

Now, it is time to clear away the wreckage of our past. We do this by making amends or restitution. the RESTITUTION PHASE. Step Eight: The spiritual principle of JUSTICE & BROTHERLY LOVE. Step Nine: The spiritual principle of GOOD JUDGMENT & SELF-DISCIPLINE. These 2 steps are closely aligned, and easily done together.

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

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

For Step 8: The 1944 pamphlet suggests that Under this step we will make a written[\* The original Detroit pamphlet said "a list (mental or written)," but the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* later made it clear that it needed to be *written*.] list of those we have harmed. We ask **God** to let his will be done, not **our** will, and ask for the strength and courage to become willing to forget resentments and false pride and make amends to those we have harmed. We must not do this step grudgingly, or as an unpleasant task to be rid of quickly. We must do it **willingly**, fairly, and humbly - - without condescension.

For Step 9: The pamphlet suggests that “This is where we make peace with ourselves by making peace with those we have hurt. The amends we make must be *direct*. We must pay in kind for the hurt we have done them.

- If we have cheated we must make restitution.
- If we have hurt their feelings we must ask forgiveness from them.

The list of harms done may be long but the list of amends is equally long. For every *wrong* we have done, there is a *right* we may do to compensate.

There is only one *exception*. We must develop a sense of justice, a spirit of fairness, an attitude of common sense. If our effort to make amends would create further harm or cause a scandal, we will have to skip the direct amends and clean the matter up under Step Five.”

Step 8 has 2 parts 1. Made a list of all persons we had harmed. 2. Become willing to make amends to them all.

The 1st half of step 8 was done when made our inventory in Step 4 and 5.

The 2nd half is WILLINGNESS: we need to become willing to make amends to all the people on the list.

(69:3) Whatever our ideal turns out to be, we must be willing to grow toward it. 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. In other words, we treat sex as we would any other problem. In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer will come, if we want it.

(76:3) Now we need more action, without which we find that "Faith without works is dead." Let's look at Steps Eight and Nine. We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory. We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal. 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. **If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes.** (This is a prayer.) Remember it was agreed at the beginning we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol.

Step 8 questions:

Did you subjected yourself to a drastic self-appraisal?

Have you a list of all persons you have harmed and to whom you are willing to make amends?

Let's have moment of silence as we ask God for the willingness to make amends to them all.

According to the "Big Book" authors, you have taken Step 8!

ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FOR STEP 8?

NOTE No-one should make an amends, until discussing each matter with a sponsor or spiritual adviser

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

(76:3) 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. 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.

(76:4) Probably there are still some misgivings. As we look over the list of business acquaintances and friends we have hurt, we may feel diffident about going to some of them on a spiritual basis. Let us be reassured. To some people we need not, and probably should not emphasize the spiritual feature on our first approach.

(77:0) We might prejudice them. At the moment we are trying to put our lives in order. 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.** It is seldom wise to approach an individual, who still smarts from our injustice to him, and announce that we have gone religious. In the prize ring, this would be called leading with the chin. Why lay ourselves open to being branded fanatics or religious bores? We may kill a future opportunity to carry a beneficial message.

We let our actions, rather than our words, demonstrate to others that we have changed. Starting with line four, the book states:

But our man is sure to be impressed with a sincere desire to set right the wrong. He is going to be more interested in a demonstration of good will than in our talk of spiritual discoveries.

(77:1) We don't use this as an excuse for shying away from the subject of God. When it will serve any good purpose, we are willing to announce our convictions with tact and common sense. **One of the most difficult amends is to someone we don't like. The book continues:** The question of how to approach the man we hated will arise. It may be he has done us more harm than we have done him and, though we may have acquired a better attitude toward him, we are still not too keen about admitting our faults. Nevertheless, with a person we dislike, we take the bit in our teeth. It is harder to go to an enemy than to a friend, but we find it much more beneficial to us. We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.

### **Instructions on what to say and what not to say:**

(77:2) Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue. Simply we tell him that we will never get over drinking until we have done our utmost to straighten out the past. We are there to sweep off our side of the street, realizing that nothing worthwhile can be accomplished until we do so, never trying to tell him what he should do. His faults are not discussed. We stick to our own. If our manner is calm, frank, and open, we will be gratified with the result.

(78:1) In nine cases out of ten the unexpected happens. Sometimes the man we are calling upon admits his own fault, so feuds of years' standing melt away in an hour. Rarely do we fail to make satisfactory progress. Our former enemies sometimes praise what we are doing and wish us well. Occasionally, they will offer assistance. It should not matter, however, if someone does throw us out of his office. We have made our demonstration, done our part. It's water over the dam.

The Big Book explains what to do about our debts. We may not like the sacrifice required to make good on our bills, but sacrifice we must. The process forces us to rely on God for guidance, which takes us out of self-will,

and into God's will. Under God's direction, we find it much easier to make restitution than we ever thought possible.

(78:2) Most alcoholics owe money. We do not dodge our creditors. Telling them what we are trying to do, we make no bones about our drinking; they usually know it anyway, whether we think so or not. Nor are we afraid of disclosing our alcoholism on the theory it may cause financial harm. Approached in this way, the most ruthless creditor will sometimes surprise us. Arranging the best deal we can we let these people know we are sorry. Our drinking has made us slow to pay. 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.

The next paragraph deals with criminal offenses:

(78:3) Perhaps we have committed a criminal offense which might land us in jail if it were known to the authorities. We may be short in our accounts and unable to make good. We have already admitted this in confidence to another person, but we are sure we would be imprisoned or lose our job if it were known. Maybe it's only a petty offense such as padding the expense account. Most of us have done that sort of thing.

(79:0) Maybe we are divorced, and have remarried but haven't kept up the alimony to number one. She is indignant about it, and has a warrant out for our arrest. That's a common form of trouble too.

Next the book instructs us again to ask God for guidance. This reliance upon God is essential, if we are to outgrow the fears that have separated us from our Creator (page 79)

(79:1) Although these reparations take innumerable forms, there are some general principles which we find guiding. Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience, we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. We may lose our position or reputation or face jail, but we are willing. We have to be. We must not shrink at anything.

Next is an example of how to proceed when other people could be affected. Here extreme caution needs taken:

(79:2) Usually, however, other people are involved. Therefore, we are not to be the hasty and foolish martyr who would needlessly sacrifice others to save himself from the alcoholic pit. A man we know had remarried. Because of resentment and drinking, he had not paid alimony to his first wife. She was furious. She went to court and got an order for his arrest. He had commenced our way of life, had secured a position, and was getting his head above water. It would have been impressive heroics if he had walked up to the Judge and said, "Here I am."

(79:3) We thought he ought to be willing to do that if necessary, but if he were in jail he could provide nothing for either family. We suggested he write his first wife admitting his faults and asking forgiveness. He did, and also sent a small amount of money. He told her what he would try to do in the future. He said he was perfectly willing to go to jail if she insisted. Of course she did not, and the whole situation has long since been adjusted.

The Big Book suggests we ask others for help before we make some of our more difficult amends. We need direction, preferably from someone who understands the inventory and restitution process. We must make sure we do not create further harm as we clean up our side of the street. At the top of page 80, the book says:

(80:1) Before taking drastic action which might implicate other people we secure their consent. If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others, asked God to help and the drastic step is indicated we must not shrink.

Next is a story of a man that had to get consent from his family and business partner before proceeding:

(80:2) This brings to mind a story about one of our friends. While drinking, he accepted a sum of money from a bitterly-hated business rival, giving him no receipt for it. He subsequently denied having received the money and used the incident as a basis for discrediting the man. He thus used his own wrong-doing as a means of destroying the reputation of another. In fact, his rival was ruined.

(80:3) He felt that he had done a wrong he could not possibly make right. If he opened that old affair, he was afraid it would destroy the reputation of his partner, disgrace his family and take away his means of livelihood. What right had he to involve those dependent upon him? How could he possibly make a public statement exonerating his rival?

(80:4) After consulting with his wife and partner he came to the conclusion that it was better to take those risks than to stand before his Creator guilty of such ruinous slander. He saw that he had to place the outcome in God's hands or he would soon start drinking again, and all would be lost anyhow. He attended church for the first time in many years. After the sermon, he quietly got up and made an explanation. His action met widespread approval, and today he is one of the most trusted citizens of his town. This all happened years ago.

The next page or so deals with domestic troubles. Starting with the second line from the bottom of page 80, we find:

(80:5) The chances are that we have domestic troubles. Perhaps we are mixed up with women in a fashion we wouldn't care to have advertised. We doubt if, in this respect, alcoholics are fundamentally much worse than other people. But drinking does complicate sex relations in the home. After a few years with an alcoholic, a wife gets worn out, resentful and uncommunicative. How could she be anything else? The husband begins to feel lonely, sorry for himself. He commences to look around in the night clubs, or their equivalent, for something besides liquor. Perhaps he is having a secret and exciting affair with "the girl who understands." In fairness we must say that she may understand, but what are we going to do about a thing like that? A man so involved often feels very remorseful at times, especially if he is married to a loyal and courageous girl who has literally gone through hell for him.

(81:1) Whatever the situation, we usually have to do something about it. If we are sure our wife does not know, should we tell her? Not always, we think. If she knows in a general way that we have been wild, should we tell her in detail? Undoubtedly we should admit our fault. She may insist on knowing all the particulars. She will want to know who the woman is and where she is. We feel we ought to say to her that we have no right to involve another person. We are sorry for what we have done and, God willing, it shall not be repeated. More than that we cannot do; we have no right to go further. Though there may be justifiable exceptions, and though we wish to lay down no rule of any sort, we have often found this the best course to take.

(81:2) Our design for living is not a one-way street. It is as good for the wife as for the husband. If we can forget, so can she. It is better, however, that one does not needlessly name a person upon whom she can vent jealousy.

In the first paragraph on page 82, we are yet again instructed to ask God for guidance as we make good on our past misdeeds:

(82:1) Perhaps there are some cases where the utmost frankness is demanded. No outsider can appraise such an intimate situation. It may be that both will decide that the way of good sense and loving kindness is to let bygones be bygones. Each might pray about it, having the other one's happiness uppermost in mind. Keep it always in sight that we are dealing with that most terrible human emotion-jealousy. Good generalship may decide that the problem be attacked on the flank rather than risk a face-to-face combat.

This is an example of how we must be tactful and considerate of others as we make our amends. Nobody said it would be easy – it just has to be done. Remember to always use God as your constant Guide. By following His direction, the most difficult situations can have a positive outcome.

In the next several paragraphs, the Big Book authors state quite emphatically that stopping drinking is only a beginning. We must take additional action if we are to recover from alcoholism:

(82:2) If we have no such complication, there is plenty we should do at home. Sometimes we hear an alcoholic say that the only thing he needs to do is to keep sober. Certainly he must keep sober, for there will be no home if he doesn't. But he is yet a long way from making good to the wife or parents whom for years he has so shockingly treated. Passing all understanding is the patience mothers and wives have had with alcoholics. Had this not been so, many of us would have no homes today, would perhaps be dead.

(82:3) The alcoholic is like a tornado roaring his way through the lives of others. Hearts are broken. Sweet relationships are dead. Affections have been uprooted. Selfish and inconsiderate habits have kept the home in turmoil. We feel a man is unthinking when he says that sobriety is enough. He is like the farmer who came up out of his cyclone cellar to find his home ruined. To his wife, he remarked, "Don't see anything the matter here, Ma. Ain't it grand the wind stopped blowin'?"

Not drinking is not enough. The Big Book makes that very clear. The reconstruction that will need to take place in most homes may at times seem difficult. But, once again, we rely heavily on prayer and guidance from our Creator. At the top of page 83, our text states:

(83:1) Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead. A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won't fill the bill at all. We ought to sit down with the family and frankly analyze the past as we now see it, being very careful not to criticize them. Their defects may be glaring, but the chances are that our own actions are partly responsible. So we clean house with the family, asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.

(83:2) The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it. Unless one's family expresses a desire to live upon spiritual principles, we think we ought not to urge them. We should not talk incessantly to them about spiritual matters. They will change in time. Our behavior will convince them more than our words. We must remember that ten or twenty years of drunkenness would make a skeptic out of anyone.

Here we're told that in order to achieve the vital physic change, we have to live the A.A. program. So, we don't just take the Steps, we practice these principles on a daily basis. Next, we will provide the information for this way of life and continue to grow through the process of Step Ten, Eleven, and Twelve.

The next paragraph on page 83 gives us directions on what to do if we can't make amends to someone face-to-face:

(83:3) There may be some wrongs we can never fully right. We don't worry about them if we can honestly say to ourselves that we would right them if we could. Some people cannot be seen -we send them an honest letter. And there may be a valid reason for postponement in some cases. But we don't delay if it can be avoided. We should 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.

The Big Book concludes the Ninth Step with another list of results. Starting at the bottom of page 83, it tells us precisely what is going to happen once we commence to clear away the wreckage of our past. It describes these results as promises. The Big Book is filled with promises. These are just a few of them:

(83:4) If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

(84:1) Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us -sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

What a message of hope! It is almost beyond comprehension that all of these wonderful events will occur if we just make our amends to those whom we have harmed. But, they will happen – that's a guarantee.

Lastly, Dr. Bob co-founder with Bill W. is an example of someone who could not stay sober until he became willing to complete all his amends. He made all his amends in one day:



(155:2) “When our friend related his experience, the man agreed that no amount of will power he might muster could stop his drinking for long. A spiritual experience, he conceded, was absolutely necessary, but the price seemed high upon the basis suggested. He told how he lived in constant worry about those who might find out about his alcoholism. He had, of course, the familiar alcoholic obsession that few knew of his drinking. Why, he argued, should he lose the remainder of his business, only to bring still more suffering to his family by foolishly admitting his plight to people from whom he made his livelihood? He would do anything, he said, but that.”

(155:3) “Being intrigued, however, he invited our friend to his home. Sometime later, and just as he thought he was getting control of his liquor situation, he went on a roaring bender. For him, this was the spree that ended all sprees. He saw that he would have to face his problems squarely that God might give him mastery.”

(156:1) (From Dr. Bob’s story) One morning he took the bull by the horns and set out to tell those he feared what his trouble had been. He found himself surprisingly well received and learned that many knew of his drinking. Stepping into his car, he made the rounds of people he had hurt. He trembled as he went about, for this might mean ruin, particularly to a person in his line of business.

(156:2) At midnight he came home exhausted, but very happy. He has not had a drink since. As we shall see, he now means a great deal to his community, and the major liabilities of thirty years of hard drinking have been repaired in four.

Commit to begin making amends immediately with the support of your sponsor based on the guidelines that we have reviewed. Steps 10, 11 and 12 will offer much support and guidance while continuing to make amends.

Activities for these steps:

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.

WHO should be on the list? If you’re not sure whether someone belongs on your list, ask yourself these questions: .

- Did I cause them harm?
- Did I do anything that deserves an apology? .
- Did I behave in a way I would not behave today?
- Do I feel guilt for my behavior towards them?
- If I saw them today, would I cross the street to avoid them?

If you can answer “yes” to any of these questions, put them on your list. At this stage, don’t worry about whether people might be harmed by your apology. You should err on the side of listing too many people – your sponsor is likely to cross a few off your list immediately.

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.

Once you start making amends, if you followed all the suggestions above, you will realize at some point that your fear is gone – or at least greatly diminished. Congratulations. You have had your spiritual awakening!

Now on to the maintenance steps so you can keep from slipping back into the fear that has ruled your life until now!

This concludes our discussion of Step Nine.

Does anyone have any questions?

### **Taking Step 9:**

#### **Will you begin to make amends this coming week?**

If you answer yes you have begun to take Step 9.

Your assignment is to beginning making your amends. If you are not sure how to proceed with a specific amends, ask your sponsor or spiritual adviser for help.

We will use the extra time in this class to go over the inventory.

Or, if there are no questions, we will use the extra time to introduce the additional principles of the 4 Absolutes used by the founders of AA for daily spiritual living.

The 4 Absolutes were the guiding principles used by the AA pioneers for practicing 11<sup>th</sup> step meditation and 2 way prayer. There is a very important pamphlet on how to practice 11<sup>th</sup> step guidance and 2 way prayer, called "How to listen to God."

The Four Absolutes are: Honesty, Unselfishness, Purity, & Love

They are principles borrowed from the Oxford Group Movement when AA was in its humble beginning. Because they were never mentioned specifically in our Steps or Traditions, some of us are inclined to forget them. Yet, in many old time groups, especially in the Mid-West, where the solid spirit of our fellowship is so strongly amplified, the Four Absolutes are mentioned frequently.

Think about the steps that we've discussed so far this weekend and you will find that the Four Absolutes form a thread that runs through all of our principles. The Absolutes of Honesty, Unselfishness, Purity, and Love can be easily defined.

Honesty – "Is it TRUE or FALSE?"

Unselfishness – "Is it about YOU or ME?" / "How will this affect the other person?"

Purity – "Is it RIGHT or WRONG?"

Love – "Is it about FEAR or FAITH?" / "Is it UGLY or is it BEAUTIFUL?"

Members of the Oxford Groups and early AA members often referred to the Absolutes as the Four Standards or the Four Tests. Let's discuss how to use the Absolutes as a Test for God's Will or self-will. We can easily do this in conjunction with our practice of Steps 10 & 11 like the early members of AA did. The Absolutes can be used specifically when making decisions in our daily life (in conjunction with Step 10). And they can be used for checking our daily Guidance in Step 11 which the early AA members stressed as a must.

First, Step 10 says "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it." It also tells us in the Big Book to "watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear." The defects we watch for in Step 10 are the direct opposites of the Absolutes.

Step 10 asks us to watch for and ask God to remove selfishness. The Oxford Group and our founders taught us to practice Unselfishness.

Step 10 asks us to watch for and ask God to remove dishonesty. The Absolutes ask us to practice Honesty. Step 10 asks us to watch for and ask God to remove resentment. The Absolutes ask us to practice Purity. Step 10 asks us to watch for and ask God to remove fear. The Absolutes ask us to practice Love. When we spot one of the defects crop up that Step 10 tells us to watch for we can ask God to remove it and replace it with the corresponding Absolute.

We can also use the Absolutes when we have an important decision to make... or even a not so important decision for that matter. For example,

if I'm faced with a decision that I don't know the immediate answer to I can "test" it against the Four Absolutes. I can ask myself "if I do \_\_\_\_\_:

- Will it be TRUE or FALSE (Absolutely Honest)?
- Will it be about YOU or ME or how will it affect other people involved (Absolutely Unselfish)?
- Will it be RIGHT or WRONG (Absolutely Pure)?
- And will it be about FEAR or FAITH or is it UGLY or BEAUTIFUL (Absolutely Loving)?

If my decision "passes" all four Absolutes, then it is believed to be God's Will for me and therefore the right thing to do. If the decision "falls short" of even one of the Absolutes then it's probably a decision based on self-will and will probably later place me in a position to be hurt. If I make my decision based on self-will rather than God's Will, which the Four Absolutes follow, then I'm setting myself up to act out on at least one of the defects described in Step 10: selfish, dishonest, resentful, or afraid. Let's remember, we're either moving towards God's Will or acting upon self-will. We can't do both at the same time.

Let's discuss how to use the Absolutes with Step 11 and our daily meditation and Quiet Times, which we'll describe in greater length during our discussion of Step 11.

The early members of AA learned from Oxford Group members and Ann Smith (Dr. Bob's wife) to have an early morning Quiet Time where they would often pray and meditate in small groups. During these Quiet Times prayers were voiced aloud or silently,

Guidance for each day was received from God and written down by each member of the group. Members went into that quiet place within themselves where they could meditate and ask God for His Guidance. As thoughts came into their mind, they would write them down. After the predetermined amount of time was over they would "test" what they wrote against the Four Absolutes of Honesty, Unselfishness, Purity, and Love. Going down each item they wrote on paper, if it "passed" the "test" then it was believed to have been from God. If it didn't "pass" the "test" then that thought must have come from self. After discussion with other members, the "God thoughts" were acted on and the "self-thoughts" were discarded.

This concludes our discussion of the Four Absolutes. We hope you will begin to use these spiritual "tools" as our founders did in conjunction with the Tenth and Eleventh Steps, which we will be discussing next.