

OA Desert Recovery

Step Nine Principle: **LOVE**
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By Jenny R.

The Principle of **LOVE** in Step Nine became real to me by the time I had worked through Steps One through Eight during the inventory process. “Giving it away,” I looked at “my part” and my wrongs and sought God’s help and grace to address my needed amends. This action prepared me to acquire the right-hearted spirit to *act* on Step Nine. Making direct and sincere amends to those I had harmed, with a calm and peaceful approach, I admitted my exact wrongs. I then committed, from then on, to change my behavior and attitudes by making ongoing living amends.

For me, Step Nine is an intimacy step. By not avoiding others out of shame or guilt, but by becoming closer to them and to God by acting from **LOVE** as our literature states in Step Nine instructions, we strive to have the best possible relations with every person we know, every single day.

By Becki B.

Making a relationship better, overcoming ego, is all about **LOVE**. If I do not want to feel **LOVE**, instead of resentment, I won’t bother with amends. My sister was in town for our joint birthdays. My son and daughter-in-law drove down, too. As I was driving through the neighborhood, a car pulled out of a side street, right in front of me. I flipped him off and honked. My son started lecturing about how the guy could be dangerous, on and on... repeatedly saying how wrong I was. I got royally ticked, told him to shut up, loudly. We later hugged and said we **LOVED** each other. If I want **LOVING** relationships, I need to amend my behavior, not allowing old fears and defenses to rule my reactions. I need to be always in conscious contact with my Higher Power. It is from the comfort of that serenity that true change is possible. And, with the changes inside myself, I can truly **LOVE** others.

By Margy E.

Having only five months under my belt, I'm still a newbie and was honored to be asked to write some thoughts on the Step Nine Spiritual Principle: **LOVE**.

The purpose of Step Nine is to relieve ourselves of guilt and sour feelings towards anyone we may have harmed in order to build healthy relationships once again. Some people won't be willing to accept our good intentions, but that's their issue and it won't stop us from healing, if we do our part by releasing them with **LOVE**. This Step involves a sincere apology, straight from our hearts. It may also include "living amends" where we make lifestyle changes, acting in a new way towards them, to prove our sincerity. Sometimes it will be necessary to make amends anonymously, not for us to avoid being embarrassed, but to avoid hurting others. We need to carefully choose all those we have hurt in the past or we would be depriving ourselves of complete healing and a sense of freedom.

In my case, I've had to make amends to two relatives who have already passed on. Of course, I now wish I had done so while they were still alive. My sponsor encouraged me to write out what I would have said and how I would have changed my behavior with each of them. She then encouraged me to either burn or tear the letter up. What a feeling of relief came over me as I let go of the ill will, the resentments, and the hurt which had taken place over many years. In gaining the freedom I sought, I was clearly giving myself the gift of **LOVE!**



By Janet R.

You develop a servant heart by serving. As you grow in **LOVE** and compassion, you develop a servant heart. It's like developing muscles. It takes training and repetition. It becomes automatic to care about others. The St Francis prayer becomes a way of life.

God did a number on my heart. His **LOVE** was demonstrated. The sooner I realized it was not about me, the sooner I became a servant. The greatest gift is a servant heart. It's who we become. Freely received, freely given.



By Cindy S.

While hiking on this Twelve Step recovery pathway, it's crazy how much "action" I have had to take! It seems like for all those years I was sedentary and complacent, while engaged in compulsive eating, "action" was the last thing I ever considered! Acquiring my "alcoholic foods" and bending my elbow to mouth was about my only "action". During those food (destructive) years (65 to be exact), my spiritual connection was pretty much nonexistent. The pilot light was always on, but I never turned the dial up to fully ignite it. Much of the **LOVE**, which I believed I had for others, was quite conditional. I was always expecting a "payback" in some form or another.

When I came face to face with Step Nine, I realized that I would never have peace and serenity with food until I made amends owed to those I had harmed. I clearly visualized my resentments as giant obstructions: big trees, downed across my pathway, blocking the way to my contact with HP. I had to take action; remove the obstructions; face those people where possible; make right my past harms, either by direct or living amends. An important action on my part was to release with **LOVE** those people for whom I held resentments. Several of my amends involved friends/family who had already passed. In these cases, I wrote letters to these folks, expressing what I had done, giving my heartfelt apology and the corrective actions I am now implementing in my daily life. In short, I wrote how I have changed my thinking and behaviors.

Practicing the spiritual Principle of **LOVE** is something I've been doing throughout my recovery, just by abstaining from my "alcoholic foods." By Step Nine, I had eliminated many of the destructive attitudes, perspectives, and feelings I used to have, which makes room for **LOVE** in my life. As I become filled with **LOVE**, I find the need to share it in the form of nurturing my relationships, building new ones, and by selflessly sharing my recovery, time, and resources with others.

What I now understand about the Ninth Step is that:

- ✓ I needed courage
- ✓ My faith had to replace my fear
- ✓ Steps One through Eight provided my firm foundation, those solid, "faith building blocks"
- ✓ I had to rely on a Power greater than myself to complete my amends
- ✓ I realized that **LOVE** allowed me to complete this step
- ✓ **LOVE** of others. And guess what? That included me!



*“The remedy of all blunders,
the cure of blindness, the cure
of crime, is **LOVE**.”*

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

By Joy V'M.

LOVE. I remember when my first boyfriend, five-year-old John from my 1st grade class, told me that he **LOVED** me and gave me a kiss on the cheek. My parents weren't really kissy people, and I don't remember getting a lot of hugs, so I knew that this must be true **LOVE**. I didn't change that notion for quite some time.

So, what is this **LOVE** thing? Is it physical, spiritual, or emotional? The answer is yes. Just like this program. Each one needs the other two. If physical **LOVE** is missing, I believe that affects both emotional and spiritual **LOVE**. The same thing goes for emotional **LOVE**. If two people are not connected in that way, can it be called true **LOVE**, braiding the other two with it? And that spiritual connection – when God is involved. In many marriage ceremonies, God seals the union. I don't know whatever happened to John. We live an ocean apart. It is my hope, though, that all of the boys who have kissed me have found true **LOVE**. There's nothing like it.

Editor's Note: The focus for the October newsletter will be the principle for Step Ten – **PERSEVERANCE**. Your submissions will be gratefully received when you send it via email to newsletter@oasouthernaz.org by Friday, October 13th. ~Judy

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