
District 41 Messenger

FALL – 2019

Addison – Bensenville – Elmhurst - Lombard – Oakbrook Terrace
Villa Park – Wood Dale

The 12 Steps ...STEPS 8 & 9

Editor Note: This series is focusing on theThe Twelve Steps of our Fellowship ...One Step at a Time. This month we explore Steps Eight and Nine. Completion of these steps requires courage and guidance. This newsletter is only a summary of these two important steps. We urge you to get out your Big Book and the 12 & 12 to read and comprehend what our founders have written in more detail

Step Eight ...Made a list of ALL people we have harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

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

☐ Every AA has found we can make little headway in this new adventure of living until we first backtrack and really make an accurate and unsparing survey of the human wreckage we have left in our wake. (12 & 12)

☐ Bungled responsibilities, lost opportunities, disappointed hopes, financial recklessness, lies and evasions, all tend to erode our confidence, undermine affection, and directly harm other people. In other cases, it's the emotional aftermath of addiction – the shame, the blame, and the regret which takes its toll.

☐ Step Eight of AA is the beginning of the process of making amends, forgiving others, and possibly being forgiven by them, in addition to forgiving ourselves. By making a list of the people we harmed and becoming willing to make amends, we take action toward healing the past with others and learning how to live in the world with our head held high, looking people right in the eye. We have the opportunity to translate our experience of courage into developing a compassionate spirit.

☐ We identify the damage we have done to others and list those names. It doesn't matter if the harm we caused was from selfishness, carelessness, anger, arrogance, dishonesty or any other character defect. It does not matter if we didn't intend to cause the harm.

☐ Before we can rebuild relationships, we need to identify the relationships which were damaged. We take responsibility for own part, not someone else's. This is not a list we keep in our heads. We must write it down.

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This Phase of Our Development ...



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Websites

dist41.aa-nia.org
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Alcoholism

The disease that makes
you too selfish to see
the havoc you created
and care about the
people you shattered.



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▣ A sense of great sorrow may come over us as we write our list. We begin to accept how we hurt others and ourselves. Wreaking havoc in the lives of everyone we knew, never being our true selves, we bury some essential part of ourselves. We bury it alive. Remember, it takes time to heal from traumas. As alcoholics we want to rush to the end result. But there is no prize for doing any of the Steps as fast as we can. Impulsively rushing in to make amends can be as detrimental as not making amends. It's never too late, but sometimes it's too early.

▣ Who did I harm? What did I do? How was alcohol involved? What amend am I able to make? See the details of the harms we have done. The 12 & 12 suggests making a second list with the names of those people who have harmed us. Then we forgive them, even if they don't ask to be forgiven. Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of Maximum Service to God and the people about us.

▣ Material wrongs: money, contracts, bills, damage to property. Moral wrongs: involving another in wrong doing or giving a bad example to people who looked to us for guidance, support or love. We become totally unaware of the needs of others. Spiritual wrongs: sins of omission or neglect of obligations. Make direct amends to those concerned. One of the telltale symptoms of alcoholism is behaving in ways which go against your personal values and standards. We must separate ourselves from our disease. We come to understand we are good people who are sick.

▣ Will the person be better off if we attempt to make an amend? We wish no further harm to anyone on our list. Some cases we might just have to live with, perhaps making an indirect amend. We must realize the value of other people. Willingness is what frees us. We have begun to make our peace. Love, courage, tolerance, and is our goal. Our practice requires a Clean Slate.

▣ Steps Eight and Nine help us to move out of the shame we have lived in, shame that feeds the cycle of addiction and substance abuse. We strengthen our recovery whenever we do our part to repair relationships or reach out to others with support and understanding.

▣ So when we become aware of an injury we have caused another person, we gladly bare our soul of wrongdoings so the other person doesn't have to carry around any excess baggage, twisting their mind over and over again trying to make sense of the Mack truck which just ran over them. How blessed we are to become free of our past, and give the gift of freedom another.

▣ Some of our amends may never be done and our efforts may continue throughout our recovery. The truth is, every day we can make an effort to refrain from hurting our families, friends, co-workers, and even strangers. We practice loving behavior with them as we continue our amends. Continuing to pay off debts, refraining from lying, stealing or cheating will be an ongoing Ninth Step practice in our lives.

▣ Step Nine should not be undertaken without first consulting our sponsor, therapist, or spiritual advisor. Period. No exceptions.

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MAKING AMENDS

1. ADMIT YOUR MISTAKE.
2. ASK FOR FORGIVENESS.
3. RECTIFY THE WRONG.
4. CHANGE THE BEHAVIOR.

**It's not how
we make
mistakes, but
how we
correct them
that defines
us.**
Rachel Wolpin
TheGoodVibe.co

**"The readiness to take the
full consequences of our past
acts, and to take
responsibility for the well-
being of others at the same
time, is the very spirit of
Step Nine. (12&12 p83)**

**My past is what
I've been through,
it's not who I am.
It has helped mold
me, but it does
not define me.**
thealcoholic.com

Amends

There are three types of amends available to us.

Direct Amends ...taking personal responsibility for our actions and confronting the person we would like to reconcile with and repair damage we have done.

Indirect Amends ...finding ways to repair damage, which cannot be reversed or undone, by actions such as volunteering and helping others.

Living Amends ...when we show others and ourselves we have made a genuine lifestyle change and are making a commitment to ourselves and those we have hurt to discard our previous destructive behaviors.

The Three R's of the Ninth Step

Restoration means bringing something back to its former state, usually things which have been damaged. This can mean restoring our reputations, and even restoring trust in a relationship.

Resolution as recovering alcoholics means we likely have past experiences which plague us or disturb us in some way. Finding a resolution to these problems means coming up with answers and solutions and laying the disturbance to rest.

Restitution, as it relates to the Ninth Step, is the act of returning something material (or abstract) to its rightful owner.

There may be times when approaching another person directly or seeking to provide restitution could be painful or harmful for that person. There are so many kinds of situations in making amends and they all need to be taken into consideration on an individual basis. We must seek guidance from our sponsors.



EVERYONE
DESERVES A
CHANCE TO
CLEAN UP
THEIR
MISTAKES.

As Bill Sees It...

It is seldom wise to approach an individual and announce we have gone religious. But our man is sure to be impressed with a sincere desire to set right the wrong. We are there to set right the wrong, not to fix the relationship. Our man is going to be more interested in a demonstration of good will than our talk of spiritual discoveries. We don't shy away from the subject of God. When it will serve good purpose, we will be willing to announce our spiritual discoveries.

GSR Meetings

Monthly GSR Meeting is held on the third Thursday of every month at 7 pm in Elmhurst Presbyterian Church 367 Spring Rd at St. Charles Rd

Actions
prove who
someone is,
words just
prove who
they want
to be.

WHEN YOU MESS UP OR
MAKE A MISTAKE,
MAKE YOUR AMENDS,
FORGIVE YOURSELF
AND NOW...
GO DO BETTER!

*This phase of our
development ...*

**Steps Eight and Nine
are the culmination of
the action steps.
Now we are ready for
the results in the form
of The Promises.**

The Back Page

▣ Our entire path of sobriety can be seen as amends to ourselves.

Repairing our connection to the spiritual life

Becoming honest with ourselves and others

* Making Amends*

* Passing on the Gift*

▣ The Steps are in order for a reason. If we practice the 12 Steps in sequence, we are leaving the attitudes, behaviors and past events that marked our alcohol addiction and moving toward the freedom of lasting sobriety. As we move through one step to the next, we are moving farther away from our life as an addict toward a more self-actualized life filled with health, serenity and inner peace. It goes without saying as we go deeper into our step work, the going gets tougher and tougher and we are required to truly dig deep into our past. The eighth and ninth steps can be a transforming moment in our recovery because we make amends to those we have hurt while active alcoholics.

▣ Completing our Ninth Step cannot be contained within a particular time frame. We don't finish our Eighth Step list and then immediately start crossing off "completed" amends like we would for items on a shopping list. In fact, some of our amends may never be done and our efforts may continue throughout our recovery.

**The first nine steps of Alcoholics Anonymous are
doing exactly for us (The Promises)
what alcohol used to do for us
"when alcohol was our friend."**

**We don't drink today because we found everything
good we "thought" alcohol gave us (when it was
killing us) has been replaced by The Promises gained
through our practice of the steps and sober living.**

**The first Nine Steps will never turn against us.
Alcohol will.**

District 41 Messenger is published quarterly by District 41 of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is intended as a service letter to inform district members of service opportunities, events, and experiences relevant to carrying the AA message, in and through service. Opinions expressed herein are those of the contributors and do not necessarily express or reflect the thinking of Alcoholics Anonymous, District 41, or the editor. This newsletter is a confidential document. Please do not take it to jails, treatment centers, etc.

Editor's Note: The words of guidance in this newsletter are taken from years of scribbling in notebooks after listening to meeting comments and reading books. I don't often remember exactly where comments come from, and every paragraph has a little from one place and a little from another to promote fluidity. BUT, I can make a list of some references from my book shelf. "Shift Happens" by Robert Holden, Ph.D. "Drop the Rock" by Bill P. and Todd W. "Carry this Message" by Joe McQ. "The Steps We Took" by Joe McQ "Understanding the 12 Steps" by Terrence Gorski. "Emotional Resilience" by David Viscott, Ph.d "The Spirituality of Imperfection" Kertz & Ketcham, Joe & Charles Big Book Studies and The Twelve & Twelve and The Big Book along with numerous on-line AA sites.

The Dreaded

EIGHT and NINE

The slow drip of remorse, or the sudden agony of a memory which springs to life may leave us cringing. Or they sap our strength with painful memories of what once was or might have been. On the days when such regrets come back they suck the life out of us and turn us into the the walking wounded.

While working the steps something happens to us, a gradual but radical shift from shame, guilt and denial to openness, acceptance and honesty.

Revealing ourselves to ourselves and others frees us from having to hide parts of ourselves . Embracing the honesty of the steps, our practice requires a Clean Slate ...free of excessive guilt and worries.

Our steps transmute from a burden to a joy; from a dreaded task to a freeing leap; from drudgery to vital activity.

(Editor Note) Information on upcoming workshops, reports, contacts, and other information can be found on our D41 website. It is the responsibility of GSRs (Group Service Representatives) to provide flyers and information to their groups. If you do not have a GSR for your group please choose your representative so they may attend the monthly meetings on the Third Thursday of every month.



Good, sober is.

Willingness followed by Action