



eating disorders *anonymous*.

EDA Step Workbook



A guide for new members and
Eating Disorders Anonymous groups

**Step Eight –
Made a list of all persons we had harmed and
became willing to make amends to them all.**

Having begun the very hard work of examining how our choices have impacted our life, we now prepare to translate our thoughts into actions. There is often great trepidation around this step. Have we not already labored long and hard? Is it not enough to have confronted what we have done, not enough to have confessed to a Higher Power, not enough to have shared our deepest secrets with a person whom we may marginally trust, if we even trust him/her at all? Are we now to potentially humiliate ourselves with yet more people, some of whom, if we are to be honest, we still think have acted far worse toward us than we had acted toward them? Nearly all of us had such thoughts when we first approached step eight. Yet we know that we must break free of our old patterns.

Step eight is where we really begin to consider how we may set right the wrongs for which we are responsible, where our actions and sometimes our inaction created or perpetuated the suffering and hardship of others. Step eight may sound dreadful, but taking responsibility for ourselves and our actions frees us from the feeling like victims. Many of us have lived lives of reaction, where we regularly blamed our behavior on what others said or did. We cannot be free or happy if we allow the attitudes and actions of others to determine the course of our own. We have a responsibility to think clearly and choose well in all we do.

Where we rejected this responsibility and blamed others for our negative thinking and damaging actions, we must become willing to adopt new ways. Where we have caused pain, suffering or hardship, where we stole or lied, where we remained financially dependent children instead of independent adults, we must become willing to identify the error, admit the truth, and right the wrong as far as possible without causing additional damage.

We begin by considering where we have created harmful or difficult situations for others. We do not concern ourselves at this point with why we behaved badly; we are sure to have had our excuses. We reflect that we have now turned our will and our lives over to the care of our Higher Power, and we try not to judge our past behavior any more than we judge the past behavior of others. If we are to establish ourselves on a new footing, we must avoid resentment, bitterness and self-pity like the plague. The thinking that guided our past actions was obviously flawed, yet those same feelings may flow suddenly back as we reconsider the situations in which we created suffering or added to the burdens of others. We may need to remind ourselves that we work this step as a means of developing new and better ways of meeting the old challenges.

Reviewing our step four inventory is a good start for our step eight list, but we should not be surprised if in doing our review we think of more material for step four. Our task now is to move forward and think about how things should be, not belabor what all we or others did wrong. We have already admitted our errors and have asked for help in letting go of our defects. We do not delay now; we move on. With our step four inventory in hand, we make a list of all the people we have hurt. Surely this would be a

long list if we think long of all the friends and family we neglected or upon whom we inflicted emotional or financial burdens! But we should not wallow, nor list every individual we have ever met; it is enough to concentrate on individuals with whom we have current or have had long-standing relationships. The goal is not a perfect list but one that reflects that we have been thorough and honest in its preparation. Remember, the steps are a continuous process; if we have forgotten something important, we will have many future opportunities to set things right.

Taking our list, we think of each person individually, and pray as earnestly as possible for their health and well-being every day for at least a month. We do this even though we may not truly wish the best for these individuals at first. We have to set aside our own pain, anger and resentment to make progress with this step and with our lives. We must develop more objectivity and perspective or we shall return to old patterns. So we pray for all good things to come to the people on our list. We do not think of ourselves. We think of what it means to be a good spouse, friend, co-worker, and family member and we ask to be provided with opportunities to be useful without drawing attention to ourselves. We ask for our resentment and pain to be removed. We ask for any lingering sense of victimization and hopelessness to be removed. We ask for freedom from concern about what others might do or think.

We are not in charge of anyone else's thoughts and actions; we work toward better management of our own. We focus instead on how to be of service to others, expecting nothing in return. With this attitude and with actions to match we practice the objectivity and perspective we must have to be successful with step eight and with all the rest of the steps.

When we have practiced prayer and service for a month or more, we will find many of our hurts and resentments have become much less powerful. We review our step eight list again. We commence to prepare making amends to the people who have been the focus of our obsessions, fantasies and resentments, and most likely to have been affected by our poor behavior. Where we have been traumatized by the inappropriate actions of others, we must begin to let go of thoughts of revenge and hatred. We focus on God's power to heal us and restore our ability to live happily and without the shame and guilt that impaired us. We think carefully about forgiveness. Are we willing to forgive each individual for his or her part in **our** subsequent behavior? Are we willing to accept responsibility for our actions? We think about approaching the individuals who pose no current threat to our safety. Are we now willing to go to the people who were most affected by our dependence, negativity, blaming and other ill behaviors, to try and set things right?

We go through our list again. Even if we are reluctant, we ask our Higher Power for good, orderly direction and for the courage to change the things we can. Many of us feel compelled to rush through this step. It is critical that we remember that this process is really the work of a lifetime; it is not a race. If you are willing to approach the majority of the individuals on your list with a commitment to rebuild or repair what you have damaged, especially including interpersonal trust, you should feel good, for you are working step eight.

Workbook questions designed to help you create your step eight list of people you have harmed, and to help you find the courage necessary to approach step nine:

1. List the relationships most severely damaged by your past misdeeds.
2. In which relationships do you feel the greatest resentment, guilt, or shame?
3. Who are you emotionally unwilling to forgive? How does this interfere with your relationship with God?
4. Cite an example of your passing judgment on others and thus harming them and yourself.
5. Which relationships cause you the most pain in terms of anger and bitterness? Tell God through written prayer, "God help me forgive.....and....."
6. Describe a relationship where your pride caused harm to the other person.
7. Name one person with whom you need to make amends but who is unavailable to meet face-to-face. What amend needs to be made? Step nine will provide guidance on how to approach this situation. How do you think might you accomplish the amend?
8. Pray for the health, well-being and happiness of every individual on your list for thirty days. When possible, think of their unmet needs and pray for the fulfillment of these needs. Pray to be unburdened of any resentment, bitterness and pain you still have so you might more freely utilize your talents and energy to serve a larger purpose. You will find fulfillment, joy and meaning in such service.
9. What concerns do you have about how you will be treated when making amends? Which situations cause you the most concern? Talk these out with a trusted friend if possible. Ask yourself how someone you really respect might act in each situation, and form a plan of action with which you are willing to engage.

Congratulations! You have already embarked on the road of freedom and empowerment!