that aren't so pleasant. Denying the truth will not change it, but only keep me in ignorance. Once I have determined what my shortcomings are, I can begin to make positive changes. Otherwise, I will remain stagnant. The better I know myself, the more capable I am of governing my behavior and the less likely to be easily moved by foolish impulses.

If I do Step Four the best I can at the time of undertaking it, although the attempt may seem feeble, I am beginning to build an exemplar of self-honesty and starting to develop within myself an awareness that will continue after this inventory has been finished and forgotten.

-- B. D., Reynoldsburg, Ohio

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Happy Founder's Day!!

Local Readers Share.....

PINK CLOUDS + DOUBLE DIGITS

As I approach 10 years of sobriety in AA, like so many of us, I do a lot of reflecting on the journey. The one thing that keeps coming back is the beautiful Pink Cloud I rode on for my first year and a half.

Then suddenly life showed up — for the first time in sobriety, I had to deal with real life problems: health situations, family, and financial matters. My world quickly went very dark. But with the support from my AA family, I was able to get through.

Today, life isn't all rainbows, but with a lot of unconditional love, I still am able to find pieces of that wonderful Pink Cloud.

—Gene S., Ft.Lauderdale

Definition of Broward County Intergroup, Inc.

Your Intergroup office services all groups in the Broward County area. It is not a governing body and does not attempt to, nor can it, rule any AA Group. Its sole purpose is to act as a clearinghouse for the convenience of members and groups desiring assistance, and to extend the Twelve Step Work "carrying the message" to the sick alcoholic. The Intergroup office is supported entirely by contributions from groups, usually a specified amount each month or at intervals throughout the year.

Faithful Fivers are A.A. members who donate five dollars (\$5) a month to Intergroup as an act of gratitude. Their generosity helps us to carry the message of A.A. to the still sick and suffering alcoholic throughout the year.

Thank you to our Faithful Fivers. Your contributions are so appreciated!

Tom & Liz J., Gregory C., Suzanne J., Bob H., Anonymous I, Elizabeth B., Ron J., Tim S., Lois O., Richard H., Jennifer S., Pat R., Beth D., Craig G., Sandy P., Leo H., Vickie T., Howie K., Kerry W., Lewis G., James H., Joanne D., Gerry B., Don W., Eric P., Tara D., Denise J., Howard S., Bob D., Robert H., Sally S., Anonymous II, Jane T., Fran C., Peter S., Deborah C., Women's Step by Step and Rachel L.

Please consider becoming a "Faithful Fiver." Your commitment of \$5.00 a month to your Intergroup Office will go a long way toward helping carry the message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic who reaches out. Fill out this form and mail it in with your contribution today!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Sobriety Date and Home Group _____

Make checks payable to:

Broward County Intergroup, Inc., 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE: discontent, behavior, initiative, guidance, physician, transforms, terminally, specific, insulted, competent, advised, reflecting — hooray for sober dads!

I AM RESPONSIBLE....

WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE, REACHES OUT FOR HELP,
I WANT THE HAND OF A.A. ALWAYS TO BE THERE. AND FOR THAT: I AM RESPONSIBLE.

NAME: _____ GENDER: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

PREFER: VOICE: _____ TEXT: _____ EMAIL: _____ CITY OF RESIDENCE: _____

WILL CALL BACK: _____ AND/OR PAY A VISIT: _____

AVAILABILITY: MONDAY to FRIDAY: _____ WEEKENDS: _____

8:00am-12:00pm _____ 12:00pm-5:00pm _____ 5:00pm-9:00pm _____ 9:00pm-8:00am _____

TO COMPLETE A 12-STEP CALL, you only need to be sober one day, but you NEVER GO ALONE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE! SEND COMPLETED FORM TO: help@aabroward.org



MEETING CHANGES

Tuesday

NEW MEETING On Sober Grounds meets upstairs from Underground Coffeehaus, 3020 N. Federal Hwy., Ft. Lauderdale. 7 PM, OD.

Russian Speaking Meeting of S.FL which met at Twelve Step House in Ft. Lauderdale NO LONGER MEETS.

NEW MEETING Lit-tur-ture Lambda South Club, 1231 E. Las Olas Blvd., rear entry, Ft. Lauderdale, OBBg, 8:30 AM.

Wednesday

Out of the Woods which met at the 101 Club in Pompano NO LONGER MEETS.

Thursday

NEW MEETING Lit-tur-ture Lambda South Club, 1231 E. Las Olas Blvd., rear entry, Ft. Lauderdale, OSTg, 8:30 AM.

Atlantic Women's Group which meets in Margate is changing their time from 5:45 PM to 5:30 PM.

Redeeming Grace Women's Recovery meets at 8:30 PM. New City Fellowship Church, 2740 Van Buren St., Hollywood. OSPDw

Donuts and Solution meets at the Wellness Center, 5225 NW 33rd Avenue, Ft. Lauderdale at 7:00 PM, CSP.

Friday

NEW MEETING Wild West Group meets at West Pine Community Church, 21113 Johnson St., Pembroke Pines, 11 AM. OCC.

Perry Street South which met in Wilton Manors NO LONGER MEETS on Fridays.

I Came To Stay which met at the 101 Club in Pompano NO LONGER MEETS.

Saturday

Sober on Saturday Night that meets at Sober Today Club in Hollywood changed the start time to 5:30 PM.

Harbor Group that meets at Sober Today Club in Hollywood changed the start time to 7:30 PM.

Saturday Night Anniversary Meeting that met at Lambda South once a month, NO LONGER MEETS.

KIS Lunchtime which meets at WBC in Davie M-F has added a meeting on Saturday at 12:30 PM.

Sunday

NEW MEETING Halfway to the Next Step 1855 NE 53rd St., Pompano, 7:30 PM, OSPm - on patio outside.

NEW WEB DESIGN IS DONE!!

www.aabroward.org

Please check it out, and send any questions or comments to
help@aabroward.org

Upcoming Events

- June 9** **Founder's Day Picnic** hosted by District 9 General Service. Snyder Park, 3299 SW 4th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, 11 AM— 4 PM. Live DJ, Line Dancing, Games, Volleyball and Horseshoes, A.A. Meeting at 2 PM. Tickets \$8 in advance and \$10 at park for lunch, kids under 7 eat free. Bring a dessert and a newcomer. Parking fees \$1 per hour or \$5/day.
- July 31- Aug 4** **63rd Florida State Convention** will be in Miami. Get registered today at 63.FloridaStateConvention.com Trump Doral Hotel. Speakers, Archives, Fun, Fellowship.
- Aug. 10** **Carry the Message Day 2019** hosted by District 9 General Service and BCIC. NSU, Terry Bldg., 3200 S. University Drive, Davie. Coffee, Dessert 5:30. 2 speakers at 7 PM. Free service Event. Bring a newcomer and dessert, and learn about the many service opportunities.