

Step 7 Study Guide

Version of August 20, 2019

"Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings"

In the doing and living of Steps One and Two, a degree of humility, no matter how slight, was necessary when we admitted that we (the acquired false self) were powerless over clutter and came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity (the true Inner Self). In Step Three, humility allowed us to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. Without humility as our guide, the uncovering and discovering of the acquired character defects (Step Four), along with the admission of the exact nature of our wrongs to God, ourselves and another human being (Step Five), could not have been possible. In Step Six, the readiness to have God remove all these defects of character was once again in proportion to the degree of humility that we had. At least, through doing and living the first six steps, we have attained some humility in spite of the acquired false self.

In Step Six, we first took a detailed look at the acquired character defects and then proceeded to become ready to have God remove them. Looking at the exact nature of our wrongs, which we are now aware of by having done Step Five thoroughly, made us eager to be rid of our shortcomings. Step Seven is an action Step. It is relational in nature and it consists of bringing the problem to its solution. The key to Step Seven is developing enough humility to ask our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings, without any reservations whatever.

The whole emphasis for Step Seven is on humility. This Step is where we make the change in our attitude which permits us, with humility, to begin dismantling the defenses that make up the acquired false self.

Humility flows from the true Inner Self; it allows us to move toward selflessness, away from self-centered behavior. This motion then produces harmony in our relationships —with ourselves, with God and with other human beings.

The basic ingredient of all humility is a desire to seek and do God's will. Here we humbly start asking him to remove our shortcomings, so that we can become attuned to doing his will and can do it without obstacles. In Step 11, we will continue seeking and embracing God's will.

Since humility is the basic principle in each of the Twelve Steps of CLA, we might ask: "What is humility?" In the past, we may have associated humility with humiliation. Certainly, each of us had experiences with being humiliated. Also, we may have thought that being humble was a sign of weakness. As we grew in the CLA program, we came to recognize humility as being absolutely necessary to our survival. Humility, or the attainment of greater humility—no matter how little of it we may have now—is simply the growing awareness that I am powerless over my clutter and my Higher Power is the one with all power. Only by a deeper awareness that by ourselves we can do nothing can we truly, with genuine humility, ask God to remove our shortcomings.

With humility shining as the way to undertake Step Seven successfully, should we find ourselves lacking enough of it, we must ponder the question of how to grow in it. All the ways open to us have one thing in common: that we seek to experience our true place in the world and affirm it with our words as we try to embrace it in our hearts. We grow in humility by making room—inside ourselves and inside our minds. We declutter the cumbersome conviction of completeness. We renounce the phrases of the absolute, which we have used in the past as walls and weapons: "There is no way," "I can't possibly do this," "I absolutely need it," and "Never." We start saying "I can't see a way (I hope I will be shown one)," "I haven't been able to succeed (I am willing to try again)," and "perhaps one day (soon, I hope)." We grow in humility by saying to ourselves and others that there are solutions we have not thought of, desirable experiences that we have not yet had, surprises beyond our imaginations.

There often seems to be one thought, attitude, or behavior in our lives that is standing in the way of further recovery or growth -- one sticking point in our will, one thing that we are consciously hanging on to that obstructs the process and holds everything else down. Of course, at first, this was our addiction itself; without picking it up off

the stack, so to speak, and dealing with it, we weren't about to go anywhere. It covered what was underneath. Once we started recovering, we could then see and acknowledge the stack of defects on which to work Step Seven.

We are the only ones who can ask for our defects to be removed. When we do, the grace and love of our Higher Power floods in to replace what was given up.

WRITING GUIDE

The purpose of writing Step Seven is to strengthen the resolve to take action. In doing this, we will also attain greater humility.

Answer the following questions in writing, as thoroughly and as honestly as you can.

1. What is your definition of the word humility?
2. Give examples of ways you have attained greater humility by working the Steps in CLA.
3. What part does self-centered fear play in your inventory of acquired character defects? Is it the core issue? If not, what is? What are you doing in practice to eliminate it?
4. In what ways has your attitude toward God changed since you began to work and live the steps on a daily basis?
5. What does "Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings" mean to you?
6. How are you going to *live* Step Seven on a daily basis?
7. Are you ready to ask your Higher Power to remove your shortcomings? If not, What practical actions can you take to grow in humility?
8. Pray the Seventh Step Prayer (or use your own version)

"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." (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, Page 76)

This material was adapted with permission from the study guides of the SA San Diego Intergroup, which in turn were adapted from materials by the Top of the Hill Group, an AA group. Their resources included Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book) and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.