

## STEP NINE

*"Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."*

For many of us in Co-dependents Anonymous, our most comfortable role had been that of victim. We had waited years for someone, anyone, to make amends to **us**.

Step Nine brought us to our moment of truth. It asked us to take that particular action **ourselves**.

How we worked this Step became the measure of our recovery. The keys to success for us would be sensitivity, good judgment, and courage. Even if the words, "Higher Power," were unmentioned in Step Nine, many of us felt this truly was the time to seek spiritual guidance.

### **Made Direct Amends... Wherever Possible**

Because our own name was first on our list of amends, each of us had the chance to practice this important task before making amends to others. The question before us was this: How would I like amends to be made to me? Would a simple, "I'm sorry," suffice? The answer was, "no."

What most of us wanted in the way of amends from another was to have that person acknowledge his or her part in harming us. We also wanted our feelings and our perception of the incident acknowledged. And if we were to continue in a relationship with this person, we wanted them to behave differently towards us.

If that was what we wanted from others, could we ask for less from ourselves?

And so we arrived at a method of making amends — to acknowledge our harmful behavior and the other person's feelings in the matter, and to follow that with a change in our own behavior.

These amends were to be made in person wherever possible, otherwise, it was suggested that we put our amends in writing.

If we were unable to find someone to whom we owed amends, it was recommended that we remain willing until such time as that person was found. In the case of owing amends to someone who had passed away, a parent perhaps, we discovered that being of service to a person of similar circumstances was a good alternative.

### **Except when to do would injure them or others**

We looked at this statement in several ways, and included ourselves in the word, "others."

We could not afford to enter into this amends-giving with expectations of those to whom we owed amends. By doing so, we could be injuring ourselves with disappointment and possibly resentment.

Another "luxury" we could not afford was fear of recrimination. If we were still giving others the power to harm us with their reactions, injury to us would surely result.

Some of us saw that making certain amends could result in loss of employment

for us or possible imprisonment. We had families or others who depended upon us and who could be harmed by taking such action. Or perhaps we feared what we perceived as dire consequences to ourselves that could come as a result of a direct amends. In all of these cases, it was suggested that we discuss such amends with our sponsor, a trusted CoDA friend, or a spiritual advisor.

Perhaps our amends would create a "can of worms" where we thought none existed. Often this kind of amends involved promiscuity, adultery, or sexual abuse. Revealing our wrongful action could cause serious hurt or shame in another. Again, we were directed to discuss these difficulties with a friend or sponsor. Sometimes in these cases, our change in behavior, along with some kind of appropriate service was the best amends possible. Often, we discovered, our fears were exaggerated and a direct amends was the best approach for everyone involved.

*In this moment, I trust my Higher Power to guide me in making sincere and honest amends. In this moment, I experience my gratitude for Co-dependents Anonymous and the Twelve Steps of recovery knowing that as I am willing to live this program, share the fellowship, and walk with God, I am free.*

Having completed our work in Step Nine to the best of our ability, we felt prepared to move on to the final Steps of the CoDA program.

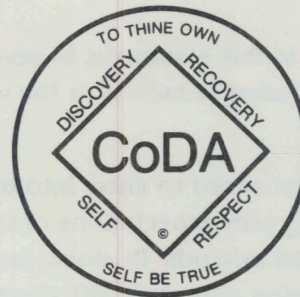


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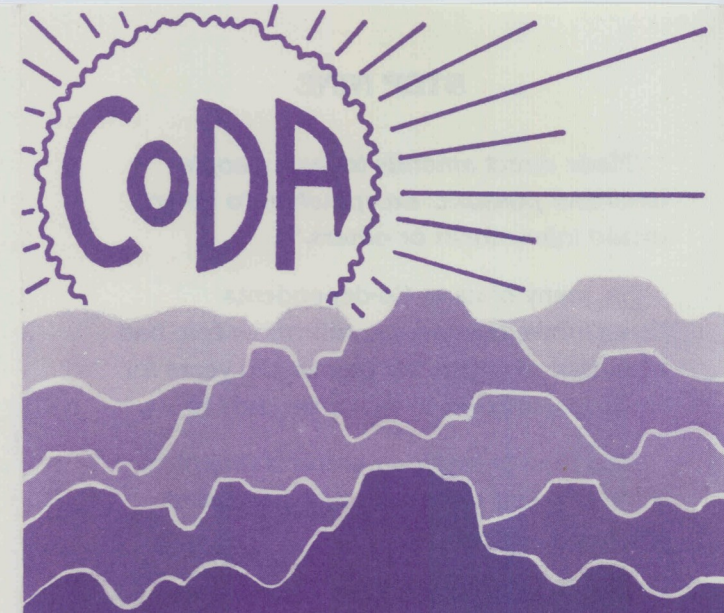
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God,

*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, Inc.  
P.O. Box 33577  
Phoenix, Arizona 85067-3577  
(602) 277-7991



# CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS

## STEP 9

**"Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."\***