

## CONSIDERING OTHERS

# *Life With God In Recovery*

## STEP NINE: CONSIDERING OTHERS



**Step Nine – We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**

Step Nine calls for direct amends except when to do so might cause further injury. We want to be careful that we aren't trying to achieve our personal serenity at the expense of someone else. When we're making amends, we need to be wise in the way we go about it. We may be so anxious to get things off our chest that we may blurt things out without fully considering the other person involved. We need to consider how our actions may injure them. We may feel so pressured by guilt and fear of exposure that we rush ahead and make mistakes we can't erase.

***The wise are known for their understanding, and pleasant words are persuasive. Discretion is a life-giving fountain to those who possess it, but discipline is wasted on fools. From a wise mind comes wise speech; the words of the wise are persuasive. Kind words are like honey — sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.*** (Proverbs 16:21-24 NLT)

When making amends, we need to weigh the feelings and needs of the people who will be exposed to what we want to say and do. Since we are not always the best judge of what needs to be disclosed and when, we need to rely on God, our sponsor, and perhaps other trusted friends in recovery, for help and guidance in these decisions. Reviewing our intended amends with a sponsor or trusted friend helps us consider our motivation and the consequences of our intended actions. Sometimes an indirect amends is the most appropriate choice (i.e. amends through changed behaviour).

***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 2:3-4 NLT)

There are several reasons why we might consider NOT making direct amends. It might be that simply seeing us would cause great pain and stir up wounds that the other person is not ready to face. It might be that the other person is unaware of the harm we have caused and simply making them aware, would cause them great pain. Sometimes an indirect amends – being aware of what we have done and working hard to live differently is the best we can do. Sometimes the person has died or moved out of our known world. We do not avoid making amends simply to spare ourselves discomfort. We check with our sponsor or a trusted friend as we sort

through the list we made in Step 8. We pray for wisdom and seek wise counsel from trusted individuals to help us select the most suitable time and method of approach.

***Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.*** (Colossians 4:5-6 NLT)

Timing is an essential part of this step. We should make direct amends when the first opportunity presents itself, except when to do so will cause more harm. Procrastination, fear or embarrassment should not prevent us from contacting the person to whom we wish to make amends. It is a good idea not to take this person by surprise. There are people to whom we can make full amends as soon as we get sober. There are others who should not be contacted until we have some time in sobriety. This might include a child who would be disappointed if struggles and even a relapse were to be part of our early recovery.

***Don't be concerned for your own good but for the good of others. I, too, try to please everyone in everything I do. I don't just do what is best for me; I do what is best for others so that many may be saved.*** (1 Corinthians 10:24, 33 NLT)

We do not avoid making amends to spare ourselves discomfort. Avoidance will only increase our guilt and prevent our healing. In some situations, just changing our behaviour such as, gossiping, complaining, or controlling, would be sufficient in making indirect amends in relational situations. Prayer for guidance as we approach each task is essential. Our motives should be revealed to a trusted individual and their counsel listened to. In all cases, when we are not sure what type of amends is called for, we remind ourselves that making direct amends is our responsibility, except when someone would be harmed by doing so.

***She [Wisdom] will guide you down delightful paths; all her ways are satisfying. Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her; happy are those who hold her tightly.*** (Proverbs 3:17-18 NLT)

Honesty, balance, and realism are essential tools to keep at hand as we approach the making of amends. If we are leaning towards self-justification, we may find it useful to remember the Golden Rule, ***“Do to others as you would like them to do to you.”*** (Luke 6:31 NLT) This step calls us to humility as we clean our side of the street, walk in forgiveness and have a desire for reconciliation in relationships. As we seek Him, God will teach us the truth about our lives, past, present, and future. Humility says we have much to learn.

It is essential that we become willing to make amends to people we have harmed. However, we need to do so with the motive of taking responsibility for the harm we have caused. When the time is right, and with a prayerful attitude of seeking God to heal the people we have harmed, God will guide each of us to the pathway to peace.

***Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.*** (Luke 1:78-79 NLT)

### Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. What must we let go of before we start making our amends?
2. How do we prepare to make amends? Who needs to be involved in this preparation?
3. How do we go about “weighing the feelings and needs of the people who will be exposed to what we say and do?”
4. Why is it useful to check with someone else, both our approach and our motives, when we are preparing to make amends?
5. When might it be more appropriate to use indirect amends rather than direct?
6. How can we maintain a healthy sensitivity to the needs of others without sliding into unhealthy avoidance of difficult issues?
7. What is my experience in how making amends provides an opportunity for everyone involved to move towards a pathway of peace?

*Heavenly Father, Thank you for your unending love and forgiveness. Please help me to sort my motives as well as my actions as I do the work of making amends with those I have harmed. Help me to be teachable and humble. Help me to not simply do what's best for me, but to be wise and considerate of others. Thank you for guiding me to the pathway of peace and teaching me how to live in peace with others. My desire is that others would have the same opportunity. Holy Spirit, please give me courage and discernment as You guide me step by step in Your way of truth and love. I am forever grateful that you care for me. Amen*