

STEP 9

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

To make direct amends means making amends in person whenever possible. If miles apart makes such a meeting impossible, a phone call, perhaps, followed by a letter, would fit the bill. In regard to the method you choose, the question one must ask is: Am I following the program and taking my lumps or seeking a softer, easier way? One must be satisfied in one's own heart that you did the harm and likewise you must be satisfied with the method chosen to make amends.

Which amend should be made first? Look back to Step Four and it's quite possible that you have already made or started to make amends. Sometimes pressure makes this decision, although that may not be the best way. Loan sharks might scare you more than bookies so you may react to fear and start with them, bookies may come next, then banks. Last may come friends and relatives because you don't fear them; in truth, they should probably be first on your list except for a crime you've committed which may lead to court action and incarceration.

The solution to these questions may be found in an effective pressure relief group meeting. Usually amidst all the confusion, it will be suggested that each creditor be asked for a moratorium. This extra time will permit a chance for a pressure relief group meeting to be held and a course charted which will, in time, rid one of all the pressure of debts and bring manageability into the new way of life.

This pressure relief meeting can cover marital, legal and financial areas.

It is an objective approach — help will come from experienced people who once were in the same shoes. The success of such a get-together depends on complete openness, spouse's willingness to cooperate in the plan and continuing desire to follow the plan to the letter until completed. It is equally important that the single member also have a pressure relief group meeting. As one approaches those harmed, one may assume to know how they will react to the effort. Try not to predict their reactions — their reaction is not predictable. At this point honesty is needed.

As long as this honesty is present, you can correctly present the harm and how you intend to try to make amends for this harm. One may be facing a long period of paying back debts; in some rare cases, perhaps, the task will take a lifetime. Remember, it took a long time gambling to get to this point and it may take a longer time to repay. Recovery from addiction is a lifetime process. These wrongs can be corrected by practicing the Steps in your daily life. One may hear in Gamblers Anonymous, "You must walk the way you talk." As one practices the Steps, personal growth will result and family will benefit. Abstaining from gambling, working the program and making amends, you will gradually return to society. Self-respect, so long absent, starts to return.

Making amends does not always mean just repaying. You may not have taken money from your in-laws. You might have treated them very poorly or with indifference — Also think about your fellow workers, teachers, neighbors, etc.

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Good judgment will be required to take Step Nine.

1. Timing and prudence are needed.
2. We will also need courage.

DISCUSS:

- A. Has anger diminished? Can we deal with problems clearly and objectively?
- B. Today, what personal consequences are unacceptable? What fears remain?

Having made a list of those we harmed ... we saw that "groups" of individuals are divided.

1. Some will be seen now, later or never.
2. Some opportunities to make amends have been passed.

DISCUSS:

- A. Procrastination. Too much thinking and not enough work with personal problem solving and growth.
- B. Reasons for not making amends when opportunity arose. What to do at this point?

Step Nine warns we can only freely admit damage and apologize when ...

1. We are reasonably certain we are recovering in the GA Program.
2. We are sincere.

DISCUSS:

- A. Current growth in GA.
- B. Need for "self honesty." Has awareness of "self" improved?
- C. Have self esteem and confidence grown? Explain ...

Making amends may jeopardize our employment, family relations and personal friendships.

1. Frankness is the best method.
2. When in doubt, seek help from Higher Power, GA group or sponsor; seek guidance.

DISCUSS:

- A. Difference between fear of consequences and shame of apologizing.
 - B. Meaning of "Serenity Prayer."
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