

Apprentice Group Meeting Guide – Making Amends (Step 9)

“Are we all ready?” - *If you haven't yet read through this guide, take a look now.*

“How are we all doing?” - *High, Low & Buffalo*

“Shall we dive in?” – *Read 2 Cor. 3:17-18 out loud. Take a few seconds, then read it again.*

“Let's take a moment.” (Silence) – *Take a few minutes to “tune” your heart towards Jesus.*

“Can someone read this next part out loud?”

In step 9, we reach out to those we have hurt to make amends. There are two parts to making amends and we should usually do both:

Direct Amends	Indirect or Living Amends
I confess to the other person what I have done wrong, I take responsibility, and I apologize.	I examine my attitudes and behaviors towards the person and people who remind me of the person. <i>Am I impatient, unhelpful, angry, bitter, etc.?</i>
If possible, I take specific steps to repair this harm I caused. <i>For example, I pay to fix the bike I broke, or re-plan a vacation I ruined.</i>	I make specific changes to avoid causing the same hurt in the future. <i>E.g. Being patient, helpful, kind, generous, etc.</i>
If direct amends is unwise or impossible, a ‘representative’ direct amends might be the next step. <i>For example, if the person I hurt has passed away, I could write a letter of amends and read it at their graveside.</i>	I take steps to produce ‘good’ instead of ‘hurt.’ <i>For example, using words of encouragement instead of criticism, or supporting a charity that is helping heal the kind of hurt I caused.</i>

“Can someone read The Plan for making amends?”

Part 1 – We Start The Plan (Today)

Share when you intend to reach out to the person you hurt, what time you will suggest you connect, and whether direct amends, indirect amends, or both are best.

Part 2 – We Stick to The Plan (Between Now and November 30th)

Check in with each other each week. Did everyone follow through on their commitment to reach out?

Part 3 – We Finish The Plan (Before November 30th)

As far as it depends on you, and unless something prevents you, connect with all three people to make amends before November 30th.

“Do we all commit to following The Plan, as far as it depends on us?”

“Who would like to go first?”- Share one at a time – Set a timer if you’d like.

1. Consider your journey from the first step of this series until now. How are you different? What has Jesus done in you?
2. If you didn’t share your homework from step 8, share that now. Who have you hurt?
3. Part one of The Plan is committing to reach out to each person to set up a time to connect. Part two is encouraging each other to follow The Plan. The Plan is complete when, to the best of our ability, we have shared our Amends CARD (see page 5) with each person you have hurt.

Share the first part of The Plan with your group:

	When will I reach out?	When will I suggest we connect?	What kind of amends (direct, indirect, or both) would be best?
Name #1 _____			
Name #2 _____			
Name #3 _____			

4. Making amends is important and can be very delicate and complex. Do you need input, wisdom, or advice for how to make amends? Do you believe you may cause harm by initiating a process? If so, who will you ask to help discern the best way forward? (You can ask your group now if you’d like.)

Please Note: Session 18 in *Freedom Session* does an incredible job of unpacking how to make amends, including guidance on abuse, the potential of jail/prison, affairs/pornography, and fragile relationships. The material is available online with a free registration at :

<https://freedomsession.thinkific.com/courses/foundations>

5. How do you feel as you consider making amends? What do you need from the group to help you succeed?
6. Is there anything you are afraid will happen? If so, name the fear: “I’m afraid that when I reach out to _____, they will _____.”

“Thanks for sharing _____. I want to remind you of Jesus’ promise: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” Can I pray for you?”

“Alright, who’s next?” (Everyone Takes a Turn Sharing and Being Prayed For)

“Thanks everyone! Same time next week?” (Confirm Next Meeting & Wrap it Up)

Step 9 Homework – Guidelines for Making Amends

On the next pages we will continue The Plan for making amends. Read these questions before you make your plan, and again once you are done.

1. Will making direct amends cause harm to the other person?
2. Am I using excuses to avoid making direct amends?
3. What would I want the other person to do if the roles were reversed?
4. Does this person already know what I need to ask forgiveness for?
5. Am I able to own *what* I did as well as *why* I did it?
6. Am I hedging, excusing, explaining, off-loading, or doubting responsibility for my actions? Am I using words like 'but' and 'if only' and 'because...' to soften the severity of what I did?
7. Is the other person ready for me to make amends?
8. Am I able to ask for forgiveness *without expecting anything in return*?
 - a. They may be angry. The relationship might suffer. Are you still willing?
9. Will I give the other person a chance to respond? Will I listen to what they have to say?
10. Am I sharing appropriately? *For example, am I sharing unnecessary details with my children?*
11. Do I need input on how best to proceed? If so, who will I ask for wisdom and advice?

Step 9 Homework – Making Amends

Making amends can be very delicate. While many situations are straightforward, some are more delicate and need to be handled carefully. If you are unsure, seek advice from your apprentice group, a pastor, a trusted friend or family member, or a Christian counsellor or lawyer.

A Sample Amends CARD

1. **Person #1 from Step 8:** Bob

2. **Is anything preventing me from making both direct and indirect / living amends?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

3. **If ‘Yes,’ what is preventing me?** Nothing.

4. **When and how will I reach out to them to let them know I want to make amends?**

I will reach out to them on Tuesday night at 8 PM by text message.

5. **When will I suggest we have the discussion?** (Meet in person if possible and appropriate)

I will suggest we meet at Derby Reach on Friday / Facetime later this evening.

6. **What will I say when I reach out?**

a. It will be helpful to explain what you are doing and why. For this part you may want to ask the other person if you can just read what you have prepared.

b. *“We are going through a series at our church based on the 12 steps. Over the past few weeks, I have looked at myself and invited Jesus to change me. Part of this process is acknowledging the hurts I have caused, and I know that I have hurt you. I would like to make amends.”*

7. **My Amends CARD¹ (Confession, Apology, Responsibility, Desire to Make Things Right)**

a. Confession – What did you do wrong? Be specific. Don’t explain, blame, or justify.

i. *For example, “I confess that I have said terrible things to you. I have insulted you, nagged you, and dragged you down. I have been critical, angry, and judgmental.*

b. Apology – Express your sincere apology for what you have done.

i. *I know what I did was wrong, and I am deeply sorry for what I have said.*

c. Responsibility – Own what you have done without excuse.

i. *I have no excuse for how I have spoken to you. I should have been a person who encouraged you, but instead I have let my anger control me.*

d. Desire to Make Things Right – What do you intend to do differently? Be specific.

i. *To the best of my ability and with God’s help, I will use my words differently. I plan to say one encouraging thing to you each morning. I have booked a counseling appointment and have asked my apprentice group to hold me accountable.*

¹ The Amends CARD is used in *Freedom Session* by Ken Dyck (2020).

My Amends CARD (*Adapted from Freedom Session*)

Name of Person I Hurt: _____.

When and how will I reach out to them to let them know I want to make amends?

I will reach out to them on _____.

When will I suggest we have the discussion? (Meet in person if possible and appropriate)

I will suggest that we _____.

Is anything preventing me from making both direct and indirect / living amends? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If 'Yes,' what is preventing me? _____.

What will I say when I reach out?

My Amends CARD

Confession – How did I hurt them? Be specific.

Apology – Express a sincere apology for what I have done.

Responsibility – I own what I have done without excuse.

Desire to Make Things Right – What do I intend to do differently?

“But What If...?”

Making amends is delicate and important. How you do it can be as powerful as why you do it. As a start, read through these “What if...?” suggestions. It might be helpful or essential to get wise input from your group, trusted friends or family members, a pastor, Christian counsellor, or Christian lawyer.

1. But what if they don't remember what I did?
 - a. Assume that they do remember.
2. But what if there is a financial cost to making direct amends?
 - a. If you can afford it, make a sincere offer to cover the cost.
 - b. If you cannot afford it, offer to make a plan to cover the cost over time.
3. But what if making amends involves confessing to a crime?
 - a. Get wise input, but likely it is still necessary to make amends with the person.
 - b. See Session 18 of *Freedom Session* for some helpful guidelines.
4. But what if it will hurt someone more if I tell them what I did? *For example, should I confess pornography usage or an affair to my spouse?*
 - a. If you want to restore trust and intimacy, the answer is likely 'yes'
 - b. Indirect amends rarely break a secret habit.
 - c. You can ask the other person if they want to know.
 - i. “I know that what I have done will hurt you deeply and I want to make amends. I've written it out here. Do you want me to read it to you?”
5. But what if the person doesn't know what I did?
 - a. If there an ongoing impact to what you have done, then direct amends might be the next step.
 - i. *For example, they might not know you spread a rumour about them, but the rumour is still out there.*
 - b. If there is no ongoing impact, then indirect amends might be the next step.
 - i. *For example, if you 'secretly thought they were stupid' but didn't say it, change your attitude towards them and make living amends.*
6. But what if the person is dead?
 - a. Write a letter and read it at a graveside or other significant place.
 - b. Then, make indirect and living amends.
7. But what if I'm not in touch with them anymore?
 - a. *Try to get in touch with them: is there a mutual friend, social media, old e-mail address, etc.*
 - b. If you can't get in touch with them, make a 'representative amends.'
8. But what if it's a really bad idea for me to reach out? *For example, making amends with my drug dealer after I've stopped using, or reaching out for being bitter towards someone who abused me.*
 - a. Some relationships should not be repaired.
 - b. However, we can still be transformed. What is ours to own, and what indirect or living amends could we make?
9. But what if things can't go back to the way they were before? *For example, can you make amends with a former spouse if you've remarried, or to an employee you've fired and replaced?*
 - a. Make amends for what happened in the past, recognizing that restoration is not possible.
10. But what if they told me they don't want to hear from me, or if they're not ready for the conversation?
 - a. Let them know you would like to make amends (e.g. send a written letter through the mail) but allow them to choose the time and to reach out when they're ready.
 - b. In the meantime, make a 'representative' amends as well as living and indirect amends.