

## **STEP NINE**

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

Step Nine is an action Step. By taking the information we've acquired in the first eight Steps, we begin the process of making amends. We continue the work begun in Step Four—cleaning up the wreckage of our past. The Ninth Step is about our admission of wrongful conduct, a sincere apology, and reasonable reparation. There are many approaches to this Step. Ultimately, how we choose to accomplish it will be a personal choice, guided by our sponsor or spiritual advisor.

The purpose of Step Nine is not to win the admiration of others, but to restore our self-esteem, and further our spiritual growth. The form of our amends may vary, but our attitude is always the same—willingness to take responsibility for our behavior and taking action to right our wrongs.

Although many of us approached this step with hesitation, we found it to be one of the most deeply rewarding and spiritual experiences of our lives. Step Nine doesn't mean that we think less of ourselves; it means we think of ourselves less.

### **Getting Started:**

- Read “Step Nine” in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Nine with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words *justice*, *integrity*, and *reparation*; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what each word means to you.

### **Preparation:**

Many of us have found it helpful to begin by writing letters to each person on our list and reviewing them with our sponsors. This helps ensure that we keep the focus on ourselves and not blame others for our actions. It prevents us from beginning with a sincere apology and ending up with the “yeah, buts.” (For example: “Yeah, I stole your money, but you were cheap.”)

When beginning our letters it is suggested we come clean about our addiction, whenever possible, not as an excuse, but as a potential explanation of our behavior. We make amends for what we have not done, as well as for what we have done—such as isolation and neglect of others.

In some cases we make amends to those that have harmed us, maybe even more than we harmed them. The Ninth Step is about clearing up our side of the street, not taking the inventory of others.

### **Taking Action/Making Amends:**

Whenever possible we make our amends face to face. Some of us use our letters as a script, to make sure we say exactly what we mean to say when making our actual amends. Utilizing the phone, mail or email is sometimes our only option.

In some cases, making an amend might do more harm than good. Again, that is something to be discussed and decided upon with the guidance of our sponsor. Concern about consequences does not excuse us from making amends, unless to do so would injure ourselves, or others. When we owe financial amends to practicing addicts, we seek options for our safety that do not put us at risk for relapse and illegality by being in the proximity of drugs.

Sometimes making direct amends isn't possible. If the person we have harmed has died or is untraceable, we can write a letter and read it to our sponsor and then make an indirect, or living amends. These can include contributing to charities, doing volunteer work, or making an honest change in our behavior towards others.

The Ninth Step is about our apology. It requires no response or forgiveness. However, following our amends, we might encourage feedback, to give the other person an opportunity to express their feelings. Afterwards, we ask if there's anything we can do to make up our for our misbehavior.

The rewards we receive from taking this Step are profound and sublime. Miracles become an everyday reality. The hard work we put into the first nine Steps is a valuable gift. In order to keep that gift, we turn to **STEP TEN**.