

It's been a while since I last wrote for this blog. I've continued my personal inventory (& found cowardice). I've renewed my interest in meditation for physical & spiritual health. And I've continued in service as a peer mentor & sponsor. All in all, I've made right decisions during my absence. Except in delaying my 8th Step.

The 8th Step is when we make a list of all the people we have harmed & become willing to make amends to all of them. - It sounds easy enough. - I mean, it's just a list, right?

For me, the 8th Step is more than simply writing a list of names. - It's recalling all the horrible things I did to each of those people. - It's remembering their disappointment, heartache, & shame. - It's about putting my face on their fears, tears, pains, & scars. - It means seeing myself again as an absent son, an unfaithful partner, & an irresponsible deadbeat father. - It's another look at myself as the monster who killed a man in cold blood & was poised to kill again. How is the 8th Step not the most difficult?

I am willing to make amends to every single person I have ever wronged. But I've wished my process to be one in which I might bypass a written list of names & an unwritten list of pains; I've wanted it to be easy.

Nothing in the 12-Steps literature says that I must suffer through my 8th Step. Rather,

I'm taught to simply acknowledge my part in
harming others & to sweep up my side of the street.
But my guilt & remorse are more demanding; they
would have me feel the misery I have caused. So
if this is what I must do in order to stay
sober — in order to be the man I want to be —
God, give me the strength to do it.