

HOW

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VIEW OF STEP 8:

The first part of Step 8 is easy to accomplish – we simply need take pen and paper (ok, build a spreadsheet if you like...any way you do it is fine, as long as you can refer to it from time-to-time) and make a list of the people we've wronged.

And, yes, the Step does say "all," which means everyone we can think of, from the paper delivery person we didn't pay to our ex spouse.

If you're like me, you'll probably need to take several passes before the list is complete. I started with my inventory and just listed the people there. After that, over a period of several days, other people came to mind. For example, I woke up one morning horrified to remember that, when I'd been a Brownie leader, I had absconded with some of the money that was meant for the National organization – down went Girl Scouts America and the amount on my list. Needless to say, my list ended up being much longer than I expected.

In fact, you might want to break up the list in parts, like Financial, Romance, Family, Friends and Misc. I found I tended to think in categories – once I'd remembered the Girls Scouts I remembered several other people I owed money.

It's the second part of the 8th Step that often causes problems. I mean it's one thing to become willing

to repay the Girl Scouts and quite another, I discovered, to get even close to being willing to make amends to my ex-husband. After all, my mind raged, if only he'd... You know how it goes. In my case, most of the people I'd mentioned or alluded to in my inventory we're in this 'difficult if not impossible' category.

What quickly became obvious was that I was a long way from letting go of my anger at my ex, my parents and a whole slew of other people. Which is, of course, one of the main values of Step 8 – it acts almost as a second inventory and let's me know what sort of internal work I still need to do.

It was awhile before I could really see, and accept, my part in my failed marriage. This was true even though I knew, intellectually, that no marriage falls apart just because of one person. Step 8 drove me deeper than my intellect, down to where my own poor self-worth, and resulting righteous indignation boiled and bubbled.

In fact, family and romance issues are often the most difficult because it's so easy to see where and how we've been wronged rather than how we've wronged the other. This is true because, in many cases, we have been wronged! And sometimes we have to work through those feelings before we can get to our part in what happened. Getting

to our part in the problem is an absolute *must* – it's the only way we can gradually build up a true picture of ourselves.

With willingness and asking for help at meetings and from my sponsor, my subtle and not so subtle actions became clear and, bit-by-bit, I let go even more. More importantly, I was moving toward taking true responsibility for my past – a truly powerful step!

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Anne W., San Diego, CA*

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A man goes to a party and has too much to drink. His friends plead with him to let them take him home. He says, "No," that he only lives a mile away.

About five blocks from the party, the police pull him over for weaving and ask him to get out of the car and walk the line. Just as he starts, the police radio blares out a notice of a robbery taking place in a house just a block away. The police tell the party animal to stay put, they will be right back and they hop a fence and run down the street to the robbery. The guy waits and waits and finally decides to drive home. When he gets there, he tells his wife he is going to bed, and to tell anyone who might come looking for him that he has the flu and has been in bed all day.

A few hours later the police knock on the door. They ask if Mr. X lives there and his wife says, "Yes." They ask to see him and she replies that he is in bed with the flu and has been so all day. The police have his driver's license. They ask to see his car and she asks why. They insist on seeing his car, so she takes them to the garage and opens the door and there sits their police car, blue lights still flashing.

True story, told by the driver at his first AA meeting.

Origin Unknown



§ Eight VIII

STEP

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

While the purpose of making restitution to others is paramount, it is equally necessary that we extricate from an examination of our personal relations every bit of information about ourselves and our fundamental difficulties that we can. Since defective relations with other human beings have nearly always been the immediate cause of our woes, including our alcoholism, no field of investigation could yield more satisfying and valuable rewards than this one. Calm, thoughtful reflection upon personal relations can deepen our insight. We can go far beyond those things that were superficially wrong with us, to see those flaws which were basis, flaws which sometimes were responsible for the whole pattern of our lives. Thoroughness, we have found, will pay — and pay handsomely.

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TRADITION

**"Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional,
but our service centers may employ special workers."**

1. Is my own behavior accurately described by the Traditions? If not, what needs changing?
2. When I chafe about any particular Tradition, do I realize how it affects others?
1. 3. Do I sometimes try to get *some* reward—even if not money—for my personal AA efforts?
4. Do I try to sound in AA like an expert on alcoholism? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On AA itself? On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on *humility*?
5. Do I make an effort to understand what AA employees do? What workers in other alcoholism agencies do? Can I distinguish clearly among them?
6. In my own AA life, have I any experiences which illustrate the wisdom of this Tradition?
7. Have I paid enough attention to the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*? To the pamphlet *AA Tradition—How It Developed*?

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CONCEPT

"The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) With respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and their primary committees directly manage these affairs. (b) But with respect to our separately incorporated and constantly active services, the relation of the Trustees is mainly that of full stock ownership and of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all directors of these entities."

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Explaining A.A. to the Outsider

Alcoholics Anonymous does not fit neatly into any category familiar to the average professional. It is likely that professionals have heard of A.A., and no doubt many have formed an idea of the program. It's also likely that many would be surprised by how simple the program works and its lack of affiliation with any other group or enterprise.

Professionals, many of whom readily credit A.A. with helping legions of seemingly hopeless alcoholics recover, may mistake A.A. for a social service enterprise or proselytizing entity.

Explaining A.A. to the outsider can be difficult. As Leonard Blumenthal L.L.D., a Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee, said in a recent interview, "many times the professional who doesn't understand the program will look on it as competition."

Helping professionals

understand A.A. "is an ongoing challenge, because there are always new people coming into the field," he said, adding that "getting to know about A.A. probably wasn't part of their training."

In his presentation to the World Forum in Montreal last September, Leonard said there is "a great deal of misunderstanding among many professionals as to what A.A. is, can do, and does not to."

Leonard, who in 1998 retired as chief executive officer of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission in Edmonton, listed functions that many wrongly assume A.A. performs.

The program may work miracles, but as he noted, it "does not do the following: Furnish initial motivation for alcoholics to recover; solicit members; engage in or sponsor research; keep attendance records or case histories;

join 'councils' of social agencies; follow up or try to control its members; make medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses; provide drying-out or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, or any medical or psychiatric treatment; offer religious services; engage in education about alcohol; provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money or any other welfare or social services; provide domestic or vocational counseling; accept any money for its services or any contributions from non-A.A. sources; provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc."

What's left? As Leonard remarked, "having said this, why would any self-respecting professional refer anyone to A.A? Here are some reasons. Each of us reaches a point in dealing with an alcoholic when we have done as much as we can and must reach

closure in our involvement. There comes a time when the individual must get on with his life. Because we have invested a considerable amount of time and effort in an individual, it only makes sense that we would protect that investment in any way possible. A referral to A.A. as a continuing therapy provides that investment protection.

"I have been working in this field for 35-plus years and have found this program provides the best recipe for living of any that I have seen. Alcohol is only mentioned in the first of the Twelve Steps, with everything else emphasizing growth and recovery. "I would encourage every professional who deals with alcoholics to call the A.A. number in the phone book and arrange to attend an open A.A. meeting. You might get the same surprise I did - seeing many of your former clients doing very well without you!"

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ALCOHOPE COMMITMENTS

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

TUESDAYS

SATURDAYS

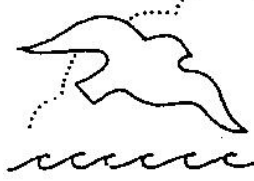
Free & Easy	August 12	Sebastian Freedom	August 16
ODAAT	August 19	Vero 12 & 12	August 23
Midnight Oil	August 26	Friday Night Young People's	August 30
Noontime Recovery	September 2	Discovery Women's	September 6
Indian River Men's	September 9	Candlelight	September 13
South Vero	September 16	Vero Beach Group	September 20
Serenity House	September 23	ODAAT	September 27
Royal Palm	September 30		

CARRY THE AA MESSAGE!

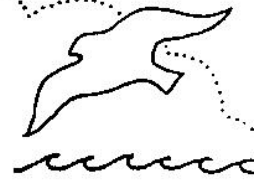
FOR INFORMATION CALL LEE: 567-4759



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PLACE
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