



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

Step 8

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The One Thing I Need To Know About This Step: An apology is NOT the same thing as an amends

Spiritual Principle of the Step:
LOVE

Reading Assignment:
BB: Pgs. 76-84 / 12&12: Pgs. 77-82

“But this is not an end in itself. Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.” (Big Book, Page 77, Into Action)

STEP SUMMARY

An apology is quite different from an amends. One dictionary defines an apology as: “an admission of error or discourtesy accompanied by an expression of regret,” and it defines amends as: “reparation or compensation for a loss, damage, or injury of any kind.” I offer you an apology when I accidentally step on your toe. I offer you an amends when I have caused you hurt or harm in some way. (More on this will be discussed in Step 9)

Many of us were taught by our sponsors that if we wanted to learn how to be in healthy relationships with the world around us, we could take a deeper look at the Traditions. Woven throughout each of the Traditions are wonderful suggestions on how we can better show up to those relationships. Interestingly enough, Steps 8 & 9 do that as well. On page 77 of the 12 & 12 it states, “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; next we make a vigorous attempt to repair the damage we have done; 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.”

Important Reminder: As we continue this journey of being of maximum usefulness, when preparing to make our amends it is helpful to remember to not minimize our faults and failures by focusing on the faults of others, and to realize that we hurt others as well as ourselves with our drinking. In looking beyond our obvious defects and in doing a thorough examination of our flaws, we must avoid judgments of others. It's OUR inventory that uncovered harm done – not theirs.

Many members of A.A. think that creating a list of those we have harmed is ONLY about cleaning up the wreckage of our past with those people, places or things. While that is certainly a huge part of it, another reason Step 8 is important is because it's about continuing the process we have already started back in Step 3 of being a maximum usefulness to God and his kids. Is it possible that Steps 8 & 9 are not about getting back in the good graces of those we've harmed, but about being willing to do the footwork and, once again, leave the results up to God? Yes, it's entirely possible. Love of ourselves, love of others and love of God is the foundation to this Step.

Important Side Note: Remember, this Step is ONLY about making the list. No action other than writing the list happens in this Step (EXCEPT OF COURSE having the the willingness to act upon the list as you move into Step 9), so there is no need to fear (as so many of us do when we start thinking about having to make amends). It's JUST a list my friend!

MYTHS ABOUT THIS STEP

Your drinking hasn't harmed anyone but yourself.

People often think that if the damage isn't extreme and noticeable, then there isn't anything beneath the surface. This is a dangerous misconception and something AA calls “purposeful forgetting.” We can't get the most out of the 12 Steps if we aren't willing to be vulnerable and rigorously honest—even if what we discover about ourselves and others is painful to accept.

[Download the 8th Step Worksheet on the Website](#)

INVENTORY

Taking a step displays a willingness to write inventory and allow it to surrender something within us. Write inventory on your most serious shortcomings around the practical application of this step in your life today (“How am I applying the spiritual principle found in this Step to every moment of my life?”).

In My Personal Relationships:

List at least three (3) examples of our “willingness” (not including actual amends on your 8th Step list) to enhance the love and service found within and improve our personal relationships.

At Work:

List at least three (3) examples of our “willingness” (not including actual amends on your 8th Step list) to enhance the love and service found within and improve our work relationships.

With God and In A.A.:

List at least three (3) examples of our “willingness” (not including actual amends on your 8th Step list) to enhance the love and service found within and improve our relationship with God and A.A.



What Can I Surrender in this Step?

Fear of telling the truth, and...
My need to point out “their” part, and...
Fear of the outcome.

To see the **Checklist** for this Step, visit takethe12.org