

The Apology Blueprint

Overview

Refrain (from doing harm)

1. * Act to avert further harm
2. * Acknowledge and address your own unmet needs

Recognize (what you have done)

3. * Acknowledge what you did or didn't do
4. Allow space for them to express

Repair (what you have done)

5. * Address what you did or didn't do
6. (Make) Amends
7. * Avoid Repeating

Reflection (let them reflect)

8. * Allow processing time (if necessary, but this is their call, not yours)

Receive (their response)

9. * Accept their response

Rebuild (the relationship, if possible and appropriate)

10. Ask what more can be done
11. * Apply consistent effort to (re-)building trust and connection

Bonus

(Go) Above and beyond

- One of the Essential 8 steps



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The Essential Eight Steps to an Effective Apology
(The minimum 8 steps needed in most basic apologies)

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Receive (their response)

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Note: You don't have to make a big deal out of each of these steps - you can cover most of them in a few sentences. The important point is to ensure each of them is included.



The Apology Blueprint

The full apology blueprint (needed for apologies where someone has been more significantly impacted)

Part 1: Refrain (from doing harm)

1. * Act to avert further harm

- Act to avert further harm and go into damage control
- Act fast and deal with anything urgent, critical or time-sensitive that needs to be addressed to avoid the situation from getting worse
- Communicate with the other person that your priority is doing what is necessary to ensure that the situation does not get any worse for them

2. * Acknowledge and address your own unmet needs

- Check in with your own needs at the beginning and throughout the entire process
- Ensure that your unmet needs are not affecting the apology and that the other person doesn't have to deal with YOUR feelings about the fact that YOU negatively impacted them, as well as having to deal with the impact you've had to them
- Apologize to yourself for acting in a way that negatively impacted someone else, and therefore also compromised your own needs

Part 2: Recognize (what you have done)

3. * Acknowledge what you did or didn't do

- Acknowledge 1) what you did (or didn't do) and 2) the impact that it had on the other person
- You need to show you understand, what the issue was, why it was an issue and take full responsibility for your part in that issue
- Once you have acknowledged, check in to make sure you have fully understood

4. Allow space for them to express

- Even if you have acknowledged what you have done, they may still want or need to express how they felt for themselves
- Ask "Is there anything (else) you want to share about what happened or how you are feeling?"
- As they are sharing, just acknowledge them, do not react, or reply to what is being said with your perspective

Part 3: Repair (what you have done)

5. * Address what you did or didn't do

- Address what happened
- Rectify the initial issue and make right what originally went wrong

6. (Make) Amends

- Make amends for the impact that the incident had on the other person
- This is not about correcting the original issue; it is about making amends for the impact to the other person of the fact that the issue happened
- The amends need to be proportional to the negative impact to the other person's needs

7. * Avoid repeating

- Do whatever is necessary to avoid repeating the same situation again
- Communicate to the other person what you are doing to ensure this



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Part 4: Reflection (let them reflect)

8. Allow processing time (if necessary, but this is their call, not yours)

- Allow the other person time to process what happened, the apology, and how they feel about it

Part 5: Receive (their response)

9. * Accept their response

- Accept whatever response they have to your apology (it is not their responsibility to accept it)
- Process any emotions we have about their response or meet needs that need tending to as a result of it yourself

Part 6: Rebuild (the relationship, if possible and appropriate)

10. Ask what more can be done

- Check in with the other person and ask what more can be done
- Let them tell you if there is anything else they need or want to make the situation right
- Offer an alternative if what they are asking for is not possible
- Accept the response if they say there is nothing more that can be done

11. * Apply consistent effort to (re-)building trust and connection

- - It is important to put consistent effort into rebuilding trust, In general AND in the specific areas where the impact happened
- This can be done in small ways, by just paying attention to the other person and their wants and needs, being curious about them and how to show up in ways that support them, and putting effort into

Bonus

• Go) Above and beyond

- Go above and beyond to take the relationship from just good to extraordinary
- Go further, offer more, meet more needs
- Put an ongoing focus on rebuilding trust with the other person by continuing to cultivate the relationship by showing up consistently after the fact

