

Dear Family,

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this short essay. With that said, I'll get to my point so as not to waste much of your time. My hope is you will read this and have a better understanding of an all-too-often misrepresented and important aspect of our program.

When I got clean in 2006 I was told to get 2 things; a Basic Text and a dictionary. I was told I needed to know what words meant and not what I thought they meant. I've come to experience the drastic effect these two books have had on my life. I had a desire to learn despite my arrogance. I had heard a lot of old timers talking about "defects" and "shortcomings". Some members would share things such as "having a defect is like having a flat tire and a shortcoming is driving on that tire". This inferred these were clearly different. Some members would share about the fact defects and shortcomings were the same thing and we should learn to keep from spreading misinformation. I was curious to know if there was a difference or not, so I went into my Basic Text and my dictionary to find out for myself. As it turns out, defects and shortcomings are NOT different. They are the same thing. The American Heritage Dictionary I purchased states a defect as **1.** The lack of something necessary or desirable. **2.** An imperfection; shortcoming. Conversely, a shortcoming is defined as "a deficiency; flaw." Both terms are nouns, and not verbs which would imply an action. This action is our behavior. Our Basic Text says in Step 7, "Character defects **or** shortcomings..." not **and**. The two terms are also used interchangeably in our It Works: How and Why throughout Step 7. Why would we admit the "exact nature" in Step 5, which are the defects of character (the why in our behavior), become willing to have these defects removed in 6 and then ask for something completely different in 7? Makes no sense. I've argued with some people about this and have been told this is just my perspective. I'm sorry to hurt your feels, however, our literature, the dictionary and even the

creator of the 12 Steps, Bill W. himself, collectively, prove you wrong. What is my perspective?
It is the practical application of these Steps in my life, not the clear definitions of these words.

Taken from a thread discussing this very topic:

Also...the "nature of our wrongs"...

I just found this also...hope it is helpful:

7) Humbly asked Him (God) to remove our shortcomings.

What shortcomings? The “exact nature of our wrongs” in step 5 is expressed in terms of “defects of character” in step 6, and offered up to God for removal as “shortcomings” in step 7. Bill Wilson, when asked why he used three different sets of words to define character defects, said it was to avoid repetition. Therefore, he intended that there be no significant distinction. Some members waste time needlessly by differentiating the three expressions, which we term, simply, as character defects.

When step 5 is performed well, we leave with a list of our character defects. In step 6 we progressively become willing to have these removed from us, and in step 7 we pray that they might be.

<http://www.soberrecovery.com/forums/step-7/224300-word-shortcomings.html>

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As a member of Narcotics Anonymous I have come to understand it is my responsibility to share accurate information as well as my experience, strength and hope. Bill W. had an aversion toward redundancy, hence three different words/phrases to describe the exact same thing; exact nature, defect and shortcoming. I apologize for any self-righteousness/arrogance regarding this topic. It has been eating away at me and I cringe when I hear misinformation shared in meetings or with other recovering addicts outside of meetings. Thanks for letting me share.

Dave P.