

Session Three A

Let's take some time here to practice preparing and giving a **Direct** amends. The materials being used for this 3A session are taken from Amends, Apologies, and the Myths of Forgiveness, by Steven C. Choose one person from your Eighth step amends list and complete the reflection worksheet. Using this worksheet as your guide, you may want to follow either the BTBR guideline for making amends or the 8 step guideline provided by Steven C. Practice delivering your amends to your sharing partner. Sharing partner should role-play the recipient of the amends and then offer suggestions and/or advise back.

BTBR Amends should include

- A. Here's what I have done wrong.
- B. An apology for this.
- C. What I propose to do to make it up.
- D. An invitation for the person to add anything else they feel you did to cause harm or if they want to discuss something more.

Steven C. Amends Guide

- 1. This is what I did
- 2. This is how I believe it was harmful to you
- 3. This is how I felt about it at the time
- 4. This is how I feel about it now
- 5. These are the character defects that were involved
- 6. This is how I would do it differently today
- 7. This is how I am amending my behavior
- 8. This is how I propose to make reparations/make it up to you/make it right (This final part may not always be possible)

Break for time to prepare and share.

Welcome back. How was this experience for you?

The last thing I want to say is that the decision to receive whatever we have to offer in our direct amends and the form in which the offering comes must be in the hands of the person to whom we are offering it. At the very least, we owe them the respect and dignity of making this decision for themselves, regardless of our wishes. To that end you should consider preceding your amends by offering it with a letter or email which states your intentions and asks the intended recipients whether they are willing to receive them and, if so, in what form they wished that to be. Here is a generic form of the initial communication as a possible format; the format you choose should be a collaboration between you and your sponsor.

Dear _____

As you may or may not be aware, I have been involved in a program of recovery from addiction for the last _____. The work in that program includes owning up to the mistakes and wrongdoing of my past, and offering amends to persons I have harmed.

I believe that you are one of the people who was harmed by my behavior in active addiction. If you are willing, I would like an opportunity to offer you amends for that behavior.

Although I would like to make these amends face-to-face, I am willing to do this in any fashion that is acceptable to you (by phone, email or letter)—or not at all if that is your preference. What's most important is owning my part in what went on between us, and hearing any response that you care to make.

My address and phone number are at the bottom of this letter; my email address is _____. If I don't hear from you in two weeks, I will mail you a letter or send you an email that contains my amends to you.

Thanks for taking the time to consider this, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

I've included another sample of the possible wording for a **Living** amends. (taken from

I acknowledge that what I did was wrong (or harmful, or inappropriate, or unwarranted, etc). I accept full responsibility for my actions, I express to you my sincere remorse for my behavior, and I offer you my solemn commitment to do my best, in this moment and in all movements moving forward, to not live that way anymore; to not treat another human being the way I treated you

Person harmed

What did I do?

How do I believe
I did harm?
done it differently?

How am i
amending my
behavior?

How did I feel
about it then?

How do I feel
about it now?

Character defects
involved?

How would I have

Amends,
reparations, and
acts of
accountability?

Person: Name of the person harmed

What did I do?

A detailed account of the behavior(s), done with transparency and rigorous honesty .

How do I believe I did harm?

The phrasing of this question is not accidental: recognize that you are doing your best to *imagine* the impact of your behavior on the other person. Do not presume to know how they actually felt or what the harm actually was—-assuming we knew what other people were feeling may well have been one of our character defects.

How did I feel about it then?

From the place you are today, do your best to re-experience the emotional mindset of your addictive self. This could run the gamut from positive emotions to negative. This is not self-abuse. The ability to dispassionately observe the addictive process at work is a valuable defense.

How do I feel about it now?

If you are experiencing shame and/or guilt at this point, notice that and welcome it as a healthy contrast to whatever delusional state you were in when actively engaging in the behavior. If you feel yourself spinning into a shame spiral, STOP, reach out for support, and offer up a prayer for the part of you that once felt a need to behave this way. Touch into your compassion for the poor, lost being who once believed this was the only way he/she could move safely through the world. Marvel at your ability to actually feel today, and offer up your gratitude for a healthy heart that experiences honest emotions.

Character defects involved?

Review the list of character defects from your Fourth Step moral inventory and/or your Sixth and Seventh Steps; which ones were activated here?

How would I have done it differently?

Knowing what you know today, as the person you are today, how would you have responded to that set of circumstances in a way that reflects your healing and your higher self?

How am I amending my behavior?

What steps are you taking today that reflect the changes in beliefs and attitudes you have undergone since entering recovery and that help ensure you will never treat anyone like this again.

Amends, reparations, and acts of accountability?

What, if anything, can you do to make amends for the harm caused by your behavior?