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**Step Seven -- Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.**  
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Having worked step 6, we are entirely ready to let our Higher Power transform us. We are now willing to humbly request that the Spiritual Power of our Understanding to replace our own dysfunctional patterns with those designed by a Higher Wisdom. When ready, we can pray: Let us consider the following prayer from the Big Book of AA.

“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.” (BB P 76)

The 12 steps provide a path to freedom from the past and an opportunity to begin anew. Practicing humility and gratitude we begin to focus on what we are doing right in recovery, and in doing so we notice the "right" things in our lives begin to increase. We trust that ultimately we will discover the freedom and the joy that our Higher Power intends for us—that is our birthright.

We practice humility when we humbly seek Higher Power’s intention for our lives. It is sometimes heard at 12-step meetings that humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less. Humility is a virtue that when practiced opens us to a healing grace. Humility means hiding nothing from ourselves, accepting ourselves as we are now, even the aspects of ourselves that may make us uncomfortable. In the interest of our recovery, we are continually striving to be honest and authentic with our Higher Power. True humility does not bring humiliation: True humility brings serenity. Mother Theresa said: "If you are humble nothing can touch you, neither praise nor disgrace, because you know who you are."

In recovery we are learning more about who we are. With an open heart we stand in the Presence of Infinite love and Power seeking a transformation of character. We are learning that seventh step prayers born of our own self awareness seem to “work” best. Our experience shows us that the Seventh Step Prayer may not be a magical formula that dispels our dysfunctional patterns. It does however offer us access to a process that is setting us free. We are asking the Divine Presence to heighten our awareness of our own indisputable worth, so that we may come to know ourselves well enough to see which of our qualities keep us in bondage, and which lead us to freedom.

We discover that our defects of character are always opportunities for growth. By focusing on the intent within our dysfunctional patterns and not solely on our

actions, we begin to see beyond the limitations that have stymied us. By opening to the Divine Power, we can transform these limitations and focus on moving our lives forward.

This step marks our milestone decision to move on with the work at hand. Predictably, as human beings we may fall short of our expectations. We ask our Higher Power to help us accept our imperfect efforts. For this is a program of progress, not perfection.

### **Different EDA Members' Step Seven Experiences**

\*Names have been changed

#### Experience shared by Jane Q.

“Step Seven was really a turning point for me in my ability to trust my Higher Power and the Program of recovery. Up till then I was mostly trying to stay straight and keep my act together one day at a time. All of a sudden I really wanted to change a lot more... to work at bringing myself into a more harmonious relationship with the world. To find out what this talk of serenity was all about.”

#### Experience shared by Colleen S.

“For me, Step Seven involved considerable risk taking. I was now trying to do new things in new ways. It took practice to learn to reach out at meetings and develop new friendships. I took a big risk when I accepted a service position in my Home Group. It took a lot of faith and help from my Higher Power to do these things... to not just say no automatically.”

#### Experience shared by Lucy P.

“Step seven really reminded me I had to continue to ask for help and feedback because it usually takes a lot of time to make these changes and it's easy to revert back to our old coping strategies.”

#### Experience shared by Margaret D.

“Step seven starts with the word "Humbly" so we can gather that humility is an important key to this Step. Humility is just about the exact opposite of humiliation. It is a sense of our very humanness; a realistic acceptance of our strengths and weaknesses. We have been developing a more realistic acceptance of ourselves by working the first six Steps. Here's where I think humility really pays off. We get better on two levels. We can take all the Steps and do our best to use all the tools and assets we have, but those deeper changes happen in God's own time and manner. So when I say humility, I mean that we do what we can as best we can and the rest is up to our Higher Power.”

Experience shared by Pauline B.

“Humility is the result of knowing that God is the doer, not me. In the light of this awareness, how can I take pride in my accomplishments? I am an instrument and any work I seem to be doing is being done by God through me. I ask God on a daily basis to remove my shortcomings, in order that I may more freely go about my life with an attitude of “love and service.”

**\*Step Seven Exercises:**

Make a grid with two columns. One should be labeled “Character Defect”, the other “Willingness to have removed.” List your defects of character in it. Some to consider are: Abusiveness, Anger, Dishonesty, Fear, Infidelity, Irresponsibility, Procrastination, Greed, Thievery, Stinginess, Thoughtlessness, and Perfectionism. Add any of your defects that became clear in steps 4, 5, and 6.

There are five possible levels that represent your willingness to have each character defect removed. These are: 1) Already removed, 2) Absolutely willing, 3) Almost willing, 4) Give me more time, and 5) Never. Assign each defect a level. If your willingness level for any item is not 1 or 2, you will want to repeat the exercise again later.

We are certain that Our Higher Power will not remove any defect that we do not admit we have. This fact explains one of the reasons we must take steps 4 and 5. We also know that this Supreme Being may remove our defects only to the extent that we are willing for them to be removed. That is why we take step 6. The Great Spirit does not intrude upon our private desires to cohabit with the trash in the garbage can.

Write down these statements.

I am so low I cohabit with worms.  
I deserve contempt and condemnation.  
I am worthless.  
I am filled with guilt, shame, remorse and self-loathing.  
I feel like being totally honest.  
I have little interest in impressing others.  
I have nothing to hide from my Higher Power  
I am coming to really know who I am.

How did you feel as you wrote each of these? Did your disease tell you that some were true? Did some feel true from a positive and spiritual place? Make a note of those feelings somewhere near the statements.

The first four statements above describe humiliation, not humility. For us, humility means “down to earth”. Humility means honest, real, and without phoniness as in

statements 5 through 8 above. So, we enter into step 7 with honesty, willing to stand naked, so to speak, before The Great Spirit hiding nothing, and with no hidden motives.

In Step 7 we are asking our Higher Power to do something – to remove our shortcomings. So, now might be a good time to open up to the Spiritual source. Here is an opportunity for you to identify further your own conception of a Higher Power. This is not a true-false exercise. Some of your responses might require some contemplation. Thinking deeply on these questions is the benefit of doing it.

Your own conception:

What is the name of your Higher Power (HP)?

Where is your HP located?

What is the primary location of your HP at the time you are meditating or praying?

If you usually pray on your knees, why do you?

Can your HP read your thoughts when you pray? Does your HP hear you better when you speak aloud?

Is your motive underlying the prayer as important as the thoughts and words of the prayer itself?

Should your message be specific and precise, or is it OK to be vague in your requests to your HP?

Place a check next to the defects which the Spiritual Power of your understanding is likely to remove.

Defects of which you are not aware.

Defects which stand in the way of your usefulness to The Universe and your fellow humans.

Defects which annoy you.

Defects which interfere with your happiness.

Once you have asked your HP to remove your defects (shortcomings), will they be gone?

Does your HP reward you when you comply with its will?

Does your HP punish you when you do not comply with its will?

Is it necessary for you to attend or be a member of a church?

Congratulations! You have just completed Step Seven. Remember, if you did your best, it is good enough! Celebrate this major milestone in your recovery, and move on to step eight.

\*Part of these exercises have been modified and used with permission from the Big Book Bunch.