It seems reasonable to insist that certain conditions must be satisfied by any definition of omnipotence if it is to be regarded as an adequate definition. First, it seems reasonable not to require of an omnipotent being that he be able to bring about a state of affairs that it is logically impossible to bring about. So, for example, we cannot reasonably require of an omnipotent being that he be able to bring about a state of affairs in which there exists a round square. Since the description of that state of affairs is self-contradictory, it is logically impossible that there should exist a state of affairs to which the description truly applies and, hence, it is logically impossible that there should be any action which can truly be described as bringing about that state of affairs. Accordingly, the claim that a being cannot bring about a state of affairs in which there exists a round square does not entail that the being lacks some power or ability and, hence, does not entail that the being is not omnipotent. It seems reasonable, then, to adopt the principle that the failure to bring about a state of affairs that it is logically impossible to bring about does not count against omnipotence or falsify the claim that a being is omnipotent. Some few philosophers like Descartes and Wade Savage are not ready to countenance the reasonableness of this principle, but Harry G. Frankfurt has shown what logical absurdities follow from rejecting the principle. So, any definition of omnipotence is inadequate and must be rejected if it entails the claim that an omnipotent being can bring about a state of affairs that it is logically impossible to bring about and if any definition of omnipotence is adequate then it does not entail that claim.

Second, it seems reasonable not to expect of an omnipotent being that he be able to bring about a state of affairs that it is logically impossible for him to bring about. There is a kind of state of affairs whose description is not self-contradictory and which it is logically possible for some agent or other to bring about but which it is logically impossible for some particular agent to bring about. So, for example, a state of affairs not brought about by an
omnipotent being is a state of affairs whose description is not self-contradictory and which it is logically possible for many agents to bring about but which it is logically impossible for an omnipotent being to bring about. It is logically impossible for an omnipotent being to bring about that logically possible state of affairs because to expect of an omnipotent being that he be able to bring about a state of affairs not brought about by an omnipotent being is to expect of an omnipotent being not that he be able to bring about a state of affairs whose description is not self-contradictory but that he be able to bring about a state of affairs whose description is self-contradictory, namely, the state of affairs both brought about and not brought about by an omnipotent being. Accordingly, the claim that an omnipotent being cannot bring about a state of affairs not brought about by an omnipotent being does not entail that the omnipotent being lacks some power or ability and, hence, does not entail that the omnipotent being is not omnipotent. It seems reasonable, then, to adopt the principle that the failure of an omnipotent being to bring about a state of affairs that it is logically impossible for an omnipotent being to bring about does not count against omnipotence or falsify the claim that a being is omnipotent. Clearly, rejecting this principle also leads to logical absurdities. So, any definition of omnipotence is inadequate and must be rejected if it entails the claim that an omnipotent being is able to bring about a state of affairs that it is logically impossible for an omnipotent being to bring about and if any definition of omnipotence is adequate then it does not entail that claim.

Third, it seems reasonable to require of any adequate definition of omnipotence that it be logically compatible with the claims essential to traditional Judaeo-Christian theism concerning the other divine attributes. No definition of omnipotence is compatible with traditional theism which entails that if God is omnipotent then He is not omniscient, not omnipresent, and not all-loving; and no definition of omnipotence which is incompatible with traditional theism in this way is adequate for resolving issues in philosophical theology. Such definitions may indeed provoke philosophical debate, but such debates would be unrelated to the question of the omnipotence of God since these kinds of definitions would entail that the being in question is not the God of traditional theism. So, any definition of omnipotence is inadequate and must be rejected if it entails the claim that if God is omnipotent then He is not omniscient, not omnipresent, and not all-loving; and if any definition of omnipotence is adequate then it does not entail that claim.