

Twelve Steps: Helping With My Character Defects

One of my biggest and most damaging character defects is fear, followed closely by people-pleasing. During this time of pandemic, working the Steps has given me power, courage, and clarity. Admitting that I am powerless over the pandemic, or other people's reactions to it has freed me to focus on my own response, and my own health. Believing that my HP can and does restore me to sanity, I turn my will and my life over to HP's care. Having done that, I examine areas where I do have control over a situation, and areas where I do not. For example, I choose to wear a mask, even when visiting friends. My friends may or may not wear masks. Turning my will over to HP, I pray to know what is the best response for me.

Letting go of fear, I quietly listen for guidance. In some situations, the guidance is that I do not get

together with someone. In other situations, it is to go ahead. I trust my HP's guidance to help me navigate without fear. Some people I know are offended if I wear a mask around them, and some are offended if I don't wear one when I am outside, and physically distanced from others. If there is one thing this pandemic has taught me, it is that I can't please everyone! As I have prayed and turned each situation over, I have been delivered from fear, and from my people-pleasing behaviors. I am learning to live and let live. And I am enjoying peace and deliverance from some of my character defects.

Steps 4 through 7 remind me to be humble and teachable. With new information coming out almost daily, there is a lot to learn about the new virus our world is dealing with. New information may lead me to new behaviors, and that's ok. I am doing the best I can with what I know, and trust that others are doing the same. Steps 7, 8, and 9 encourage me to make amends where I have harmed others.

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**OVEREATERS
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MILWAUKEE AREA INTERGROUP
Serving Eastern Wisconsin

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Third Quarter 2021 Theme

The theme for the third quarter 2021 *Cocoon* is "How Convention Boosts My/Our Recovery."

Or any other topic regarding your experience, strength, and hope is welcome!

Deadline: Friday, June 12, 2021.

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Serving Eastern Wisconsin

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(New board members take office at November meeting, based on October elections)

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MAI News Available Via Email

Want to receive free, monthly MAI news via email? Send an email to emailblast@oamilwaukee.org with "subscribe" in Subject to receive our "News You Can Use." Include your first name, last initial, and home meeting.

Your email address will never be distributed nor seen by other people receiving the mailings.

MAI Monthly Meetings

Third Monday of every month, 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Martin Luther Lutheran Church
9235 W. Bluemound Road, Milwaukee, WI 53226
Each member group can have two voting representatives. All OA members are welcome.

OA World Service oa.org

Free OA podcasts featuring OA speakers: oa.org/podcasts/. A podcast is a radio-type show you can download from the Internet to your computer.

A link also is available at this site to get World Service Office (WSO) information.

Spanish OA Website Espanol.@oa.org

French OA Website Francais.@oa.org

Region 5 region5oa.org

Serving Midwest US and Canada

Cocoon Submissions

We want your stories of recovery, poems and pictures, that share your experience, strength, and hope!

Issue	Deadline	Topic
3rd Quarter	June 12	How Convention Boosts Our Recovery

Send to cocooneditor@oamilwaukee.org or OAMAI, Attn: Cocoon Editor, PO Box 270054, Milwaukee, WI 53227.

Editor: Louise V.

Editorial Policy

Out of the Cocoon is the *quarterly* newsletter of the Milwaukee Area Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. We welcome OA-related contributions from members. Material cannot be returned, nor can payment be made. All submissions must be signed; names will be withheld upon request. The editor reserves the right to make editorial changes and to refuse any article not meeting the editorial policy or that breaks any traditions. Articles may not appear in the quarter of submission. Other OA groups may reprint articles without permission as long as credit is given. The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers, and not of the Intergroup or OA as a whole.

Seeking a Sponsor?

The MAI Twelfth-Step-Within Committee maintains a list of available sponsors and temporary sponsors so newcomers and those still suffering can get direction and support. If you need help finding a sponsor, email 12th-stepwithin@oamilwaukee.org or call 414-259-0640 and leave a message. Provide your contact information, type of sponsor you're seeking (i.e. food, step, temporary, etc.), and any other specific needs.

Available to Sponsor?

Please add your name and phone number to the list so you can help another member. Indicate type of sponsor you are willing to be (see above for ideas) and time of day you are available.

Character Defects: What God Is Doing for Me

Healing continues in layers. It's progressive.

What I learned in program is when I have feelings that might tempt me to eat, I can pick up three program tools as quickly as possible, give myself care and maintain my abstinence. They may be writing, making a phone call, going to a meeting or reaching out to my sponsor. The program gives me choices besides eating. When angry, I can pause, and I don't need to act out that feeling. Again, I have choices.

I worked the Twelve Steps and read the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* many times. I started this work my first year in the program and kept coming back. I thought I was tenacious in my recovery, thinking it meant I was relentless in my pursuit. Yet tenacious actually means to hang onto or, not let go.

One of the many gifts of the program is what God is willing to take away when I am willing to let go. When I was willing to let go of excess food,

God took away my excess weight and my body size normalized. When I was willing to let go of control, I asked for and received a sponsor.

I worked Step 11 daily, improving my conscious contact with God, as I understand God. When things were going well, I used to say, "Thanks, God, I'll take it from here!" God smiled. I have free will. He wasn't going to stop me. And, when things were tough at work, I used to think, I had to *do* something, forgetting turning it over was doing something.

It took practice for me to realize I can relax and continue to turn my will and my life over to Him, letting go of my character defect of control, every day, every time, no matter how things are going. I now lovingly agree to let Him guide me through my day and accept the gifts He offers me with gratitude.

~Anonymous

You've Got This – We've Got You!

Dear OA Members,

I loved you, each and every one of you, abstinent or not. I was glad you were here. OA exists to help the still suffering compulsive overeater. Without each other, there is no need for OA to exist. We were never meant to suffer with this illness alone.

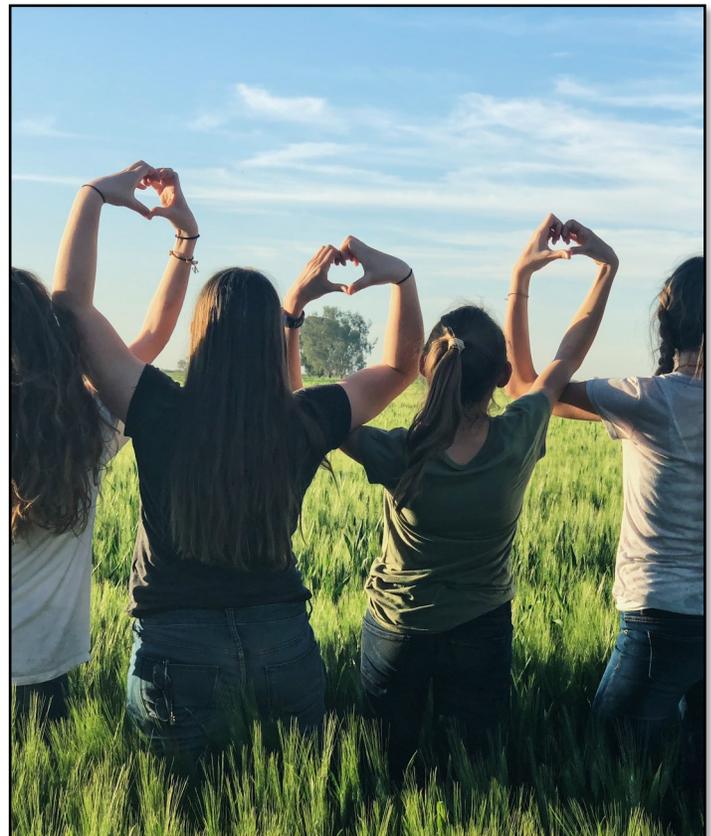
Recovery is attainable, one day at a time. Keep coming back, stay for the miracle and be here for the next newcomer that needs you like I was here when you needed me. You may be the only copy of the Big Book some people ever see. Recover for you because you are worth it!

I join so many who have gone before me. We are altogether now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours.

You've got this, and we've got you!

Love,

~D.



Twelve Steps: Helping With My Character Defects

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However, if I am unkind, judgmental, or fearful, my actions under those influences may hurt another. In those cases, direct amends, made as quickly as possible, are important. By daily practicing Steps 10 through 12, I give HP the opportunity to remove my fear, and to support me when I am tempted to please others, rather than doing what is right for me. By daily working the Twelve Steps, I am getting out of the way, and allowing my HP to remove all these defects of character, one day at a time - even during this time of a world-wide pandemic.

~Heather R.

Tenth Step Removes Defects

Hi Family,

Lisa N, here to share what I have been taught about how some people work the tenth step to uncover character defects. I was always so adept at spotting others' defects, that I was shocked to find out that mine were cropping up, daily, without me knowing. Fear was a biggie for me and yes, it is a defect. I guess because it is the opposite of faith and this is a program of faith in an HP, that would make sense. But I thought it was something that happened to me, and I couldn't do anything about it. That's where my HP steps in, if I do my part.

Because of the pandemic, I have had many opportunities to meet new people, join in on different meetings and learn how other people work their program. One thing I was taught is doing a tenth step train. That's where I get a new partner every two weeks and we commit each day to sharing honestly, a fear, a resentment and/or a gratitude. One partner taught me to share my gratitude list everyday and boy, does that help. I guess you could do that with anyone as long as they were willing, couldn't you?

For information or a list of character defects that you'd like to get rid of, don't be afraid, lol, please contact me.

~Lisa N.



Happy, Joyous, and Free

In sponsoring and Twelve Step work, I remember to talk about some of the defects I still have, as well as those that have been removed.

In OA, my character defects have been revealed to me: perfectionism, worrier, and thinking I needed to work at making everyone a friend. Each defect has been self-destructive, in its own way, causing me to feel sad.

In the past, my character defects have compelled me to strive to accomplish super-human goals, feel fearful about the future, and put myself through so many paces in order to befriend everyone.

Fortunately, I've learned in program to turn character defects over to God and pray that He relieves me of those burdens. And God does. One day at a time. As a result, I feel happy, joyous, and free. Thank You God and the OA program.

~Bobbi

OA is the Solution to My Character Defects

I have learned through Steps 6 and 7 the meaning of the words "defects of character." Bill W. also referred to them as "sins," "shortcomings" and "faults" as he preferred not using the same word to describe something too often. I heard the phrase "PAGGLES" a long time ago which stood for Pride, Anger, Greed, Gluttony, Lust, Envy and Sloth. These are the "seven deadly sins" that many people refer to when embarking on their fourth and fifth steps. I am now aware there are many more defects of character than those seven.

The use of the fourth and fifth steps aid in determining what part I own in my resentments, anger, fears and insecurities. It helps me see what part of me is affected by those resentments. (Refer to p.65 in the chapter "How It Works" of the 4th ed. of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, commonly referred to as the "Big Book.") It clearly shows a simple and concise way to determine who I am resentful towards, what the cause is and what it affects. I can then go on to see my part and where Steps 6 and 7 come in to play.

What do I do next? I find a solution or a remedy to that defect of character. Then I take action. Action is the key. I cannot hold onto a defect and remedy it at the same time. I cannot continue to complain about that which I have no control over. In fact, the only thing I have control over are my own actions, doing the next right thing and eventually accepting the unacceptable. If I see where I can change or improve a situation, I do so.

If I am afraid of something, I can only get over it by going through, not around it. If I feel like I am abused or feel like a doormat, only I have the ability to make changes and set boundaries. If I feel out of shape (sloth), only I have the ability to exercise or move. If I feel emotionally bored or frustrated by the restrictions of the pandemic, only I have the ability to find new projects and ways to look to the light and see silver linings. If I have medical problems that OA cannot solve, only I have the ability to call a doctor.

The sixth and seventh steps have taught me how to see the beauty in front of me, the abilities that I have, the willingness to count my blessings and understand that I have more time behind me than in front of me. It

has enabled me to question, "How do I want to spend the rest of my life? Do I want to be angry and hang onto the past or move forward and live life on life's terms taking the joy that's there?"

I have come to see that the first thing on my gratitude list must be to thank my HP for another day, another chance, another opportunity instead of wishing my days away hoping they will be something other than they are. Steps 6 and 7 are about the Spiritual Principles of Willingness and Humility.

I thank God every day for what I have instead of cursing Him for what I do not have and most of all, I thank God for the kindness and love given to me by the members of this fellowship. More than anything, I see that the pandemic has given me the gift of time to grow my program and for that I am ever so grateful. Amen.

~Wendy A.

Awareness, Acceptance, Action

That is how I deal with my character defects. It starts with a Step 10 inventory. As I review my day, I become aware of a defect that has returned.

I must accept that defects will re-emerge sometimes years after I think they have been removed. I humbly ask my HP to show me what I can do to change my attitude. I make amends if necessary. I do a gratitude list and ask God to show me the next right thing to do and trust that my loving HP will show me His will for my life.

Then I know I am on the right path and can keep putting one foot in front of the other with joy and confidence. It is a reminder that I will never be perfect and I am still loved and cherished by my loving HP.

~Judy W.

OA Teaches Us That All of Life has Lessons

Letting Go of Judgments – We will Know Serenity, We will Know Peace.

This year, God lovingly took me on a journey showing me I am safe, no matter what. I need to stay on my path and not invite others' problems onto my path. They are not mine to fix.

God demonstrated this by showing me a severe storm with black clouds coming towards me. Gray clouds filled the space between the black clouds and the ground. Lightning started to flash in the black clouds. Then I saw yellow and orange in the distance and I knew lightning started fires.

I was safe. A plexiglass wall separated me from the fire. I saw no people or animals in the fire. Part of me wanted to stand there and watch, thinking, "Isn't it awful?" Or see if someone might need help, but it wasn't my path. Mine was straight ahead, curved down the road, so I couldn't see very far into my future, although the path itself was smooth and clear. There were green meadows on my left and trees ahead, blocking the far-off view of my path. God told me I could help the most people if I continued to walk forward on *my* path.

After the boundaries lesson, came lessons on judgment. I have worked hard on my issues around my dad. He died in 2006, and that work did not stop.

God continues to give me opportunities to work on *my* issues. My judgments of others often stemmed from the judgments I had of my dad: not taking care of his responsibilities, lying, cheating, stealing, name calling and criticizing others.

If I could lance that boil, perhaps I could let go of my judgments more globally. I was willing to try. God gave me the opportunity and I could see how my relationship with my dad also gave me the opportunity to be empathetic to others who were abused and abandoned as children. I could be thankful for the lesson without condoning his behavior or others who displayed similar behavior. I was more able to separate the behavior from the people.

The work I was willing to do and did allowed me to understand and accept where my judgments came from and let them go. The base of my judgment was a fact of my past but did not need to define me or my future. I accepted my dad and my past, without wishing to shut the door on it, another program promise fulfilled for me.

Through working Step 11, I trusted God and His wanting to give me more gifts. I first needed to be willing to let go on a deeper level than before. I lovingly agreed to His plan for me. Life continues to get better and happier for me. Through letting go, I was able to receive serenity and know peace.

~Anonymous

