**Step 8: The List**

You know, there are all types of lists. If you're like me, you **make a to-do list** daily (show my list). I’m old school, so I write down everything I need to do and tackle everything on the list, one at a time. I get the things that are most critical done first. If I don't finish my list, the next day, the stuff I didn't finish will go to the top of my list. My "To Do List" keeps me organized and on task.

My wife and I keep a **Grocery List**—two of them: a Sam's list and a Kroger list. When we grocery shop, we only buy what's on the list. That way, we only get what we need rather than buying everything in sight. On a side note, my wife didn't follow this list when the new Costco opened. As a result, she spent double, putting her on another list…. **my resentment list**!

Then there is one of the most difficult lists to compile: your **Wedding Guest List**. This isn't easy. This is where you invite Aunt Helen, who everybody on your dad’s side of the family can't stand, to the wedding. However, if you don't ask her, you'll insult her son Billy, who has always been one of your favorite cousins. This is tough stuff! And let's face it, you don't like some of your future husband or wife’s family and friends. If truth be told, you’d rather not have them at the wedding at all. This is one of the most difficult lists you’ll ever make. Man, planning for a wedding it’s fun, isn’t it??!!!

Another list is the **Bucket List**. It's so popular that they made a movie about it. This list includes what you'd like to do before you meet Jesus.

Here is the World’s Most Popular Top 10 Bucket List (by the way, I’m not sure who decided this is the list, but here you go):

**1. See the Northern Lights** – I've heard this is awesome…

**2. Run a Marathon** – Uh no!

**3. Take an African Safari** – That would be cool…

**4. Write a Story** – I kind of do that twice a month.

**5. Walk Along the Great Wall of China** – That’s a good one…

This item topped the bucket lists of 40 percent of the people surveyed by the Daily Mail.

**6. Learn to Play an Instrument** – I’ve done that one.

**7. Snorkel at the Great Barrier Reef** (or Just Go Snorkeling) – Sounds fun…

**8. Skydiving** – I’ve never understood why anyone would jump out of a perfectly good airplane…

**9.** **Own a Dog** – Got one!

**10. See the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt**– This would be super awesome!

There are **scheduled maintenance lists** for your vehicles, **timeline lists**, **brainstorming lists**, **checklists**, and even an **index list**, which is the **list of all the lists** you have. Lists are important because they keep you focused on a task and give order to your life.

One of the most important lists you'll ever make is within your **inventory** compiled during your fourth step. This list contains the people you have hurt and those who have hurt you. This might be one of the most impactful and vital lists you'll ever make. But making the list isn't what's important…. Completing the assignment, which is completing Steps 8 and 9, is the important part.

**This is not a list you acknowledge in your head.** You must put this list on paper. Writing these names down will begin the cycle of healing. You’ve already cataloged your character defects and moral inventory, and now you will examine some of the same situations from another angle and perspective.

Tonight, we are going to examine how to construct **The List** and effectively work Step 8. First, we'll explore the process of working on this critical step, including precisely who and what goes on The List, and then decipher the process of becoming willing. Then, we'll look at another vital aspect of working on Steps 8 and 9: forgiveness.

But first, let's look at **Step 8. We make a list of every person we have harmed and those who have harmed us and become willing to make amends and forgive them all.** Step Eight is the beginning of the process of making amends.

According to the Free Dictionary, making amends is

*reparation or compensation for a loss, damage, or injury of any kind.* In layperson's terms, making amends is to make things right for the wrongs you've committed. But remember, in Step 8, you are only doing the groundwork before you make amends.

Steps 8 and 9 are the reconciliation and restoration steps. Before you can restore relationships, you need to identify the relationships that were damaged. That’s why you are making The List. You are taking responsibility for your own part, not someone else’s, and are cleaning up your side of the street.

Let's look at how to accomplish the task of making The List. The first step is quite simple…. **Start your list**. If you are like me, you've procrastinated far too long because you aren't really excited about Steps 8 and 9. Benjamin Franklin famously said, **“Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today.”** The hardest step is to start, so get busy and write down names. Begin with the obvious ones first: Your ex, your kids, your parents, your extended family. People you stole from, romantic partners you hurt, employers you took advantage of. Then add those who think you "might" have hurt. Chances are you did hurt them, which is the reason they came to mind.

Remember, you've already compiled a list of people from the inventory you completed in Step 4, so many names will be directly from your inventory. However, when compiling your Step 8 list, you may have missed some. This brings us to the next step in this task… **Go to the Lord in prayer** and ask Him to reveal any other people you need to include on The List. God will open your eyes to things you might have forgotten or that you blocked from your memory because of your perceived lack of severity of the offense. Daniel 2:22*He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.* God will reveal those things blurred from your memory so you can deal with them.

After you have completed your list, it’s time for the final step in this process, which you’ll complete with your sponsor: **Categorize your list.** Sequence and timing are everything in making amends; categorizing your list will better prepare you. It's important to tackle the amends in the proper order.

1 Corinthians 14:40*But all things should be done decently and in order.* With this in mind, here are the four categories:

1. **People to make amends to now**: You need to make things right with these people in your life very soon, or irreconcilable damage might occur. Remember, before you try to make amends, YOU need to be in a place in your sobriety where you can effectively attempt to make amends. Fairly often, your attempt at reconciliation is met with angst and unwillingness. Sometimes, the hurt you've caused is deep, and the person you've hurt isn't in a place where they can even accept your amends. If your sobriety isn't substantial, it can throw you into a tailspin, which can result in a relapse.
2. **People to make amends to later**: There are others with whom making amends too soon will only further damage the relationship or situation. Timing is extremely important in these situations. Your sponsor will be an essential asset as you prepare for this group. There is an old saying that *time heals all wounds*. This simply isn’t true. **Jesus is the Healer, and His timing is perfect**!
3. **People you want to make partial amends to in order not to injure them or others:** Some people you shouldn’t contact to make amends to because your contact would cause more harm than good. Examples would be an ex who has remarried or someone you abused or hurt deeply. Sometimes, just being willing to make amends is enough. Another way to make partial amends is to seek counseling or help to deal with the underlying defect of character that caused you to act out in the first place.
4. **People you may never be able to make amends to**: This list would include those you can't find or those who are deceased.

Remember, we are only on Step 8, so **becoming willing to make amends is the key here**. You are in the preparation stage, not the facilitation stage. Some of you may ask, **“How do I become willing to make amends?”** Here are some suggestions that have worked for me:

* **Acknowledge and identify the damage you’ve caused**. It doesn't matter if the harm you caused was from being selfish, careless, angry, arrogant, dishonest, or any other character defect; in fact, it doesn't even matter if you didn't intend to cause harm. What matters is that you acknowledge and identify the damage you've caused. Proverbs 28:13*Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.*

This is another layer of coming out of denial. Often, you minimize the wreckage you've caused. If you are going to develop the willingness to make amends, you must first acknowledge the gravity of the damage you've caused. Your sponsor can help you realistically evaluate the depth of the harm you've caused.

* **Own it!** One of the best ways of developing a deep willingness to make things right is to own your part. Admit it and own it. *Galatians 6:5* *For we are each responsible for our own conduct.* Far too often, the tendency is to minimize the damage and then blame others. Instead, take full responsibility for your actions. Once you've identified the people you've harmed, acknowledged the damage you've caused, and then taken responsibility for said damage, God will begin to remove the scales from your eyes and soften your heart.
* **Focus on you, not them.** Becoming willing to make amends requires inward focus, not outward judgment. Don't focus on what others have done to you; instead, focus on how you have wronged others. By looking inward, you'll become more likely to accept the damage you've done, not obsess over the pain you've endured. Matthew 7:3*: Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?* Yes, you must become willing to forgive others; however, at this point, it's time to look at your part. If you want to become willing to make amends, focus on you, not them.
* **Pray and meditate daily.** Persistent prayer and meditation are the keys to becoming willing. When you pray, you communicate with the One who has all power. The One who can and will change you from the inside out. He will soften your heart. He will help you take responsibility for your actions. Colossians 4:2*Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.* So, pray consistently and continuously. Also, spend time daily in the word of God, the Bible. Pray and meditate on scripture, and the willingness to make amends to those you have harmed will begin to blossom.

When you work on the fourth step, you do some personal house cleaning of sorts. When you arrive at the eighth step, it's more of a social house cleaning. Step 8 is all about recognizing and taking responsibility for the wreckage that you have left in your wake while you were actively engaged in your addictive or compulsive behaviors.

Making a list of the wrongs you’ve committed helps you to truly understand the importance of change. It’s easy to overlook one or two bad events in your life. But when you see an entire list of the times that your destructive behaviors have hurt someone, it motivates you to change.

The List, **YOUR list**, will help foster the desire within your heart to make amends so that you can move on to Step 9.

Some of you are ready to start working on the willingness to make amends. You have been spurned into action as you have heard the message tonight. However, some of you aren't there yet. You're not sure you want to make things right, but you're tired. You're tired of your life's turmoil, and you know something must change. Tonight, I want each of you to take a step in the right direction on this road to willingness. As the Worship Team plays, I invite you to come forward. Let's spend some time in prayer and worship and declare, I will wait for You, Lord!

Here is your **Leader’s Question**:

Are you willing to make amends to those you’ve harmed? Share about it. If not, share what’s holding you back.