

# ***The Five Languages of Apology***



**Divide into 4 groups & discuss if you:**

**Agree/disagree: Forgive and forget.**

**Agree/disagree: Love means never having to say  
you're sorry.**

**Why don't people apologize? Can you forgive without  
an apology?**

**Is there a right way & wrong way to apologize?  
What do you look for?**

**Forgive and  
Forget:  
*Is it possible  
to do both?***

This actual phrase is not found in the bible

We are told to forgive one another or reap bitterness & the loss of eternal reward

Forgiveness is a decision of will

Since God commands us to forgive, we must make conscious choice

It may be impossible to truly forget; can't delete memory

God does not "remember" our wickedness; but God is all-knowing

He treats us as if the sin has not occurred

We remember the sin, but live as if we don't

*Love means  
never having  
to say  
you're  
sorry.*



**1970: Ryan O'Neil & Ali McGraw; when they fight, she says it to him; after she dies, he says it to his father  
I was 8, and even then I had problems with this.**

-- *Why don't people  
apologize?*  
-- *Can you forgive  
without an apology?*

**Not worth it**

**Not my fault**

**Insensitive conscience**

**We are instructed to forgive others in the manner God forgives us**

**Scripture says if we confess our sins, God will forgive them**

**Nothing indicates that God forgives the sins of those who do not  
confess & repent**

**Father forgive them; they know not what they do**

**Jesus compassion & His desire to see them forgiven**

**But that forgiveness came later when they acknowledged it ACTS  
2:22-44**

# What do we look for in an apology?

**Ask for sharing**

**Explain The Five Languages of Apology per Dr. Gary Chapman**

**Don't need all five to be effective - although that is the ideal**

**But 2-3 of the 5 speak more to a person than the others**

**This is our apology language**

**We need to hear the "right ones" spoken**

**Likewise, we would need to speak the "right one" to an offended**

## **The Five Languages of Apology**

- **Expressing Regret**
- **Accepting Responsibility**
- **Making Restitution**
- **Genuinely Repenting**
- **Requesting Forgiveness**

**These are the Five Languages per Dr. Chapman  
Let's take a look at each one**

## The Five Languages of Apology:

### ■ Expressing Regret

“I am sorry.”

An acknowledgement that what you did, or failed to do, that affected another

The offended wants you to experience some of their pain

The offended wants you to realize how deeply you hurt them

Share story on page 27 of book

Body language: tears, bowed head, soft voice, eye contact speaks volumes

Be specific: I am sorry for. . .

Don't turn the tables: I am sorry you feel that way or I am sorry my behavior upsets you

No buts, no blaming: you yelled, don't accuse the one you yelled out of getting you upset

Say it with no expectation of receiving an “I'm sorry” back

## Statements of Regret

- ▣ I know now that I hurt you very deeply. That causes me immense pain. I am truly sorry for what I did.
- ▣ You were promised a service that we have not provided. I am sorry our company clearly dropped the ball this time.
- ▣ I obviously was not thinking very well. I never meant to hurt you, but I can see that my words were way out of line. I'm sorry that I was so insensitive.
- ▣ I feel really bad I disappointed you. I should have been more thoughtful. I'm sorry I caused you so much pain.

Provide each table with chart paper & marker

Each comes up with own statement of regret

Post and analyze: Is this a "good" statement of regret?

Share story from page 48 of book

# The Five Languages of Apology:

## ▣ Accepting Responsibility

*“I was wrong.”*

Why is it so hard to admit we are wrong?

Not my fault;blaming;provoked by another

Tied to our sense of self worth; weakness

Is actually a sign of immaturity

Use agree/disagree approach

I agree I have a right to feel hurt, as I don't choose feelings but experience them

I disagree that my feelings give me the right to hurt another

If we truly don't understand why another is hurt, we must ask

Share story on page 110

## Statements of Accepting Responsibility:

- ▣ I made a big mistake. I wasn't thinking at the time. But looking back, that was a problem. I wish I had thought before I acted. I was wrong.
- ▣ I spoke out of anger, trying to justify myself, but it was unkind and untrue. I was wrong.
- ▣ I repeated a mistake that we've discussed before. I messed up. I know it was my fault.

**Provide each table with chart paper & marker**

**Each comes up with own statement of accepting responsibility**

**Post and analyze: Is this a "good" statement of accepting responsibility?**

**The Five Languages of  
Apology:**

**☞ Making Restitution**

*“What can I do to  
make it right?”*

Judicial system and human relationships influenced by this idea

“Pay for” mistake with jail time

“Make it up” by community service

In public, we call this fulfilling a sense of justice

Leader in research on forgiveness Everett Worthington calls it “equalizing”

We Catholics call it penance

In private, a need for love

Luke 19:1-10 is story of Zacchaeus - page 66

Zacchaeus' restitution was monetary

words of affirmation

acts of service

gifts

quality time

physical touch

Effective restitution requires learning the love language of your loved one and speaking it as part of your apology

## Statements of Restitution

- Is there anything I can do to make up for what I have done?
- Just saying “I’m sorry” doesn’t seem right. I want to make it up to you somehow; what would you consider appropriate?
- I’ve broken this promise again; would it help if I put my commitment in writing?
- I damaged your honor. Can I make a public correction in some way?

Provide each table with chart paper & marker

Each comes up with own statement of restitution

Post and analyze: Is this a “good” statement of restitution

Share story from page 64 of book

## The Five Languages of Apology:

### ■ Genuinely Repenting

*“I’ll try not to do  
that again.”*

The word repentance means “to turn around”

Realization that behavior is destructive, regrets it, and **CHOOSES** to change

Share story from page 69

Notice the words “try”

We are expressing an intent

The possibility of failure should not keep us from trying

We should also develop a plan for change & then implement that plan

Share story from page 74

And remember that it's important to verbalize the intent

If you don't tell them, it could take months for them to notice the changes

And even then, they may not realize the motivation behind the changes

## Statements of Genuine Repentance

- ▣ How could I say that in a different way that would not come across as critical?
- ▣ I know my behavior was painful to you, and I don't want to cause you pain. I'm open to any ideas you may have for me.
- ▣ I let you down again. What would it take for you to rebuild your trust in me?

**Provide each table with chart paper & marker**

**Each comes up with own statement of genuine repentance**

**Post and analyze: Is this a "good" statement of repentance**

***Check this out:***

Languages of Apology

- ▣ Expressing Regret
- ▣ Accepting Responsibility
- ▣ Making Restitution
- ▣ Genuinely Repenting

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you.  
 And I detest all my sins, because of Your just punishments, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love.  
 I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to sin no more.

**Do we see the languages of apology in our act of contrition?**

**Note: We accept responsibility when we walk into the confessional!**

**This brings us to the last of the Five Languages of Apology: Requesting Forgiveness**

**As Catholics, we do this when we say "Bless me Father"**

## The Five Languages of Apology:

### Requesting Forgiveness

*“Will you please  
forgive me?”*

How can I forgive you when you don't want to be forgiven?

Requesting forgiveness indicates that you want the relationship fully restored  
Shows willingness to put the future of the relationship in the offenders hands  
in spite of a fear of rejection  
in spite of a fear of failure  
in spite of a loss of control

Requesting forgiveness AFTER you have expressed an apology convinces of sincerity

Granting forgiveness is a choice we make - a pardon

Share throne analogy on page 99

It requires the offended to give up desire for justice, relinquish feelings of betrayal  
It requires the offended to forgive consequence that could be long-lasting  
Chinese proverb “When you bow, bow low.”

## Statements of Requesting Forgiveness

- I know what I did hurt you very deeply. You have every right never to speak to me again, but I am truly sorry for what I did . And I hope you can find it in your heart to forgive me.
- I'm sorry for the way I spoke. You didn't deserve that. It was wrong of me. I'm asking you to forgive me.

Provide each table with chart paper & marker

Each comes up with own statement of requesting forgiveness

Post and analyze: Is this a "good" statement of requesting forgiveness

## Just the facts:

- 75% of couples surveyed differed in their most preferred apology language
- In 15% of the couples, one member's primary apology language was the other member's *last choice*
- If you apologize to others in the way you most want to be apologized to, on average you won't stumble upon their favorite apology language until the third attempt
- 3 of every 4 couples must learn to speak an apology language different from the one they most want to hear

# How do I know what my primary apology language is?

**Ask yourself:**

**What do I expect the person who offended me to do?**

**What do I want this person to say?**

**What hurts me the most deeply about the situation?**

**When I apologize to others, what do I think is most important?**

**It's quite common to be bilingual**

**That actually makes it easier for someone to apologize to you**

#### The Five Languages of Apology

- I am able to accept an apology from someone who expresses regret simply by saying, "I'm sorry."
- When I am offered an apology, I long to hear the words "I was wrong."
- I find an apology most sincere when the person who has wronged me takes action to make it right.
- I find an apology most sincere when followed by a promise to change, with the offending person saying, "I'll try not to do that again."
- I find an apology most sincere when the other party places great importance on asking for my forgiveness.

**This is Dr. Chapman's 30-second assessment  
A more intense 20-question profile is available in the book**

# How do I discover someone else's language?

Share the concept & ask them to take the profile

Ask them to describe an apology that someone once gave them that seemed insufficient

Ask what was lacking

When you have offended them, ask them

“What hurts the most about what I did or said?”

“What do I need to do or say in order for you to consider forgiving me?”

Ask, when you express an apology to someone, what do you think is the most important part of the apology?

## Remember:

- All five languages have merit
- Speak the primary one to communicate sincerity
- Sprinkle in the other four for emotional extra credit
- When you don't know the other's primary language, cover all your bases

**The need for apologizing is like a five-gallon container strapped to our back**

**When we wrong another, it's like pouring a gallon of liquid into our container**

**3-4 wrongs and our container gets heavy**

**A sincere, effective apology is the only way to empty the container**