

STEP SIX

*"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."**

In Steps Four and Five we identified and admitted our patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving. We looked at the ways in which these patterns affected our own lives and the lives of others.

Step Six proposed that we do more than take a difficult action or challenge a treasured belief. The message in Step Six was clear — get ready to change!

Entirely Ready

At first this concept of being, "entirely ready," seemed impossible to achieve. Many of us thought it meant we had to work this Step without fear. Once again we had put the cart before the horse. We wrongly assumed we must be free of our character defects in order to be ready to have them removed.

We were reminded that "entirely ready" meant completely prepared. Having completed our Fifth Step was a large part of that preparation. We examined this phrase more closely and found we could test it in our daily lives.

For instance, if we were in a restaurant and a waiter didn't take our order with enough haste to suit us, we had some options. We could behave in an old way. For some of us, this might take the form of acted-out irritation or, perhaps, the silent treatment. For others, the reaction might be resignation because we were hesitant to speak up in our

own behalf. What we discovered in Step Six was a new option. When faced with a character defect, in this case, impatience, we could ask ourselves if we were entirely ready to have it removed. The choice was ours.

If our answer was, "no," we needed to consider the consequences of that defect of ours, not only on others but on ourselves. Were we willing to continue to pay for this kind of attitude?

We began to understand that an attitude or behavior born out of a shortcoming would never give us the peace of mind we sought, no matter what those "voices-in-our-heads" said!

But what about the defects we believed we needed in order to survive? False pride, arrogance, and self-righteousness were often substitutes for poor self-esteem. Resentment seemed to bolster our boundaries against invasion. Fear kept many of us on alert for those who would do us harm. How could we ever become "entirely ready" to have these defects removed?

The answer came to us, that all of our character defects were, in some way, products of our own self-will. They were survival tools from our past, and while they seemed to provide for our apparent well-being, they were no longer enough. We wanted to live, not merely survive, and for that we would need a clean slate.

To Have God Remove All These Defects of Character

As in previous Steps, Step Six suggested we put our own wills aside and leave the work to God.

Throughout our lives, most of us had handled adversity on our terms, relying on our shortcomings to get us through painful and often complex situations. Many of us had used our Higher Power, directing this Power to do our bidding. "Dear God, make her love me!" "Oh God, don't let him leave me!" "Lord, make them give me that job right now!!!"

We made those prayers as honestly as we could. The trouble was our approach. Ironically, while we had come to view ourselves as flawed, our arrogance led us to think that we alone held the answer to everyone's problems, including our own. It was this distorted reasoning that had left us in such a state of unmanageability.

In Step Six we were offered a solution — to place our recovery in the hands of our Higher Power — again.

But what about this notion of turning "all" of our defects over to God? Why not become entirely ready to have God remove **some** of our defects of character?

It was suggested that we view these shortcomings as a protective shell that we had outgrown. Hanging onto them would be as self-defeating as a bird keeping some of its shell or a butterfly clinging to a bit of its cocoon. At this point in our recovery, our character defects didn't protect us at all. They were excess baggage that dragged us down, often blinding us to our potential.

In this moment, I am entirely ready to be freed of all my shortcomings. In this moment, I am ready to surrender these defects of character to God, knowing that the power of willingness to heal is great.

*Each new step I take in my recovery,
no matter how small it may appear,
is an affirmation of my wholeness.*

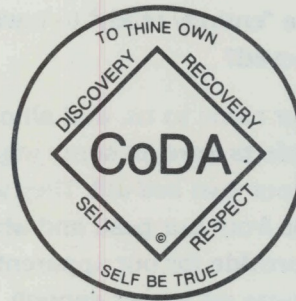
Having become ready for God to remove
our shortcomings, we were willing to ask.

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

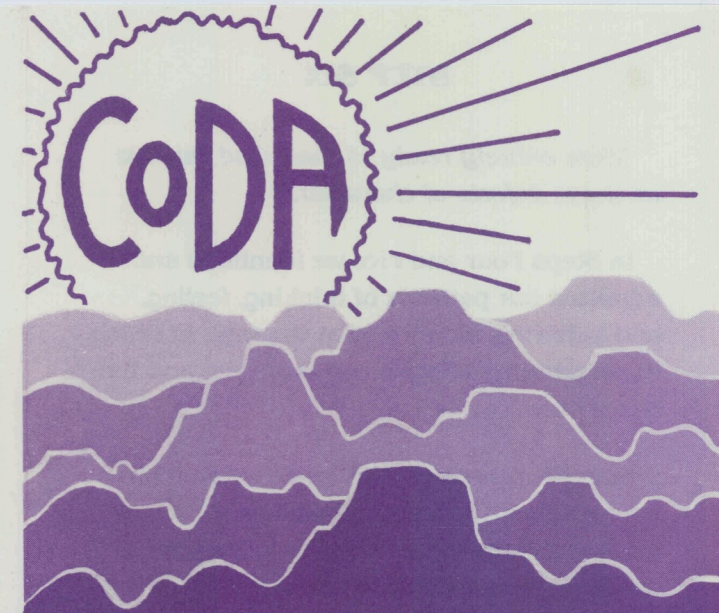
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God,

*Grant me the Serenity to accept
things I cannot change, Courage to
change things I can and the
Wisdom to know the difference.*



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CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS

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