

OAQ STEP STUDY – STEPS 8 – 9
INTRO

Hello Folks,

Looking forward to seeing you at the next session. Please see your email for the date and time of this session. The Zoom link is the same and is also in your email.

We will be working steps 8 - 9.

Please read those steps in the OA 12 & 12, or in the big book excerpts, attached. You can also read the Big Book or the AA 12 & 12 online. At this and many other web sites: <http://www.portlandeyeopener.com/AA-BigBook-4th-Edition.pdf> (Steps 8 - 9 are pp. 76 - 84 in the big book.)

You may attend this session, even if you have missed some earlier ones.

Big Book Excerpts 8 - 9
Writing Suggestions Steps 8 - 9
Step 8 chart - example.
Step 8 chart - blank

The schedule will be the same as last time: See your email.

We would love some volunteers who would like to learn to facilitate these workshops in future. There is a chairperson script. And you will get lots of support. You can plunge in. Or you can start off being a co-host and then, when you're ready, you can become the facilitator. If you want, I can be present at each session, in case you get stuck. Let us know by emailing: coiquicksteps@oaontario.org

Please feel free to register for future workshops, if you're interested. The next workshops are not up on the website yet. Please check in a month or two at this link: www.oaontario.org look at the "Special Events and Announcements" section on the home page.

Wishing you a day of peaceful abstinence,

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BIG BOOK EXCERPTS
OA Quick Steps – STEPS 8 - 9

STEP EIGHT: Made a list of all persons that we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

STEP NINE: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

You can read the big book on-line at this link and on many other websites.
<http://www.portlandeyeopener.com/AA-BigBook-4th-Edition.pdf>

p. 76 – 84

Now we need more action, without which we find that "Faith without works is dead." Let's look at Steps Eight and Nine. We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory. We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal. Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes. Remember it was agreed at the beginning we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol.

Probably there are still some misgivings. As we look over the list of business acquaintances and friends we have hurt, we may feel diffident about going to some of them on a spiritual basis. Let us be reassured. To some people we need not, and probably should not emphasize the spiritual feature on our first approach.

We might prejudice them. At the moment we are trying to put our lives in order. But this is not an end in itself. Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us. It is seldom wise to approach an individual, who still smarts from our injustice to him, and announce that we have gone religious. In the prize ring, this would be called leading with the chin. Why lay ourselves open to being branded fanatics or religious bores? We may kill a future opportunity to carry a beneficial message. But our man is sure to be impressed with a sincere desire to set right the wrong. He is going to be more interested in a demonstration of good will than in our talk of spiritual discoveries.

We don't use this as an excuse for shying away from the subject of God. When it will serve any good purpose, we are willing to announce our convictions with tact and common sense. The question of how to approach the man we hated will arise. It may be he has done us more harm than we have done him and, though we may have acquired a better attitude toward him, we are still not too keen about admitting our faults. Nevertheless, with a person we dislike, we take the bit in our teeth. It is harder to go to an enemy than to a friend, but we find it much more beneficial to us. We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.

[Actually, in another part of the big book it states that we never make amends for thoughts or emotions, just for our actions. - editor]

Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue. Simply we tell him that we will never get over drinking until we have done our utmost to straighten out the past. We are there to sweep off our side of the street, realizing that nothing worth while can be accomplished until we do so, never trying to tell him what he should do. His faults are not discussed. We stick to our own. If our manner is calm, frank, and open, we will be gratified with the result.

In nine cases out of ten the unexpected happens. Sometimes the man we are calling upon admits his own fault, so feuds of years' standing melt away in an hour. Rarely do we fail to make satisfactory progress. Our former enemies sometimes praise what we are doing and wish us well. Occasionally, they will offer assistance. It should not matter, however, if someone does throw us out of his office. We have made our demonstration, done our part. It's water over the dam.

Most alcoholics owe money. We do not dodge our creditors. Telling them what we are trying to do, we make no bones about our drinking; they usually know it anyway, whether we think so or not. Nor are we afraid of disclosing our alcoholism on the theory it may cause financial harm. Approached in this way, the most ruthless creditor will sometimes surprise us. Arranging the best deal we can we let these people know we are sorry. Our drinking has made us slow to pay. We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink if we are afraid to face them.

Perhaps we have committed a criminal offense which might land us in jail if it were known to the authorities. We may be short in our accounts and unable to make good. We have already admitted this in confidence to another person, but we are sure we would be imprisoned or lose our job if it were known. Maybe it's only a petty offense such as padding the expense account. Most of us have done that sort of thing.

Maybe we are divorced, and have remarried but haven't kept up the alimony to number one. She is indignant about it, and has a warrant out for our arrest. That's a common form of trouble too.

Although these reparations take innumerable forms, there are some general principles which we find guiding. Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience, we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. We may lose our position or reputation or face jail, but we are willing. We have to be. We must not shrink at anything.

Usually, however, other people are involved. Therefore, we are not to be the hasty and foolish martyr who would needlessly sacrifice others to save himself from the alcoholic pit. A man we know had remarried. Because of resentment and drinking, he had not paid alimony to his first wife. She was furious. She went to court and got an order for his arrest. He had commenced our way of life, had secured a position, and was getting his head above water. It would have been impressive heroics if he had walked up to the Judge and said, "Here I am."

We thought he ought to be willing to do that if necessary, but if he were in jail he could provide nothing for either family. We suggested he write his first wife admitting his faults and asking forgiveness. He did, and also sent a small amount of money. He told her what he would try to do in the future. He said he was perfectly willing to go to jail if she insisted. Of course she did not, and the whole situation has long since been adjusted.

Before taking drastic action which might implicate other people we secure their consent. If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others, asked God to help and the drastic step is indicated we must not shrink.

This brings to mind a story about one of our friends. While drinking, he accepted a sum of money from a bitterly-hated business rival, giving him no receipt for it. He subsequently denied having received the money and used the incident as a basis for discrediting the man. He thus used his own wrong-doing as a means of destroying the reputation of another. In fact, his rival was ruined.

He felt that he had done a wrong he could not possibly make right. If he opened that old affair, he was afraid it would destroy the reputation of his partner, disgrace his family and take away his means of livelihood. What right had he to involve those dependent upon him? How could he possibly make a public statement exonerating his rival?

After consulting with his wife and partner he came to the conclusion that it was better to take those risks than to stand before his Creator guilty of such ruinous slander. He saw that he had to place the outcome in God's hands or he would soon start drinking again, and all would be lost anyhow. He attended church for the first time in many years. After the sermon, he quietly got up and made an explanation. His action met wide-spread approval, and today he is one of the most trusted citizens of his town. This all happened years ago.

(... p. 82)

The alcoholic is like a tornado roaring his way through the lives of others. Hearts are broken. Sweet relationships are dead. Affections have been uprooted. Selfish and inconsiderate habits have kept the home in turmoil. We feel a man is unthinking when he says that sobriety is enough. He is like the farmer who came up out of his cyclone cellar to find his home ruined. To his wife, he remarked, "Don't see anything the matter here, Ma. Ain't it grand the wind stopped blowin'?"

Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead. A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won't fill the bill at all. We ought to sit down with the family and frankly analyze the past as we now see it, being very careful not to criticize them. Their defects may be glaring, but the chances are that our own actions are partly responsible. So we clean house with the family,

asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.

The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it. Unless one's family expresses a desire to live upon spiritual principles we think we ought not to urge them. We should not talk incessantly to them about spiritual matters. They will change in time. Our behavior will convince them more than our words. We must remember that ten or twenty years of drunkenness would make a skeptic out of anyone.

There may be some wrongs we can never fully right. We don't worry about them if we can honestly say to ourselves that we would right them if we could. Some people cannot be seen - we send them an honest letter. And there may be a valid reason for postponement in some cases. But we don't delay if it can be avoided. We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping. As God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone.

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

WRITING SUGGESTIONS
OA QUICK STEPS
STEPS 8 - 9

**Writing Suggestions, Prayers and Meditative Readings
related to the 12 steps of Overeaters Anonymous**

Taken from Alcoholics Anonymous and
The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous
per OA's 10th Tool, AA Literature.

Writing Suggestions from the O.A. Sponsorship Guide
And some extra questions by Pat G.

Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity, to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I
can; and wisdom to know the difference.

Step 8 Writing Suggestions

This step only asks us to MAKE A LIST of the names of people to whom we owe amends. Use the attached chart on p. ____ Fill in the first two columns. "Who you make the amends to," is the first column and "what you did," is the second column. And then put x's in one or more of the last 3 columns to indicate what kind of amends you owe. Please put YOURSELF at the top of your amends list.

A **direct amends** is when you will speak to, phone, email, or otherwise communicate directly with the person. This could also mean paying back money owed, repairing damage done to property, or announcing that the rumour you started was untrue.

An **indirect amends** is when you will make an amends by a letter that you don't send, or by a donation to a charitable organization or by a gift to a child of the person you owe amends to. Indirect amends are appropriate when the person you owe the amends to is deceased, or when you don't know their name or can't find them. Or when making the amends would injure the person, for example in the case of an affair that is unknown to the person to whom you are making the amends.

A **living amends** is behaving differently towards that person. This is appropriate in most cases. When the harm you caused was mostly negative thoughts or feelings, then we never make a direct amends. We never say, I'm sorry I've hated you all these years. Instead, we make amends by many years of kindness, courtesy, forgiveness, acceptance, praise or prayers for that person. Please note that forgiving someone does not mean you want to spend time with them.

The second part of step 8 is to BECOME WILLING to make amends to them. This means we need to forgive them. This is a tall order. Usually before we can forgive, we need to acknowledge and embrace the pain that this person caused us. If you are not ready to make amends, you may instead, choose one of the following questions to write about:

1. Write out what they did. How that affected you at the time and over the rest of your life. I.e. how that affected you emotionally, physically, financially, spiritually, sexually, or in some other way.

2. Write an angry letter to the other person that you don't send. Write out any other emotions you have about the event(s). Anger, fear, sadness, guilt and shame, despair, powerlessness, shock, horror, etc.
3. Write out your part. If it's nothing – say it's nothing – I was innocent.
4. Write a forgiveness letter to yourself.
5. Write about why you can't forgive yourself. Will something bad happen if you forgive yourself? Are you expecting perfection from yourself? Is it hard to accept that you are human, and that you make mistakes, just like everyone else?
6. Write out why you acted the way you did. Where did you learn that behaviour?
7. Write a letter to your HP asking for help in forgiving yourself.
8. Write out all the reasons you don't want to forgive the other person.
9. Write out a prayer for what you want for yourself. And then pray for the other person to receive those things. If you can't do that, then ask your HP to give those things to both you and the other person or pray to become willing to say this prayer for the other person.

Step 9 Writing Suggestions

Write out one or more amends letters or an amends script depending on how you will make the amends. See sample letters on pp 9 - 10. Please note that we never make a direct amends of an emotion. We apologize only for our behaviour, not our feelings. Please put YOURSELF at the top of your amends list. If you are not ready to write an amends script or an amends letter to someone else, then write one to yourself. And if you are not willing to do that, or if there is more time, choose another of the step 8 questions.

SAMPLE 9th STEP AMENDS LETTERS

1) **MR. BROWN, colleague**

ISSUES: resented, gossiped against, blamed

INDIRECT- LETTER NOT TO BE SENT – Read to Buddy/Sponsor

LIVING—will refrain from gossiping about him, will invite out for coffee and will make a point of greeting him each morning

LETTER NOT TO BE SENT (Indirect)

Dear Mr. Brown,

Thanks for all the support and care you've shown me since I joined the company in 2003. I've appreciated the time you've taken to show me the ropes in the office and given me encouragement when I needed it. You always seem to lighten things up with a story or a joke just at the right time.

I want to apologize for engaging in some improper behaviors toward you in the past. I also took personally what was clearly not meant that way. I ask for your forgiveness. I've come to see that these were coming from places in me that needed healing, and I am pursuing that now.

I hope all's well with your family. I ask that God give you peace, joy and contentment in everything you do. I'm looking forward to continuing our work together.

With best wishes,

(Name)

2) **MS. JONES, my supervisor at ABCD (my employer)**

ISSUES: drank on job, stole hours, cheated on expense reports

DIRECT- LETTER TO BE SENT

RESTITUTION—will make up (or compensate for) hours claimed but not worked

INDIRECT--resented, gossiped against

LIVING—will continue to work a program, not drink on job, keep honest records, and will volunteer for the office party committee and for kitchen clean-up once a week

LETTER TO BE SENT (Direct) (Or write a similar script to say in person.)

Dear Ms. Jones:

I want to thank you and ABCD for giving me the opportunity to learn and grow over the years I've been working at ABCD. The firm has given me a tremendous amount in so many different areas—mentoring, skills development, professional guidance, personal encouragement, and much more. I feel fortunate that the firm chose to invest so much in me.

I apologize for my unreliability and inebriated behavior at the workplace, and for my dishonesty in stating hours worked and expenses incurred. The firm deserved better and I regret the harm that I caused everyone—owners, stockholders, you and my other co-workers. I'm grateful to have found avenues for healing in these areas, and I'm pursuing them now.

I would like to make restitution for the hours I claimed but did not work. I estimate that I claimed 80 hours that I did not work. I look forward to talking with you about how I might go about making those hours up or providing reimbursement, or some combination of the two.

I hope that the firm prospers and continues to do the good work that has benefited many people over the years. I look forward to doing my part in this.

With best wishes,

(Name)

indirect portion:

[indirect] I would also like to apologize for speaking about the company in an unflattering way to others in the firm. I recognize that this was wrong and I am sorry for the harm I caused you.
[end indirect]

3) ROSEMARY, former lust object

ISSUES: pursued inappropriate sexual relationship

INDIRECT- LETTER NOT TO BE SENT – Read to Buddy/Sponsor

LIVING—will pray for her

LETTER NOT TO BE SENT (Indirect)

Dear Rosemary,

I hope all is well with you and you are enjoying your new position at the museum. I know that you've always dreamed of working as a curator, and I'm sure it must be exciting to finally be pursuing it in earnest.

I wanted to apologize for pursuing an inappropriate relationship with you back in 1993. What I did dishonored you as a woman and disrespected you as a member of the community. I am sorry for breaching your trust and ask your forgiveness.

I pray that God will bless you and your family and fill you with joy and abundance.

All the best,

(Name)

4) HAILEY, former soccer team member in childhood

INDIRECT— Resented her for teasing me

LIVING—will pray for her

LETTER NOT TO BE SENT (Indirect)

Dear Hailey,

It's been a long time--I still remember your terrific athletic skills while we were on the soccer team. You were always revved up and played well for us. I also appreciated your sense of humor. You made us laugh a lot, and made it easier to take our defeats in stride.

I will always remember all the good things we shared in those exciting days on the team. I hope you are doing well wherever your life has taken you. I pray that you will always feel loved, accepted, listened to, understood, empowered and honourable. May God bless you.

Warm wishes,

(Name)

SAMPLES FOR 8TH STEP LIST

<i>Person/Institution I harmed</i>	<i>What I did</i>	<i>Direct – in person, by phone, email, or postal mail (any restitution?)</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>Living (explain how)</i>
Mr. Brown	Resented, gossiped against, blamed		X	X (will be friendly; will invite to coffee to restart the relationship)
My employer	Stole from the cash register. Stole food from the cafeteria	X In person; restitution Will pay back what I owe		
Rosemary, flirted with my husband	Resented, gossiped against		X	X (will be friendly; will compliment her.)
My husband	Screamed at him. Told him he was a loser.	X In person		X (Will thank him for what he did well. Will pray for him.
Business acquaintance	Started a false rumor about her.	Will tell people that I lied - the rumour was false.	X	

8TH STEP LIST BLANK

<i>Person/Institution I harmed</i>	<i>What I did</i>	<i>Direct – in person, by phone, email, or postal mail (any restitution?)</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>Living (explain how)</i>