



# *RECOVERY ROAD ONLINE*

## **RECOVERY STEP EIGHT**

**ZOOM UP THE HIGHWAY OF HOPE**



# WORKING THE RECOVERY STEPS

## “STEP EIGHT”

Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all

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Spiritual Principle: **FORGIVENESS**

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## EIGHTH STEP PRAYER

Higher Power,  
I ask Your help in making my list of all those I have harmed. I will take responsibility for my mistakes and be forgiving to others as You are forgiving to me. Grant me the willingness to begin my restitution. This I pray.

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## STEP EIGHT

### MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WE HAD HARMED AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL

While Steps Eight and Nine are closely related, it is important that we work them each separately. Although it may be difficult, while working Step Eight, we should try to avoid thinking ahead to the actual making of the amends that takes place in Step Nine. If we start having imaginary conversations in our head with the people on our list, we often become so full of fear that we become unable to focus on working this step. It should also be noted that this step is just about becoming willing to make amends. The reality is that some of these people on our list we may not actually ever have to contact! That issue will be further explored in Step Nine.

The first part of Step Eight should actually be pretty straightforward. We listed all of the people we had harmed because of our sex conduct, financial dishonesty, and other thoughtless behavior in the Fourth Step, when we completed worksheets 4C, 4D, and 4E.

The second part of the step – became willing to make amends to them all, is usually the more difficult. In the first place, what exactly do we mean by the phrase “make amends”? Is this just hurriedly mumbling “I’m Sorry”? Unfortunately, it is usually more than this.



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This really means that we are now willing to make restitution to someone for the harm we have caused. The amends is about making things right and changing our behavior, so we don't repeat the harms. In the case of a financial harm, this typically means we have to pay back the money we owe. However, with other harms, this may not be so straightforward. The reality is that the exact nature of the amends usually has to be determined on a case-by-case basis and that process we will explore more fully in Step Nine.

This step is how we begin this new life of focusing on "keeping our side of the street clean". We no longer concern ourselves with our neighbors across the street that don't always mow their lawns or rake their leaves. Whatever harms (real or imagined) we think might have been done to us, are irrelevant to working Steps Eight and Nine. A common obstacle therefore of our completing Step Eight is "Forgiveness". When we think about a broken relationship with another person, often our emotions go on the defensive. To avoid admitting the harms we have done others, we instead often focus on the wrongs that they have done us. Indeed, sometimes the other person has behaved quite badly, and we believe that fully justifies anything we might have done to retaliate.



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However, this line of thinking is not compatible with our new way of looking at the world. We now have a simple choice to make – would we rather be right or be happy? This step is not about judging another person’s behavior. It is about achieving our own peace of mind. We have resigned from our position as supreme ruler of the universe and have made a decision to let our Higher Power run things, including being the arbiter of another person’s behavior.

Other people are certainly going to do things that we disapprove of – including hurting us. Sometimes these harms to us are intentional and sometimes they are not. As we discovered in our Fourth Step Resentments Worksheet (4A), sometimes these harms to us are severe, but more often than not they are pretty trivial. Before we can become willing to make amends for our behavior, we must first learn how to forgive others for their behavior. We must remember that in many cases, we are dealing with people who have also suffered in life and that often we made that suffering worse. We must treat these people the way we would treat a sick friend. Often before we can move forward, we must apply the valuable tool we used in our Fourth Step inventory – praying for those for whom we carry resentments.



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If we should also try to take comfort in the mistaken belief that we were the only person that we hurt with our behavior, we should again review our Fourth Step worksheets. Typically, with our gambling behavior we were cyclones in the lives of others – creating havoc and destruction with whomever we met. Because we were so selfish and self-centered around our gambling obsession, we rarely noticed the wreckage we caused in the lives of others. As much as we tried to delude ourselves that we were just trying to win money to help our families and friends, the reality is that we were just feeding our own selfish gambling addiction.

More than likely the truth was that we often dreaded having to spend time with our family and friends and we were secretly plotting how to get away so we could return to action. We can also no longer delude ourselves with the notion that no one noticed this behavior. In addition to the financial harms we did, these are the types of thoughtless acts we engaged in on a pretty regular basis. We must now become willing to make amends for these harms as well.

At this point, we should again review our worksheets 4C, 4D, and 4E. Then we should add any other people to this list that we have



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either forgotten, or after further consideration, we now realize should be added. Finally, with each name on each worksheet, we must be honestly willing to make amends. If there are any people on these worksheets to whom we are still not willing to make amends, we should pray for the willingness and discuss with our sponsor.

Once we have expressed willingness to make amends to all of these people, we are ready to move on to Step Nine.

