

9th Step

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

The thought of having to make direct amends to people that I had harmed didn't sit too well with me. On some of these people I felt that they owed me an amends, and not the other way around. That was fear disguised as pride within me. The sincere act of making direct amends to those I had harmed was spiritually uplifting. It was also a full release from the fear, guilt, and emotional blockage that hindered the path to true serenity within me.

Each opportunity that I get to make a direct amends gives me additional release, and a better understanding of my true self. In the instances that a direct amends could truly not be made I had to leave it in the hands of God.

My list of persons that I had harmed came from my fourth step, fifth step, and eighth step. My sponsor helped me determine who, on my list, I could start to work on. This saved me from my own pride, and faulty relationships that I had caused. Gradually I was able to "Let go and let God" cause the right circumstances to arise for the amends I could not make directly. I have found that time is not important for the ninth step, but true sincerity is.

I have learned to recognize that pride also makes me want to run out and make amends instantly because of the feeling of approval I get from the act itself. As I learn self-restraint in my own skin I realize that there is a time and a place for all beneficial action in working the ninth step.

I have also learned that not all persons on my ninth step are going to be, or have been receptive to my new-found path in life. Some of them may be where I was when I was laid low in my alcoholism. They may not be receptive at all. I pray for them, and move on to help another if possible.

One man I went to make an amends with had sunk so low in his alcoholism that he wanted me to give him money as an amends. He didn't know what I was even trying to do. I gave him money, but I did not consider the amends to be made by me. If he finds what I now have in AA then I will attempt it again. Another man ran me off with the threat of serious injury, but I considered the amends to be made because of my sincerity to the task (and he had a gun).

When I begin an amends I ask the person "What can I reasonably do to make the situation right?" If it is within my power, and it is reasonable then I do it. I never try to gloss-over the

harm I have done by giving lip service such as “I’m sorry about all that, let’s shake hands and forget about it.” That is insincere, and sanctimonious.

The most cherished amends I have been blessed to be able to make is the amends I made directly with my father. What a forgiving man he is. I love him very much.

The ninth step has given me an adjustment to reality that I sorely needed, and am entirely grateful to have.

- *Anonymous* -