

BREATHING UNDER WATER: WE JOURNEY TOGETHER

Steps 8&9: Repairing what was broken

KEY IDEA: Grace restores relationships, not just individuals.

We are created to be in relationship with God and one another. But sometimes our relationships fray and break. Repair is a key ingredient to growth and wholeness. This repair often includes the hard work of acknowledging the harms we've done and, with grace, extending our hands and hearts to make things right. In this process, we are wounded healers, with our pain serving as a source of strength, acting with vulnerability and gentleness to be a compassionate presence for others.

As we continue our examination of "Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps," we offer some thoughts for you to consider, in contemplation or conversation. Below are three questions to ponder:

1. Mending relationships is hard, but important work. How easy or difficult is it for you to have serious conversations and put yourself in an attitude that allows you to make amends and bring about reconciliation? How does your understanding of God's forgiveness toward you influence your desire and ability to extend that same grace to others.
2. In our spiritual lives, deep soul-searching and lament can get sidelined. But lament offers us a healthy way to address difficult emotions. How, in your experience, does modern culture tell us to cope with suffering and wrongdoing? How does this differ from what the Bible advises? When you're in the midst of making a list of those you've harmed and begin making amends, what are the boldest, most vulnerable questions you want to take to God in prayer?
3. Making skillful apologies can be complicated. It's important not to take on a sense of false victimhood, to practice redemptive listening, avoid possible hidden agendas, and ensure we are not causing more harm in an effort to do good. Imagine one of the wisest people you know; what advice would they give you about making amends with someone you've wronged? How, for you, does making amends differ from simply saying "I'm sorry"?

As people of faith, we are called to imitate both the humanity and divinity of Jesus. In your close relationships, consider how your actions and deepest truths affect others – for better or worse. If your ways of thinking and behaving were aligned with what you know about Jesus, how might you alter your relationships? What does following Jesus teach you about repairing broken relationships? How, in your life, is accountability shaped by grace?



Sometimes when face-to-face apologies could cause harm, people make “living amends,” changing their behavior or giving back to others in ways that reflect their growth. Take some time for reflection and consider what specific character traits, fears or selfishness of yours might be hurting someone. Then, commit to changing that hurtful behavior. How can you move beyond words to demonstrate a sense of grace and reconciliation? Take a first step.



FROM AGE TO AGE: Sharing Intergenerationally

When exploring the concept of making amends, it's helpful to offer ideas about how saying "I'm sorry," is just a first step. Reconciliation, or restoring wholeness, often involves actions and efforts to heal relationships and repair harm.

To illustrate ideas about making amends, you might explore ideas about weaving, and how when a blanket or garment is ripped, we can use thread to patch and repair it. It's not just enough to acknowledge the tear.



Weaving is a delicate, intentional process of bringing together distinct threads to create a stronger, unified whole. And, often, after something is mended, it is more interesting and takes on a different kind of beauty.

God's love weaves us together, as people, as family, and as a church. God meets us where we are – even when we're broken – and leads us toward wholeness.



EMBODYING FAITH

In the book, *Breathing Under Water*, Father Richard Rohr talks about the idea of “practical incarnation.” Incarnation can be defined as the practice of fully inhabiting your physical body, anchoring the divine into your lived reality, and moving beyond theoretical beliefs into tangible, embodied love and compassion. Father Rohr notes that practical incarnation “keeps Christians grounded, honest and focused on saving others instead of just ourselves.”

Read and reflect on John 1:14 and how your body and its lived experiences are sacred vessels for spiritual transformation. If you’re so inclined, do this reflection while practicing gentle, intuitive movement, like walking, yoga or swaying to music. Are there any “wounds” or issues that seem to be calling for your attention?

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE *BREATHING UNDER WATER* SERIES AND TO ACCESS MORE RESOURCES SCAN THE QR CODE.

