

OA Desert Recovery

September 2022 - Step Nine

**“MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHEREVER POSSIBLE,
EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS.”**

[Spiritual Principle: Love]

I stole office supplies throughout my career: copy paper, file folders, pads of paper, yellow highlighters, pens, paper clips, post-its. I justified my actions. I told myself that the Federal Government, my employer, would not miss the items. When I came back to OA after years of relapse and worked the steps, I knew that I had to make amends for my actions. I thought about how to make amends. I still had some of the stolen supplies. I wasn't sure exactly what I stole or its value. I wasn't working at that office anymore. I did not know how to make amends. I discussed the situation with my sponsor. I decided to put some of the stolen office supplies which I still had in the supply room of my current office (also the Federal Government but a different branch.) I donated the rest of the stolen office supplies to a local women's shelter. I did the best I could. I made amends. ~Lauren M.

The urgency of proving myself right: Do I have the same urgency to make amends as I had to prove a point? Do I have the same urgency to clean up my past as I had to prove myself right? Do I still battle self-justification for the situation? Do I WANT to sweep my side of the street clean?

This is the only way I can reach out my hand to you, the only way I can look you in the eyes, the only way I can carry out my primary purpose. What stops me from reaching out to you? I had guilt, shame, resentment, and anger. As long as I carry those things around with me, I am never free to care unconditionally. ~Janet

I was very nervous to make amends to my sister about something really horrible I had done. I planned what to say, reviewed it with my sponsor, and practiced it. She had no idea what I was talking about- didn't remember it at all! It really showed me how self-centered and distorted my thinking had been!

My hardest amends was a financial one to my parents. I borrowed \$1000 to replace a broken refrigerator but was to pay it back within a few months. Then we cut off contact with each other for almost 10 years. I didn't want to make the amends, because I didn't want to have to admit I had done anything wrong when they had never admitted anything they did wrong. My sponsor said it was about cleaning up my side of the street, not theirs. So, I wrote a check with a letter. I felt free instead of guilty or resentful. ~Michelle S.

A friend mentioned to me that other people's expectations are not my responsibility. I suppose I had heard this, but as with everything, it did not click until it was time to hear it. I had made amends for an outburst, one of those times when I really should have practiced the pause. But, although the other party said the apology was accepted, the relationship did not feel mended. All I could do at that time was practice another program tenet and act as if everything was okay.

Doing amends, as suggested in Step Nine, does no good if we still bear hard feelings. If I want to repair a relationship, I must forgive and forget. I know that is not the case when resentments keep coming back, even after using the resentment prayers (pp.67 & 551, *Big Book*). So, how do I accomplish removal of resentment? I can only give my own experience. First of all, I must accept those I resent exactly as they are; just as I want them to accept me as I am. I remind myself that God loves them, just as God loves me – warts, defects, and all. Finally, I recognize that resentment removes me from serenity. And I truly miss that serenity. Being right, rationalizing their guilt, hiding behind ego, none of those feels as good as inner peace. Repeated use of this sequence, along with prayer, puts me in forgiveness.

When I had acceptance and forgiveness, for them and for me, I felt the relationship was mended. ~Becki B.