

STEP EIGHT

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

Step Eight was the beginning of mending our relationships, both with ourselves and others. It prepared us to venture out from the relative safety of the Fellowship. We would begin to interact with others in a new way.

The amends which this step got us ready to make were not merely to be apologies, as some of us thought. Rather, the amends called for in this Step included changes in our behavior.

These amends were not to be made until we were willing to face each person we had harmed and acknowledge our wrongdoing. We were guided to work each step, as written. A half-baked approach would not do the job.

Made A List

As with each element of the CoDA program, there was a logical sequence for us to follow. In the first half of Step Eight we were asked to list everyone who had been harmed by our personal unmanageability. Our name came first and the reason was obvious. We had been the least able to escape from our own co-dependence, and therefore, in most cases, we received the greatest injuries. A change in behavior toward ourselves would have to come first.

If we had been physically, emotionally, sexually, or spiritually abused as children, it was especially important for us to be diligent and clear in making this list. We needed to

look carefully at each of our relationships to discover if someone else had been made to pay the price for what had been done to us as children. Again, we found that our name, while not the only one of the list, came first. Although nothing we could have possibly done as children ever warranted the abuse we'd received, what was important here, was to discover if **we** had harmed ourselves or others as a way of venting our rage, grief, or hurt at these past injustices.

Became Willing To Make Amends To Them ALL

Many of us discovered we had resistance to this Step. We found reasons to leave names off of our list. An infraction was thought to be too small to mention, or the person not important enough to bother with. Or we may have listed someone to whom we were unwilling to make amends. Perhaps we had done something for which we were never caught. Why rock the boat? In some cases the person might be hard to find, in other cases, dead.

Ultimately, none of these reasons worked. If a name belonged on the list, we reasoned we would find a way to become willing to make the amends.

And willingness was again our key. Step Eight was not the Step in which we would face those we had wronged. The purpose of Step Eight was to focus our attention on becoming ready to face those we had harmed. And it was in becoming willing that we got stuck. We wondered what action we could take to prepare ourselves for this new task.

We found asking these questions to be helpful: What would my motive be in making amends to those I have harmed? Would it be to clear my conscience, to rid myself of old guilts? Or do I want to acknowledge my wrongdoings as a step in altering my behavior? Can I count on myself to avoid using this step to justify my past behavior? Am I capable of separating what I did from what was done to me?

Based on these questions, many of us expressed doubts regarding our ability to be truly willing to make amends. Some of us needed to return to Steps Six and Seven to discover what defect of character we had kept in reserve. Others had become willing as a result of truly accepting their own contribution to their troubled relationships.

This self-forgiveness would be instrumental in moving us out of our co-dependence and into healthy, whole relationships with God, ourselves, and our fellow human beings.

In this moment, I see the impossible become not only possible but real. As I forgive myself for my shortcomings, I am able to forgive others, opening the way for a true and lasting change in my behavior. Thank you God.

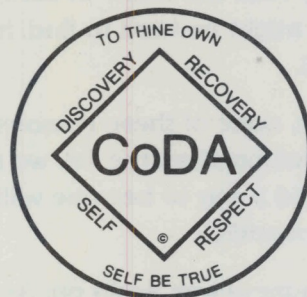
Our willingness to make honest amends to all those we had harmed led us into Step Nine.

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

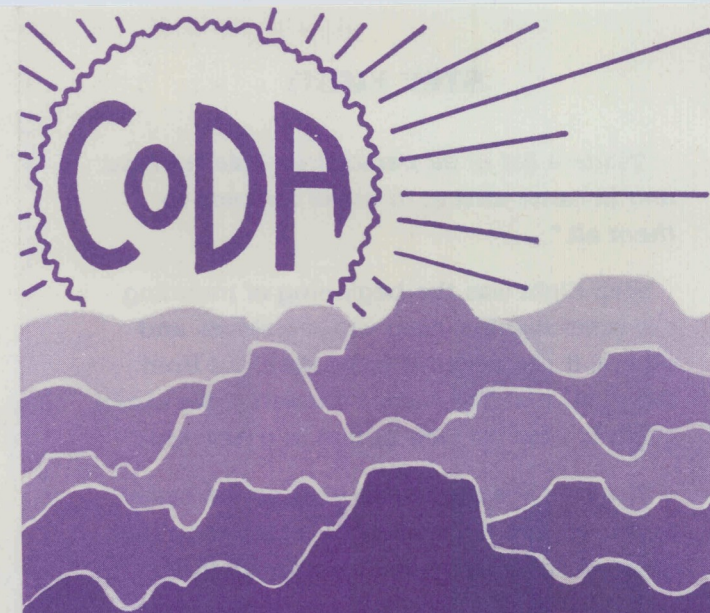
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God,

Grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can and the Wisdom to know the difference.



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CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS

STEP 8

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