

Step 9

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

The guiding principle of this Step is Self-Discipline.

This is the Step for our restoration of relationships with others, ourselves, and our possessions. We mend, not just apologizing for, the wrongs we have inflicted on people from our list in Step 8.

Making amends is a lifelong process. We stay focused on our role, not on what others have done to us. In making amends, we behave with caring, openness, and fairness. As a result, we gain self-respect, clear conscience, peace, and lightness. We lose remorse, guilt, and shame from inflicting harm on others, especially ourselves. We make honest repairs so we can live free from our clutter.

We should never approach this Step alone. Prayer and meditation are a necessary part of this process. Ask God for the wisdom to know which amends to make and when, and the necessary courage to carry them out. The trust we have built in working the previous Steps will give us confidence, sensitivity, and poise to proceed. By having this conscious contact with God, we are better equipped to clean our side of the street and avoid harming others with selfish or impulsive amends. Working with a Sponsor or Co-Sponsor will help us develop our timing, judgment, and prudence.

When preparing to make amends, we first eliminate emotional obstacles. Resentful attitudes will defeat our recovery. We cannot hate and make amends at the same time. Hate and resentment are barriers to our recovery. We consider if the place, time, or content of our amends may harm others. We make amends proportionate to the damage our clutter inflicted. We choose the form of our amends: verbal, written, written-and-destroyed, monetary, acts-of-service, reparation-in-kind, or living amends.

With our Higher Power, Sponsor, or Co-Sponsor, we call upon courage, insight, and empathy. We select the best approach, entrust the outcome to our Higher Power, and make our amends. To gain skill and confidence in the process, we tackle the easiest remaining amends.

Remember, we are clearing out not only our clutter, but also the wreckage of our past. We should neither delay nor procrastinate. The longer we avoid making our amends, the longer we remain in active addiction, regarding our clutter, without ever achieving recovery. Nor should we jump head-on into reckless abandon. A question to ask ourselves would be: “Can I get started by making one amend this week?”

1. We make amends to ourselves for creating homes, schedules, and relationships that don’t support us, and for the stress and shame they bring. Our amends consist of moving toward a life free from all forms of clutter, by no longer overscheduling our lives, trading abusive relationships for healthy ones, and focusing on the essential. We buy what we actually need and can reasonably accommodate into our homes. In this Step, we also learn to say “No” to those things that keep us from our life purpose, even some gifts, activities, and relationships.
2. We make amends to others when it causes no harm to them or others.
3. If we owe money to a person, organization, or government, we make a plan for repayment. We cannot hold out on any amends, if we want to live a life free of clutter and in recovery.
4. When there is risk of violence, we do not make *direct* amends. We work with a Sponsor or Co-Sponsor to determine if correspondence is safe. If so, we write something like: “In the past, my behavior toward you has not been loving and supportive. I apologize for the hurt my behavior has caused you.”
5. Some people on our list may have moved and we no longer have the ability to contact them. *We must be willing to make amends to them*, if we ever become aware of their location.
6. Others will not be available for us to make our amends. Whatever the situation, *we must be willing to make the amends*.
7. Others may have died and we cannot make direct amends to them either. Some people write their heartfelt amends and then ceremoniously destroy the letter. *We must be willing to make amends*, so that we can be free to move forward in our lives.

Often, the people to whom we are making amends have not remembered the situation. As long as we aren’t trying to deceive or hide our misdeeds, it is

not important that they remember, and we do not try to help them recall the event. We simply apologize and move forward.

Sometimes, making amends re-ignites the fires of anger in others. We remain calm, avoid commenting on their anger, simply apologize, and move on. Remember, we are clearing our wreckage, not becoming angry in this situation.

As we continue making amends, we become consistent and dependable. Our fears will begin to disappear. We will no longer attempt to fill our needs by cluttering, overscheduling our time, over-burdening our minds, dominating conversations, or remaining in unhealthy relationships. We will start to live our life purpose. The Promises of Alcoholics Anonymous are working in our lives.

Step 9 Checklist

I refers to the clutterer. *We* refers to the clutterer plus Higher Power and Sponsor or Co-Sponsor.

- ☐ 1. I pray, meditate, and invite my Higher Power and Sponsor or Co-Sponsor to help me.
- ☐ 2. We look at my list from Step 8.
- ☐ 3. We focus on the harm my clutter inflicted and address procrastination and other obstacles.
- ☐ 4. We sort amends from easy to difficult and determine whether there are some amends I cannot make now.
- ☐ 5. Considering also my safety, we select the form of amends (verbal, written, written-and-destroyed, monetary, acts-of-service, reparation-in-kind, or living amends).
- ☐ 6. We choose amends that are proportionate to the damage my clutter inflicted.
- ☐ 7. We consider when, where, and how to make amends so I do no more harm.
- ☐ 8. I answer yes to the question “Can I get started by making one amend this week?”
- ☐ 9. Starting with amends to myself, I repeatedly schedule and make amends, learn from the experiences, and celebrate effort.

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. How have I included my Higher Power in this process?
Write about it.
2. How do I feel *before* making amends to people, including myself, harmed by my clutter?
Write about it.
3. How do I feel *after* making those amends?
Write about it.
4. How have I made amends to myself regarding my clutter?
Write about it.
5. How have I made amends to other people on my list from Step 8?
Write about it.
6. How would I alter my amends next time?
Write about it.
7. Is there a pattern to the amends I have needed to make?
If so, write about it.
8. How have I changed?
Write about it.

When you have completed making the amends you can make now, you are ready to proceed to Step 10.