



2-3-23

Reply: a4fv

Step 8 is a step which brings one to the cross road, bridging our future "character" by owning one's past.

Believe you me! Here is where the sting of Remorse initiates us in Compassion.

The "Questions To Be Honest About" are a good exercise to write out your POV so you can see exactly what you are finally willing to consider.

As with all initiations, this one doesn't only enhance your humanity, but it also ushers in your divinity. Here's where spiritual principles/character assets replace character flaws,

For the Love of Truth

Criminals & Gangmembers Anonymous

STEP EIGHT

WE MADE A THROUGH LIST OF ALL THOSE WE HAD HARMED, REALIZING HOW OUR NEGATIVE ACTIONS IMPACTED THEIR LIVES AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL

The understanding of Making Things Right

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability requires the following:

1. An understanding of the unique harms of the crime and
2. Statements of responsibility and actions to repair those harms, such as making amends and payment for losses.

ACCOUNT FOR MY CONDUCT

1. Restitution: Repayment of a debt owed because of my actions.
2. Vindication: Acknowledgement or recognition of another's point of view or position.

ELEMENTS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

In making amends, there are *Three Elements of Accountability* that are very important:

1. Admitting that it was MY choice to commit my crime and I accept that the person(s) I victimized are responsible for either the crime itself or my sentence.
2. Understanding just how my crime harmed and hurt others and owning up to my responsibility for repayment/repair of those damages.
3. Taking actual, real steps to Repair the harms caused by my crime(s).

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. Why is being accountable important to your recovery?
2. How can holding yourself accountable for the harm you've caused improve your overall life?
3. Can you hold another person accountable for their wrongs? Can someone else do the same to you? Please Explain:
4. Have you made a true effort to give Vindication to your victim(s)?
5. Is paying your 'Court-Ordered' restitution enough? Why or why not?

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If a water pipe is clogged, obviously, water cannot flow freely through it. We cannot clear a Spiritual Channel if it is clogged without seeking forgiveness for our victimization of others. If we are dirty, we don't like the odor so we shower as often as needed to be clean. Every time someone has intentionally or unintentionally done wrong to us, the anger and resentment from their wrong seems to linger in our minds, keeping us away from them with harsh judgment until they come to us with a sincere apology.

A wrong is never forgotten, but it can be forgiven. As we continue becoming responsible people through the Steps we are taking, at this point we should be 'willing' to be accountable for doing wrong to others. In this, the Eighth Step, we review our Fourth and Fifth Steps to gain an understanding of how we impacted the lives of others through our life of crime. Feeling empathy for our victims, we are now able to truly realize that they are not simple objects, but rather *people*, deeply affected by our wrongs. We should not have any problem making a list of who these victims are.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. If you have not forgotten the wrongs done to you, why would you imagine that any of your victims 'simply forgot' what you've done to them?
2. When someone has done you wrong, don't you expect them to take responsibility, be accountable and make a sincere apology to you?
3. If someone owes you, or has stolen something from you, don't you feel it's fair for them to repay you?
4. How do you feel after someone who has done you wrong, sincerely apologizes?
5. Can you honestly become clean with God without first cleaning up your wrongs with those you've harmed?

KEY WORDS DEFINED:

HARM: Physical or mental damage.

IMPACT: A forceful contact, collision or onset.

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

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

EMPATHY: The action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thought and experiences of another.

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

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For years and most often, even today we have used our *Defects of Character* to blind us from the most tragic effects of our past and on-going actions. Being selfish will not allow us to see how we affected our victims (or in some cases to even see them as victims). Holding on to resentments cannot and will not allow us to make fair and sound decisions. By the time we come to the Eighth Step we should have a better understanding of our *Defects of Character* and how they played a role in how we treated other people and how those same *Defects of Character* played a role in how other people treated us.

The Eighth Step calls us to see clearly and (maybe for the first time), take an honest look at the pain that we have caused. However, this can be next to impossible if we choose to not use the Seventh Step of 'Changing our self-destructive Emotions or Behaviors' that arise as a result of our Eighth Step Inventory. By applying each Step in our lives as they are intended, we can begin to realize that we can no longer continue to use past, terrible experiences that we went through, as an excuse to justify our behavior today. It is our behavior and how we impacted our victims that we are looking at here, Nothing Else! Just remember the pain, anger and frustration that you experienced (and still might go through) when you were injured or harmed by others. We should now be able to understand what our victims are going through because we have/are experiencing some of those same emotions. So we become willing to make amends, because we now have a greater understanding of how much pain we caused.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. Have you ever taken an honest look at how your actions impacted your victim(s)?
2. Do you still have any resentments that will not allow you to see another's pain?
3. Have you ever experienced the loss of a loved one?

KEY WORDS DEFINED:

VICTIM: One that is made to suffer injury, loss or death.

IMPACTED: To evoke a usually strong mental or emotional response from.

WILLING: To have a desire or inclination to.

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If you want a clean glass of water, first you have to make sure that the glass is clean, before you put the water in. Why put on clean clothes if you haven't showered for a week? If a wound is infected, it won't heal until it's opened and the poison is drained out. How can a person be kind and compassionate if they are riddled with pain and anger?

Why would anyone be willing to forgive us for our wrongs, when we refuse to honestly apologize? Resentments are powerful and they just don't 'magically' disappear or dissolve. Healing is a *Process*, requiring a willingness to recover and overcome the burdens of our past.

How can we even begin to ask someone for forgiveness, if we are not willing or able to forgive those who harmed us, or forgive ourselves for causing harm to others?

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. Can you define some of the 'most common' causes of resentment?
2. What are some of the 'most common' effects of resentments?
3. Do you have a personal resentment or 'issue' that still has a negative impact on your life?
4. How can resentments affect your relationships with others?
5. Why is it so important to work through the resentments that linger in our minds, effecting how we feel and act?

KEY WORDS DEFINED:

WILLING: Inclined or favorably disposed to in mind, Ready, Prompt to act or respond, Accepted by choice or without resistance.

RESOLVE: To deal with successfully, Clear up, To find an answer to.

RESENTMENT: A feeling of indignant displeasure or persistent ill-will at something regarded as a wrong, insult or injury.

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

APOLOGETIC: Offered in defense or vindication, Regretfully acknowledging fault or failure.

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In Step Eight, we must be *WILLING* to express and understand the wrongs we committed, be willing to make amends to All those we harmed and be committed to develop and practice a better way of life, free of our destructive habits of action and thought. We need to get past the destructive lifestyle and addictions that we lived with in the past so that we can stop creating more victims in the future. For years we have created countless victims through our destructive and selfish behaviors. It is now time for us to take our Recovery seriously and ask ourselves the following questions:

- ▶ Were my actions justified by my pride, anger and pain?
- ▶ Did I deserve the things I took just because I wanted them?
- ▶ Did (or do) I have a right to make others feel the pain that I felt (or am feeling)?

These are warped beliefs. Through our twisted beliefs, manners and habits we left a path of destruction and now we must be willing to make amends for ALL our wrongs and be willing to be held accountable for the damage we caused.

Some of us are responsible for taking human lives, others for destroying families and some of us are responsible for the destruction of other's lively-hoods. How many times have you spoken of your crime – glorifying or justifying your actions and behavior, never really focusing on how your negative actions impacted their lives? Let us no longer minimize our actions or behaviors. **LET US NOW**, from this day forward

ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL OUR ACTIONS.

QUESTIONS TO BE HONEST ABOUT:

1. Have you attempted to make a list of all those you have harmed? Why or why not?
2. Are you Willing to take Accountability and Responsibility for ALL those you have harmed?
3. Put yourself in the shoes of your victim or one of their family members, explain how you would feel if your crime was committed against you or one of your loved ones –
4. What are you doing today to put a face to your victim(s)? How do you ensure that your remorse for your offense(s) is genuine and known?
5. How have you contributed to stopping the victimization of others while you have been incarcerated? What will you do to educate others about this all important CGA Step Eight?

THE KEY TO STEP EIGHT, IS BEING OPENMINDED AND WILLING TO STEP ON THE SIDE OF OUR VICTIMS WITH RESPECT AND EMPATHY SO WE CAN CLEARLY UNDERSTAND HOW WE IMPACTED THE LIVES OF OTHERS WHETHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY

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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.

Our recovery cannot be made genuinely possible without application of this amends and restitution step. How can we move forward at peace if we intentionally neglect those we harmed, leaving them in pain, without any effort to correct the damage whenever it is clearly possible to do so?

It is also crucial to understand that “direct” amends means that we take action ourselves, not making excuses to have someone else represent us. If we had no problem directly committing the crime, (or being involved in the crime directly) we should not have a problem being directly responsible and accountable for our actions.

The only exception to making “direct” amends and restitution is under those circumstances where we cannot contact those victims or, when we sincerely feel that to contact these victims would cause them further injury or harm by opening old, tender, emotional wounds. To help in determining which situations are too sensitive to make direct amends, we should consider the “opinion” of an experienced sponsor, then ultimately make the best choice and decision ourselves. Since we must deal with this step in a responsible, accountable manner, we should not let anyone make the final judgment for us. We have to live with our own conscience and it is our spiritual well-being at stake.

There is never any instance when we cannot take some form of action to make amends and restitution. In those instances where we cannot make “direct” amends, then we should ask God for Assistance. In CGA we have a recommended “amends process” to follow, to help us maintain spiritual integrity through fasting for our victims. With restitution, we continue to practice “good-will” deeds toward all people with respect to our victims. The sacrifices we make to freely give to others through helpful or comforting communicating, acts of kindness or material assistance, express our sincere respect for our victims and to God.

SAMPLE-PRACTICAL APPLICATION

LIST OF THOSE TO MAKE DIRECT AMENDS TO:
PRAYER/FASTING:

LIST OF THOSE TO OFFER

NOTE: “DIRECT” means “take action yourself”
By letter, phone, personal contact, etc...
