

Making Amends

Michael D. McGee, M.D.

Purpose—to heal the harm caused to the other person.

Not to gain anything for yourself. To be done with no expectations. Making amends is an act of care for another.

1. Acknowledge the harm done. List the wrong actions.
2. Take ownership for your actions. DO NOT provide explanations or excuses!
3. Express empathy—an understanding of how your actions must have impacted the other person.
4. Express remorse
5. Express commitment to not harm again.

Go over with a trusted intimate or sponsor to make sure you have it right. You may want to practice it.

Consider whether to do it in person or by letter/email. In person is usually better if possible.

Do not make amends if it will harm the other person. Remember that you are not doing this to relieve your own guilt.