

**Step 8 “Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.”**

**Principle:** discipline and action [Compassion]

**Process:** make a list of people we have harmed

**Problem:** intolerance, defensiveness and denial

**Practice:** restitution – making right our wrongs

**Proposal:** Am I willing to be responsible and accountable for my actions?

**Promise:** my whole attitude and outlook on life will change.

**Quote :** We have a list of all persons we have harmed [Step 4] and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory. We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal.” (76: 3)

**WHO DO I MAKE AMENDS TO?**

What did I do? Do I feel guilt for my behavior towards them?

If I saw them today, would I cross the street to avoid them? Did I behave in a way I would not behave today?

How did it harm them?

What spiritual principle did I violate?

What should I have done instead?

**WHY make amends?**

In a general sense, just like all the other steps, we make amends because we want to feel better. But steps 8 and 9 are particularly important, as they are the final triggers of the spiritual awakening promised by the steps. The vigor with which you approach and work these steps will determine the quality of that awakening.

We have found when we begin the restitution process in conjunction with praying for the willingness to commence with the seemingly more difficult reparations, we start to cross off names we never thought we'd be willing to face. We become willing when we commence to get results from making the easier amends.

**HOW to make amends:** The basic formula for making amends is: This is what I did..... I know it was wrong..... I am sorry.

We don't make excuses or justify our behavior. We don't mention the recipient's behavior, we don't unburden ourselves at their expense; we don't tell them how they felt about our behavior. We stick to our own actions.

**How to apologize**

Express remorse  
Make amends  
Admit responsibility  
Resolve to avoid the behavior

**What does not belong on Step Eight:**

complex analyses of motivation; how we felt; rationales, excuses, and rationalizations; back-story; other people's conduct; what we were thinking at the time.

**Step 8**

**Prayer:** God, I ask Your help in making my list of all those I have harmed. I will take responsibility for my actions, and begin to clear my past mistakes. Grant me the willingness to begin my restitution. Amen

**Prayer:** God, please remove my Fears and show me Your truth. Show me all the harms I have caused with my behavior and help me to be willing to make amends to one and all. Help me to be willing to go to any lengths for victory over alcohol (76:3)

**Prayer:** God help me to become willing to sweep away the debris of self will and self-reliant living. Thy will be done for this person as well as for me.

AMEN

**Prayer** Higher Power, I ask Your help in making my list of all those I have harmed. I will take responsibility for my mistakes & Be forgiving to others as You are forgiving to me. Grant me the willingness to begin my restitution. This I pray.

**WHAT IS A HARM?**

Harm can be caused only where we have diverted from the path of right action; To cause others to suffer physical injury, emotional pain, financial loss, or other damage through actions or neglect on our part.

Harm is when, without justification or overriding cause, I give rise to:

Physical suffering

Emotional suffering

Loss of money

Loss of or damage to property

Inconvenience or other 'stealing' of time

OR where I get in the way of another's spiritual growth.

**For example:**

- Preventing a crisis when it is in the natural course of things (for instance, letting unacceptable behavior persist instead of confronting it)
- Doing something for someone they should do for themselves (for instance, fostering dependency)
- Shielding someone from the consequences of their actions (for instance, preventing someone from hitting a rock bottom).

**5 CATEGORIES OR RESULTS:**

1. The act constituted a definite harm for which an amend is necessary. Action: formal amend.
2. No real harm was done, but an apology is required as a courtesy. Action: low-key apology.
3. The act was an error which merely needs correcting in my future behavior. Action: corrective measure.
4. The act was part of the normal rough and tumble of life. Action: none.
5. The act was entirely harmless. Action: none.

### The One Minute Apology

- What mistakes did I make?
- Did I dismiss another person, their wishes, feelings, or ideas?
- Did I take credit when it was not due?
- Why did I do this?
- Was it an impulsive, thoughtless act?
- Was it calculated?
- Was it a result of my fear, anger, or frustration?
- What was my motivation?
- How long have I let this go on? Is this the first or repeated time? Is this behavior becoming a pattern in my life?
- What is the truth I am not dealing with?
- Am I better than this behavior? ----- A business approach

### HOW DO YOU MAKE AMENDS?

When making amends, a well thought out strategy is crucial. So you will need to prepare your approach step-by-step in the following way:

**Step One:** Evaluate the extent of your wrongdoings. In order to obtain a proper perspective of your mistakes, you will need to step out of your comfort zone and try to see your actions from the angle of the person affected. Developing empathy will help you to understand how you have wronged that person, why it hurt them, and how you might be able to make it better.

**Step Two:** Give them a carefully worded apology. In order for your apology to work, it will need to be sincere and relate directly to the basis of the matter. You must address the mistake itself to show the person that you understand what you did was wrong.

You must also address how it affected the person, and emphasize that you do understand why they are upset with you. Be sure to express how much you value your relationship with them, and tell them you do not want to lose it. Hold yourself accountable, and do not allow yourself to deflect the blame or make excuses for your actions.

**Step three:** Suggest ways to rebuild and repair your relationship. Damage control takes time, and trust has to be earned, but slowly the right actions and activities will help to restore their faith in you. Organizing quality time with this person is also a great way to show how much they mean to you.

**Step Four:** Avoid making the same mistakes over again. By re-examining your mistakes, you will be able to uncover the reasons why you made them – and that will help to keep you from repeating them. If you find that you are prone to making these mistakes when you are surrounded by certain people, consider changing the company you keep.

### An effective apology satisfies at least one of the following psychological needs of an offended person

- The restoration of dignity in the offended person.
- The affirmation that both parties have shared values and agree that the harm committed was wrong.
- Validation that the victim was not responsible for the offense.
- The assurance that the offended party is safe from a repeat offense.
- Reparative justice: the offended sees the offending party suffer some punishment.
- Reparation: the victim receives some form of compensation for the pain.
- A dialogue that allows the offended party to express feelings toward the offender and to grieve over losses.

### MAKING AMENDS AND THE 4 ABSOLUTES

#### Amends:

The antidote to harms is to make amends – change that part of ourselves that allowed us to hurt other people. We focus on changing how we behave in the here and now.

On page 69 of the AABB, the authors state:

“We must be willing to make amends where we have done harm, provided that we do not bring about still more harm in so doing.”

But “wrong” here does not have a moral overtone, but a selfish one. A “wrong” action or thought is an action where we were thinking entirely of ourselves. As addicts, we are extreme examples of “self-will run riot...and we must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us!” (pp. 62)

If I have an outstanding apology, it must be made as soon as practicable once the review has been completed.

#### 4 ABSOLUTES: GOD’S WILL VS. SELF-WILL:

To determine if we need to make an amends, we can test our actions based on the 4 Absolutes. The four absolutes provide a simple, straight forward way to evaluate whether our thoughts, words or actions are self-centered or God-centered. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? These shortcomings are based on self-will.

To test for God’s will, we ask the opposite: was I unselfish, honest, pure and loving?

Self-Will	God’s Will
Fear	Love
Anger	Purity (Forgiveness)
Selfishness	Unselfishness
Dishonesty	Honesty

For each person on our list that we harmed ask: “How can you make amends to this person?”

Before and after making amends, we need to make sure to review and discuss each specific amends and ensure that they are appropriate.

Step Nine is an ongoing process. Living in God’s will, cleaning up the wreckage of the past and helping others repays our debt will produce a spiritual transformation sufficient for recovery. But, the spiritual life is not a theory, WE HAVE TO LIVE IT. (pp. 83) To be vital, faith must be accompanied by self-sacrifice and unselfish, constructive action. (93)

### WHAT IF I AM UNWILLING TO MAKE AN AMENDS?

If I am still unwilling for any reason to make an amends, I pray and ask God for guidance.

With prayer and contemplation, I ask myself:

- Do I still hold resentment toward that person?
- Are my pride and/or fear blocking me from doing it?
- Could it harm another or open an old hurt for them?
- Could it cause problems with that person's current relations?

If the answer is not yet clear I seek guidance from my sponsor and spiritual mentors.

Silence, prayer, and patience are critical to make amends: I wait for an intuitive thought, insight and inspiration. In the stillness and the quiet, God will reveal what I need to do to take the next right step.

As it says in the AA BB: "Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. But we must go further and that means more action." (pp. 85) We must carry the vision of God's will into all our activities: "How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. (pp. 85)

#### Making Amends – How to Say I'm Sorry

In order to understand how to say I'm sorry and have it be an effective apology, we need to know what kind of statements to include when apologizing. How does one person make someone else understand that they truly are sorry?

This article will look at the "*Science*" or ingredient list that when combined produces the perfect apology.

A proper apology should always include the following:

- a **detailed account** of the situation
- **acknowledgement** of the hurt or damage done
- taking **responsibility** for the situation
- **recognition** of your role in the event
- a statement of **regret**
- asking for **forgiveness**
- a **promise** that it won't happen again
- a form of **restitution** whenever possible

### The tools of the programme that did resolve these problems were as follows:

- Recognising that others are unwell
- Recognising that that everyone is dealt some good cards and some bad cards
- Recognising that what is past is literally no longer there
- Recognising my own infinite worth as a human being and that this applies equally to others
- Recognising that inferring who I am from what happens to me is flawed thinking
- Dropping the whole value system underpinning my interpretation of and interaction with the world
- Forgiving
- Making amends
- Guarding my thoughts and preventing negativity from gaining a foothold
- Actively seeking and developing a relationship with God
- Seeking to implement that relationship by working for God by serving others
- Remaining in the now

### UNIVERSAL MORAL CODE

#### DO NO HARM.

- Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you.
- Do not lie.
- Do not steal.
- Do not cheat.
- Do not falsely accuse others.
- Do not commit adultery.
- Do not commit incest.
- Do not physically or verbally abuse others.
- Do not murder.
- Do not destroy the natural environment upon which all life depends

#### DO GOOD.

- Do to others what you would like them to do to you.
- Be honest and fair.
- Be generous.
- Be faithful to your family and friends.
- Take care of your children when they are young.
- Take care of your parents when they are old.
- Take care of those who cannot take care of themselves.
- Be kind to strangers.
- Respect all life.
- Protect the natural environment upon which all life depends.

### Emotional Sobriety Inventory Form

Situation	Expectation or Reaction	Emotional Dependency/ Character Defect	God-Centered Response What should I have done instead?	Amends/Restitution
What happened?	How did I respond? What did I want that I did not get?	What was my part? Where was I to blame?	How would God have me be? What would God have me do?	Did I cause any harm? What do I need to do to make this right?

**Step 9 “Made direct amends to such people, wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”**

**Principle:** justice & forgiveness

**Process:** make amends – direct, living, financial

**Problem:** rationalization & procrastination

**Practice:** honest introspection and review of our conduct in relationships – identify harms

**Proposal:** Am I willing to forgive people who hurt me? Am I willing to make amends to the people I have hurt?

**Promise:** “THE PROMISES.” Our REAL purpose is to FIT OURSELVES to be of MAXIMUM service to God and the people about us.

**Quote:** "Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves." [91:1] (76:3)

**Quote:** “Now we need more action, without which we find that ‘Faith without works is dead.’ ... Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past.” (76: 3)

**Quote:** “If we are painstaking ... Self-seeking will slip away.... Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. ... If we work for them.” (83: 4)

**What is the Difference between Making an Apology and Making Amends?**

There is actually a huge difference between making amends with someone and merely giving them an apology. While a sincere apology is a crucial part of making amends, an apology alone is simply not enough to undo the irreversible pain and heartache that one’s addiction (or actions during addiction) may have caused.

Making amends, however, is a way for an addict to work toward restoring goodwill as much as they can. This can be done in a direct way, like replacing an item that you broke; or in an indirect, symbolic way, such as taking part in volunteer work. The most important part of making amends is to ensure you undertake a complete change in your behavior, and a whole new approach to how you live life.

**COMPLETING STEP 9:**

Ask yourself:

- 1 Am I willing to change?
- 2 Am I willing to be changed in ways I may not be aware of or in control of?
- 3 Am I willing to address each harm that I am aware of?
- 4 Am I being completely honest with my mentor about the nature of the harm?
- 5 Have I thoroughly prepared each amend with a mentor?
- 6 Am I willing to complete all my amends using creative solutions for individuals I can’t meet?
- 7 Is finishing my amends a top priority in my life?
- 8 Have I finished my amends? Am I avoiding some?

**Prayer:** God, I pray for the right attitude to make my right my wrongs to others, being ever mindful not to harm others in the process. I ask for Your guidance in making direct, and indirect amends. Most important, I will continue to make amends by staying abstinent, helping others, and growing in spiritual fitness. Amen.

**Prayer:** God give me the strength and direction to do the right thing no matter what the consequences may be. Help me to consider others and not harm them in any way. Help me to consult with others before I take any actions that would cause me to be sorry. Help me to not repeat such behaviors. Show me the way of Patience, Tolerance, Kindliness, and Love and help me live the spiritual life.

**WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF AMENDS?**

**Direct Amends**

This involves taking personal responsibility for your actions and confronting the person who you would like to reconcile with. This takes a lot of courage, as you will need to discuss openly and honestly the reasons for your actions, and try together to find a solution as to how you can compensate this person. For example, if you had stolen money from a person, you would start by giving it back. You must try to the best of your abilities to replace, repair or re-reimburse the person you hurt, as well as understand that much of the damage caused by your addiction may not be physically possible to reverse.

**Indirect Amends**

These are ways that you will be able to repair damage that cannot be reversed or undone. In cases like these, you would work towards redemption by selfless acts, or ‘indirect amends’. For example, if you injured someone else in a bike accident while intoxicated, you could volunteer at a handicapped school, or register to become an organ donor.

**Living Amends**

Living amends is the best way to show others (as well as yourself) that you have changed to become a better person than you used to be. This requires a genuine lifestyle change, and making a life-long promise to yourself and those that you have hurt that you will discard your previous destructive behavior.

**Financial amends**

Face the creditors now and arrange the best deal ("Arranging the best deal we can we let these people know we are sorry ... We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink if we are afraid to face them.") (78:2)

A practical note: prioritize debts where you will be pursued legally and consider consolidating such debts through an agency. Consider how much you can afford to pay off per month in total and split, if possible, between all your creditors, in terms of an opening offer for how much to pay back. Then you will be able to approach everyone more or less simultaneously and will not have to delay approaching any particular creditor. It may be best to approach and negotiate deals with all of the creditors who can pursue you legally first before entering into any arrangements with people who do not have a legal claim or do not even know you owe them money.

The key priority is approaching creditors promptly.