

# *Life With God In Recovery*

## **STEP EIGHT: BECOMING WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL**



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

Relationships matter. While on earth, Jesus demonstrated how to live in loving relationship with His Father as He prayed with Him about everything He did. Just like Jesus, having a loving relationship with God, and praying with Him about everything we do, is the foundation for our life as followers of Jesus and persons in recovery. When we experience the love and peace that an intimate relationship with God brings, the desire for our earthly relationships to be renewed and restored will be stirred up within us. This desire is foundational to the hard work Step Eight calls us to undertake.

Jesus said: ***Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven.*** (John 13:34, Luke 6:36-3 NLT)

We have all been hurt and let down by others. It's simply part of being around humans in our world. Some of us however, are so focused on how we've been victimized and how others have hurt us, that we fail to see how we've been hurting others and ourselves. Step Eight is about acknowledging the pain and brokenness in our relationships instead of running from them. We ask God to show us how our way of relating to others is different from His plan for loving relationships. We ask God to bring to mind particular people and circumstances where we caused harm. We write down what happened, clearly outline our part, and acknowledge our responsibility. We ask God for healing and forgiveness so we can become willing to make amends to the individuals we have hurt.

***“And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.*** (Matthew 7:3-5 NLT)

For most of us, when we think of the things that have been harmful in our interactions with others, making a list may sound like a big undertaking and, in

early recovery it can even seem overwhelming. For a long time, some of our past relationships have been the source of frustration, heartbreak, or confusion. Indeed, some individuals entwined in our histories may have died or exited from our lives. Doing anything that might contribute to restoration and healing seems impossible. However, God will help us as we become willing to make the effort. God lives in us and He promises that His unfailing love will find full expression in our lives and relationships as we work to complete this step.

***Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. Let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.*** (1 John 4:11-12, 1 John 3:18 NLT)

This step encourages us to write down what happened, and clearly outline our part and our responsibility. It's painful, because we see not only our actions, but the actions of others who brought pain to us, to which we reacted imperfectly. To truly become willing to make amends we have to see God in the middle of each painful and fearful circumstance or memory, and choose with God's help to face it rather than run from it. We have to get connected to the God who knows, who cares, who heals, and who makes something good out of even the most traumatic events. We need to first receive healing and comfort from God or we'll never be secure enough to forgive others who have harmed us, and acknowledge our own failure to act in a loving way.

***Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*** (1 John 4:7-8 NLT)

Broken relationships are a significant issue in the majority of relapses into active addiction. We do the work this step asks of us in order to recognize these powerful influences and, once and for all, get to the root of the problem. Refusing to acknowledge pain in a relationship, unwillingness to accept responsibility for our part in how things went wrong, and reluctance to forgive the wrongs of others are all significant issues to consider as we make a list of all persons we have harmed and become willing to make amends to them all.

***Make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.*** (Philippians 2:2-4 NLT)

When humility surrounds all of the Step Eight process, God is willing to undertake deep restoration. Others have failed us, but we have failed others as well. Others have not lived up to their good intentions and honourable ideals and caused us pain in the process, and likewise, so have we. Are we better than those who have harmed us? Obviously not. Did Jesus take the suffering of all the wrongs done to us and all of the wrongs done by us to the cross? Yes. Making a list of all persons we have harmed and becoming willing to make amends to them will help us go forward with confidence in the journey of love and freedom which God has set before us.

### Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. What's the process been for me to become willing to make amends?
2. How am I dealing with the sense of "overwhelming" that exists when I consider the amount of wreckage that exists in my circle of relationships?
3. How am I "breaking the cycle" of pain and dysfunction in which I grew up? Where is God in this process?
4. What new beliefs have I needed to develop in order to even believe I need to make amends?
5. What needs to change in me as I seek to relate to God and others as God intends?

*Heavenly Father, Thank you for creating me to live in relationship with You and others. Thank you for Jesus, whose death on the cross for my sins made loving relationships with You and others possible. Your word says there is no fear in love and I believe Your perfect love will cast out all my fear, and help me become willing to make amends to those people I have hurt. I desire to do an honest inventory of my relationships and, where I've been wrong, I ask for your help to acknowledge my part in the situation. With You as the strength of my life, I have nothing to fear. Thank You Lord that You never leave me nor forsake me. I am forever grateful that You care. AMEN*