

Anatomy of an Apology

1. Acknowledge specific actions (responsibility). **What happened?**

2. Acknowledge impact (NOT your intent). **How were people negatively impacted?**

3. Be clear about what you will do to change behavior (accountability). **What did you learn?**

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DIRECTIONS

There are three key components to the skill and art of an apology. Apologizing requires responsibility, acknowledging impact, and accountability. There are many other ways to craft an apology, this is only one way! Take a few moments to think about a situation where you think apologizing to someone may need to occur. Now, write your responses to each of the questions on the other side of this worksheet. You do not have to share anything you wrote with anyone in the room, so be as honest as you need to be during this activity.

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AVOID

1. Empty apology: an apology that has limited to no content or substance. Examples include “I’m sorry you feel that way...”
2. Denial: it is difficult to hear that we have harmed or hurt someone or that something we were a part of negatively impacted another person. Try to take a deep breath and listen before speaking.
3. Excessive apologizing: nobody wants to keep hearing you apologize because it is still all about you! Do it right the first time and learn the lesson you need to!
4. Incomplete apologies: these are apologies that do not consider or acknowledge the above components and therefore may be incomplete.

STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH FAILURE

- Take a deep breath, take another, and another and another...
- Reflect
- Thank whomever has shared another point of view with you
- Drink water
- Utilize your support system
- Contact your supervisor/mentor
- Process your response

- Take Action!