



Step 8

“Made a list of all persons we have harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.”

As the saying goes, the steps are in order for a reason. All the work I had done on previous steps with my sponsor, especially Step 4 and 5, helped me make a list of all persons I had harmed, and become willing to make amends to them all. My sponsor had me list out the people I was closest to as it was natural that I had probably harmed them the most and they should be initially more receptive than others to meet for Step 9. I then met with my sponsor to discuss the list of individuals, which he was already aware of from the Step 4 work I shared with him in Step 5. We discussed again the types of harms I had caused to each, including specific actions and incidents. He told me to make a list of these for each of the individuals. We met again and went over my list. I jotted down edits and further directions to help in finalizing the list. He then worked with me to determine my first person to meet with for Step 9. I'm truly happy that my sponsor was keeping a close eye on my progress, nudging and not pushing me through the steps. He seemed to gauge when I was ready to make each step. By the time Step 8 was next, I had some good sobriety and the ability to recollect most of things I had done or failed to do to others going back many years, even into my childhood. In my mind, the act was now isolated and involved no justification or reasons for why I committed it. Sure, I remembered them, along with the emotions and mindset I had at the time I caused these harms. However, they in no way change the fact of the harm or enter into the completion of this step. I found the honesty in writing these harms out, accepting my responsibility, and considering the pain and disappointment I caused brought me a long way in the “willing” part of the step. With the evidence written on the page in front of me, I wanted to make amends to these individuals, to hopefully heal some of the wounds. Let me be clear – I didn't come to this conclusion thinking it would be easy and go smoothly. Five minutes here and maybe, ten minutes there? I knew I was willing, but were they? I mean, all these people were my fiercest critics. But clearly, weren't they for good reason? And it wasn't because they hated me. They loved me, were concerned for me, and felt helpless as I sunk further in the mud of my life. These were the same people that were happy that I was putting together a string of sober days, an active member of AA, and mentally returning to the land of the living. Even so, I still had some apprehension about whether they might be combative, emotional, or not willing to accept my amends. As the Big Book and my sponsor informed me, they have every right to do all of these. We need to be willing to accept their reaction and work with them. It's been a big help to hear speakers, and fellow members relate how their amends have been received or rejected, most especially their own handling of the outcome. It's a necessary part of recovery and it helps to know and talk with those around us who have walked the same steps.

Obviously, Step 8 forms the foundation for the following steps. In my case, being aware at all times, recognizing when I harm someone, and being willing to promptly make amends is critically important to my sobriety. I can't afford to let it linger and avoid making amends as it could turn into a resentment. I need to travel in this world with as little as possible to carry of my own doing. This allows me to show up and be present for others...so I may be of assistance when, not if, others need help carrying their own weight. Dan B

As Bill Sees it:

We discovered the best possible source of emotional stability to be God Himself. We found that dependence His perfect justice, forgiveness and love was healthy, and that it would work where nothing else would.

If we really depended upon God, we couldn't very well play God to our fellows, nor would we feel the urge to rely wholly on human protection and care. W, Bill. As Bill Sees It. New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1967, Twelve Steps and Twelve pg.72.

We are looking for D43 members that are curious or interested in being of service as the New Chair and co-chair of The Groupvine. The position starts in January of 2026. We will help with the transition for the positions. Please contact us at: groupvineeditor@gmail.com



Save the
Dates!

August 16th
District 43

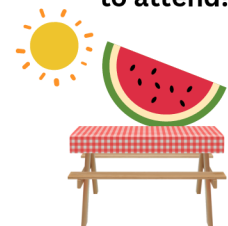
PICNIC

Seager Park Pavilion

1163 Plank R.d.

11:30- 3:30

All are welcome
to attend!



August 20th

District 43 Monthly

Business meeting

7-8 p.m.

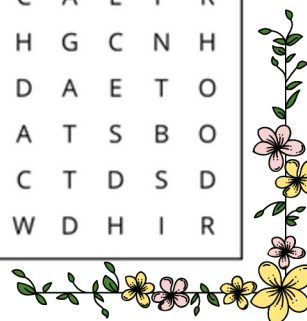
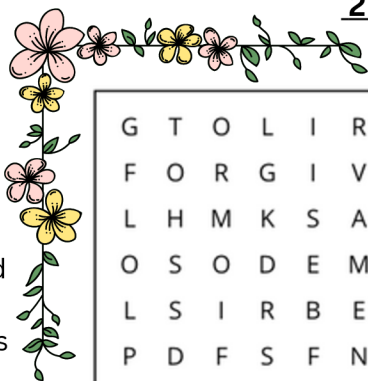
(Third Wednesday of
each month)

ZOOM MEETING ID:

96566590236

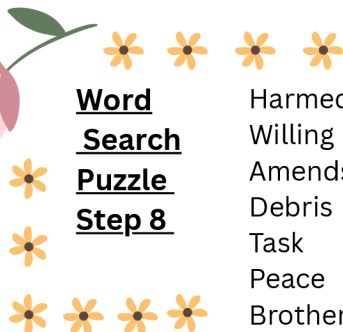
P.W: 932879

All are welcome
to attend!



Word
Search
Puzzle
Step 8

Harmed
Willing
Amends
Debris
Task
Peace
Brotherhood
Obstacles
Forgiveness
Prospect



I Became Willing

My first pass through the steps of AA went pretty smoothly. I came into the program on my own accord. I had the realization that I was approaching 50 years of age and had become a problem-drinker, that I had become obsessed with alcohol, and that I couldn't quit on my own accord. I surely had some resentments and they were helpful to analyze in coming up with my defects of character. My high bottom, however, seemed to save me from having to do much deep work at steps 8 and 9. I explained to my sponsor that I hadn't really hurt anyone. No one was actually mad at me for anything and some of my family members even thought that I was being a bit extreme by going to AA meetings. I got through steps 8 and 9 relatively unscathed.

That changed, however, when I got a new sponsor at about 1 year of sobriety. I had already been through the steps prior to changing sponsors. My new sponsor and I were reading the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book together on a weekly basis and I stopped her when we were reading about Step 3. I explained that the analogy of the "director" who tries to control everyone around them hits me deeply. I had made good progress in defining my higher power (after having come in as an atheist) and I had found that the "stop, pray, and proceed" tool was extremely helpful to me in my life. Yet, I still had control issues. I told her that I have been acting as a director in other people's lives for as long as I can remember, well before I had started drinking alcoholically.

I explained that about 18 years ago, I had interfered in my sister's life so severely that we have not had anything more than a surface level relationship since. I have 3 sisters and my family is very tight-knit. The tension between my sister and I was problematic and yet no one ever talked about it. When my sponsor asked me if I'd written a 4th step about this and whether I'd made amends to her, I didn't know how to respond. I didn't think that I had to make amends to people who I hurt before I was drinking. I stared at her, not knowing what to say. She stared back at me, kindly, and carefully explained that my strongest character defects; self-righteousness, fear, and judgement, have been developing and strengthening within me long before they led to my alcoholism.

I tried to argue that if I hadn't threatened to call DCFS on my sister then she wouldn't have taken her husband to family counseling. Again, my sponsor responded with kind eyes and patient words. Perhaps I acted out of fear and yes, they surely would benefit from counseling, but who was I to force someone else into action? In forcing people into my plan for them, I alienated my sister and made her feel as though she couldn't protect her own children.

So I became willing to make amends to my sister. As a mother, and within the past 18 years, I've been humbled 100 times over. I don't always know what to do and in fact I've really struggled at times. My sisters have been nothing but supportive. I couldn't imagine one of them stepping in to judge me and tell me what I had to do, while listing consequences if I didn't do what they said. I'm extremely thankful that my sponsor listened to me and helped me work through clearing up my side of the street. When I was scared or trying to convince myself that it was fine and that I didn't need to make this amends, I would pray about it. When I prayed, I asked for help in viewing the situation with faith, love, and care, as they are opposite actions to fear and judgment. So I became willing to make amends to my sister. (It went well...)

- Margaret T