

# **STEPS 8, 9, & 10 CoDA WORKSHOP**

By Shari A

***Step 8: “Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.”***

***Step 8 Spiritual Principle: Self-discipline.***

List: God, self, and others.

Harmed: consult 4<sup>th</sup> step inventory. “Everyone” in all or nothing thinking.

Became willing: pray for the willingness.

Amends: change.

We become accountable to ourselves and responsible. This is about me growing and changing, no one else.

Feelings that come up during step 8: fear, vulnerability, resentment, anger, shame, guilt, and powerlessness. These are all opportunities to seek Higher Power support, guidance, and love.

Actions that step 8 brings forth: integrity, dignity, humbleness, spiritual fortitude.

Beliefs to be examined: harm will come to me if I tell the truth; obsessing will help; no one will love me anymore; I’ll be judged; they owe me an amends...

Affirmation: “I admit my mistakes and learn from them.”

Separate what I did from what was done to me. Excerpted from CoDA Blue Book page 57: Because we were raised in families where abuse, abandonment, neglect, enmeshment... and addictions may have existed, we need to be clear about how these influences have affected our adult lives. Have we ignored our relationship with God or taken it for granted? Have we blamed God, ourselves or others for our life experiences? Have we as a result of emotional abuse, become critical and judgmental of ourselves or others? Have we as a result of neglect, ignored our personal needs or those of our mates and children? Have we secretly held onto resentment, bitterness or hatred toward those who had neglected, abused or abandoned us in our

childhood and adult life? Can we let go of fear and resentment as false power and establish healthy boundaries?

Payoff: clarity, balance, and hope.

Processes occurring: forgiveness of self and others, grief, and acceptance.

We don't know everything about ourselves.

**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.**

***Step 9: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."***

***Step 9 Spiritual Principle: Love***

Direct amends: in person. In writing, if in person not available.

Except: a condition not to do harm.

Them or others: each person including myself.

We become accountable to others. One person at a time.

Feelings that come up with step 9: fear, vulnerability, resentment, anger, shame, guilt, and powerlessness. These are all opportunities to seek Higher Power support, guidance, and love.

Actions that step 9 brings forth: acknowledge the wrong, amend it (state what you will replace behavior/attitude/belief with), and listen to/ acknowledge the person's feelings and perceptions. We do this in a simple, honest, specific, and direct manner (see example below). We do not grovel, argue, debate, criticize, or judge. We maintain humility, spirituality, and boundaries. We pray, take God with us, and ask for God's highest good. Our amends are **our** truth without blame, distraction, justification, or manipulation.

Beliefs to be examined: harm will come to me if I tell the truth; obsessing will help; no one will love me anymore; I'll be judged; I can't do this; they owe me an amends...

Affirmation: "I am growing/changing with the help of my Higher Power."

This is where we face reasonable consequences. We have no expectations of how the amends will go, where and when it will take place, or how the person will respond to us. They do not have to be available, like, accept, or forgive us. If we have exaggerated fear, we consult a sponsor, spiritual advisor, mentor, or friend.

Our first amends is to Higher Power. No right or wrong way to do this. Consult religious leaders, spiritual organizations, sponsor, and God. Letter can be read out loud or to sponsor. Meditate to sense God's love, care, and forgiveness.

Our second amends is to ourselves. Letter can be read out loud or to sponsor. Embrace your inner child. Look at yourself in the mirror. We start treating ourselves with love, respect, and care.

The rest of our amends are to others. In Higher Power's time. Practice with a sponsor or friend. Talk to someone before and/or after. Pray before and after. Be brief and to the point: ***I am trying to better myself and seek a spiritual path. In the past when I have/have not \_\_\_\_\_ at/to you, I feel this was hurtful. I am truly sorry and will make every effort to stop/start this. From now on, I plan to \_\_\_\_\_. I care about you and I'd like to know how you feel about all of this.*** Then listen. Thank them for their time and end the meeting. Seek support.

If we cannot find a person, or a person has died, a letter is suggested and living amends can be made. Other amends can be saying "no", expressing a differing opinion, listening to others, no expectations, changing with God's help.

Payoff: Closer to Higher Power and my authentic self, healing, The Promises start to manifest, our perspective changes about fear, shame, resentments, forgiveness, and inner peace. We now have choice.

Processes occurring: forgiveness of self and others, grief, and acceptance. Amends are spiritual exercises in humility with awareness of our attitudes and actions.

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.

***Step 10: “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.”***

***Step 10 Spiritual Principle: Perseverance.***

Continued: ongoing, regular.

Personal inventory: present, here and now. Not moral.

When: not if.

Promptly: immediately.

This step is about awareness and living in the present moment. It is about continued spiritual growth/change. It is a commitment to ongoing rigorous honesty. This step is about balance of work, rest, and play; becoming better equipped to live a healthy life and engage in healthy and loving relationships with God, ourselves, and others. It is about spiritual empowerment and consistent progress, not perfection. Step 10 is not about getting approval from others, being right, or solving our anxiety. Being codependent is not something we can just stop doing.

Journaling or writing a balance sheet is suggested: assets, accomplishments, and victories; liabilities (or character defects) and motives; feelings. Even a spot check at intervals during the day or evening can be helpful.

Points to ponder:

How do I know I am wrong? (Feelings, intuition, awareness)

Am I getting enough rest/sleep, exercise, and play/fun? Am I eating healthy?

Am I engaging in self-abuse, self-abandonment, or self-neglect?

Are my feelings balanced or over reactive? Do I honor my feelings?

Do I check in with Higher Power often?

Did I speak up for myself or am I resentful?

Did my feelings get hurt? (Steps 1, 2, & 3) Do I need to set boundary?

What self-care did I do today?

In reviewing our journal, we may see patterns, triggers, old behaviors returning. We may need to return to step 1 and proceed through steps again, or seek professional help. As this step is about awareness, it is wise to observe, pause, and then act.

**In this moment, I live my life in a new way. As I continue to open my heart and mind, little by little, one day at a time, I reveal my true self, mend my relationships, and touch God.**