



STEP EIGHT

I make a list of all persons that I have harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step 8 is the more specific person-to-person application of the shame-reduction that was begun in Steps 4 and 5. The making of amends was a very strong tradition among the members of the Oxford Group, which is the parent of all modern Twelve-Step organizations. (For more history on the Oxford Group, see [Steps to Serenity: An Introduction.](#))

A question we might ask is: Who should be on the list of persons to whom we make amends? Here are four suggestions:

1. We need to include all persons who may have been victims of our addictions.
2. We need to review all of the persons included in our Step 4 relationship history. As a rule, we probably owe some amends to most of the people on that list.
3. We need to include members of the next generation (especially our own children) who have been impacted by our addictions and compulsions.
4. We need to consider whether we need to make amends to the following general "family" groups.
 - All members of our families of origin, living and dead. (We may even owe amends to a highly abusive parent. Making amends does not mean that we ignore, excuse, or condone the abuse, but that we take back any negativity we may have fed into such a relationship.)
 - Our families of procreation, that is, the families we make by marriage.
 - Our work families.
 - Our community families.
 - Our church families.
 - The family of man. (Have we been prejudiced against and intolerant toward other political, religious, or racial groups?)

Implicit in both Steps 8 and 9 is the assumption that we carry a toxic residue of shame from virtually every incident in which we have hurt, rejected, or ignored others. Steps 8 and 9 provide us with the opportunity to reduce this guilt by setting things right again. We should be cautioned, though, that we need to work through and grieve our underlying resentment, hurt, anger, and pain, before trying to make amends with those who have offended us.

Otherwise, we are putting a bandage on a festering, cancerous sore, because the toxicity is still there. Only after it has been excised can we release our resentments with a high degree of emotional integrity.

“So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.” (Matthew 5:23-24)



STEP EIGHT

I make a list of all persons that I have harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Who should be on the *list* of people we have harmed?

Why do we have to *become willing*?

What important relationships did you destroy or damage because of your addictive behaviors?