

Hi, I'm Brian, **I believe in Jesus, as** the God of Creation, **I believe** that because of **His resurrection** power, I am **receiving progressive** victory over sexual addiction, **I believe** that **He is active** and working **with me**, on **healing** my wounds. **I believe** that **as I grow in understanding** of **His love and grace, He is creating** in me **a new heart and a new mind.**

Tonight I have the privilege of talking about Step 8, Principle 6, and the word **AMENDS.**

➤ **AMENDS**

Became willing to make amends. Here are some good quotes I found on amends;

- “Amends are about a genuine change in our behavior instead of the patchwork of an apology.” – John MacDougall
- “Making amends is not only saying the words but also being willing to listen to how your behavior caused another's pain, and then the really hard part, changing your behavior.” – David W. Earle
- “Humility leads to strength and not to weakness. It is the highest form of self-respect to admit mistakes and to make amends for them.” – John J. McCloy

I asked a wise man, early in my recovery, How do I make amends, for destroying my children's lives. That's how it felt at the time. My boys were about **12, 9 and 6**, when my wife divorced me, my **oldest** moved in with me, to my new rental and the **youngest** two moved in with their mother, to her new home. The **word** I received was, “**get your life in order, work** your recovery and **become** the best person and **dad you can be.**” We can't **change the past**, but we can work on **today** and do our best at **becoming** a better person. That is **my ongoing goal.**

Sometimes marriages don't work out. Sometimes we lose the **respect** of our children. Sometimes we lose our **job**. Sometimes there are **consequences** for our actions and addictions. Sometimes **people** choose **not** to forgive us. Sometimes **churches** and **Christians** hurt and disappoint us. Sometimes **God** seems distant and inaccessible. Sometimes **life** is not fair. Sometimes **hurt people**, hurt people.

My **key thought** for tonight:

» **Moving from hurts, to amends!**

Moving implies action. Paul says in Romans, *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

Recovery is about **healing our hurts**, whether what was done to us, or what hurt we inflicted on others. Doing our part, taking steps, being intentional, to move from our hurts, to healthy relationships, as much as we are able.

» **Step 8:**

We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Do to others as you would have them do to you. – Luke 6:31

Treat others, the way you would want them to treat you, regardless of how they treated you. Not always an easy thing to do. When it comes to amends, **Who comes to mind, for you?**

» **Principle 6:**

Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others when possible, except when to do so would harm them or others.

Happy are the merciful. – Matthew 5:7a

Happy are the peacemakers. – Matthew 5:9

Here we begin to **repair** some of the **broken relationships** in our life. This principle **takes the step to another level**. The step says, people “**we harmed**” and now the principle is adding the idea of “**offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me**”. I've always thought of amends as, “**to those I have hurt**”. But it makes sense to add, **forgiving others**, making things **right** with those **that hurt us**, as this is the **gateway** to being **forgiven** and **living free from resentment**.

Any guess on what is next? Yes, the CR acrostic, **AMENDS?**

‣ **Admit the hurt and the harm**

Sometimes we **minimize** or deny **our pain**, our hurts, our wounds, even our **abuse**. Sometimes we **mask our pain with good or bad behaviors, work, addictions, sometimes with avoidance**. It is common for us to become **practiced at denial or the minimizing of emotional pain** or past **abuse**, in order to function in our daily lives. When in reality,

‣ *We need to admit the hurt, embrace the hurt, feel the hurt, in order to begin to heal the hurt.*

Unconsciously we have learned how to **keep the pain at bay** so we can “do” our daily lives with some kind of **normal**. “They” say, **in order to heal emotional pain**, we need to invite it up into our conscious awareness. We need to **love and care** enough about ourselves to spend the **time** and **seek** whatever **help** we may need, **to heal our pain**. **Addiction is often about medicating our pain**. As we **begin to heal**, as we are **loved** by others, as we **learn to love and forgive ourselves**, we also learn the importance of **forgiving others**. And this next verse even goes so far as to indicate, that **our not** forgiving, will result in God **not** forgiving us.

‣ *Do not judge others, and God will not judge you; do not condemn others, and God will not condemn you; forgive others, and God will forgive you.”*
– Luke 6:37

Who have you not forgiven? What if forgiving them, is your door, your gateway to healing and serenity? Another good quote I found says,

‣ *When you forgive, you in no way change the past - but you sure do change the future.* – Bernard Seltzer

I know for me and many of the men I have worked with, I struggled to reach a time of forgiving myself, for my younger self’s foolish behaviors and lack of knowledge on how to get out of my addiction. Have you forgiven yourself? Forgiving yourself and beginning to love yourself, are also essential for recovery!

‣ **Make a list.** Our verse here says,

‣ *Treat others as you want them to treat you. – Luke 6:31*

Some people think, why? **Why drag up the past? Why go there? Why should I talk to my brother or mother about things that happened years ago? My wife gave me permission to say, she really struggled with this one? What is the purpose? They don't want to talk about it. I don't want to talk about it. Has anyone else ever feel that way? Why go there? Answer,** To create a **better future, to deeply heal the hurt** and free ourselves from the past. Where do you start? Sometimes we just need to **gather information**, from those in our life that were there, **get another perspective** or **get some missing pieces** to our puzzle. Some **hurts** have been **deeply buried** and we are not sure we want to **visit** them. At this stage we start by **making a list**, considering those that have **hurt us** and those that **we may have hurt**. We start by just getting the **names** on a piece of paper and then sharing them with our **sponsor**. Now, on a somewhat **lighter** note, we also need to,

‣ **Encourage one another**

‣ *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. – Hebrews 10:24*

We all **crave, desire and need** encouragement. We all need someone to discuss this whole **recovery process** with. We all need to **help and encourage each other**. Our open share group seems to have landed on, **Blade Brothers. Iron sharpening iron and a reference to a strong family bond**. We need a renewal to a **“one another” mentality**, to win battles against the flow of this **world**, our sometimes **weak flesh** and the very **real attacks of the enemy**. I don't think I need to remind anyone that there is a very real enemy, **seeking** those that he can **destroy** and devour. It seems to me our society is actually quite **isolated**, with an **“every man for themselves”** mentality. **We can't win battles, alone!** We need to allow our sponsors and accountability partners to guide us toward **loving, as God** would want us to **love. Forgiving** as God would want us to forgive. **Admitting** our wrongs. **Who are you encouraging?**

Loving and forgiving others, especially those that hurt us, is **not** an easy or natural process, we will need **encouragement**. We need encouragement **daily to fight a good fight**. We can not win without **encouraging people in our corner**. **Do you have a team of people, in your corner? “Successful people”, have a variety of people, encouraging them, training them and cheering them on.**

‣ **Not for them**

‣ *Love your enemies and do good to them; lend and expect nothing back.* – Luke 6:35a

Have you ever thought or said, *I will never forgive them?* Some people, we feel, **do not deserve** our forgiveness. From a human perspective, **that may seem true**. But this point reminds us, forgiveness is **not necessarily, for them**. **Unforgiveness is bondage for us and harms us the most**. Many times our deepest wounds, our unforgiveness, are at the core of our **pain**, our **addictions** and our dysfunctional behaviors. If we want to stop medicating, we **must** work to heal our pain, our hurts, we must forgive. And your forgiveness is not for them, it is for you!

Our **next** teaching is specifically on **forgiveness** and the three types of forgiveness. So we will continue to work through this often difficult, but **essential** concept. We know the opposite of forgiveness, often looks like **bitterness or resentment** and we are **the one suffering** and being punished. Anger and resentment can produce **depression**, despair, discouragement and other health issues. You’ve heard the saying, *“Holding a grudge is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die.”* **It doesn’t work.**

Regarding trauma or abuse, there is an educational book entitled, *The Body Keeps the Score*, subtitle, *Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Many times **our past hurts, show up** in our body as **health** issues or **relationship** struggles. Facing and **healing our wounds** is essential and has many benefits. The **statistics** are alarming and horrifying regarding **sexual abuse**. Can we talk a minute about some **statistics**? Understanding the topic of **sexual abuse is a sensitive one** and some in this room have already, **courageously** shared their own abuse stories. So, **not to be triggering**, but to raise our awareness and put us all **on guard** when it comes to those we love.

Some estimate that approximately **1 in 6 boys and 1 in 4 girls** are sexually abused before the age of 18. The primary reason the statistics are **not higher**, is that only about **38%** of child victims disclose the fact that they have been sexually abused. Some never disclose. That is alarming. They estimate, **35.8%** of sexual assaults occur when the victim is between the **ages of 12 and 17**. Even more alarming, the most vulnerable age for children to be exposed to sexual assault is between ages **3 and 8 years**, with the **majority** of onset happening between these ages. Over **90%** of the children know their abuser. Of those molesting a child under six, **50 percent** were family members. Many victims of abuse have resulting psychiatric disorders, are vulnerable to addictions and often struggle with **intimacy** in relationships. The most important consideration here is to remind and **assure** a person who was victim to childhood abuse, they were **in no way at fault**. They have **nothing** to make amends for, regarding their abuse. They will need to work through and **in time**, reach a place of **forgiveness**. Even then, forgiveness does not **excuse** the past abuse or **minimize** the damage. **It simply brings healing, release from the pain and freedom to move forward.**

Now back to this principle of making amends, to someone **you** have hurt, it is important to remember, **“do not expect anything back.”** That is a tough one, we often **hope** for immediate forgiveness, so **we feel better**. We need to be prepared for the **possibility** that they are **not ready to forgive us**. Be prepared, with your sponsor, for the **worst** response. Their response does **not negate** the benefits of this step in **your own** recovery.

Trust the process and do the right thing. As we saw earlier, **Jesus** instructs us in Luke, *to, love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great.*

➤ **Do it at the right time**

Ecclesiastes tells us,

➤ ***There is a right time for everything.*** – Ecclesiastes 3:1

Timing! You’ve heard the saying, especially in **telling a joke, timing is everything.**

So here are a couple of clean, silly jokes, groaners, just **for my friend Mark:**

1. The other day, my wife asked me to “**pass her her lipstick**”, but I accidentally passed her a **glue stick**. ... She still **isn't talking to me**.

2. So a Spanish magician says he's going to disappear on the **count of three**, He then says “**uno, dos ...**” and **poof**. (pause) He disappeared without a **tres**.
Ok, one more, the worst;

3. What's the difference between a **good joke and a bad joke timing?**

Some of you will get it later.

Remember a good thing, done at the wrong time, **might not be** a good thing.

So when it comes to **making amends**, we are reminded, **timing is important**.

Are you ready and prepared and have you created a space with the person you are wanting to talk with, **that is good for them?** Paul says in Philippians,

➤ *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.* – **Philippians 2:4**

Step 9, which we will get into in a future teaching, **reminds us**, “We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would **injure them** or others”. For now, what they are saying here, is when it comes to making amends, **Do it at the right time!** And I might add, for the right **motive**, with the right **understandings of why** and for **your healing**.

What about this phrase, *except when to do so would injure them or others?* This can open the door for **wise consideration or rationalization**. **Consult with your sponsor**, and if a serious concern, with uncertainty, do the wise thing and get a multitude of counsel. If the act of making amends **will open old wounds** or **create new harm**, then making direct amends should perhaps be avoided. The benefit of making amends, to the recovering person, does not outweigh the wisdom to **do no more harm to another person**. **And this may include, not doing more harm to yourself**. I'm sure this will be discussed more in the next couple teachings.

Now, here is the final S, in Amends ...

‣ **Start** living the promises of recovery

‣ *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*
– Romans 12:18

So what are some of the promises God gives?

Here are just a couple:

‣ Hebrews 10 tells us, *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.*

‣ Hebrews 13, reminds us, *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”*

So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.

We know there are **many more** we could claim and need to remind each other of. Let’s look at the AA **promises**, they include, promise of **serenity**, **freedom** from our past and a **hope** for a future. God wants to give us a **hope and purpose, from the pain of our past**. As we begin to **walk with those that are hurting**, we are given **purpose** for our own journey. No one can **walk with you** more empathetically, than someone that has **been where you have been and suffered in a similar way**. As we begin to **heal our past**, we can begin to **live and experience the promises** of recovery. Here are the AA promises:

‣ **AA promises:**

The AA promises provide inspiration and something to look forward to in sobriety, especially for struggling newcomers.

The Big Book mentions that the **promises** are:

“Being fulfilled among us - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.”

If we are **painstaking** about this phase of our development, we will be **amazed** before we are half way 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. (and my favorite)

We will **suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves**.

Can I get an amen!?

Now back to my **key thought**, for tonight:

» **Moving from hurts, to amends!**

May God direct your mind and your path as you take action on this step, this principle and may we begin to see more and more of the promises coming to be, a reality in each of our lives. Now, if you have a good amends story, that brought some healing and serenity in your life, be sure to share it with your group, to encourage others to take this daring step.

Before we conclude tonight with our Serenity Prayer, let's look at and take this question into our open share groups.

» **Open share Leader's Focus Question:**

Who do I need to make amends to? And/or, Who do I need to forgive?

Thanks for letting me share with you tonight.