

...unfinished business...

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One Man's Extraordinary Year of Trying to Do
The Right Things



TOOLKIT: MAKING AMENDS

Making amends is a four-part process. It involves:

1. Accepting responsibility for what you have done;
2. Apologizing to the person(s) you have hurt or offended;
3. Trying to reverse the effects of your mistake; and
4. Making a commitment that you will never repeat the offending or hurtful behavior.

Making amends is not about confessing your sins or spilling your guts or making sure that the person you've hurt is aware of your pain. It's about repairing the pain you've caused another human being.

Sincerity is everything.

"I am sorry." "I was wrong." "Thank you." These phrases only have value if they come straight from the heart, without any expectation that you'll get anything in return, including the other person's forgiveness.

Your goal in making amends is to restore a sense of balance and mutual respect to your relationship.

That means listening more than speaking and putting yourself in the other person's shoes. It also means realizing that sometimes, just sometimes, it's best to let sleeping dogs lie.

I discuss in the prologue of the book how making amends is central to most religious traditions and to addiction-recovery programs. Because it involves painful memories and strong emotions, the process of making amends can get complicated. If you find yourself struggling with it or having doubts, seek the guidance of a trustworthy friend, therapist or clergy member.