

'Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.' – AA Big Book
OA Central NJ Red Bank BB Speaker Series – October 16th, 2010 – Writing the Character Defect Essay

"I do not need to fear failure. I need, rather, the peace of mind that comes with taking the action I have been putting off."
–For Today, p. 168

Excerpt from the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, Step Six, p. 56-57

Being entirely ready means that we are completely willing to recognize and let go of our defective behavior patterns, and to let God change us as God will. We don't set the timetable or method for these changes... our work is to do what we can to make ourselves ready...

In steps 4 and 5 we took a long hard look at each trait and acknowledged it as a part of our lives. Now we ask ourselves what it is doing *for* us as well as what it is doing *to* us. We search out our reasons for hanging on to each trait. Perhaps one has been a readily available source of comfort, while another has added excitement to our lives and a third has compensated for our lack of self-esteem. Every character defect we have today has been useful to us at some point in our lives, and we need to recognize that fact.

Next, we need to recognize that each of these old tools for coping with life has now outlived its usefulness. We look at the harm it is doing us to cling to each of these ways of thinking and acting. As we had to "hit bottom" with our eating behavior, so we now need to hit bottom with each of these traits. Only when we fully realize that they are costing us more than they are giving us do we become entirely ready to be rid of our defects of character.

The OA 12/12 method to use to become entirely ready for God to remove these traits:

1. Make a list of traits for improvement (character defects), which you have realized you have. (Ideally this should be based upon the observations noted in your 4th and 5th steps.)
2. To this list, add in any of the character traits that you have not already identified. (My sponsor told me to assume that I have each of these to some extent.) These are listed in the AA BB (Chapter 5, How It Works), or in the AA 12/12 on pp.66-68, or in the OA 12/12 on pp. 34-43.
3. Do an essay on each trait: first, name the trait.
4. Consider how you began to rely on this trait, and how it filled a need for you at that time.
5. Discuss how this trait is now blocking your progress toward a more balanced/more recovered state.
6. Creatively imagine how you would be better off without this trait, and think of how you might react to life situations without using the same old response. Be specific about replacements you could use.
7. Write one of these essays daily, and share it with your sponsor as your daily writing. Continue until you have written an essay on each defect.