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Reply: a4fv

Step Seven is the step where one becomes Aware of Awareness, And with that Awareness of Awareness comes the Responsibility to consciously choose to adjust one's POV. Understanding

THOUGHTS beget ACTIONS beget HABITS beget CHARACTER – and that CHARACTER (to mark, to engrave) begets DESTINY, the choice to suffer character flaws or nurture character assets, is the ultimate choice to be aware of.

That's all I'm here to do. Making people ~ living souls ~ Aware of options to choose for themselves.

Pass It On!

For the Love of Truth.

Criminals & Gangmembers Anonymous

STEP SEVEN

**WE HONESTLY RECOGNIZE OUR SHORTCOMINGS WHENEVER BAD HABITS SURFACED, PROMPTLY
CORRECTING OUR THINKING AND ACTIONS.**

Listed below are some Character Defects as well as some Character Assets/Spiritual Principals. Using examples from your own past, identify a Character Defect, and talk about how you have or can replace (d) it with a Character Asset or Spiritual Principal.

LIST OF CHARACTER DEFECTS

Abrasive	Angry	Apathetic	Aloof	Argumentative
Arrogance	Attention-Seeking	Belligerent	Bigotry	Bitter
Bossy	Braggart	Careless	Cold-Hearted	Complaining
Compulsive	Cruel	Deceitful	Defensive	Denial
Dependent	Depressed	Detached	Discriminatory	Disorganized
Distant	Distrustful	Dramatic	Egocentric	Envious
Evasive	Excessive Pride	Fearful	Forgetful	Glutton
Gossip	Grandiose	Greedy	Guilt	Hate
Head-Strong	Hostile	Humorless	Immature	Impatient
Impulsive	Inconsiderate	Inconsistent	Indecisive	Indulgent
Inhibited	Insecure	Insensitive	Intolerant	Isolated
Jealous	Lazy	Lustful	Lying	Manipulative
Materialistic	Negative	Neglectful	Obsessed	Opinionated
Over-Emotional	Passive	Perfectionism	Pessimism	Preoccupied
Perverse	Procrastination	Promiscuity	Prudish	Quarrelsome
Mean	Rebellious	Reckless	Resentful	Rude
Rueful	Sarcastic	Secretive	Self-Centered	Self-Condemning
Self-Doubting	Self-Hating	Self-Importance	Selfishness	Self-Justifying
Self-Pity	Self-Seeking	Short-Tempered	Shy	Stingy
Stubbornness	Submissive	Thin-Skinned	Thoughtless	Tight-Fisted
Timid	Unauthentic	Uncritical	Undependable	Undisciplined
Unemotional	Unfriendly	Unrealistic	Unromantic	Unscrupulous
Unstable	Vague	Vain	Vindictive	Vulgar
White-Knuckled	Withdrawn	Workaholic		

LIST OF CHARACTER ASSETS/SPIRITUAL PRINCIPALS

Accepting	Agreeable	Analytical	Approving	Assertive
Attention-Giving	Attentive	Bold	Careful	Cautious
Cheerful	Concerned	Confident	Considerate	Content
Controlled	Cooperative	Decisive	Dependable	Disciplined
Extroverted	Flexible	Forgiving	Free	Friendly
Generous	Gentle	Good Listener	Giving	Guilt Free
Helpful	Honest	Humble	Industrious	Involved
Kind	Lawful	Loving	Moderate	Modest
Loving	Supportive	Compassionate	Nice	Open
Open-Minded	Optimistic	Organized	Outgoing	Patient
Peaceful	Permissive	Persistent	Playful	Polite
Rational	Realistic	Relaxed	Reliable	Romantic
Selfless	Self-Liking	Self-Sufficient	Sensitive	Serene
Mindful	Sociable	Social	Specific	Spiritual
Steady	Straight-Forward	Thoughtful	Tolerant	Trusting
Unassuming	Adventurous	Warm	Willing	Witty
Easy	Enjoyable	Comforting		

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STEP SEVEN

**WE HONESTLY RECOGNIZE OUR SHORTCOMINGS WHENEVER BAD HABITS SURFACED,
PROMPTLY CORRECTING OUR THINKING AND ACTIONS.**

When common emotional responses trigger certain feelings, causing our normal behavior (through manner) to change, we are thinking and acting in a way that is NOT normal (abnormal). It is up to us to apply Step Three and make the right choices and decisions to feel and/or treat others according to our to our destructive self-will or do we make a choice to apply Spiritual Principals (which will simply be the opposite of the wrong/evil habits we have engaged in in the past, which equals destructive behavior).

<u>DEFECTS THROUGH SHORTCOMINGS</u>	← EXCHANGE FOR →	<u>SPIRITUAL PRINCIPALS</u>
DISHONESTY	←————→	HONESTY
INSECURE	←————→	SECURE
IRRESPONSIBLE	←————→	RESPONSIBLE
AGGRESSIVE	←————→	ASSERTIVE
ANGER	←————→	CALM

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. What 'Defect of Character' could you exchange for 'Spiritual Principals', right now, today?
2. What 'Defects of Character' have you already exchanged for 'Spiritual Principals'?
3. Do any of your 'Defects of Character' make your life, or the lives of those around you better?
4. What 'Spiritual Principals' are you lacking in your day-to-day life?

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We now realize from our Sixth Step experience, how powerfully destructive defects are, which in turn can cause us to turn towards evil or wrongdoing. Step Seven is our solution to the problems our defects can cause. It is God's assurance to us that 'Good' can always prevail over 'Evil' when we call upon our 'Free-Will' capacity to continue making the right choices and decisions with respect to our experience, understanding and application of Step Three within this Step.

It is part of our human nature as emotional beings to feel threatened, challenged or selfish in our expectations of others. Sometimes our patience and tolerance will be strong enough to "Correct our thoughts" before we act out rudely or aggressively through words or actions. Other times we will 'slip' through our "shortcomings" making a comment or doing something to push our way aggressively or with self-centered intentions. This Step reminds us of our "imperfections" while keeping us alert to the need to practice self-honesty a bit more, each and every day. Whenever we are honest enough to accept our own faults in judgment, when we promptly correct our thinking and actions we experience a "Spiritual Awakening" doing what is right instead of what is wrong.

In our early experiences in recovery, applying this Step seems awkward because we are not used to acting or reacting kindly or compassionately when we are not getting our way. Learning to change warped, self-serving beliefs, manners and habits is not an overnight thing. Changing old habits to adopt a more consistent practice of Spiritual Principles is a process which will take time getting used to. Simply speaking, new shoes look great, but they don't feel comfortable until we wear them for a while. For most Criminals and Gangmembers, having a humble, compassionate attitude is not normal. The change from being aggressive, self-centered, demanding and generally rude, to a demeanor and attitude of kindness, compassion and care is a process that takes a period of time. How fast the change in our character will occur, depends on how often and consistently we apply the Seventh Step.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. How have old, negative habits affect your relationships?
2. What have you done today that is different from what you did yesterday, or last week, or last year?
3. Can you think of any negative consequence created by "promptly correcting our thinking and actions"?

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STEP SEVEN

WE HONESTLY RECOGNIZE OUR SHORTCOMINGS WHENEVER BAD HABITS SURFACED,
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ABNORMAL RANGE OF BEHAVIOR

Not normal, Not Average, Not Typical, Not Usual, Irregular, Especially to a Considerable Degree.

DISHONEST SELF-RIGHTEOUS

IRRESPONSIBLE ANGRY

RANGE OF NORMAL OR "IMPERFECT" BEHAVIOR (THINKING, MANNERS AND HABITS).

NORMAL: Conforming with or constituting an accepted standard, model or pattern; especially corresponding to the median or average of a large group in type, appearance, achievement, function, development, etc...; implies conformity with the established norm or standard of its kind.

PASSIVE

LOW SELF-ESTEEM

INSECURE

LOW SELF-CONFIDENCE

ABNORMAL RANGE OF BEHAVIOR

Not Normal, Not Average, Not Typical, Not Usual, Irregular, Especially to a Considerable Degree.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. When faced with an obstacle, what is your usual/habitual way of dealing?
2. How could living with the "Range of Normal Behavior" affect your life?
3. Can you give an example of a time when you reacted in the "Abnormal Range of Behavior" to a given situation? What was the result?

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**WE HONESTLY RECOGNIZE OUR SHORTCOMINGS WHENEVER BAD HABITS SURFACED,
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REBUILDING OUR CHARACTER

First of all, what does character mean to you? I didn't know what it meant this morning until I looked it up in the Dictionary and I found out it meant so many different things:

- Pattern of behavior.
- Personality found in an individual.
- Moral constitution.
- The way I carry myself in living today.

How I live today is important, because if I believe that I want to have change my in life, I have to live it. Before I started living the Twelve Steps, I didn't believe in changing, so my beliefs were shot out. It wasn't until I started changing my beliefs and the things I was doing that I started to see my character change. Today, for me, *Character Is Keeping My Integrity*. My thing is this, I have to not only talk CGA and the Twelve Steps – I have to live it. I couldn't do that before because of my shot out character. Today I'm trying to change this. I'm trying to change my character.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. Do your beliefs get in the way of changing your character?
2. Do you try to live differently today than you did yesterday?
3. Does integrity have a role in your life today?
4. What morals do you adhere to in your day-to-day life?

KEY WORDS DEFINED:

MORALS: Concerned with the discernment of what is right and wrong. Virtuous, Upright, Rules or Habits of Conduct.

CHARACTER: Pattern of behavior or personality found in an individual, Moral constitution.

INTEGRITY: The quality or state of being of sound principal, Uprightness, Honesty and Sincerity.

BELIEF: A state of believing, Conviction or acceptance that certain things are true or unreal.

“AS WATER REFLECTS THE FACE,
A MAN'S HEART IS REFLECTED IN HIS CHARACTER.”

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STEP SEVEN

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It took us many years to develop a lot of bad habits. Many of us have also carried a lot of painful anger, guilt or shame inside of us for too long and were afraid to let anyone know how we really felt. These bad habits and bad experiences are deeply ingrained in our characters and behavior. So, changing overnight is not going to happen, nor will change be easy. For, to change through recovery is a "Process". It takes hard work and constant practice. Shortcomings are simply defective (or 'Bad') attitudes or behaviors that come alive. We will make mistakes throughout our lives, but the faster we correct our faults or avoid making mistakes in the first place, the sooner we can see that progress is being made. In recovery, we are only seeking "daily progress" not trying to become perfect people. Whenever we make a choice not to do wrong or evil, we are, in that moment, practicing "Spiritual Principles" which are opposed to any wrong or evil.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. Do you still feel like giving up when you know how recovery is helping you to feel and live better?
2. Do you give yourself credit for your efforts, or do you still put yourself down when you make mistakes?
3. Do you still struggle with allowing the negative comments people make about you, become your opinion about yourself?
4. Are you striving to become 'perfect', or are you learning to accept the fact that you are imperfect?

KEY WORDS DEFINED:

HONEST: Free from fraud or deception, Truthful, Trustworthy.

RECOGNIZE: To acknowledge or take notice of in some definite way.

BAD HABIT(s): Failing to reach an acceptable standard, where it is a frequent pattern of behavior.

SHORTCOMING: Deficiency, defect.

PROMPT: Performed readily or immediately.

CORRECT: To make or set right, Amend.

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Both Step Six and Step Seven are companion Steps, because they remind us of our imperfections through the defects in our characters. As Step Six helps us to identify what these defects are, now in Step Seven we learn how to free ourselves from them when they surface.

Shortcomings will occur whether we are interacting with people or not. We can never accurately predict what we will experience moment by moment. We can promptly determine how we decide to react and ultimately feel, regardless of whether the experience is 'good' or 'bad'. Once we learn not to panic or over react when our shortcomings surface, while at the same time, correcting our thinking and actions, we will, in effect, practically improve the application of Step Three in our day-to-day life in conjunction with the other Steps.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. Can you share one of your shortcomings?
2. How long will a shortcoming generally last, Please explain:
3. How do you 'simply' correct or change a shortcoming?
4. How can/do shortcomings make your recovery difficult?
5. What other Steps work in direct conjunction with Step Seven?

KEY WORDS DEFINED:

SHORTCOMING: Deficiency, defect.

DEFICIENCY: An amount that is lacking or inadequate, a shortage.

CORRECT: To make or set right, Amend, To alter or adjust so as to bring to some standard or required condition.

PRACTICAL: Actively engaged in some course of action, Concerned with voluntary action and ethical decisions.

APPLICATION: An act of putting to use, Capacity for practical use.

CONJOIN: To act in opposition to a force or influence, To move or tend in a reverse direction.

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A shortcoming is simply being too lazy and irresponsible to promptly correct, or do the opposite of something that is selfish, rude or simply wrong. A shortcoming can be as simple as having a prejudicial attitude toward people throughout the day or as serious as assaulting someone. These shortcomings happen as an emotional response to something we are thinking, saying or doing that has an effect on how we are feeling. Since we are normally in social engagements with other people, in some places, while doing different things, others are constantly pushing their defective attitudes and behaviors upon us, this can awaken our defects as a defense shield for our own self-protection. Once our emotions have been provoked or impacted by others, the practice of the Seventh Step can allow us to find a pro-social solution to the problem at hand.

A common example of correcting a shortcoming is when someone makes a comment that is rude or offensive to us. A 'natural' emotional response can trigger insecurity or fear, this affects how we react to what we are feeling. The shortcoming is simply the way we allowed another person to 'make' us feel and we are now allowing their opinion of us to become our opinion of ourselves. The longer we allow their remark to affect us, the stronger our desire can become to defend ourselves through some form of retaliation. If we reflect 'wrong' behavior, the problem continues and escalates, with the chance of getting out of control, at this point our Defects are working and in control – not Spiritual Principals.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. What shortcomings have you been able to catch and correct?
2. What is it that you still find yourself repeating, knowing it needs to stop?
3. Have you ever made a decision based on doing the 'right' thing, rather than what you felt like doing?
4. How often do you let others dictate how you react?

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We seek progress, not perfection! The more we practice being honest and good, the more we develop a *right manner of living*. Consider for a moment a big box, filled with all of the Defect of Character that we discovered in our Fourth and Fifth Step inventories. Of course there were many and some of those defects were very powerful because they had become bad habits that became magnified through our addictions. In the Seventh Step, we are asking God to help us remove the defects of character. Yet in the process of letting go of some of these burdensome defects, there are some we will still keep a tight grip on. Do not be discouraged! There is no one among us who is perfect, so we are all safe and equal in our lack.

It took a long time for us to learn and practice our bad habits. It will most likely take a bit longer to remove our defects of character. As we put forth honest effort, we will find ourselves slipping back into old habits and ways of thinking. Usually this involves People we used to hang around with, the Places we hung around and the Things we did while deep in our addictions. It is important that we remind ourselves of our goals and remain to go to great lengths to maintain and improve the quality of our lives. We are not striving to be better than others, but we do intend to develop a better way of living.

In this effort to change and through practicing a new way of living, it is expected that we will not be instantly balanced nor do everything free from error. Change is a process, not a one-night thing, or an instant miracle of some sort. Change requires constant work and long effort. But the VALUE, the reward we receive through the strengthening of our character, is well worth the effort.

Let us not be so critical or hard on ourselves when we make mistakes along our journey toward recovery. In our most difficult moments, we can try to remember that we can turn to the God of our understanding. Our God will not criticize, nor judge. We can continue to let go of those frustrating feelings that only create obstacles for us. As we humble ourselves before God, we can learn to become humble with ourselves. Then we will not become disrespectful by demanding anything, nor will we be tempted to give up or give in to frustration. With patience, guidance and understanding, we can work at our own pace to learn how to live better than we have before, eventually, the list of our daily shortcomings will become shorter as we practice our Spiritual Principals.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. List Three (3) Shortcomings and/or Bad Habits that you need to change, why you need to change them and the damaging effects they have on your life today

We must be responsible to face the
Facts and change our problems...

WE MUST BE ACCOUNTABLE TO AMEND
THE WRONGS WE'VE DONE
THAT BROUGHT HARM, INJURY
OR LOSS TO OTHERS...

Our restitution to our victims
Should not only be monetary,
But most important, continued to be
Demonstrated in the selfless
Way we live.

Richard M.