



## Step of the Month: Step 8

### Guiding principle: Willingness

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

Step Eight: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. In OA’s 12-and-12, it says, “Since forgiveness is essential to completing Step Eight, some discussion of how to forgive another person is in order.” (emphasis mine) There is no doubt that forgiveness is a very important spiritual concept and goal. There is no doubt that we would be better people if we can forgive ourselves and others. However, I think the emphasis on forgiveness in OA’s Step Eight is a stumbling block and almost makes the task of Step Eight harder than those with which we are challenged in Steps 4, 5 and 9 (and who thought that would be possible?!). There is also ample evidence in the literature of Alcoholics Anonymous that forgiveness is not essential for us to complete Step Eight and move forward in our program. A basic observation: Step Eight does not say “Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them after we forgave them (or ourselves) for their wrongs.” Additionally, let’s compare the literature. In the AA Big Book and 12-and-12 combined, forgive (or one of its variants) is used 28 times. Of these, 19 are in the 12-and-12. Of those 19 uses in the AA 12-and-12, 4 are in Step Eight. In the OA 12-and-12, forgive is used 37 times. Of these 37 uses, 26 are in Step Eight (5 of them apply to self-forgiveness). AA’s literature itself does not seem to make forgiveness essential to completing Step Eight. In fact, AA’s Step Eight notes, “...we consider how, with our newfound knowledge of ourselves, we may develop the best possible relations with every human being we know. This is a very large order. It is a task which we may perform with increasing skill, but never really finish.” (emphasis mine) I do think forgiveness is part of improving relations with ourselves and others but if it can never really be finished then how can it be essential to completing Step Eight? Step Eight in AA’s 12-and-12 also notes that forgiveness is the first obstacle we face in this step. Since we are contemplating making amends, “...our emotions go on the defensive...and we resentfully focus on the wrong [someone] has done us...[especially if the person] behaved badly at all.” It goes on to say, “Right here we need to fetch ourselves up sharply. It doesn’t make much sense when a real tosspot calls a kettle black.” The reference to tosspot and kettle can be seen (and I’m paraphrasing) in AA’s suggestion elsewhere that we realize we are faced with a sick person and treat them as we would a newcomer to program. This is not forgiveness writ a different way; it is compassion. It is a much easier task to see myself in another and treat them gently (compassion) than to forgive another for a (sometimes egregious) harm they’ve done. On a very personal note: intentionally, my father nearly killed me as a child. This has had a profound impact on my life. The concept of forgiving him is not something I remotely feel called upon to do (although rarely do I think about this). However, I have tremendous compassion for the fact that he was an incredibly, profoundly sick man. (I suspect it is this experience that informs my resistance to the concept of forgiveness being essential to completing Step Eight.) AA’s Step Eight goes on to say, “If we are now about to ask forgiveness for ourselves, why shouldn’t we start out by forgiving them, one and all?” This is really a rhetorical question. Working with a sponsor, they will tell you we need to be sincere in making amends. In its simplest approach, that can be I sincerely want to recover so I need to make amends. We explicitly ask to make amends in person (where appropriate) but we do not, indeed should not, ask for that person’s forgiveness. They are giving us a tremendous gift by receiving our amends but asking for their forgiveness makes our amends conditional and puts an onus on them. Also, even their presence to hear our amends is not required for us to recover since we can make amends in other ways if they refuse. (And thank goodness for that, otherwise my recovery would have been hung up around Step Nine to this day.) OA’s Step Eight does say, “Most important, we begin to become willing to make amends—that is, to make changes—in the way we deal with the people who share our lives.” And goes on to say later, “We’re not doing Step Eight to make others feel better or like us more, we’re doing it for ourselves, so that we can recover.” Yes, this is the most important part for the most important reason: so that we can recover. Forgiveness, like many - if not all - things spiritual in my program, is a gift from my Higher Power. Likewise, I cannot “push a button” and make myself forgive a wrong. (Although the “resentment prayer” approach, in my experience, looks and acts remarkably like a “button” as a way to remove resentments.) Like a surgery to remove an infected organ, I can improve my environment by being abstinent, going to meetings, working the steps, doing service, and other healthy recovery behaviors. Our Higher Power is still the Great Healer and is responsible for the spiritual tissues to knit themselves together (just like the bodily ones which medicine cannot “make” happen). The 12-step program gives our spirits (and our bodies) extraordinary restorative capabilities. So I, for one, do not think forgiveness can be dictated as essential to completing Step Eight. I do know I have received and given forgiveness many times now through my program work. I keep coming back to receive this gift, and I hope you do, too.

-Anonymous

### Announcements



**August 13 & Sept 10**  
 .Intergroup 9:45 am-  
 ZOOM and Hybrid meet-  
 ing Church of Reconcilia-  
 tion, 8900 Starcrest, 78217

**August 6 Sept 3**  
 Newcomer/Welcome  
 Zoom meeting 9:45  
 Meeting ID: 891 6797  
 3011  
 Passcode: 111111  
 Contact for newcomers  
 Lea 210-396-9295

**If you need zoom  
 info on meetings,  
 go to page 3. We  
 would love to  
 have you. Come  
 on in. You are  
 welcome to our  
 meetings. Good  
 luck on recov-  
 ery.**

God grant me  
the serenity  
to accept the  
things I can-  
not change;  
courage to  
change the  
things I can;  
and wisdom  
to know the  
difference.

Living one  
day at a time;  
enjoying one  
moment at a  
time;  
accepting  
hardships as  
the pathway  
to peace;  
taking, as He  
did, this sinful  
world  
as it is, not as  
I would have  
it;  
trusting that  
He will make  
all things  
right  
if I surrender  
to His Will;  
that I may be  
reasonably  
happy in this  
life  
and supreme-  
ly happy with  
Him  
forever in the  
next.  
Amen.

## A story for you

Step Eight asks me to own up to who I am in relation to other people and myself.

Working with a sponsor helped. I returned to OA after a relapse, during which I quickly gained 40 pounds (18 kg). After a suicidal crisis, I realized I would slowly eat myself to death if I continued. I received the gift of desperation and was willing to go to any length to recover from this disease. I asked someone who had what I wanted to sponsor me.

After Step Seven, my sponsor suggested I review my Fourth Step to look for anyone I had harmed. I wrote down their names and the reasons why I needed to make amends to them. The first half of Step Eight was an opportunity to name those I had harmed and why. It didn't matter if someone had harmed me; I only needed to identify the people I had harmed. I recently considered several people I used to sponsor. It wasn't easy to admit I had been controlling and arrogant towards them. When I did admit I had harmed these people, relief filled my heart.

I needed to put my own name on the list—"we have also damaged ourselves with our self-destructive thinking, eating, and living habits" (The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, p. 69). I damaged my body by compulsively overeating, starving, overexercising, and denying my excess weight. I lived in isolation, fear, self-pity, and resentment. I wrote my name on the list, although I had no idea how I would make amends to myself. That was part of Step Nine, and I wasn't there yet.

The second half of Step Eight involved becoming willing to make amends to those I had harmed. "It might help us to remember that our purpose in doing step eight is not to judge others, but to learn attitudes of mercy and forgiveness" (The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, p. 69). My sponsor suggested I pray for anyone I was unwilling to forgive. I prayed for each person to have health, prosperity, and joy, although I still felt angry. After praying for one particular person every day for a month, I felt a wave of forgiveness flow over me. The God of my understanding helped me see this person as a lovable child of God, who, just like me, was doing one's best with what had been given.

I prayed for each person on my Step Eight list and asked God to forgive me too. Then I was ready for Step Nine.

-Anonymous

## A story

I've always related to the idea that my cup was half empty, which was apparent in my behavior. My plate was never full enough. I always had to have a beverage at hand. Anxiety would develop if I thought I was going to run out of something in the cupboard (I still have issues with this, but now it happens with my abstinent foods). I always anticipated the worst possible outcome in any scenario. My thinking was, if I prepared myself for the worst, I could be happy with any result less catastrophic than the imagined one. I vowed to be grateful—but I never was.

Nothing was good enough. My insatiable desires played with me on every level: I never felt I had enough food, substance, money—or this or that or the other thing. Gluttony was embedded in me. I had to have it all or nothing.

My connection to my HP through OA has changed this character defect. It has re-manifested: my "all or nothing" attitude has become the driving force in my desire to absorb every piece of recovery I can. Perseverance reigns. Being blessed with what I need liberates me from acting on wants. I don't have to worry about what tomorrow holds. For today, I have a roof over my head, food on my plate, clothes on my back, love in my life, close friendships, a program that works because I work it, and a Fellowship to which I feel akin. Where else could I be so understood, so accepted, and comfortable enough to share my ugly transgressions without fearing judgment? OA has given me a chance to redeem myself, an opportunity to be a changing person. The beauty is that I only have to do it in intervals of twenty-four hours.

I am overcome with peace of mind, body, and spirit. I don't anticipate tomorrow. But now I am aware: by living the OA Steps, using recovery Tools, and thanking God for the good graces that brought me to this new way of living, I have options to face whatever comes my way, now and going forward.

Thank you for your patience in reading my share (rant). A rush of emotion flows through me into my hands, and out comes the negativity I could drown in. Each time I delve into it, I am released from the chains with which I once bound myself. Cleaning up my side of the street, I believe the hole I once buried myself in was no one's fault but my own.

Blessings to all for an abstinent twenty four hours!

-Anonymous

## San Antonio Area Intergroup—Service Board

SAAI is duly registered with the World Service Office of Overeaters Anonymous.

Our primary purpose is to aid those with the problem of compulsive eating through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous and to serve and represent the OA groups from which the Intergroup is formed.

SAAI can be reached in the following ways:

Phone: 210.492.5400

Email: [news@oasanantonio.com](mailto:news@oasanantonio.com)

US mail:  
SAAI  
PO Box 5458  
San Antonio, TX 78201

Website:  
[www.oasanantonio.com](http://www.oasanantonio.com)

### 2021-2022 Board

Chair: Ken R  
Vice Chair: Michele D  
Treasurer: Lindsay  
Recording Secretary: Swann V  
Communications Secretary: Deborah A  
Parliamentarian: Lea B  
WSO Delegate: Ron J  
Region III Representative: Helen

SAAI has standing and special committees to carry out its purposes in an effective and efficient manner.

### 2021-2022 SAAI Standing Committees

**Audio Library:** Steve M.  
**Archives:** Barbara F.  
**Communication:** Deborah A.  
**Swan/El Cisne:** Chris B.  
**Website:** Deborah A.  
**Public Information:** Open

**Professional Outreach:** Mary Rose J.  
**Meeting Info/Phone line:** Sharon V.  
**Welcome Back/Newcomer:** Lea  
**12X12:** Open

**Literature:** Barbara F.  
OA and AA literature can be ordered and picked up at Intergroup meetings.  
[Literature forms online](#)

Place literature order at:  
[oasaliterature@gmail.com](mailto:oasaliterature@gmail.com)

Want to receive The Swan/El Cisne and important updates via email?  
[news@oasanantonio.com](mailto:news@oasanantonio.com)

### Zoom Meeting IDs & Passwords (PW):

**Sunday 5:00 PM, Hybrid, ID: 193-124-988, PW: 474395**  
**Sunday 7:00 PM New Braunfels, Hybrid, ID: 869-194-04552, PW: 1111111**  
**Monday 9:30 AM, Virtual Only, ID: 324-599-463, PW: 281**  
**Monday 5:45 PM, Virtual Only, ID: 715-513-8641, PW: 121212**  
**Monday 7:00 PM, Virtual Only, ID: 898-2617-8803, PW: 111111**  
**Tuesday 5:45 PM, Virtual Only, ID: 832-0041-1425, PW: 831971**  
**Tuesday 7:00 PM, In Person Only**  
**Wednesday 12:00 PM Kerrville, In Person Only**  
**Wednesday 7:00 PM, In Person Only, Spanish**  
**Wednesday 7:30 PM, Hybrid, Audio: (712) 432-0900, Access code 637-445**  
**Thursday 12:15 PM, In Person Only**  
**Thursday 7:00 PM New Braunfels, Hybrid, ID: 86919404552, PW: 1111111**  
**Friday 9:30 AM, Virtual Only, ID: 803-900-343, PW: 2839**  
**Friday 5:45 PM, Virtual Only, ID: 715-513-8641, PW: 121212**  
**Saturday 8:30 AM, Hybrid, ID: 140-019-469, PW: 111111**  
**1st Saturday 9:45 AM, Newcomers/Return, Virtual Only, ID: 891-6797-3011**  
**Passcode: 111111**

### TWELVE STEPS

- 1. We admitted we were powerless and our lives have become unmanageable**
- 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**
- 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him.***
- 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**
- 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**
- 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**
- 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.**
- 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.**
- 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**
- 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.**
- 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**

## TWELVE STEPS (cont.)

**12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.**



### Service Station

**Why Service? Show up. Attending a meeting is service. Unlock the venue for meetings each week. This is a seemingly simple task, but one of great importance. Without this act of service, your group can't meet to work on their recovery. Set up and clean up meetings. Putting out and returning chairs, making the books available, and passing out materials are all ways to serve. Participate in the meeting. Welcome newcomers, read or share your own experience, strength and hope on the topic. When you are ready for more moderate or lead the meeting. The leader/moderator is just a member who follows the format to keep the meeting on topic and on time. Operate the dashboard. Unique to the virtual world this position protects the meeting from disruptive participants. Participate in group conscience. There are always different ways of doing things and the meeting members decide together what is best for the group.**

<https://oa.org/why-service/>

## AREA MEETINGS

SUN	5:00 PM Hybrid	Lynn G. (210) 240-3277	University United Methodist Church, South Campus, Main Entrance, 2nd Floor, Room S210, 5084 De Zavala (at Vance Jackson), 78249	Step Study Discussion Speaker, 2nd Sun
	7:00 PM Hybrid	Sondra (830) 212-2818	Unity Church, 408 Gruene Road, <b>NEW BRAUNFELS</b> , 78130	Literature Discussion
MON	9:30 AM Virtual Only	Vera C. (210) 494-2713	Shearer Hills Baptist Church, South Building (San Pedro Entrance) Room 201, 12615 San Pedro, 78216	Literature: Big Book
	5:45 PM Virtual Only	David E. (830) 928-4844	Zoom	Literature Discussion Speaker, 5th Monday
	7:00 PM Virtual Only	Ken R. (210) 520-3727	St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6110 NW Loop 410, 78238	Discussion
TUES	5:45 PM Virtual Only	Julene (512) 923-0707	Alamo Heights Baptist Church, 6501 Broadway, 78209	Joe & Charlie Big Book Study; Bring BB, Notebook; Listening, writing, & sharing
	7:00 PM In Person Only	Curtis (210) 487-1683	Alamo Heights Baptist Church, 6501 Broadway, 78209	Steps, 1st Tues Big Book, 2nd Tues Traditions, 3rd Tues Abstinence Book, 4th T
WED	12 Noon In Person Only	Kay (404) 286-9169	Unity Church of the Hill Country, Library, 1016 Jefferson St., <b>KERRVILLE</b> , 78028	Steps / Traditions
	7:00 PM In Person Only	Graciela (210) 219-9660	Emmanuel Presbyterian Church 713 Division Ave SA TX 78225	Spanish <i>español</i> Literatura y Discusión
	7:30 PM Hybrid	Barbara D. (210) 637-7203	Church of Reconciliation, Brigid Room, 8900 Starcrest, 78217	Step Study OA 12 & 12 Newcomers, Ask It Basket
THURS	12:15 PM In Person Only	Graciela (210) 219-9660	Collins Garden Library, 200 N. Park Blvd. (corner of Nogalitos), San Antonio, TX 78204	OA Literature Discussion
	7:00 PM Hybrid	Kay R. (210) 831-8079	Unity Church, Life Room, 408 Gruene Rd., <b>NEW BRAUNFELS</b> , 78130	OA Literature
FRI	9:30 AM Virtual Only	Gwen (210) 862-8211	N.E. Christian Church, 2839 Woodbury (at Nacogdoches .6 miles outside Loop 410 ), 78217	Literature Discussion Speaker, 2nd Friday
	5:45 PM Virtual Only	David E. (830) 928-4844	Zoom	Speaker & Topics Alternating Fridays
SAT	8:30 AM Hybrid	Sharon V. (210) 863-3338	Church of Reconciliation Alban Room 8900 Starcrest, 78217	OA For Today OA Voices of Recovery Discussion
<b>****MONTHLY MEETINGS****</b>				
1st SAT	9:45 AM Virtual	Lea B (210) 396-9295	Zoom	SAAI Newcomer / "Welcome Back"
2nd SAT	9:45 AM Hybrid	SAAI Chair chair@oasantonio.com	Church of Reconciliation, Brigid Room 8900 Starcrest, 78217	San Antonio Area Intergroup (SAAI)