

9th Step Amends Suggestion (Part A)

A few reminders:

- Willingness is the key and where the healing truly comes from, not doing the actual amends. That you are willing to make amends is what Higher Power uses to continue to change your heart which is where the real change is needed. As we've said, the 'problem' is in us. It's not 'out there'.
- The amends is *not an apology*. Rather, it is taking accountability for our harmful actions and *repairing the damage* (p. 76, Big Book). And because that is the purpose, you don't need nor should you ask for "forgiveness" from the other person. If the person you've harmed chooses to forgive you, great. But there is no obligation on their part towards you.
- Your intention should be to make direct amends wherever possible - face to face, video or over the phone. Writing someone a letter or text is not the approach that we'll use. In some cases, that won't be possible, however you can still write out the amends and ask your Higher Power how you might deliver it (you can read it to fellows in a meeting or recite it to me or as a prayer, for example).
- Avoid using the words "Sorry" or "I'm Sorry." For most people affected by our behaviors, these words have lost all meaning. It's usually better to say, "I deeply regret my actions", "I am ashamed of the way I treated you", or "You did not deserve that kind of mistreatment."
- At no point in the conversation do we discuss the other person's wrongs or shortcomings. We are only cleaning up our side of the street. "Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person entirely" (p.67)
- We do not use this process as an excuse to unburden ourselves, with or without permission.
- Give space after the amends for the other person to let Higher Power work through them. We try not to jump into other topics of conversation, make new plans, or engage in activities with the person that same day.

A few instructions:

1. Start with the easiest ones first.

2. Write out the amends in a document first, without any intention of sending (to release the feelings out and organize thoughts). Sign your name at the bottom of each letter.
3. You'll discuss your first one with me before delivering. More difficult amends we should also discuss before you do them.
4. If possible, send a text or email to the person receiving the amends explaining that you want to make right the past. We don't go into detail on this first approach. We say that are working to repair past harms and ask if they would be open to a conversation.
5. Bookend the amends process. Text someone before and have a fellow or me setup a time to talk with you after.

Written Amends Template Components:

- "I have been on a reflective journey lately, seeking to straighten out my past. May I reveal a past harm to you?"
- (if they ask why): "I am in a spiritual program and will not get over my challenges until I have straightened out my past"
- "In my relationship with you, I felt I have harmed you in these exact ways"
- "Is my understanding of the harm to you correct?"
- "Is there anything else I am leaving out or forgetting?"
- "Is there anything I can do to set things right?"
- (if not wishing to be in contact afterward): "Thank you for providing this opportunity to talk today. I wish you all the greatest success in the future."

Before making Amends:

- Use emotions wheel to get in touch with feelings
- Pray for the other persons happiness and well-being (we never pray for ourselves unless others will be helped (p.87, BB))
- Check-in with sponsor or a trusted fellow if you feel uneasy before doing the amends. Schedule a follow-up for afterwards.

Remember, we are no longer running the show. Our Step 3 decision means we are living in consultation with our Higher Power and the fellowship.

How we should be during an Amends (p. 83, BB):

- Sensible
- Tactful
- Considerate
- Humble

...without being:

- Servile
- Scraping