



Courage to Change

Reflecting the glow of recovery from Starlight at Tamassee

By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamassee DAR School



We've all had family or friends diagnosed with cancer. No one ever wants to hear a doctor speak that word, but when the oncologist does, it's time for drastic action. Surgery to remove a tumor, followed by radiation or chemotherapy. Lifestyle changes come as well – improvements in diet or physical therapy. Those battling the disease suffer serious side effects from treatment, but it's better than the alternative. Even when a loved one goes into remission, the doctor orders regular tests in case the disease recurs.

Steps Six and Seven of the Twelve Steps take similar resolve. Addiction too is a disease, and we must courageously engage treatment and vigilantly keep a check on our health. In completing Steps Four and Five – sharing our inventory with God and a trusted person – we uncovered cancer in our character. Our resentments and fears for the harms done to us drove us into isolation where we took bad medicine for our very real pain. The wrongs and harms we have done left us feeling guilty and ashamed. They wounded the people we care about and need to support our recovery. If we want to be healthy again, these tumors must be cut out of our lives.

Surgery is a frightening prospect. Ask anyone who's had a cancer procedure or anyone who has bravely faced their inner demons. Steps Six and Seven are where we decide we're ready for treatment and where we ask the Divine Doctor for healing. Step Six says, we "were entirely ready to have God

remove all these defects of character,” and Step Seven says, we “humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.”

Like Steps Four and Five, Steps Six and Seven put Step Three – where I turned my life and will over to the care of God – into action. When I honestly own that my choices in life have produced very painful consequences for me and those who love me, then I want God to change how I make choices in the future. I want to be a different and better person. I want to become someone who my family, friends, and co-workers can count on, who loves well, who not only fulfills my obligations and duties but also above and beyond.



Steps Six and Seven also put Step Two into action. In Step Two, I came to believe a Power greater than myself could restore me to wholeness. In Step Seven, I ask God to do the work of a physician and begin healing me to become my true and best self, to live like the beloved child of his that I am.

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous includes a prayer for Step Seven. It's worth praying regularly. "My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and others. Grant me strength, as I go out from here to do your bidding. Amen."

Steps Six and Seven also prepare my heart and will for the work of Steps Eight and Nine – making amends to those I've harmed. If Steps Six and Seven are the character surgery, then Steps Eight and Nine are the follow up treatment where the healing takes even deeper hold.

At Starlight at Tamassee, we believe the Divine Doctor loves to heal his sick children and never fails to care for us when we ask for his help, and we're here to help mothers and children find that healing. To learn more about Starlight, visit www.starlight.tdarschool.org, or contact us at starlight@tdarschool.org or 864-944-1390. If your church or civic group is interested in a presentation on recovery, contact Jon Holland at jholland@tdarschool.org.

