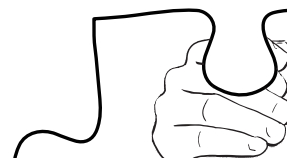
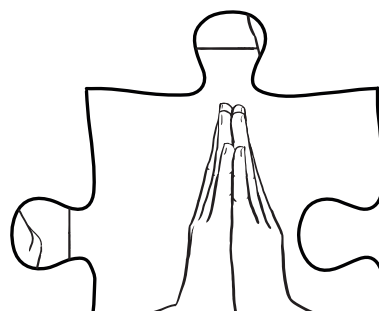
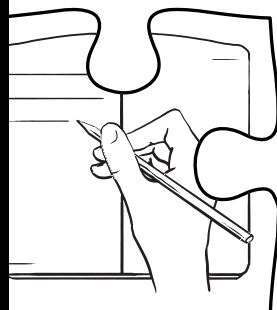
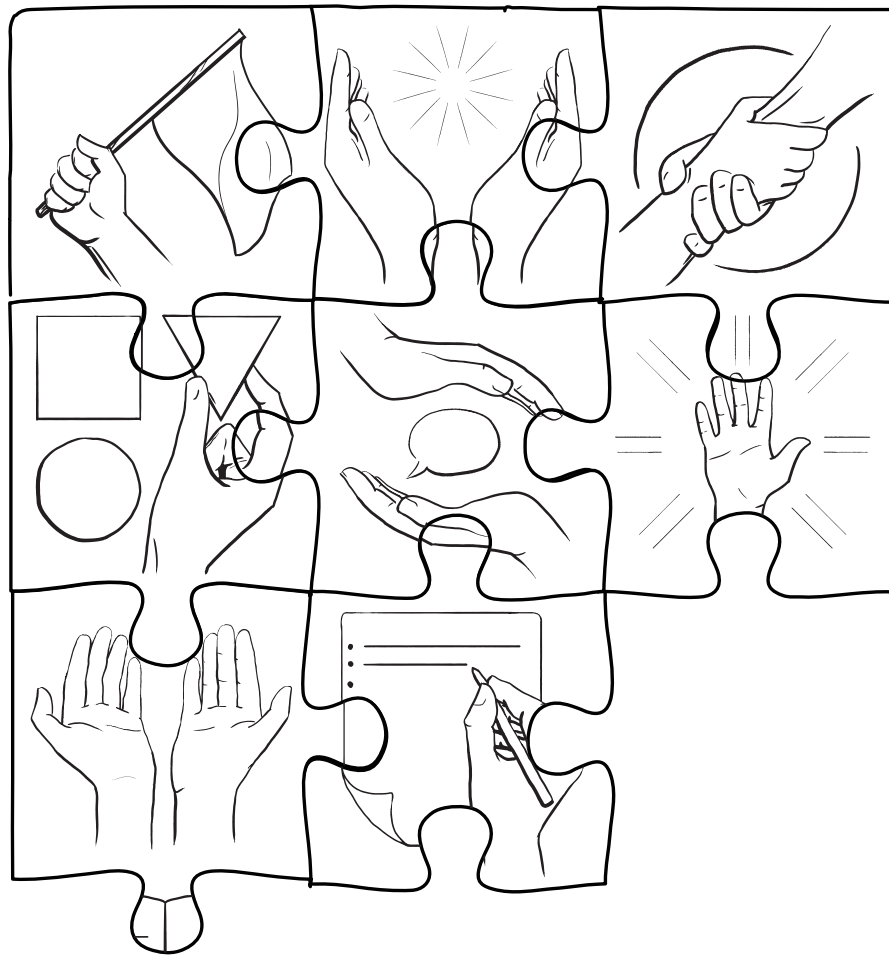
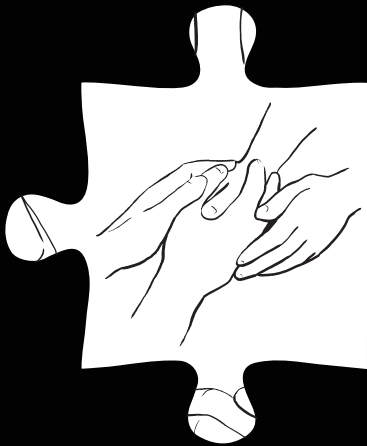


# EXODUS STEPWORK PROGRAMME

## STEP NINE

“We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”





“We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”

## PUTTING WILLINGNESS TO WORK

In Step 8, we made a list of all the people that we harmed in our addiction and by acting out on our shortcomings. We also focused on becoming willing to take ownership of our behaviour and to repair the damage that we caused. In Step 9, we put our willingness to work through a deliberate process of amends.

The personal development that we have completed, in our journey through the Steps so far, has prepared us well for this task.

By now, we are hopefully comfortable with the concept of making amends and understand the value of such a venture. We have gained the humility required to say, “I’m sorry,” are ready to take responsibility for our wrongs, and have developed a sincere desire to pursue reconciliation in our relationships. We have faith in God to strengthen us through the process.

Despite a natural nervousness, we feel motivated by the prospect of releasing ourselves and others from our missteps of the past and we can sense the freedom and peace that is within our grasp.

- Have you completed your list of amends?

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- How has your journey through the Steps so far prepared you personally for this process?

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- How do you hope to benefit yourself and others by working Step 9?

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Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

*James 5:16*

## MADE DIRECT AMENDS

Making amends is a two-fold process involving a face-to-face apology as well as a change in behaviour that may include compensation.

*For example, in making amends for theft of property, we arrange to meet (in person, on the phone or online) with the individual from whom we have stolen. We begin with taking responsibility for what we have specifically done. Then, we apologise for our behaviour and provide, or offer to provide, financial compensation. We follow this up with a changed attitude in which theft of property is no longer acceptable and in which integrity is a fundamental value.*



Repent therefore, and  
turn back, that your sins  
may be blotted out.  
Acts 3:19

*In making amends for the way that we have neglected our spouse, we schedule a conversation with them and admit our shortcomings. We say that we are sorry. Then, we show that we mean it by making an ongoing effort to attend to their needs.*

In this way, making amends follows the structure of repentance, which typically requires an admission of wrongdoing; a resolve not to repeat the offense; and an attempt to make restitution for, or reverse the harmful effects of, the wrongdoing. In Christianity, when we repent, we acknowledge and confess our sins and then turn away from them, to live in a completely different way. True repentance involves a total change of heart and mind that translates into a sustainably changed lifestyle.

Similarly, a genuine amends process is recognisable, not only by expressed remorse, but by lasting shifts in our attitudes and behaviours, as well as by attempts to replace what we took and repair what we broke.

Personal change is always the most meaningful and convincing amends that we can make. Some of the people we have harmed have been subjected to the effects of our dysfunction for years. Such amends cannot be made in a brief apology, especially when we have used the words, “I’m sorry, it will never happen again,” many times in the past. Amends of this nature require a **lifestyle of amends** in which we consistently behave in a new way, over time. In this way, we prove to others our heartfelt regret and earnest desire to make things right.

*For example, if we have been self-centered and inconsiderate, we focus on self-sacrifice, thoughtfulness and putting the needs of others first. If we have been dishonest, we tell the truth and commit to living in a transparent way. If we have been absent, we make ourselves present and available.*

- Write out your understanding of the amends process.

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- Why is changed behaviour without an apology not a sufficient amends?

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- Why is simply saying “I’m sorry,” not a sufficient amends?

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- Why is it important to make, or attempt to make, restitution, i.e., replace what we took and repair what we broke?

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- Describe your understanding of a lifestyle of amends.

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**TO SUCH PEOPLE**

Ideally, we arrange to meet face-to-face with the people to whom we would like to make amends. However, this is not always physically possible.

We may owe amends to people who live far away, perhaps in other countries or on distant continents. In such cases, telephone and video calls provide adequate solutions.

We may owe amends to people who are deceased or who we cannot track down. There are also those situations in which a person to whom we owe amends is simply not willing to meet with us.

In these situations, **no-send letters** are helpful. In a no-send letter, we write down what we would have said to a person had we been able to meet with them face-to-face. We then share the letter with a member of our support system or read it out to the person in absentia.

We can also make **indirect amends**, through sustainable behaviour change and by inventive reparative actions. There are many creative ways to make reparations without a person being present. For example, we might choose to donate to a charity in that person's name, to volunteer our time for a worthy cause, or plant a memorial garden in their honour.

For those not yet deceased, we keep praying that an opportunity to make an in-person amends will present itself in the future. We continue trying to locate those who we cannot find, and we don't give up on those who are unwilling to meet with us. Sometimes, all that is required is time to heal and we may be successful in our attempts to make amends at a later stage.

- To whom do you owe amends that will be impossible to make in-person?

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- To whom do you owe amends that will be extremely difficult to make in-person?

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## WHEREVER POSSIBLE

In Step 9, we plan to make amends wherever it is physically possible to do so, without letting fear of the potential outcomes sway us from the task at hand.

With every amends that we make, we run the risk of judgement and rejection. Not everyone to whom we make amends will positively receive our attempts at restitution. It is possible that, in some instances, our amends will be met with unforgiveness. This can be anxiety-provoking.

When making amends, we also run the risk of being held accountable for our actions, in ways that frighten us. Some of us have committed acts with serious consequences. Owning up to our wrongdoings could, for example, lead to disciplinary procedures at work, instigate criminal proceedings, or result in financial obligations that are beyond our current means.

Because of these risks, it is normal to feel apprehensive, and even fearful, prior to making an amends. However, we cannot let our assumptions and fears determine whether, or not, we proceed.

It is never helpful to entertain pessimistic projections about a receiver's response. Despite all our preconceived notions, we will find that, in most situations, our amends will be appreciated and accepted – if not immediately, then at a later stage.

It is advisable, however, where legal and monetary issues are a factor, to seek professional guidance prior to proceeding with an amends.

Being realistic is important. We cannot expect to be instantly excused, nor should we expect resolution in all cases. Making amends to someone does not spontaneously heal their hurt. Forgiveness is a process that often takes time.

As a result of making amends, some of our relationships may improve. Others may not. Amends do not always lead to reconciliation. This is something to be anticipated and accepted. We must become comfortable with the idea that not every amends will go according to our plan, and sometimes, we will need to find peace in the opportunity that we have had to make restitution, rather than in the results.

Here, it is wise to consider how we will handle amends that are rejected and relationships that are not restored, keeping in mind that a meaningful amends process does not depend on how the amends is received. Personal freedom from our wrongdoings is achieved more by our own acts of ownership and repentance, than by a receiver's attitude and approval.

The task of Step 9 is to make amends to the people we have harmed to the best of our ability. Beyond this, we have no control. So, regardless of our expectations and anxieties, we bravely follow through with making amends, at every possible opportunity.

Like in Step 8, courage is essential in this Step, as is relying on God. Joshua 1:9 reminds us that wherever we go, and whatever we face, God is with us. We can look to Him in Step 9 to provide us with the resolve, strength, and strategy to successfully execute any amends, no matter how daunting.

We can also trust God to take care of the outcomes of our amends processes, not forgetting that in Step 3, we handed over the care of our lives to Him and that in His word, He promises to restore those who repent and turn away from sin. Because of this, we can let go and surrender to the process.



**Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.**

*Joshua 1:9*



**Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and will pray and will seek my face and will turn from their evil ways, then I myself shall hear from the heavens and will forgive their sins and heal their land.**

*2 Chronicles 7:14*

- How might assumptions and projections hinder your progress in Step 9?

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- What expectations do you have about making amends?

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- Are all of these expectations realistic?

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- Why is the act of making amends more important than the results?

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- How do you plan to handle an amends that is not well received?

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- How do you plan to handle relationships that are not restored as a result of your amends?

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- Do you owe any amends that would benefit from prior legal counsel?

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- Do you owe any amends that would benefit from prior financial counsel?

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- How does Step 9 require an even deeper level of spiritual surrender than you may have previously experienced?

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**EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS**

Before we make amends to anyone, it is advisable to seek wise counsel from a suitable member of our support system. This is to prevent us from causing further harm to others through careless and/or impulsive execution of an amends.

With our wise counsel, we discuss each one of the amends that we plan to make, outlining what we are making amends for, what we are planning to say and what we intend to do to make appropriate reparations. From the feedback that we receive, we make necessary adjustments to our plans.

The action that we take in Step 9 can have a profound effect on others. It is, therefore, important that we do not make any amends thoughtlessly, without considering the “ripple effect”.

This is especially relevant where disclosure is a factor. Disclosing (i.e., revealing) something to a person that they were previously unaware of can be detrimental to their present wellbeing.

*For example, we may have wronged a person in the past by way of a secret adulterous relationship with their spouse. Making amends to this person would require revealing the affair, which could be unfairly injurious and inappropriate.*

We must be sure that our intentions are pure. If our only goal is to clear our own conscience, then we are misled. For every amends, we must carefully consider and factor in the potential impact on the receiver.

Sometimes, we may have to forgo a face-to-face amends in the best interests of the other party. In such instances, we could choose to make amends in other, less direct ways instead.

A context in which indirect amends may be preferable is in relation to past romantic relationships. In such contexts, the opening up of old wounds can often cause more harm than good.

Making amends to an individual we have harmed who has also harmed us must be approached cautiously. An amends is not an opportunity to expose or discuss how we have been damaged. Our task is only to take ownership of our own wrongs. Before doing so, we must, therefore, ensure that we are spiritually prepared and that we have let go of our hurts and resentments. If we have not yet been able to forgive for the harm done to us by a specific individual or organisation, it is not yet time to make this particular amends. Under such circumstances, we keep working on forgiveness until we are in an appropriate mental and emotional space to make a sincere amends that does not lead to further conflict.

- With whom will you discuss your amends prior to making them?

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- Why have you chosen this person/these people to be your wise counsel?

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- To whom do you owe amends that may best be left undone (directly)?

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- To whom do you owe amends that you are not yet ready to make?

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- How will you work on becoming willing to make these amends?

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- On a scale of 1-10, how much effort have you put into Step 9?  
1 indicates no effort. 10 indicates extreme effort.

①      ②      ③      ④      ⑤      ⑥      ⑦      ⑧      ⑨      ⑩

- What have been your most significant realisations in Step 9?

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- How could you apply the principles of Step 9 to help you **throughout** your recovery journey?

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- Are you ready to move on to Step 10?

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Individual or organisation	What I am making amends for (wrongdoings shortcomings)	How, when and where I plan to make amends	What I need to do before making amends	How I will respond should my amends not be well received

Individual or organisation	What I am making amends for (wrongdoings shortcomings)	How, when and where I plan to make amends	What I need to do before making amends	How I will respond should my amends not be well received



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