

Entirely Ready to Remove Our Short-Comings

Identifying our Defects of Character

What is the meaning of the word *defect*? What is the meaning of the word *shortcoming*? Those are two words that we hear often when we are discussing *steps six and seven*, and we sometimes get caught up in the semantics of the words and it distracts us from really getting to the heart of the matter. I can understand why a person could get a little confused since they both obviously imply that there is something wrong, but if they are intended to be synonymous why did they not include them both in step six or step seven? Early in my sobriety I heard one version that implied that they didn't want to be redundant when they wrote the Big Book. When I read the *twelve and twelve*, I see a much more active role expected of us than simply asking God to rid us of these faults. Understanding that the founders never wanted to edit the Big Book, I can see that these issues had to be addressed and by publishing the *twelve and twelve* they could provide amplifying information on these and many other ideas that were unclear to the rest of us. In order to find a simple framework that makes it easy to get the best results as I addressed these two steps I had to come up with a way to conform to the spirit of the program and rid myself of my obvious character flaws. To put it in simple terms, I might use an example that we are all familiar with: If a person purchases a new car and several month later they discover a defect in the braking system causing the car to continue to role forward when you apply the brakes, the car would be recalled, the defect would be corrected, and the brakes would perform properly each time you put your foot down on the pedal. The defect was the faulty brakes, and the shortcoming was the behavior of the car. It wouldn't stop properly. Once the defect was corrected, the shortcoming went away. While talking to a close friend of mine about *gossiping about others* his comment on the matter was that "*All forms of criticism and character assassination stem from low self esteem.*" The low self esteem was the defect that caused the gossip (shortcoming). Since that conversation, whenever I caught myself wanting to criticize others I replaced the gossip with compassionate understanding and took the fall back position such as: There are two ways to have the tallest building in town. 1) Build the tallest building or 2) Tear all of the other buildings down around you. When I saw how pathetic that behavior was, I quickly started to remove it from my day to day interactions with others. (Stop the gossip) I try to use this type of model on all of the defects as I discover them and it seems to have taken all of the power out of them. This is a never ending process and nothing has served me better. Discover and correct the defects and the shortcomings disappear. My shortcomings were apparent to everyone but my defects of character were not. When I could identify them in myself, all I had to do was to use a little self restraint and the results were amazing. When I asked my higher power to remove my shortcomings, I became *entirely ready* and this process became the answer I was searching for and as a result, most of the guilt and shame has dissolved into nothingness. I don't let the semantics of the two words, *defect and shortcoming*; stop me from applying a model that works for me. I am a firm believer in step study meetings and have been attending one weekly ever since I got sober in 1969. I liken it to a rock tumbler. Each time you go through a cycle, slowly but surely, all of the rough edges are worn down and soon you begin to evolve into the finished product that you envisioned. This is one model that really worked for me.