

The Strength of an Apology



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We have forgotten the art of making a proper apology. There is no time for this “mushy and gushy” stuff today because there is so much work and KPIs to meet, if people get hurt in the process – then, it is just too bad. We expect others to be matured enough to understand our aggressiveness and if they complain – then, they are not emotionally prepared for pressure in the real world.

Why should I apologize? It is a sign of weakness.

Consider the consequence of not apologizing:

1. **What is not apologized is soon counted as a weakness.** If I am consistently late for meetings and do not apologize for it, then others will view it as a habitual trait – something to be expected. However, if I apologize promptly – then, others see my commitment to change. This is counted to my favor as character strength.
2. **What is not apologized becomes a bitterness “backlog”.** An unresolved conflict can always be traced back to an unresolved conversation. Why are conversations difficult? It's because no one is willing to come out of their stronghold of pride and arrogance. Every day, the dust beneath the carpet pills up until one day, we trip over this growing pile!
3. **What is not apologized increases the level of misunderstanding.** Silence is a strange language that can be interpreted in many ways. When we are quiet on a burning issue, the other party will view it only to their favor and may even misrepresent us to the detriment of our good reputation.

Herein lays the strength of an apology: ***The faster the apology is made, the stronger will be the restoration process.*** Many talk about the speed of execution – I would rather emphasize the speed of a sincere apology which in today's world is so sorely lacking. Show me a team that is lacking in morale and I will showing you a group of people who is not humble and courageous enough to apologize.

A sincere apology has one important component – a willingness to make restitution. For example, in addition to apologizing for being late for the meeting, I will also volunteer to take the minutes for the next session as an indication of my commitment to change. Constantly check your conscience by asking – *“In addition to saying sorry, is there anything else I can do to communicate my commitment to change.”* Do not fall into the danger of waiting for the right feelings to come first before right action is taken. Go the reverse – do what is right *first*, then the vibes will come along. Character is about making right choices despite my natural inclinations.

Here are three types of restitution you can take:

1. **By giving due recognition.** Express praise and gratefulness publicly. Many are bitter because their sacrifices are not recognized and noticed.
2. **By meeting felt needs.** Identify what the other person is lacking – is it finances, practical assistance or helpful referrals, do it willingly for the good of the other.
3. **By offering a gift.** A gift given in sincerity minimizes anger. The reason why presenting a gift is powerful is because you cannot buy something for someone without thinking about the recipient.

We live in an imperfect world with imperfect people – this is the perfect situation for plenty of opportunities for apologies! Making sincere and humble apologies regularly will only make you stronger – why? This is because every time an apology is made, you understand yourself and others much better and become a better person in the process. Isn't this what growth is all about. Think about it.

Interested in a 2-day training that addresses what it takes apologize sincerely?

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