

STEPS EIGHT & NINE

(Page numbers are from the Big Book unless otherwise noted.)

A Pre-Eighth Step Prayer: “God, Please remove my fears and show me Your truth. Show me ALL the harms I have caused with my behavior. Lord, make me willing to make amends to one and all. Amen.”(76:3)

An Eighth Step Meditation:

“God, does my lack of willingness to make amends have anything to do with whether I will drink again or not?”

Step eight (76:3)

Eighth Step Instructions:

1. [12&12 (77:1)] “Steps Eight and Nine are concerned with personal relations. First, we take a look backward and try to discover where we have been at fault (4th Step), next we make a vigorous attempt to repair the damage we have done (Steps 8 &9); and third, having thus cleaned away the debris of the past, we consider how, with our newfound knowledge of ourselves, we may develop the best possible relations with every human being we know (Steps 10, 11, &12). This is a very large order. It is a task which we may perform with increasing skill, but never really finish.”
2. **(76:3) We have a list of all persons we have harmed.**
3. [12&12 (80:2)] “Harm...the result of instincts in collision, which cause physical, mental, emotional, or Spiritual damage to people.” (Don’t forget about financial as well as...our tempers are constantly bad, we arouse anger, we lie or cheat, we deprive others of their worldly goods, emotional security and peace of mind, our sex conduct is selfish, we excite jealousy, misery and a strong desire to retaliate, we are miserly, irresponsible, callous, or cold. We are irritable, critical, impatient and humorless. We lavish attention or neglect others. We dominate the whole family, we wallow in depression, self-pity oozing from every pore and inflict that upon those about us.)
4. **(76:3) We are willing to make amends.**
5. **(76:3) We made it [the harms list] when we took inventory.**
6. [12&12 (77:2)] “Every A.A. has found that he can make little headway in this new adventure of living until he first backtracks and really makes an accurate and unsparing survey of the human wreckage he has left in his wake. To a degree, he has already done this when taking moral inventory, but now the time has come when he ought to redouble his efforts to see how many people he has hurt, and in what ways.”
7. **(76:3) We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal.**
8. [12&12 (78:1)] “The moment we ponder a twisted or broken relationship with another person, our emotions go on the defensive...Let’s remember that alcoholics are not the only ones bedeviled by sick emotions. Moreover, it is usually a fact that our behavior when drinking has aggravated the defects of others...In many instances we are really dealing with fellow sufferers, people whose woes we have increased. If now we are about to ask forgiveness for ourselves, why shouldn’t we start out by forgiving them, one and all?”
9. [12&12 (81:2)] “...year by year we walk back through our lives as far as memory will reach, we shall be bound to construct a long list of people who have, to some extent or other, been affected. We should, of course, ponder and weigh each instance carefully. We shall want to hold ourselves to the course of admitting the things we have done, meanwhile forgiving the wrongs done us, real or fancied. We should avoid extreme judgments, both of ourselves and of others involved. We must not exaggerate our defects or theirs. A quiet, objective view will be our steadfast aim...It is the beginning of the end of isolation from our fellows and from God.”

Step eight comes from our fourth step inventory. The list is compiled during the 4th Step. During the 5th Step, with our sponsors, our list is expanded, reviewed and labeled (+) for willing to make the amend or (-) for unwilling to make the amend. Finally, each of our eighth step cards are numbered within each category (+ or -). The numbering (top right corner) is done from easiest to hardest.

(THE FRONT OF THE 3x5 CARD IS FOR YOU)	
John Smith - 125 South St. - Madison, NJ 07940 (973) 555-5555	(+)(13)
<p>Don't delay. Ask God for Strength & Direction to do the right thing. Before implicating others who were involved, we secure their consent. Tell Them: I will not get over drinking until I have done my utmost to straighten out the past. If an enemy – go with a helpful & forgiving spirit, confessing my former ill feeling and expressing my regret. DON'T: emphasize spirituality unless asked; if so - use tact and common sense. DON'T tell them what to do; only MY faults are to be discussed. DON'T criticize or argue. Be calm, frank, & open. Make a demonstration of good will. Be sensible, tactful, considerate, & humble without being servile or scraping. Don't dodge creditors. If I owe money, I will make the best deal I can & then follow through with it.</p>	
(THE BACK OF THE 3x5 CARD IS FOR THEM)	
<p>Remember: you have decided to go to <u>any lengths</u> to find a Spiritual Experience. I know I have caused you this harm: I beat you up, stole your money, slept with your wife Don't Shrink, as God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone: Q: "Are there any more harms I have caused you, which I may not know about?" Shut up and listen! Q: "Do you need to tell me how any of this hurt you?" Shut up and listen! Q: "Is there anything I can do to make right or correct this wrong?" Write it down!</p>	
<p>A:</p>	

Step Nine (76:4 – 83:3)

The 9th Step Instructions:

1. [12&12 (83:1)] "Good judgment, a careful sense of timing, courage, and prudence - these are the qualities we shall need when we take Step Nine. After we have made a list of people we have harmed, have reflected carefully upon each instance, and have tried to possess ourselves of the right attitude in which to proceed, we will see that the making of direct amends divides those we should approach into several classes...those who ought to be dealt with just as soon as we become reasonably confident that we can maintain sobriety...those to whom we can make only partial restitution, lest complete disclosures do them or others more harm than good...cases where action ought to be deferred...(some) we shall never be able to make direct personal contact at all."
2. (76:4) **Do not emphasize the Spiritual feature on the first approach.**
3. (77:0) **fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.**
4. (77:0) **Make a demonstration of good will.**
5. (77:1) **Don't shy away from the subject of God.**
6. (77:1) **Be willing to announce our convictions with tact and common sense.**

7. [12&12 (85:2)] “The temptation to skip the more humiliating and dreaded meetings that still remain may be great. We will often manufacture plausible excuses for dodging these issues entirely. Or we may just procrastinate, telling ourselves the time is not yet, when in reality we have already passed up many a fine chance to right a serious wrong. Let’s not talk prudence while practicing evasion.”
8. (77:1) **If an enemy, go to him in a helpful and forgiving Spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.**
9. (77:2) **Never criticize or argue. Simply tell him we will never get over our drinking until we have done our utmost to straighten out the past.**
10. (78:0) **Never try telling him what he should do.**
11. (78:0) **His faults are not to be discussed. We stick ours harm.**
12. (78:0) **Our manner should be calm, frank and open.**
13. [12&12 (85:3)] “As soon as we begin to feel confident in our new way of life and have begun, by our behavior and example, to convince those about us that we are indeed changing for the better, it is usually safe to talk in complete frankness with those who have been seriously affected, even those who may be only a little or not at all aware of what we have done to them. The only exceptions we will make will be cases where our disclosure would cause actual harm... We needn’t wallow in excessive remorse before those we have harmed, but amends at this level should always be forthright and generous.”
14. (78:2) **Don’t dodge your creditors. Tell them what you are trying to do and make no bones about your drinking.**
15. (78:2) **Arrange the best deal you can and let them know you are sorry.**
16. (78:2) **We must lose our fear of our creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink if we are afraid to face them.**
17. (79:1) **Remind yourself that you have decided to go to any lengths to find a Spiritual Experience.**
18. (79:1) **Ask God for the Strength and Direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. We are willing. We have to be.**
19. (79:1) **We must not shrink at anything.**
20. [12&12 (87:0)] “...all of them (amends) do require a complete willingness to make amends as fast and as far as may be possible in a given set of conditions. Above all, we should try to be absolutely sure that we are not delaying because we are afraid. For the readiness to take the full consequences of our past acts, and to take responsibility for the well-being of others at the same time, is the very spirit of Step Nine.”
21. (79:2) **If other people are involved, we are not to be a hasty or foolish martyr who would sacrifice others to save himself from the alcoholic pit.**
22. [12&12 (86:1)] “There can be only one consideration which should qualify our desire for a complete disclosure of the damage we have done. That will arise in the occasional situation where to make a full revelation would seriously harm the one to whom we are making amends. Or - quite as important - other people... And even in those cases where such a matter must be discussed, let’s try to avoid harming third parties, whoever they may be.”
23. (80:1) **Before taking drastic action which might implicate other people, we secure their consent.**
24. (80:1) **If we have permission, consulted others [sponsor], asked God to help and a drastic step is indicated, We must not shrink.**
25. (83:3) **Some people can’t be seen [deceased included] – We send them an honest letter.**
26. (83:3) **We don’t delay if it can be avoided.**
27. (83:3) **Be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping. As God’s people we stand on our feet; we don’t crawl before anyone.**

For the Spouse and Family:

1. [12&12 (83:3)] “The moment we tell our families that we are really going to try the program, the process has begun...At this sitting, it is necessary only that we make a general admission of our defects...Much the same approach will apply at the office or factory...we may not want to say anything for several weeks, or longer.

First we will wish to be reasonably certain that we are on the A.A. beam. Then we are ready to go to these people, to tell them what A.A. is, and what we are trying to do. Against this background we can freely talk about the damage we have done and make our apologies. We can pay, or promise to pay, whatever obligations, financial or otherwise, we owe.”

2. (81:1) **[For spouses] Undoubtedly, we should admit our fault**

3. (82:1) **Each [spouse] should pray, having the other one’s happiness uppermost in mind. And it may be decided that the way of good sense and loving kindness is to let by-gones be by-gones.**

4. (82:2) **There is plenty we should do at home...But, we are yet a long way from making good...We feel a man unthinking when he says that sobriety is enough.**

5. (83:1) **We must take the lead...So we clean house with the family...a remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won’t fill the bill at all. Sit down with the family and frankly analyze the past being very careful not to criticize them.**

6. (83:1) **Ask each morning in meditation that God show us The Way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.**

7. (83:2) **We have to Live the Spiritual Life.**

8. (83:2) **Don’t talk incessantly to your family about Spiritual matters. Use your Spiritual behavior to urge your family to live on a Spiritual basis. [Live by example, walk the walk.]**

9. (98:3) **“When your prospect has made such reparations as he can to his family, and has thoroughly explained to them the new principles by which he is living [not forcing them on the family], he should proceed to put those principles into action at home.**

10. (99:1) **“...the alcoholic continues to demonstrate that he can be sober, considerate, and helpful, regardless of what anyone says or does.**

11. (99:1) **“ We must try to repair the damage immediately lest we pay the penalty by a spree.”**

12. (99:3) **“Let no alcoholic say he cannot recover unless he has his family back. This just isn’t so.**

13. (99:3) **“Remind the prospect that his recovery is not dependant upon people [including you!]. It is dependant upon his relationship with God.**

14. (111:1) **“The First Principle is that you should never be angry.**

15. (116:3) **“Now we try to put spiritual principles to work in every department of our lives. When we do that, we find it solves our problems too; the ensuing lack of fear, worry and hurt feelings is a wonderful thing.**

16. (118:1) **“During heated discussion, no matter what the subject, it should be the privilege of either to smile and say, ‘this is getting serious. I’m sorry I got disturbed. Let’s talk about it later.’”**

17. (118:1) **We should be “trying to live on a spiritual basis, he will be doing everything in his power to avoid disagreement or contention.”**

18. (118:2) **You owe “more than sobriety...Patience, tolerance, understanding and love are the watchwords.”**

19. (118:2) **“Live and let live is the rule.”**

20. (118:2) **“If you both show a willingness to remedy your own defects, there will be little need to criticize each other.”**

21. (119:0) “When resentful thoughts come, try to pause and count your blessings. After all, your family is reunited, alcohol is no longer a problem. [Sounds like a gratitude list to me!]
22. (119:0) You are working toward an undreamed of future.
23. (122:1) “All members of the family should meet upon the common ground of tolerance, understanding and love. This involves a process of deflation.”
24. (123:2) “It will take time to clear away the wreck. Though old buildings will eventually be replaced by finer ones, the new structures will take years to complete.”
25. (124:1) “We grow by our willingness to face and rectify errors convert them into assets. The alcoholic’s past thus becomes the principle asset of the family and frequently it is the only one!”
26. (124:3) don’t “dig up past misdeeds so they become a blight, a veritable plague.
27. (124:2) “...Each family which has been relieved owes something to those who have not, and when the occasion requires, each member of it should be only too willing to bring out their former mistakes, no matter how grievous, out of their hiding places.”
28. (124:2) “Cling to the thought that, in God’s hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have – the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert misery and death for them.”
29. (125:0) “Unless some good and useful purpose is to be served, past occurrences should not be discussed (after analyzing them & making amends).
30. (125:2) “We alcoholics are sensitive people. It takes some of us a long time to outgrow that serious handicap.”
31. (125:2) “Another principle we observe carefully is that we do not relate intimate experiences of another person unless we are sure he would approve.”
32. (125:1) “We do talk about each other a great deal, but we almost invariably temper such talk by a spirit of love and tolerance.”
33. (125:3) “Many alcoholics are enthusiasts. They run to extremes...(126:1) We think it dangerous if he rushes headlong at his economic problem. The family will be affected...”
34. (127:2) “Since the home has suffered more than anything else, it is well that a man exert himself there. He is not likely to get far in any direction if he fails to show unselfishness and love under his own roof.”
35. (127:1) The alcoholic “ought to remember that he is mainly to blame for what befell his home. He can scarcely square the account in his lifetime. But he must see the danger of over-concentration on financial success...For us, material well-being always followed Spiritual progress; it never preceded.”
36. (127:3) “As each member of a resentful family begins to see his shortcomings and admits them to the others, he lays a basis for helpful discussion.”
37. (127:3) “...Family talks will be constructive if they can be carried out without heated argument, self-pity, self-justification or resentful criticism.”
38. (128:0) “Giving rather than getting.” Is the guiding principle for the family.
39. (129:1) “...a Spiritual life which does not include his family obligations may not be so perfect after all.”
40. (129:3) “...let him go as far as he likes in helping other alcoholics...(130:0) we think dad will be on a firmer foundation than the man who is placing business or professional success ahead of Spiritual development.”
41. (131:2) “Father will necessarily spend much time with other alcoholics, but this activity should be balanced.”
42. (130:1) “We have found nothing incompatible between a Powerful Spiritual Experience and a life of sane and happy usefulness.”

43. (133:0) "Avoid then, the deliberate manufacture of misery, but if trouble comes, cheerfully capitalize it as an opportunity to demonstrate His omnipotence."
44. (133:1) "...a Spiritual mode of living is a most powerful health restorative...(133:2) But this does not mean that we disregard human health measures.
45. (135:1) "Whether the family goes on a Spiritual basis or not, the alcoholic has to if he would recover."
46. (135:1) "The others must be convinced of his new status beyond the shadow of a doubt. Seeing is believing to most families who have lived with a drinker."
47. (134:3) "In time they [the family] will see he is a new man...when this happens, they can be invited to join in morning meditation and they can take part in the daily discussion without rancor or bias."
48. (135:4) We have three little mottoes which are apropos. Here they are:
- First Things First
Live and Let Live
Easy Does It.**

Armed with our cards, we start making appointments and we make our amends. Our experience has proven:

- A. The general rule is **"always make amends face to face if at all possible"**.
- B. Before making any amend, **always run the amend past a sponsor**. This keeps you from having ulterior motives and ensures you will not inadvertently hurt anyone with the amend.
- C. **Pray** for strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be.
- D. (76:3) **We go out to our fellows.**
- E. (76:3) **Repair the damage done in the past.**
- F. (76:3) **We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves.**
- G. (76:3) **If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes. Remember it was agreed at the beginning we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol.**

A Ninth Step Prayer:

"God, with regard to this amend, please remove my fear and give me the strength, courage and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. Amen"(79:1)

A Ninth Step Meditation:

"Dear God, please show me if delay in making all my amends has anything to do with whether I drink again or not..."

With our family we have ongoing or living amends that require daily attention and prayer.

A Ninth Step prayer for the Spouse:

"God, please show me how to make amends to my spouse. Help me to keep my spouse's happiness uppermost in my mind as I try, with Your Grace, to make this relationship right. Amen" (82:1)

A Ninth Step Prayer for the Family:

"God, please show me how to find patience, tolerance, kindness and love in my heart, my mind and my soul. Lord, show me how to demonstrate these principles to my family and all those about me. Amen." (83:1)

Compiled by Dave F.