

Step Eight: The List and The Willingness

The Twelve Steps

Step-Working Guide · The Recovery Files

In this workbook

1. **Step Eight: The List and The Willingness** — key ideas, worksheet

Each topic's scored self-assessment and mind map are in the app.

TOPIC

Step Eight: The List and The Willingness

KEY IDEAS

Step Eight: The List and The Willingness

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all

Step Eight represents a crucial transition from introspection to restorative action. It requires two distinct actions: making the list and developing the willingness. It challenges us to prioritize healing relationships over protecting our ego or comfort.

Barrier 1: Harm Minimization

The Protective Shield

We often downplay the severity of our actions to avoid guilt ('It wasn't that bad'). Minimization protects us from shame but prevents the honest assessment necessary for meaningful amends. True accountability requires acknowledging the full impact of our behavior.

Barrier 2: Justification & Blame

The 'Because' Trap

Justification shifts responsibility ('I only did it because they...'). While circumstances provide context, they don't excuse harm. Step Eight asks us to sweep our side of the street, regardless of what others have done.

Barrier 3: Resentment Maintenance

The Block to Willingness

Holding onto anger toward those we have harmed creates a paradox. We cannot make genuine amends while harboring resentment. Resolving these resentments is often a prerequisite for developing the willingness Step Eight requires.

Barrier 4: Fear-Based Avoidance

The Courage Gap

Fear of rejection, conflict, or consequences often masquerades as 'waiting for the right time.' Avoidance keeps us stuck. Step Eight builds the spiritual courage to face our past, trusting that the healing process is worth the risk.

Barrier 5: Control & Expectations

Managing Outcomes

We often want to make amends only if we can guarantee forgiveness. True willingness means surrendering the outcome. We make amends to clear our spirit and repair harm, not to manipulate how others feel about us.

Barrier 6: Spiritual Bypassing

Avoiding the Concrete

It's tempting to rely on 'sending love' or general prayer instead of facing specific people. While spiritual work is essential, it cannot replace the direct, relational repair that Step Eight prepares us for.

Moving Forward

Preparation for Action

Step Eight is the preparation ground. By listing our harms and cultivating willingness, we move from guilt to responsibility, from fear to courage, and from isolation to the possibility of reconciliation in Step Nine.

WORKSHEET

Step Eight Worksheet

Preparing for Amends

PROFILE

Understanding Your Amends Profile

1. Which Eighth Step barrier affects you most powerfully?

2. What specific people create the strongest emotional reactions?

3. How have your attitudes toward amends evolved?

4. What amends situations have you avoided thinking about?

5. What strengthens or weakens your willingness?

PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology of Resistance

6. How does understanding resistance as normal affect your approach?

7. How might your family patterns influence your amends challenges?

8. How do your different barriers interact (e.g., fear intensifying justification)?

9. What are early warning signs of avoidance or minimization?

10. How do shame or trauma affect your readiness?

READINESS

Developing Readiness

11. What practices help you develop willingness?

12. What role does your sponsor play in preparation?

13. How do you distinguish caution from fear-based avoidance?

14. What spiritual practices support your willingness?

15. How can you strengthen your most challenging area?

COURAGE

Building Courage

16. How has your relationship with making amends changed?

17. What helps you maintain willingness amidst fear?

18. How do you balance self-compassion with accountability?

19. What would it look like to view amends as opportunities?

20. How might sharing your fears help?

MAPPING**Amends Map**

List specific examples for each barrier:

Harm Minimization:

Justification/Blame:

Resentment Maintenance:

Fear-Based Avoidance:

Control & Expectation:

Perfectionism:

Spiritual Bypassing:

LIST**Preliminary List Categories**

Identify people or groups for your potential amends list:

Family Members:

Friends & Social:

Professional & Financial:

Legal & Community:

Personal/Romantic:
