

Step Seven: Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings

While the words of this step suggest doing a ritual to a supernatural being, the spiritual principles behind the words offer hope to both atheist and believer. By these principles, we are offered hope that the character defects uncovered in Step Six can be transformed into character strengths.

The first principle is that such deep changes do not happen by our actions alone. We want to focus energy and control over our character in order to remove those character defects and do so quickly. This step points out that we are unable to do so. We are encouraged instead to change both our attitude about these defects and to seek outside help.

In humility, we are called to let go of our understanding of our defects, the manner in which they will be changed, and when. Deep changes to our character, our instant reactions, and our responses takes time, perseverance, and often impactful interactions with others. We are urged to accept that such changes take time and that the processes we want

to use don't work. We can have pride in the results.

We are invited to a deeper understanding of our problems. Character defects arise from valid human impulses we have distorted, misdirected, and misused. Now we have the opportunity to learn how those impulses can be directed more in a more noble fashion.

Instead of striving to rid ourselves of an impulse, we can examine how we have fallen far short of the noble ways we really want. We ask for outside help to guide and direct us to more properly use our impulse in ways that enhance our lives and others. Instead of "defects" to be removed, we have "shortcomings" where we have been missing out on major benefits.

We need outside motivation, outside pressures, and uncomfortable experiences in order to have the perseverance needed for the deep changes. We look for outside direction. We connect with others. We learn to wait and discern the right time and actions. We see our expectations not met, our hopes not fulfilled, and our

plans changed so that the desires of our hearts can be filled.

As we go forward, we learn that amends are a path to change. As we do amends, we are given new perspectives on our shortcomings and we gain insights into how we can respond in the future. As we accept these outside influences with humility, we learn empathy, see our actions in a new light, and experience acceptance by others.

We learn how to direct our impulses in new and healthier ways and we transcend our old lives. In our amends to self and others, we change who benefits from our actions. Instead of taking from others, we give. Instead of letting others harm us, we have proper boundaries.

Humility is key to being open to seeing new ways of handling situations, seeing how our lives can change, and to have pride in our new character.

In working Step Seven, we find new motivations, new expressions of our deeper wishes, and new experiences. We explore new ways of handling previously difficult situations. We are transformed into far better people.

## The Twelve Steps

One: We admitted we were powerless over our addictive sexual behavior - that our lives have become unmanageable.

Two: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Three: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.

Four: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Five: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Six: Were entirely ready for God to remove all these defects of character.

Seven: Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

Eight: Made a list of all the persons we have harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Nine: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

Twelve: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.

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## *Opening Up to New Ways of Living*

*Working step 7*



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