



# Step 6 AA Character Defects Worksheet

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

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**The sixth step of the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-step program completes our review of our past and dealing with what brought us to addiction.** We prepare to release each of our character flaws to God to resolve. Here we look at a 6<sup>th</sup> step worksheet to see us through this part of dealing with our alcohol problem.

## A Recap

Looking back at two previous steps, in the 4<sup>th</sup> step we “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves,” and in step 5 we “admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.” These together with step nine are the scariest steps we face in steps of AA, **but like all of the steps, they are necessary for long-term sobriety and ensuring emotional sobriety.** The alternative is the miserable dry drunk.

Step 4 was the good hard look at ourselves. It may have taken a long time to do but **a.** Step 5 brings about significant spiritual growth as we admit our issues to ourselves, God, and another person.

## The Sixth Step

It is not a long step. It can be over quite quickly. The keywords in the step are ready, God, remove, and defects. **The desire to have God intervene and remove our defects of character must be earnest, heartfelt, and sincere.** That it can be over quite speedily does not mean it should be. If we performed the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> steps well, we can draw on what we have noted in those to speed up this step.

In the worksheet however **there is a visualization element, we have not encountered before.** That is imagining your future free of each of these defects. This is where we should



take time in this step because we start to sketch an amazing vision of future possibilities but not one that is rooted in fantasy.

The book 12 and 12, says

How many of us have this degree of readiness? In an absolutely practical sense nobody has it. The best we can do, with all the honesty that we can summon is to *try* to have it. Even then the best of us will discover to our dismay that there is always a sticking point, a point at which we say, “No, I can’t give this up yet.”

This worksheet is an effort to get past that.

## The Worksheet

This is not a difficult step and **may be considered as a step of willingness**, indicating preparedness for the next step and readiness to let go of the character defects.

Defect	Effect	Change	Done
Stealing	Makes me untrustworthy	I will in time become more trusted.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrogance	I always believe that I am right and that I am better.	I will become more humble, better liked, and have an open mind.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Think of the columns as forming a sentence – **Defect has this effect on me and my life and if the flaw is removed then this change will happen.** The done checkbox confirms the defect has been handed over to our higher power.

So each row tells a story of a problem and the effects of its resolution. We deal next with what each column is.

### Defect



The worksheet gives a list of possible defects, just as a starting point. You will likely have some of these, but also have others that are not on that list. **We can draw on the list we made during the fourth step.** This though is a synopsis and not a blow-by-blow account of our actions as it was such as we recorded in the 4<sup>th</sup> step.

There is a complex issue here. **Some of the defects may not be due to alcoholism** and may be exacerbated partially by alcohol or not at all. Some of us may have personality disorders that exist outside of substance use issues. List these as well as often significant change can happen even when the cause of the defects is not alcohol-related.

Our higher power is **able to address any issue**, not just the ones related to addiction recovery.

## Effect

What effect does this defect have on us? How does it make our lives worse? **There are no character faults stemming from addictive behavior or any other reason that do not in some way make our lives worse than they should be.** What negative behaviors are created by this defect or what personality traits are made worse by this shortcoming?

What defense mechanisms appear to defend the defect and the resultant behavior?

More than the effect it has on us is the effects of our flaws ripple and affect others sometimes in ways worse than the ways it affects us. **If we do not like who and what we are there are others who will like it as little or even less.**

## Change

The first two columns may seem like a rehash of former worksheets and that is partly to make the worksheet self-contained. **This column, though, is new and it invites us to consider a future without this defect.**

How will removing this defect change your life? How will it make for a better life.? This is about **considering how life might be without these character deficits.** It provides a glimpse of what could be and becomes an incentive to hand over these defects to our higher power.

We must be careful to **avoid unrealistic expectations**, particularly where a deep personal relationship is involved. Rifts can be healed by following the step program of Alcoholics Anonymous, but even though we let go of our negative behaviors, they



may have moved on emotionally a long time ago. Do not consider change beyond the likely. We do not want to create disappointment by raising our hopes.

It is unlikely that our partner of 16 years ago, who is now married and has eleven-year-old twins will divorce their partner and come back to us, even if we have stopped being selfish. Do not write that down as a hoped-for effect of change.

## Done

This is essentially **a simple checkbox** that we can tick when in the seventh step indicating that we have handed the defect over to the help of our higher power.

## Conclusion

At the end of this step and this worksheet, we should be able to feel **an increased sense of hope** and have a true willingness to let go and let God. If we can do this then the seventh step is as close to a formality that you can have in any Alcoholics Anonymous step.

If we can see how we will benefit from passing on these defects to the care of God, we provide ourselves with an incentive to do exactly that. **This is a huge step forward spiritually** because having acknowledged a higher power in previous steps in this step we prepare to actively engage with the God of our understanding and ask to start to be cast in a new mold.

Bear in mind that in changing ourselves and our **futures, we are also changing outcomes for those affected by our behaviors and our traits**. That this is possible is one of the fantastic benefits of this program and it starts by preparing here.

*Note: Except where specified all quotes are from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*



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## Examples of Defects

Adulterous	Harsh	Possessive
Bigoted	Hypercritical	Power-hungry
Bitter	Hypocritical	Preoccupied
Cheating	Impatient	Procrastinating
Controlling	Insecure	Sarcastic
Cowardice	Intimidating	Selfishness
Cynical	Intolerant	Self-Pitying
Demanding	Jealous	Sexually abusive
Dishonesty	Judgmental	Sneakiness
Envious	Lying	Snobbish
Fearfulness	Manipulative	Unforgiving
Full of Rage	Miserly	Ungrateful
Gossip	Overly dependent	Verbally abusive
Greedy	Physically abusive	



Defect	Effect	Change	Done