

Step Nine: Making Amends.

I Don't do That Anymore

By Rick R.

What do we mean when we say, *make amends*? I've heard various explanations of this process and any, or all, of them are probably better than doing nothing at all, as we have time to revise our understanding of this and include anything we may have overlooked. I've also heard differing ideas about who we need to make amends to. A lot of these questions are left up to the interpretation of the individual taking the step. What are we trying to accomplish by making amends? To me the guiding principle in this is, as I understand it, in the first paragraph in Step 8 in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12) where it says, "We consider how, with our new-found knowledge of ourselves, we may develop *the best possible relations with every human being we know.*" Then in the second paragraph it says, "Learning how to live in the *greatest peace*, partnership, and brotherhood with all men and women, of whatever description, is a *moving and fascinating adventure.*" These are the two statements that inspire me and influence my acceptance and expectations of others. It does not mean that I must be friends with people that are unreasonable with me. To me it means that I must withdraw from those situations as gracefully as I can, without being critical of people that have problems of their own, and that may be the best relationship possible. I must have spiritual integrity when navigating these awkward situations. Making amends becomes clearer to me as I review steps 6 and 7 where we go about the changing of old habits which have caused us regrets in the past, therefore, amending my behavior, or if you like, *living amends*. This doesn't dismiss my responsibility to address it verbally with the person involved, but, if I still practice that same old behavior with other people and I haven't changed, I find it fruitless to make amends to this person. It would only tarnish my credibility in future amends. If, however, I can add a few simple words to the end of the "**I regret what I did back then**" and those words are, "**and I don't do that anymore, what can I do to make it right?**" Now *that's an amends*. The promises come true "if we are painstaking about this phase of our development." Now comes the question, who do I **need** to make amends to? With a healthy attitude and perseverance over a long period of time in this "fascinating adventure," I look forward to cleaning the slate with anyone that I feel any discomfort about. Peace of mind is my goal. The next time I get a chance to talk to someone that I still have unfinished business with, I might say, "Have you ever done something that you regretted? And he might say, "Sure I have, who hasn't?" Now that I have a level playing field, I say, "Can we talk?" He may want to take this opportunity to clear up something of his own.

WHY NOT? I have taken responsibility for the mistakes that I have made, I have corrected them to the best of my understanding, and I feel very good about my efforts. I am no longer ashamed about anything I do; thanks to the things I have learned in AA. The only thing that could stop from Making Amends at this time is my EGO, and I'm just not going to let that happen.