

## ***JOURNEY TO SERENITY – STEP 8***

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

It's about "shame reduction" (by getting things right again).

It's about the beginning of growing up! Taking responsibility for what I've done w/o expecting anything from the other person=changing the focus from myself to others.

Story – Step 8 like a mirror...I will look into it and see the truth...whatever faults I see in other people are usually faults I have in my self.

HUMILITY! = PROPER PERSPECTIVE IN DEALING WITH GOD'S PLAN FOR MY LIFE.

Step 4 inventory = drastic self appraisal/now time to repair the damage done in the past. Pushing it under the rug hasn't worked. Nor does self-will. Are you still willing to do what it takes to gain freedom from generational sins and medicators used to cover the pain of those sins?

= "personal housecleaning"

Step 8 begins the journey of making peace with others (1-3=peace with God & 4-7=peace with self).  
="social housecleaning"=possible healing of past relationships.

In Step Eight we're setting out to clean up all the bruised relationships and the pockets of guilt, pain, fear, resentment, and sadness that are stored inside, stuck to our shameful past deeds. For this undealt-with material blocks us from loving other people, ourselves, and God in the present.

We make little headway in this new adventure of living until 1st backtrack and really make an accurate and unsparing survey of the human wreckage left in the wake. It started with taking the moral inventory & now it's time to redouble efforts to see how many people I've hurt, and in what ways. This reopening of emotional wounds, some old, some perhaps forgotten, and some still painfully festering, will at first look like a purposeless and pointless piece of surgery. But if a willing start is made, then the great advantages of doing this will so quickly reveal themselves that the pain will be lessened as one obstacle after another melts away.

- *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 77-78

When I'm in the "if only's"...I'm sinking deeper into the trap of resentment (I need to accept the reality of my deeds...to live in the "now"!)

It's time to put faces with my wrongs. Talking face-to-face worst threat to "shame voices" (face shame voices and say NO!) I John 1:9

Sitting on my past reinforces the shame. Romans 8:1

Breaking from the past sometimes means I need "new parents" (& family) in order to "grow up", someone to model healthy adult for me=learning to love/accept myself!

*It's as if God were saying, "Okay, now you want me to take all of your character defects, fine. Then you can be free and serene and the person I want you to be. But first you must see that almost all your troubles involve other people. You've tried to control them one way or the other or fix them; you have guilty or resentful feelings about them; or you have been so preoccupied with yourself and your feelings, dreams, and plans that you have ignored them (people) emotionally and caused them to experience some of their worst fears of being deserted. Now I want you to face what you have done and own your part in hurting each person in your life so you can move into the future I have for you unencumbered by the past and beginning to understand how not to keep repeating the mistakes of that past.*

- *A Hunger for Healing*, p. 135-136

The main thing this step does for us is to help build awareness that, little by little, we are gaining new attitudes about ourselves and how we deal with other people. - *Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text*, **Chapter 4/Step 8**

Implicit in both Steps 8 and 9 is the assumption that we carry a toxic residue of shame from virtually every incident in which we have hurt, rejected, or ignored others. Steps 8 and 9 provide us with the opportunity to reduce this guilt by setting things right again. We should **be cautioned**, though, that we need to work through and grieve our underlying resentment, hurt, anger, and pain before trying to make amends to those who have also offended us. Otherwise, we are putting a bandage on a festering, cancerous sore, because the toxicity is still there. Only after it has been excised can we release our resentments with a high degree of emotional integrity.

- *Serenity, A Companion for Twelve Step Recovery*, p. 58,59

This step is not about judging others. We need to pull back into our humility and learn to replace judgment with attitudes of mercy and forgiveness. Whether our "enemies" ask for it or not, it is our responsibility to forgive them in our hearts and then apologize for our wrongdoing. This is the only attitude that will lead to emotional resolution. & a deeper acceptance of my responsibility as I reflect on these situations.

It's not about making friends, just clear off your side of the street. Helpful to have good sponsor who's travelled this journey, to encourage, nurture.

### \*TIME TO REFLECT!

Types of wrongs:

- ⤴ Material Wrongs: Tangible things...money, being stingy, manipulation of laws, legal contracts.
- ⤴ Moral wrongs: Ethical, moral inappropriate behaviors and conduct...ie involving others in my wrongdoing, selfish pursuits, unaware of others needs, (forgetting BD's, holidays). Inflicting moral harm = sexual infidelity, broken promises, verbal abuse, not trustworthy, lying, etc.
- ⤴ Spiritual Wrongs: Acts of omission, neglect by responsibilities to God, self and others (family, community)...or...ingratitude toward others who've helped us. Avoid bettering self (health, education exercise, etc) being inattentive to others in our lives by sowing a lack of encouragement to them.\*\*\*\*\*

Step 8...the journey from loneliness to forgiveness!!