

Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.

Tradition 9. SA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Promise 9. Our whole attitude and outlook on life will change.

Reward 9. Real friendships instead of loneliness

Readings:

White Book:	126-128
AA Big Book:	76-84
12 and 12:	83-87
Step into Action	131-144

Ninth Step Prayer

Higher Power,
I pray for the right attitude to make my amends,
being ever mindful not to harm others in the process.
I ask for Your guidance in making indirect amends.
Most important, I will continue to make amends
by staying sober, helping others &
growing in spiritual progress.

The Big Book, the White Book, the 12&12 and Step Into Action have excellent recommendations about this important step. One point which is stressed consistently is the importance of consideration for the welfare of others. Before contacting the person to whom you are making amends, make sure to discuss with your sponsor the exact wrong(s) you have done and exactly how you will make the amends. Perhaps anyone who believes himself (or herself) capable of navigating this difficult step alone needs to repeat Steps 4 through 7 on the character defect of arrogance. When approaching someone you have already harmed (perhaps grievously) to make amends, you need to be very certain that you do not injure this person more deeply. For some of the more difficult amends, it is recommended to write down what you and your sponsor decide to say to the person and stick closely to the script during the actual amends. An index card can jog your memory so that you don't try to justify your actions or forget to address (or chicken out) the more serious, painful wrongs you have committed. The Big Book addresses the consideration of others such as spouses or children who may be harmed by your revelation of past misdeeds. Discussion of these difficult situations with your sponsor can prevent doing additional harm to others. It might be wise to discuss the other

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persons' response to what they think will set the wrong right (amends) with your sponsor before taking action.

The Big Book emphasizes the importance of making amends to *all* the persons we have harmed. This includes enemies who may have harmed us more than we harmed them, creditors, former spouses, everyone. Some have gone to cemeteries and made graveside amends to those they had harmed. Others have committed to only speak kindly of those deceased whom they have strong resentments for, especially parents. The Big Book also addresses amends for illegal actions, and the willingness to accept the consequences of our actions. It is important to address financial and legal difficulties with the courage and rigorous honesty described in our literature. Evading consequences because of concern for ourselves is not in the letter the spirit of this step. Failure to confront these fears, may continue to hound us and contribute to feelings of restlessness, irritability and discontentedness and will hinder our chances to realize the Promises promised in Step 9. Once we have confronted the fear, accepted the consequences of our misbehavior, and made the best amends we can, these fears lose their power.

During this step we confront the fear, resentment, guilt, and shame from our past. As these feelings lose their power, the Promises we often hear read in meetings are realized:

"If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past or wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit to others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves."

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us – sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them." (Alcoholics Anonymous, pages 83 & 84)

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This is also where we start to realize the Rewards of the Program including:

Hope instead of desperation, Faith instead of despair, Courage instead of fear. Peace of mind instead of confusion. Self-respect instead of self-contempt. Self-confidence instead of helplessness. The respect of others instead of their pity and contempt. A clean conscience, instead of a sense of guilt. Real friendship instead of loneliness. A clean pattern of life instead of a purposeless existence. The love and understanding of family and friends instead of their doubts and fears. The freedom of a happy life instead of the bondage of a sexaholic obsession.