

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

**Questions as we read:**

1. Discuss the types of amends as described: Now, Later, Partial / Shouldn't, Can't (p83/84)
2. When do we start making amends? (p84)
  - a. What are some direct amends to make as soon as we are reasonably confident in our sobriety, vs. amends we ought to wait to make?
3. How do you actually approach making an amends? What is the process you've used? What are you responsible for? What are you NOT responsible for? (p84/85)
4. What were some of the experiences/reactions you got when making your first amends? (p85)
5. What are some potential pitfalls in making an amends, and how have you dealt with them? (p85)
  - a. People not accepting amends
  - b. Losing willingness / Fear
6. Share your experience with amends where:
  - a. The person is dead
  - b. You don't know the person's name, or can't find them after really trying to
  - c. Other amends that fall into the "Can't" category

**Deferred** Put off (an action or event) to a later time; postpone. (p83)

**Deflect** Cause to change direction; turn aside from a straight course. (p85)

**Dilemma** A situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two or more alternatives, especially ones that are equally undesirable. (p87)

**Discretion** The quality of behaving or speaking in such a way as to avoid causing offence or revealing confidential information. (p84)

**Evasion** The action of evading something. (p85)

**Harrowing** Acutely distressing. (p84)

**Insatiable** (of an appetite or desire) impossible to satisfy. (p85)

**Plausible** (of an argument or statement) seeming reasonable or probable. (p85)

**Preliminary** Preceding or done in preparation for something fuller or more **Prudence** The quality of being prudent; cautiousness. (p83)

**Remorse** Deep regret or guilt for a wrong committed. (p86)

**Restitution** The restoration of something lost or stolen to its proper owner. (p83)

**"Rest on our Laurels"** Be so satisfied with what one has already done or achieved that one makes no further effort. (p85)

**Reviling** Criticize in an abusive or angrily insulting manner. (p84)  
important. (p85)

**Wallow** indulge in an unrestrained way in something that one finds pleasurable (p86)

## Step 9 // Twelve and Twelve Notes

### **Direct vs Indirect/Living Amends**

The Ninth Step tells us to make direct amends wherever possible. Our experience tells us to follow up those direct amends with long - lasting changes in our attitudes and our behavior - that is, with indirect amends. For example, say we've broken someone's window because we were angry. Looking soulfully into the eyes of the person whose window we've broken and apologizing would not be sufficient. We directly amend the wrong we've done by admitting it and replacing the window - we mend what we have damaged.

Then, we follow up our direct amends with indirect amends. If we've acted out on our anger, breaking someone's window, we examine the patterns of our behavior and our attitudes. After we repair the broken window, we seek to repair our broken attitudes as well - we try to "mend our ways." We modify our behavior, and make a daily effort not to act out on our anger.

We make direct amends by repairing the damage we do. We make indirect amends by repairing the attitudes that cause us to do damage in the first place, helping insure we won't cause further damage in the future.

### **How do amends differ from apologies?**

An amend has to do with restoring justice as much as possible. The idea is to restore in a direct way that which we have broken or damaged—or to make restoration in a symbolic way if we can't do it directly. Say, for example, that I borrowed 20 dollars from you and never paid you back. If I go up to you and say, "Gee, I'm sorry I borrowed your 20 dollars and spent it on drugs," that would be an apology. Making amends is giving your money back to you.

### **Why does Step Nine suggest that people avoid direct amends in certain cases?**

For instance, you don't run home and say to your spouse, "Gee honey, I had a wonderful time in treatment. I learned all about rigorous honesty, so I want to apologize to you for an affair I had five years ago." That's clearing your conscience at the expense of someone else who's going to feel terrible. In this case, your amend can be an indirect one. Stop having affairs and bring your heart, your energy, and your attention back home where it belongs.

### **Are direct amends simply impossible at times?**

Yes. Say, for example, that someone gets drunk, drives, and kills somebody in a traffic accident. You can't go back and "unkill" the person who died. Instead, you can fill out an organ donor card. This is an indirect amend that can give life back to someone in the future. Remember that with crimes such as drunk driving, people might need to go to court and take a punishment. That's part of making amends as well.