

NEWSLETTER for the Fellowship

JUNE 2017

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*No matter how unreasonable others may seem, I am responsible for not reacting negatively. Regardless of what is happening around me I will always have the prerogative, and the responsibility, of choosing what happens within me. I am the creator of my own reality. When I [review my day], I know that I must stop judging others. If I judge others, I am probably judging myself. **Whoever is upsetting me most is my best teacher.** I have much to learn from him or her, and in my heart, I should thank that person.*

- Bill Wilson

The Sixth Step of Alcoholics Anonymous: Dropping the Rock

*Taken from Sobernation, December 30, 2015, by Tim Powers
<https://sobernation.com/the-sixth-step-of-alcoholics-anonymous/>*

With each Step you take in Alcoholics Anonymous, you are digging deeper within yourself and getting at the root causes that have kept you stuck in your addiction.

The Sixth Step of Alcoholics Anonymous is an excellent example of that point and is often seen as THE Step that separates the men from the boys (or the women from the girls). It is during this step that you must be completely willing and ready to *have the God of your understanding* remove the character defects.

As with every other Step in AA, the Sixth Step will challenge you to go to places within yourself that you may fear. Overcoming an addiction to alcohol (or any addiction for that matter) isn't easy by any stretch of the imagination. It may seem that once you conquer a mountain, a larger one looms on the horizon and a new set of challenges threatens to throw you off course. You may be tempted to try and bypass this Step or try to go through the motions and give a half-hearted effort, but with working the Steps must be all in. Half-measures won't help you truly leave your alcohol addiction behind.

Understanding Character Defects

The crux of the Sixth Step of Alcoholics Anonymous is addressing our character defects and having the willingness of the God or Higher Power of our understanding to remove them from our lives. When we look at the word *character defects* we automatically think the worst of ourselves and feel that once again we have to drag ourselves through the proverbial mud and broadcast to the world all of our faults.

If you are approaching the Sixth Step it may seem like you are

putting yourself through another round of personal torment and torture for the sake of a recovery that may be uncertain. However, it is important to understand what character defects truly are and what approach that you can take in order to make the process less daunting.

A simple definition of a character defect is a fault of failure to meet a certain standard. Taking a look at this description of the word, it can easily be seen how the meaning focuses on where a person is flawed and has a specific character trait or traits that need improvement. Perhaps the biggest thing to remember about character defects is that **it does not mean you are a bad person**. It should go without saying, but we as human being are not perfect creatures, and each and every one of us has defects or flaws that we must contend with throughout our lifetime.

Perhaps a better way to understand the concept of character defects is through changing how we view and define it. Instead of seeing your faults and failings as defects, you should frame it as shortcomings that must be address and worked on. By changing the way you view things, it will help build a sense of esteem and character as you continue working your program of recovery. The bottom line reason why you work the Sixth Step is beautifully illustrated in *The Twelve Steps and Traditions*:

So Step Six – “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character” – is A.A.’s way of stating the best possible attitude one can take in order to make a beginning on this lifetime job. This does not mean that we expect all our character defects to be lifted out of us as the drive to drink was. A few of them may be, but with most of them we shall have to be content with patient improvement. The words “entirely ready” underline the fact that we want to aim at the very best we know or can learn. (p.65)

Working Step Six

When you are ready to work the Sixth Step of Alcoholics Anonymous, a helpful metaphor that help you remember the goal of this step is to *drop the rock*.

Continued on page 2

The first step in dropping the rock is to figure out exactly what your specific shortcomings are. Fortunately, you can go back to the inventory you had completed in the Fourth Step and review what you had wrote. When you re-read your step four inventory, you want to look for recurring patterns of attitudes, behaviors and emotions that kept you stuck in addiction and are preventing you from moving forward in recovery. Some common character defects or shortcomings can include fear, dishonesty, greed, lust, jealousy, grandiosity, willfulness and anger.

When you identify these shortcomings, you want to write down each individual character defect into list form. Once you have finished compiling this list, you will want to write next to each shortcoming or defect a corresponding positive trait that will replace the negative ones on the list. Keep in mind there is no set number of shortcomings that need to be included; the list can be as long as needed.

Once this is completed, the next question you want to ask yourself is *am I completely ready and willing to let God remove these shortcomings?* In reality, your answer is probably no. While these shortcomings are going to keep you stuck in your recovery efforts, they have been such a part of who you are that in some ways you don't want to let them go. Your goal is to try and best as ready as you can and make an honest effort every day in trying to improve yourself.

Step Six of AA is not about removing every defect, and they all won't magically disappear when you work this step. While a few may go away, you will have to realize that the rest of them are considered a "work in progress" and you want to work towards steady improvement of those defects. That mindset drives home the point that recovery is a lifelong process and you must continually look within yourself, be honest about where you fall short and do what you can to be better.

Sixth Step Prayers

Dear God, I am ready for Your help In removing from me the defects of character Which I now realize are an obstacle to my recovery. Help me to continue being honest with myself & Guide me toward spiritual & mental health.

God help me become willing to let go of all the things to which I still cling. Help me to be ready to let you remove all of these defects, that your will and purpose may take their place. AMEN
(p. 76 BB)

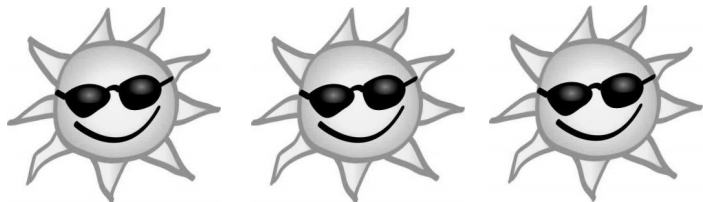
God, Thank you for removing my fear and for showing me the truth about myself. Father, I need your help to become willing to let go of the things in me which continue to block me off from you. Please grant me you're Grace Lord and make me willing to have these objectionable characteristics, defects and shortcomings removed. (p. 76:1 BB)

The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.

Ralph Waldo Emerson



Image taken from: Recovery Gallery, On the 6th Step, <http://recovery.gallery/>



Intergroup Meeting Notes from May 20th, 2017

Meeting called to order by Ted B. Serenity Prayer. 12 Traditions read by Randy M.

Present were Ted B, Jim F, Bill P, Craig B, Randy M, and Doug H.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and accepted.

Treasurer's Report: Bill P read the Treasurer's report for absent Chad B. Income \$6,092.23 Expenses \$5,221.89 For a net gain of \$870.94. YTD gain \$1,650.84 Leaving \$19,035.84 in savings and \$5,275.85 in checking.

Webmaster's Report: Jim F gave the Webmaster's report indicating that there were 674 visitors to the site but most were 'bots for various ads and scams. He is working on software that will weed out the spam from legitimate visitors.

Ways and Means Report: District 19 preparing for an workshop event at the Alano Club on June 3rd in the morning and afternoon. And the H&I committee is planning a taco night fundraiser with DJ at the same location on the same June 3 from 4PM until ?

The Newsletter is reported as continuing to be "going good".

Office Manager Report:

Office 56 visitors 102 information calls 2 12 step calls
Call forwarding 115 information calls 4 12 step calls
Total 217 information calls 6 12 step calls

Old Business. The office is doing a trial sale of non-AA "approved" meditation books and sales are good so far. The office will not be doing either on line or mail order book sales in the foreseeable future.

New Business. The High Desert Convention is June 9-11 and the June Lake Kampvention was also announced. The 7PM Monday Big Book study at the Alano Club needs more people attending.

7th tradition passed and meeting closed with Serenity Prayer at 9:51 AM

Respectfully submitted,
Doug H, Secretary

CENTRAL OFFICE STATISTICS			
	May	FINAL YTD	
Visitors	56	374	
Information Calls	102	602	
12-Step Calls	2	7	
CALL FORWARDNG			
Information Calls	115	542	
12 Step Calls	4	8	
TOTALS			
Information Calls	217	1144	
12 Step Calls	6	15	



New High Desert Meeting!

We Agnostics

Sunday Nights @ 7:15 pm
Open Meeting

Hesperia Umbrella Group
16005 Main Street
Hesperia, CA 92345

This group of AA attempts to maintain a tradition of free expression, and conduct a meeting where alcoholics may feel free to express any doubts or disbeliefs they may have, and to share their own personal form of spiritual experience, their search for it, or their rejection of it. We do not endorse or oppose any form of religion or atheism. Our only wish is to assure suffering alcoholics that they can find sobriety in AA without having to accept anyone else's beliefs or having to deny their own.

If you would like to receive or send news to the newsletter, please contact us here:
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