



Reply: 24fv

2-4-23

Step 9 is where we may demonstrate ATONEMENT.

The beauty of Living Amends expresses the fact
one has evolved... which is the ultimate
purpose for earthlings, isn't it?

Heed the "Questions To Be Honest About."
See what you write on them.

For the Love of Truth

Criminals & Gangmembers Anonymous

STEP NINE

WE MADE DIRECT AMENDS AND RESTITUTION WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO THE PERSONS WE INJURED, EXCEPT WHEN DOING SO WOULD CAUSE FURTHER INJURY OR HARM.

TOPIC: The importance of healing, the victim and the offender.

The CGA Twelve Step journey represents Recovery, Healing and Spirituality, which all merge into one's ability to live and do God's will.

RECOVERY: The CGA Twelve Steps guide us into becoming responsible for ourselves as individuals and accountable for our behavior and actions. Recognizing our human flaws and accepting the mistakes we've made in judgment is not easy. Evil and wrongdoing awaken pain, fear, anger and resentment. These feelings hold us trapped in guilt, shame or self-pity. Through *recovery* we identify why we often feel uncomfortable, why we do wrong and what we can do to correct our behavior if we make a choice and decision to recover.

HEALING: The CGA Twelve Step recovery process outlines specifically what we need to do to heal our broken human characters. As we remove the evil from within us (through understanding how destructive evil can be and how it impacts lives) we become motivated to sincerely practice compassion and live more caring toward others while being decent to ourselves. We understand too, the powerful force of addiction and how it was ignited by defects in our character that ultimately damaged or destroyed relationships with others we have an obligation to make amends and restitution for. We realize we have the capacity to change, a reliable process to utilize in changing for the support of CGA.

SPIRITUALITY: Recovery and healing both intermix and blend comfortably into development of a true spiritual manner of living in thoughts, words and actions. Through a combination of the three, we come to establish a private, personal relationship with God and begin living our lives to serve God through a commitment of love.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. How has CGA recovery helped you to become *responsible* for yourself and accountable for your actions?
2. Why is forgiving ourselves important and then seeking forgiveness from those we have offended important?
3. Do you feel amends and restitution is important to your personal spiritual journey? If so, please explain why.
4. Is it necessary to continue an amends and restitution process, or should it only be done once and forgotten?
5. Do you feel that your efforts toward amends and restitution are important to your victims?

KEY WORDS DEFINED:

RESPONSIBLE: Involving accountability, obligation or duties; able to distinguish between right and wrong and to think and act rationally and hence accountable for one's behavior.

ACCOUNTABLE: Obligated to account for one's acts; capable of being accounted for.

AMEND: To make better; improve; to remove the faults of; to improve one's conduct.

RESTITUTION: A giving back to the rightful owner of something that has been lost or taken away; a return to a former condition or situation.

Criminals & Gangmembers Anonymous

STEP NINE

WE MADE DIRECT AMENDS AND RESTITUTION WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO THE PERSONS WE INJURED, EXCEPT WHEN DOING SO WOULD CAUSE FURTHER INJURY OR HARM.

No one has the right to use violence against another human being, regardless of the circumstances. That's the difficult part for us as criminals, because through our warped beliefs we believe and justify our negative and destructive actions. For years we have lived in a state of denial, never taking full responsibility for our crimes even when our crimes have created much pain, harm, suffering and yes, even caused death to innocent people. Have we for one second stopped to realize the impact of our crimes? The collateral damage behind our crimes are widely spread out causing us to unknowingly harm and create pain upon the family and friends of those we directly victimized. How much longer will we be blinded by our selfish and foolish actions? Today we should remember our victims, because we have left countless victims behind during the path of our destruction to illegal activities.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. What are you doing today to make amends to your victims?
2. Have you fully realized the impact of your crime(s)?
3. What steps are you taking to ensure you will not create any more victims?
4. Are you aware that there is no such thing as a 'victimless' crime?
5. Have you recognized the betrayal and lack of trust that others have in you because of your crimes? (Please explain).

**ONE LESS CRIMINAL
IS ONE LESS CRIME
THEREFORE
ONE LESS VICTIM...**

Criminals & Gangmembers Anonymous

STEP NINE

WE MADE DIRECT AMENDS AND RESTITUTION WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO THE PERSONS WE INJURED, EXCEPT WHEN DOING SO WOULD CAUSE FURTHER INJURY OR HARM.

In each person's life, one can expect to be affected by a variety of experiences. These experiences will be a mixture of good and bad, right and wrong, based upon either observation or some form of voluntary or involuntary participation. To be victimized by the wrongdoings of another is undoubtedly not a good, healthy experience. And as painfully traumatic as the experience may be, it should not become the main, controlling experience to determine the course of one's life. It would not be justifiable under any circumstances to become a victimizer as a retaliatory measure or as an act of mere resentful vengeance. As a victim or an offender, the individual needs help and support. The victim will need to be responsible not to allow the traumatic experience to consume them and to become accountable to seek help and support to heal and forgive. The offender (or victimizer) will need to be responsible to accept their own faults in making poor choices and decisions and then be accountable for their actions. Through taking responsibility for the wrongdoing to another, coming to understand what caused the criminality, engaging in a process of correcting the behavior and taking the necessary steps to verbally make amends, which may include restitution through paying back (whenever possible) a debt for property or medical/emotional compensation for treatment. These steps will then demonstrate a thorough amends process.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. Have you justified the crimes you committed because other people hurt you?
2. Has a resentment caused from a traumatic experience changed the course of your life in a destructive way?
3. Explain a process of genuine "amends and restitution" in your opinion. (What does this process of yours include)?
4. Why is your victimization through the behavior of another, not a rightful justification for you to victimize yet another, causing them to suffer as your victim?
5. Can amends and restitution be made for crimes you committed even if you do not know where you victims are, or you cannot contact them? If yes, please explain the process you will take/are taking.

KEY WORDS DEFINED:

MINIMIZE: To reduce or keep to a minimum; to underestimate intentionally.

JUSTIFY: To prove or show to be just, right or reasonable.

RESPONSIBLE: Able to answer for one's conduct and obligations; able to choose for oneself between right and wrong.

FREE-WILL: Voluntary choice or decision; freedom of humans to make choices that are not determined by prior causes or by divine intervention.

ACCOUNTABLE: Subject to giving an account; answerable; explainable.

Criminals & Gangmembers Anonymous

STEP NINE

WE MADE DIRECT AMENDS AND RESTITUTION WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO THE PERSONS WE INJURED, EXCEPT WHEN DOING SO WOULD CAUSE FURTHER INJURY OR HARM.

We have just gone through the Eighth Step, where with courage and honesty, we have witnessed the impact of our destructive behaviors and lifestyle. Seeing the pain we caused makes it clear that we must make amends, because we now recognize that our victims did not deserve what we did to them. We become responsible and accountable by acknowledging how our wrongs brought pain and devastation to our victims without any cause or justification. Understanding this has prepared us for this all important Ninth Step – which opens the door for the healing process to take place.

Our Recovery cannot be genuine without the application of this amends and restitution Step. How can we move forward working toward being at peace, if we intentionally neglect those we have harmed, leaving them in pain, without any effort to correct the damage we caused whenever it was clearly possible to do so?

It is important that we understand that 'direct' means that we have to take action *ourselves*, we cannot ask someone else to face those we harmed in our place. By facing them, we become that much more accountable and responsible for our destructive and harmful actions. The only exception, the only time we should not make direct amends, is when we know that by doing so, we would cause further harm. We have to remember that the pain we caused can run deep and bringing that pain up again will only create a situation where the person harmed will relive the events we were involved with. Our intention here is to not cause any more pain, we have to be aware of this. This is why it is important to stay in contact with our sponsor during this Step.

As for those who caused us pain, it is now easier to be willing to forgive them with the same sincere desire for understanding that we would like from our victims. If we wish to be forgiven, we must forgive those who have hurt or injured us.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. Do you feel that your victims deserve amends? (yes or no, please explain)
2. When you make amends, what do you expect from your victim(s)? Why?
3. If your victim(s) do not forgive you for your crime(s), can you still forgive yourself?
Why or why not?
4. Is anything 'unforgiveable'? Why or why not?

KEY WORDS DEFINED:

AMENDS: To improve, to better, to remove the faults or errors from, rectify, to alter, to better one's conduct, reform or correct, reparation or payment made as satisfaction for insult or injury.

FORGIVENESS: To excuse for a fault or offense, to pardon, to renounce anger or resentment against, to absolve from payment.

ghe

Criminals & Gangmembers Anonymous

STEP NINE

WE MADE DIRECT AMENDS AND RESTITUTION WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO THE PERSONS WE INJURED, EXCEPT WHEN DOING SO WOULD CAUSE FURTHER INJURY OR HARM.

It seems quite unusual to offer something special to someone we realize we have offended, injured or hurt whether we intended to or not. To sincerely offer another the 'invitation' to love is a gift that will not be forgotten. It does not remove the old, previous pages of life, detailing how we willfully harmed our victims. But this new chapter, where we freely and sincerely write about how we have become spiritually responsible so we can be morally decent and accountable for our wrongs, can prove our sincerity and commitment towards living a life without creating victims. To make **Direct Amends** to someone, to give an "invitation to open the door to forgiveness and healing" means that we take action ourselves. Why should anyone else intervene on our behalf, when We committed the crime(s)? There will be some instances when this cannot be reasonable possible. By working closely with your sponsor, you can make sure that this amends process is done both thoroughly and accurately. This particular Step can have powerful, spiritual significance. It is a true sign of our spiritual growth and integrity.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. How would you define what it means to "Love thy neighbor"?
2. Who could be 'indirectly' or 'unintentionally' affected by crime?
3. Do you feel amends are about forgiving and forgetting?
4. Should our victim(s) automatically forgive us because we made an honest apology and/or paid restitution?
5. How can making amends to your victim(s) benefit you spiritually?

KEY WORDS DEFINED:

DIRECT: From point to point without deviation, immediately from the source.

AMEND: To put right, to change or modify for the better, improve.

RESTITUTION: Making good of or making an equivalent for some injury.

ACCOUNTABLE: Answerable, to furnish a justifying analysis or explanation.

RESPONSIBLE: Able to answer for one's conduct and obligations.

FORGIVE: To give up resentment for claim to requital for.

Criminals & Gangmembers Anonymous

STEP NINE

WE MADE DIRECT AMENDS AND RESTITUTION WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO THE PERSONS WE INJURED, EXCEPT WHEN DOING SO WOULD CAUSE FURTHER INJURY OR HARM.

In the course of our lives, we have harmed a lot of people and suffered injury ourselves. Every day there are people who have been justly or unjustly accused and convicted, unjustly murdered, assaulted, sexually abused and assaulted, families are abandoned and are subjected to domestic violence and abuse. All of these acts have affected our victim(s), as well as ourselves. Our victim(s) hate what has been done to them, and many of us hate ourselves for what we have done to create victims. This hate that we feel towards ourselves can lead us to believe that we can never be forgiven, or that self-forgiveness is out of the question.

Most of us have been taught to say "I'm sorry" or "Please forgive me" when we hurt someone else. We have the expectation that by saying these and similar things, everything we did to cause harm should be forgiven, when forgiveness is withheld, often we get angry because what we 'expected' did not happen, they didn't respond the way we wanted them to. To understand this, we have to understand just what it is we are asking these people to do. We are asking them to let go of the pain, hurt, resentment and betrayal they are feeling. How can a 'simple' "I'm sorry" or something similar be enough to heal the pain we that have caused someone we have victimized to feel. Very often, just saying the words isn't enough. Think about what it is you have in common with your victim(s), their family(s), our family(s), our wives and children. We, as well as they, want to know "WHY?"

"Why did he kill my son/daughter?"

"Why did you abandon us?"

"Why are you hitting me?"

"Why is this happening to me?"

"Why Can't I stop doing this?"

We all want answers, but how can we answer when we don't even know or recognize the question? If we don't know how to forgive ourselves, how can we ask someone else for forgiveness? How can we forgive others?

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. If you victim(s) asked you "Why should I forgive you?" How would you respond?
2. Have you ever doubted your honesty after saying "I'm sorry"?
3. Have you ever said "It's okay, forget about it." When someone has apologized to you?
4. If you did the above, did you really 'Let it go' or did you hold in what you truly felt?

KEY WORDS DEFINED:

FORGIVENESS: To excuse for a fault or offense, pardon, To renounce anger or resentment against, To absolve from payment of.

AMENDS: To improve, better, To remove the faults or errors of, Rectify, To alter, To better one's conduct, Reform, To correct, Reparation or payment made as satisfaction for insult or injury.