

Step Six: I Think Therefore I Do

My Actions Stem from My Thinking

By Rick R.

In my early days in Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) I heard someone stating that about ten percent of the population in this country become Alcoholics. I am not sure about that figure, but it got extended when the drug addicted population joined us in the middle seventies and brought a different dynamic to the sharing's, and I sometimes chuckle when we poke fun at each other. We strictly alcoholics suffered from guilt and shame for all the things we neglected when our families needed us. The drug addicts would say that they would rip-off your drugs then help you look for them, and again, we would chuckle. I believe that the goal in A.A. is to rid our minds of the burden we carried around between our ears that only the alcohol could subdue. The sad fact for us is that it gets worse, never better and we thought that we could not live without it, and we could not live with it. If we are lucky, we walk through the doors of A.A. and start trudging the road of happy destiny, and this requires a profound change of perception.

On page 76 in the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) it has only two paragraphs on Step Six containing a prayer, and at the end of the second Paragraph It states that "We have then completed *step seven*". That might give the impression that God is going to do all the work if we ask Him to. The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, (12&12) first printed in 1953 about 14 years after the Big Book and it has seven pages on how we should address our Defects of Character and it has another chapter of seven pages about how to address our Shortcomings in Step Seven.

When trying to make sense of the difference between a Defect of Character and a Shortcoming I use a situation that anyone can understand. Suppose you purchase a new car and drive it off the lot and come to a stop sign and the car does not stop, but drifts into the middle of the intersection, you take it back to the dealer and have them check it out. They come back and tell you they had the wrong brake pads on it, they changed the pads. This time you drive off and when you came to the stop sign the car stops perfectly and it stopes at all the other stop signs and redlights as well. Once the Defect (brake pads) was corrected the Short Coming (Behavior) went away. On page 68 in the 12&12 it states that, "If we would gain any real advantage in the use of this step on problems other than alcohol, we shall need to make a brand-new venture into open-mindedness". Most everything we do in our lives begins with our instincts and our thinking. "Selfishness--self-Centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity we step on the toes of our fellows, and they retaliate." (BB pg. 62) If Selfishness is the root of our troubles, what is the solution?

In the first year of my sobriety my wife came home from an Alanon meeting excited about the topic that they shared and I ask her what the topic was, and she said "Examine My Motives for What I Do" I have been examining my motives for all of my decision making and keeping them on the Unselfish side of the ledger and nothing in my agenda has had a more positive affect on promises that the A.A. Program offers.