

If you were involved in an abortion, create a ceremony for making amends to the spirit of your lost child.

*

Step 8 - Made a list of persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

The list in a sense was already part written, because those persons were on my resentment list and my guilt list from step 4.

So I wrote down a list of all, not just the ones who I thought it would be easy to approach, but all. To the best of my ability I wrote my list and I also wrote why I should make amends to them. With the exception of sexual abuse, every person that I resented, every person who I had harmed, I had done myself in one way or another. I have never sexually abused anyone. It was strange. The man who raped me when I was a boy kept coming into my mind. I realized that if I wanted people to forgive me, then I had to forgive!. I don't know where that man is or whether he is still alive, but I forgive him. What did Jesus say?, "Let he who has not sinned, cast the first stone", not "Let he who has not committed the same sin as him, cast the first stone".

A sin is a sin. I am no better than anyone else, forgiveness sets people free, arrogance and a sense of being cruelly treated cause pain, friction, etc!.

Well, my list was long, I went back to Dave and we talked it through, who I should physically approach, who I should write to, and those who I would be willing to make amends to. Willing, well I was involved in serious crime, if I went to these institutes I would end up in prison!. So, I became willing.

The people I had inflicted my will, my violence, my arrogance, my selfishness my jealousy, my envy, my lust, my greed, my dishonesty, my pride, my self pity etc.

I had beaten a man up and this tortured me because he was not the usual gangster type character that I associated with!. He got on the wrong side of me over a petty argument and I went berserk and became violent, which led to him being hospitalized! I would, when driving around Liverpool, avoid where he lived because I did not want to see him, because of the guilt it would trigger if I saw him!.

I could see the value of this step in short, say your sorry, ask for forgiveness and try not to do it again, and live a blameless life!.

It would be a waste of time making amends and then going out and doing the same things that lead to friction, resentment or violence.

So again, I set about learning to practice opposites. The road to freedom where I could look the world in the eye, knowing I had tried my best to clear the wreckage of the past.

In doing that, it makes the character stronger. It is not a weak thing to see that you are the problem, but it is a great strength. In reality, I can really only change myself. To know you are trying your best to bring about peace.

When I finished my list, I wrote the plan of action, who I would approach and when. I had stolen, so I paid money to charities to help drill water wells in India. I also sponsored 2 children in the third world by paying a monthly sum, so they could be helped in various ways.

Sure, I was nervous about approaching people, but I did it. I was never once made to feel guilty by anyone I made amends to! .

The other side is that it gives people faith knowing people do care. I would ask you to think about that step if you want people to forgive you for the way you have treated them. Then you have to forgive people for the way they have treated you!.

I did not know I had defects of character, I only found out after doing my inventory. Now, if people are not on a 12 step programme how are they ever going to change, so you have to understand that you have changed but don't expect everyone to start thinking and reacting the way you do now, now that you are on a spiritual path.

Step 9 - Made direct amends to such people except when to do so would injure others.

Made direct amends. My sponsor said that could be a letter, a phone call or "popping around" to see them. Some letters went out. Some phone calls were made, but most of my amends were made at a personal level.

People I now sponsor. I tell them not to confess to the loved one about affairs!. As that could really hurt our loved ones. So the key there is willing. In short that means that if I could go back in time and change what had happened I would, I became willing.

I tell them not to put their jobs in danger by telling the boss they have been stealing!. It would not help if you told your friend that you had an affair with his wife that would drag her into your guilt.

So in some cases, just become willing. Why confess to something that could get you put in jail!. You can do more good passing on the 12 steps, than being stuck behind prison bars. Don't let your amends be at the cost of other people's security, dignity and well being. As I wrote in the latter part of step 8, it was a healing experience for me and the people I made amends to!. In short, say your sorry when and if you can. If you can't go to someone just become willing. A change of attitude, a change of heart, that is what it is about!

*

Step 8 - I make a list of persons that I have harmed and become willing to make amends to them all

How have you hurt yourself by practicing your addiction?

What important relationships did you destroy or damage because of your addictive behaviors?

How much time and energy have you lost from your addictive behaviors? What do you think you would have done or become had it not been for your addictive behaviors?

Make a list of all those that you have possibly harmed by your addictive behaviors. List the effect on them as individuals and on your relationship.

Take the list of people that you have harmed and make a list of possible amends for each one of them.

From the list of possible amends, choose the ones that seem most appropriate, and mark them according to level of difficulty.

What consequences do you fear in making amends? What is the worst thing that can happen? What is the best thing that can happen? What is likely to happen?

Do you feel angry or resentful towards any people on your amends list? If so, write them a letter of anger, but don't send it to them. Describe here any other ways that you have used to get rid of the anger and resentment towards anyone on your list.

Describe any dreams that relate to making amends to others.

Step 9 - I make direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others

What amends do you think that you have already made? These can include apologies already made, helpful tasks for those that you have hurt, changed attitudes and so forth.

From your list of amends, if there are apologies that you need to make, write them down here first.

Read your apologies to a friend or a sponsor and ask them if it sounds sincere or if it sounds defensive or like an attack on the other person. Record here what response they have about them.

Role play with your sponsor or friends for anything that you are going to say when making amends. Record here how these practice sessions went and what you learned.

After you have had your first encounter with making amends, record what happened here. How did you feel about it? How did the other person respond? What have you learned from this? What would you do differently next time?

After you have done your first several encounters for making amends (for example, after 5 times of making amends), record your overall impressions here. Is there anything common? Has anything surprised you?

Has anything disappointed you? How do you feel about the process and how has it affected you?

What amends do you have the most difficulty making? What do you need to do to be able to make these amends?

How has making amends affected your relationship with others?

How are you dealing with the feedback from others after making amends? How are you feeling? How are you dealing with the desire to defend yourself?

Write down any other amends that you found that you needed to make after starting the process of making amends.

How can you celebrate or honor the completion of your making amends (step 9)?

Have you had any dreams about making amends? If so, describe them in detail.

Describe any celebrations or activities that you have done to honor the completion of your making amends.

*

Step 8 Reflection Questions

After prayerful consideration, write out the answers to the following questions:

- 1) Have I made a list of all the people and institutions I have harmed? Is it complete?
- 2) If I haven't made the list, who and what in my life have been the most harmed (physically, financially, emotionally, intellectually, or spiritually) by my behavior or by my not taking action?
- 3) Am I clear on the harm and the necessary amend?

- 4) Am I willing to make the appropriate amends?
- 5) Have I discussed these harms and intended actions with my Step Guide/Sponsor?

Step 9 Reflection Questions

After prayerful consideration, write out the answers to the following questions:

- 1) Have I completed all the amends on my list?
- 2) If I do not have this list, am I willing to make restitution for the harm(s) identified in Step Eight's reflection questions? What do I need to do?
- 3) If I have not completed all my amends, am I REALLY willing to finish this work? If not, what is stopping me?

What is the single most troublesome relationship in my life? What am I doing, or not doing, to resolve it?

*

STEP 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

When I came into the program, I believed there were a lot more people who hurt me than I hurt. When I made my list and thought about it I realized I played a significant role in the broken relationships that ensued.

QUESTIONS

1. Did I ever make a list of persons I have harmed by my addiction?
2. Do I have relationships that need healing?
3. Which relationships bother me the most?
4. Are there any persons I am not at peace with?
5. What happened between me and these persons?
6. What frightens me about making amends?
7. What do I believe I need to do to repair the damage?
8. Do I believe it is helpful to make a second list of persons who hurt me?
9. Do I find it helpful to make a third list and put my name on it?
10. Am I willing and able to forgive myself and the persons who hurt me, to make amends to myself and all those I have hurt?
11. Can I pray for discernment and wisdom before making these 3 lists and before receiving the willingness to make amends to all these persons who were harmed?

STEP 9

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

This step really scares me. I realized when I admitted my wrongs I was healing myself. Thank God for putting the words in my mouth. I realized: Hurt people hurt other people. To forgive is divine.

QUESTIONS

1. Did I ever make amends to other persons? How did I feel?
2. Do I find it necessary to develop a plan for when and how I will make amends to the persons on my list?
3. Would I feel better if I reviewed this plan with my sponsor?
4. Which relationship is bothering me the most at this moment?
What do I think I would say to that person about my behaviors, my feelings if I were free to do so?
5. What is the biggest guilt I have right now?
What do I believe I have to do to rid myself of that guilt?
6. Is it imperative to ask my Higher Power for wisdom and to seek guidance from my sponsor to avoid injuring the people I plan on making amends to or other innocent persons.

7. When an amend is made it might be helpful to write a self-forgiving note which may help us let go of guilt. It may read: "I accept and love myself. I have taken the responsibility for my behavior with _____, and I am now free to let the past go.
8. When we want to forgive others, we might write: "I have dealt with my feelings toward _____, and I have forgiven him or her. I have let go of my feelings toward that person and I allow peace and love to settle in us."

*

Step 9 Prayer - Help me to find the people I've harmed and to repair the damage I've done.

*

It's a lot easier to make the scariest amends that you have, than to live the rest of your life in active alcoholism.

*

I did more damage accidentally with this sharp tongue of mine than I ever did with my hands.

*

When you are willing to make a specific amend, pray to see if this is the right time. Then when you get together with the person you need to "set right the wrong" with, tell them: 1 - why you are doing this, 2 - what you did or did not do, 3 - ask if you harmed them in a way that you are not aware of, 4 - ask them if they need to tell you how what you did effected them, and 5 - ask what you can do to make it right (if they request something that is not "reasonable", talk it over with your sponsor/support group to see what they think).

*

One of the key words in the Eighth Step is the word "all" (which is mentioned twice!). I am not free to select a few names for the list and to disregard others. It is a list of all persons I have harmed. I can see immediately that this Step entails forgiveness because if I'm not willing to forgive someone, there is little chance I will place his name on the list. Before I placed the first name on my list, I said a little prayer: "I forgive anyone and everyone who has ever harmed me at any time and under any circumstances." It is well for me to contemplate a small, but very significant, two-letter word every time the Lord's Prayer is said. The word is "as". I ask, "Forgive us our trespasses, AS we forgive those who trespass against us." In this case, "as" means, "in the same manner." I am asking to be forgiven in the same manner that I forgive others. As I say this portion of the prayer, if I am harboring hatred or resentment, I am inviting more resentment, when I should be calling on the spirit of forgiveness.

*

Until I clean up my past I have no future. The real fault is to have faults and not to amend them.

*

Amends to AA (AA Grapevine, August 1993)

I recently completed the Eight Step and have decided that my first amends should be to Alcoholics Anonymous itself, which I believe I have harmed to some extent by violating its singleness of purpose.

I used to identify myself as an alcoholic and an addict. I do not anymore because I now believe other addictions are irrelevant at AA meetings. But, aside from that, I also used to insist on talking about my other addictions beyond what was necessary to relate them to alcohol. I justified this by saying that alcohol was just another drug and so it was unfair to expect me not to talk about all my other addictions. And refused to attend any other fellowship because I claimed to prefer the wisdom and sobriety in AA.

I realize now how rude and self-centered this position was. It is not a question of what is fair or whether alcohol is just another drug. The Traditions and primary purpose of AA are what they are whether I agree with them or not.

In the past, when I was active, I often had dinner at the homes of people who did not use drugs, but who did drink. I never considered insisting that I had the right to smoke a joint at their dinner table because they were drinking wine. And imagine if I had, and then added insult to injury by saying: "And not only do I have a right to use any drug I want to around here if you're going to drink, but I'm going to keep coming back and I'm going to keep using any drug I want to in your home because I like the food you serve and your company better than the food and company I find in the homes of my drug addict friends. And I have a right to do this because all drugs are the same and I don't care what the rules or customs of your home are."

Such a gross abuse of hospitality sounds preposterous, but that is essentially what I was doing by insisting that I had a right to violate AA's singleness of purpose. I was abusing the hospitality of this Fellowship.

This is not an apology. I was too sick to realize how selfishly I was acting, and a mere apology is not necessarily an amends. I am hoping to amend the harm I did by stating clearly what I did, for the benefit of others, and, further, by not doing it again.

*

We drank to get the results we now get from not drinking and working Steps 1 - 9:

We drank: to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

By not drinking & working Steps 1 - 9: we know a new freedom and a new happiness.

We drank: so as not to regret the past and to shut the door on it.

By not drinking & working Steps 1 - 9: we do not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

We drank: to comprehend the word serenity and to know peace.

By not drinking & working Steps 1 - 9: we comprehend the word serenity and we know peace.

We drank: to feel that no matter how far down the scale we have gone, we could see how our experience could benefit others.

By not drinking & working Steps 1 - 9: we knew that no matter how far down the scale we have gone, we see how our experience can benefit others.

We drank: so the feeling of uselessness and self-pity would disappear.

By not drinking & working Steps 1 - 9: the feeling of uselessness and self-pity slip away.

We drank: to lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

By not drinking & working Steps 1 - 9: we lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

We drank: to lose the feeling of self-seeking.

By not drinking & working Steps 1 - 9: we lose the feeling of self-seeking.

We drank: to change our whole attitude and outlook upon life.

By not drinking & working Steps 1 - 9: our whole attitude and outlook upon life changes.

We drank: to lose the fear of people and of economic insecurity.

By not drinking & working Steps 1 - 9: we lose the fear of people and of economic insecurity.

We drank: to figure out how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

By not drinking & working Steps 1 - 9: we intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

We drank: because alcohol did for us what we can not do for ourselves.

By not drinking & working Steps 1 - 9: we realize that God is doing for us what we can not do for ourselves.

*