

Important Points Regarding Amends & Restitution

Excerpted from the Big Book's explanation of Step 9, pages 76 - 83

Amend type (a) – *The people we hated / resented (page 77:1 – 78:1):*

- ▲ It may be some have done us more harm than we have done them. With a person we dislike, we take the bit in our teeth. It is harder to go to an enemy than a friend, but the benefit is greater.
- ▲ We go to them in a helpful, forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.
- ▲ Under NO condition do we criticize or argue.
- ▲ We are there to sweep off OUR side of the street, realizing that nothing worthwhile can be accomplished until we do so.
- ▲ NEVER try to tell them what they should do. Discuss YOUR faults, not theirs.
- ▲ Be calm, frank, and open.
- ▲ It doesn't matter if they accept the apology or throw us out of their office. We've made our demonstration, done our part.

Amend type (b) – *The people / institutions owed money (page 78:2):*

- ▲ Most (All?) alcoholics owe money.
- ▲ We do not dodge our creditors.
- ▲ In some cases, some of us had to disclose our alcoholism by way of explaining what drove us and what we are now trying to do.
- ▲ We do not try to beat anyone out of anything, but we arrange a deal that we can live up to. Arranging time payments has worked for many of us.
- ▲ Let them know we are sorry. Drinking has made us slow to pay.
- ▲ We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink if we are afraid to face them.

Amend type (c) – *Incidents of criminal offense (page 78:3 – 79:1):*

- ▲ Some of us padded expense accounts, fell behind on child support, wrote bad checks, and committed other offenses of the law, which might land us in jail if it were known to the authorities.
- ▲ We remind ourselves that we MUST be willing to go to ANY lengths to set right these wrongs if we are to stay sober. We don't have the power to do this so we ask God for strength and direction to do the right thing.
- ▲ No matter what the personal consequences may be, we know God will protect us if we try to do the right thing (for a change).
- ▲ We may lose our position or reputation or face jail (though most of us had already experienced that), but we are willing anyway. We have to be. We must not shrink at anything.

Amend type (d) – *When others are involved (page 79:2 – 80:4):*

- ▲ We are not to be the hasty and foolish martyr who would needlessly sacrifice others to save ourselves.
- ▲ Before taking drastic action, which might implicate other people, we secure their consent.
- ▲ If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others, asked God to help and the drastic step is indicated we must not shrink.
- ▲ Sometimes it is better to take these risks than to stand before our Creator guilty of our wrongs.
- ▲ We have to place the outcome in God's hands or we may soon start drinking again, and then all would be lost anyhow.

Amend (e) – *Domestic troubles (page 80:5 – 83:2):*

- ▲ We may be mixed up sexually in a fashion we wouldn't care to have advertised. After years with a drunk, spouses get worn out, resentful, and uncommunicative.
- ▲ We begin to feel lonely, sorry for ourselves. So we look around for "someone who understands", feeling justified, when WE were really the source of the problem in the first place. If we are involved in this way, we often feel very remorseful at times and we have to do something about this.
- ▲ If the spouse does not know, we do not always say it is best to tell them. If they know in a general way that we have been wild, we admit our fault.

- ▲ We feel we ought to say that we have no right to name the people involved even if our spouse insists on knowing all the particulars. We are sorry for what we have done and, God willing, it shall not be repeated. It is better that one does not needlessly name a person upon whom our partner can vent jealousy.
- ▲ Perhaps there are some cases where the utmost frankness is demanded. No outsider can appraise such an intimate situation.
- ▲ It may be that both of you will decide that the way of good sense and loving-kindness is to let by-gones be by-gones. Each might pray about it, having the other one's happiness uppermost in mind.
- ▲ Keep it always in mind that we are dealing with that most horrible human emotion: jealousy. Don't risk more combat over this.
- ▲ Even if we have no such complication as sex outside of the relationship, there is plenty we should do at home.
- ▲ Some alcoholics say that the only thing we need to do is to just keep sober. This isn't true because we are yet a long way from making good to our spouse and family whom for years we have so shockingly treated. Sobriety without amends is NOT enough.
- ▲ We have been like a tornado roaring our way through the lives of others. Hearts are broken. Sweet relationships are dead. Affections have been uprooted. Our selfish and inconsiderate habits have kept the home in turmoil.
- ▲ A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won't fill the bill at all. We sit down with the family and frankly analyze the past as we now see it, being very careful not to criticize any of them. Yes, they may have defects, but the chances are that our own actions are partly responsible for a lot of them.
- ▲ We set right our wrongs with the family, asking each morning in meditation that God show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness, and love. The spiritual life is not a theory. WE HAVE TO LIVE IT.
- ▲ Unless one's family expresses a desire to live upon spiritual principles we think we ought not to urge them. Our behavior will convince them more than our words.

Amend type (f) – *Wrongs we can never fully right (page 83:3):*

Be **very careful** about listing anyone or anything here. We only list someone here if we can HONESTLY say that the wrong cannot be righted, usually when to do so would further injure them or another person. We are **willing** (or pray for the willingness to become willing) to make the amend if we could. This should also be discussed with others practicing this way of life because we are very good at justifying just about anything.

- ▲ We don't worry about them if we can HONESTLY say to ourselves that we would right them if we could.
- ▲ If the case is that they cannot be seen, we write them an honest letter. If they are alive, we send it to them; if they are not we read it to them (perhaps at a place or with a person that we associate with them).
- ▲ There may be a valid reason for postponement in some cases but we don't delay if it can be avoided.
- ▲ We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping. We don't crawl before anyone.

9th Step Prayers from the Big Book

- “Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience, *we ask [God] that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be.*” (pg. 79:1)
- “If we have obtained permission [from other people who might be affected by us making this amend], have consulted with others, *asked God to help* and the drastic step is indicated we must not shrink.” (pg. 80:1)
- “*Each might pray about it* [in cases of domestic problems], *having the other one's happiness uppermost in mind.*” (pg. 82:1)
- “So we clean house with the family, *asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.*” (pg. 83:1)

Examples of 9th Step Prayers

- **Asked before we attempt every amend:** "God, with regard to this amend, please remove my fear and give me strength, courage and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. Amen" (from the thoughts on pg. 79:1)

Cleaning house with our family, we pray each morning: "God, please show me how to find **patience, tolerance, kindness and love** in my heart, my mind and my soul. Please help me show these attributes to my family and also, to those around me. Amen" (from the thoughts on pg. 83:1)

