

The Five Languages of Apology

How to Experience Healing in All Your Relationships

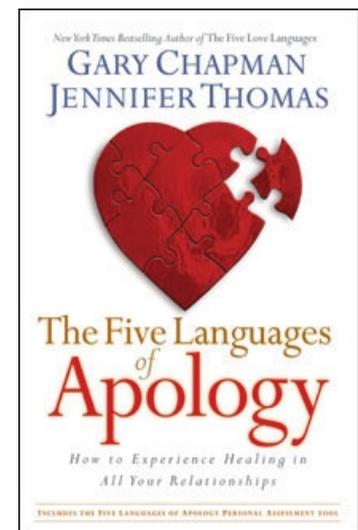
By Gary Chapman and Jennifer Thomas; Northfield Publishing, 2006

This book gives understanding as to what a real apology is. It elaborates on the different kinds of apologies and how each and every kind may vary in terms of importance for each person. It also explains the importance of forgiveness as a essential part of a healthy life. The author gives countless

examples on the topics to further assist in the understanding of the Five Languages of Apology.

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BOOK OF THE WEEK:



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- Why Apologize
- Discovering Your Primary Apology Language
- Learning to Forgive
- Apology to Family and Dating
- Relationships
- Apologizing to Yourself

Why Apologize

As imperfect beings, we all live in an imperfect world as people with conscience. As beings with a sense of morality or conscience, there is an innate desire to reconcile damaged relationships. This desire is usually stronger than a demand for justice, thus, there is an essential need for an apology as it is what hinders the build up of anger and violence.

Apologies are the most basic criteria to enable forgiveness, because forgiveness without an apology mostly benefits the forgiver rather than the offender. The study and use of the Five Languages of Apology allows the deeper understanding of effectively apologizing.

Apology Language #1: Expressing Regret

Sincerity of an apology differs from person to person, what one may consider a sincere apology may not be the case with another person. For most people an expression of regret may be the key element in a sincere apology. To express regret is more commonly known as the words "I am sorry".

Expressing regret is the emotional aspect of an apology. It is to acknowledge the pain, the inconvenience, the disappointment, the betrayal of trust done to a person. It is to feel guilt, shame and pain that your actions or words have caused to another person.

A sincere expression of regret is composed of the

following for most people:

- To hear the words "I am sorry"
- When it is seen that your body language conspires with the words you say
- Being specific enough on what you regret on
- Having to admit full responsibility and not passing blame
- When there is no ulterior motive for the apology

Apology Language #2: Accepting Responsibility

To accept responsibility is another of the Five Languages of Apology. This language is usually uttered with the words "I was wrong." The most essential part of accepting responsibility is by admitting mistakes fully and not to self-justify or make excuses. It is a sign of strength and maturity to admit ones wrongs. There is a quote that says "All of us make mistakes, but the only mistakes that will destroy you is the one you are unwilling to admit."

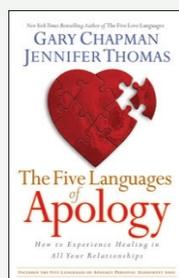
There is a very big difference between Apology Language 1 and 2, to be sorry for one thing is totally different from admitting you were wrong. One language can exist without the other. If you feel a deeper sincerity when giving or receiving an apology that acknowledges the wrong doing then your primary apology language is probably Accepting Responsibility.

Apology Language #3: Making Restitution

Making restitution answers the question "What can I do to make it right?" To make up for wrong I embedded in human psychology. It is the basis for the concept of reparative damages, which is to exert effort to make up for the wrong.

Restitution is basically equalizing, to make amends or do something about the wrong committed. In close relationships, the desire for restitution is almost always based on the need for

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love. “Am I still loved?” is the question that often has to be satisfied when making amends. For some people restitution equals sincerity.

The basic idea of to repay damages and to restore a relationship may not come naturally to everyone. The five love languages (from the book titled *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman) serve as a guide to effective restitution.

The Five Love Languages:

- Words of Affirmation
- Acts of Service
- Receiving Gifts
- Quality Time
- Physical Touch

Apology Language #4: Genuinely Repenting

To repent is literally to turn around or change. In the Apology Language it is to make an effort not to do again. Genuinely repenting starts with the mindset “I want to change”. In an apology this desire to change has to be verbalized because there is no way for the offended to immediately find out genuine repentance from the offender unless verbally mentioned. Obviously this mention of repentance has to be followed by an attempt or action to change.

There are three steps for Genuinely Repenting. After taking full responsibility for the wrong action the first step is intent to change the wrong ways. Second is to create a plan for change to take place. And the final thing to do is to implement the planned change. It is better to put plans of change into writing since it helps in reminding you of your planned change.

You have to accept that change will probably not happen overnight but failure need not defeat us. The key to a successful change is admitting relapses and continuously try and try again.

Apology Language #5: Requesting Forgiveness

This apology is often heard when someone asks to be forgiven. To some people to request for forgiveness indicates that the person apologizing wants the relationship with the person he has wronged to be fully restored. Requesting forgiveness realizes ones own faults and is willing to put the future of the relationship to the person offended.

This is one of the hardest things to do in an apology, the act of asking for forgiveness by saying the words “will you forgive me?” may become difficult because it can be scary. The three most common reasons why this process becomes hard are the following:

- to relinquish control over the relationship
- the fear of rejection
- the fear of failure

Though it is best to remember that to admit wrongs and ask for forgiveness will lead to becoming a good apologizer and a healthy individual.

Also, always remember that you are requesting for an apology and not demanding for it. To be given forgiveness even with a sincere apology is hard enough, it would be even harder if forgiveness is demanded from the person offended.

Reasons why it may be hard to forgive:

- Forgiveness gives up the quest for justice.
- If the consequences of the action done are long lasting
- If it is a major offence that has been committed
- If the offense has been repeated

Discovering Your Primary Apology Language

Knowing the Five Languages Of Apology enhances the ability to both give and receive an apology. With a study made among couples, it has been known that the primary apology language of the husband differs from the primary apology language of the

wife. If this is the case, then it is beneficial to know the primary apology language/s of people, at the very least to know the five Apology Languages. Knowing how to apologize by using the five languages hastens forgiveness, thus, hastens the reconciliation among damaged relationships.

There are few questions that you can ask yourself and there are also questions you can ask people to distinguish the primary apology languages of each individual. Remember that it is not necessary to use all five Apology languages, what is important is to be able to use the primary apology language of the person being apologized to in order to get the message through more effectively.

Questions to identify your primary Apology Language:

1. What do I expect a person to do or say when giving an apology?
2. What hurt most deeply about the situation?
3. What language is most important when I apologize?

Questions to help discover someone's Apology Language

1. Describe an apology of someone then ask him or her to comment on what lacks in the apology.
2. Ask what hurts most about the things you did.
3. Ask what he or she considers the most important part of an apology.
4. What do I need to do or say to be forgiven?

Learning to Forgive

Accepting apologies has a vital role in the reconciliation of a relationship. Without forgiveness, reconciliation will not occur. It is when forgiveness is given that relationships have the opportunity to grow. Because we are all imperfect, apologies and giving forgiveness is a part of life.

To forgive is a choice that is left to the person being asked. The choices though are not only

limited to yes and no, there is a third option which is by asking to "give me time." When making a decision to forgive always remember that forgiveness opens the door for reconciliation for both parties involved.

In forgiving there is such a thing as "to forgive to easily." This may prove not to be healthy for both individuals in a relationship. To forgive immediately

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Gary Chapman has traveled extensively around the world challenging couples to pursue healthy, growing marriages. His first book, *Toward a Growing Marriage* (Moody, 1979, 1996), began as an informal resource he gave to couples with whom he was counseling. Once officially published, this book became a blessing to thousands of people and helped launch Gary's popular "Toward a Growing Marriage" seminar.

Since 1979, Gary has written more than 15 books. His book, *The Five Love Languages* (Northfield Publishing, 1992, 1993), has sold 3 million copies in English alone and has been translated into 34 languages including Arabic and Hindi. He has also appeared on several television and radio programs and has his own daily radio program called "A Growing Marriage" that can be heard on more than 100 radio stations across the United States.

In addition to his busy writing and seminar schedule, Gary Chapman is a senior associate pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where he has served for 35 years. Gary and his wife, Karolyn, have been married for 45 years, have two adult children, and two grandchildren.

Gary Chapman is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in anthropology from Wheaton College and Wake Forest University, respectively. He received M.R.E. and Ph.D. degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and has completed postgraduate work at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Duke University.

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without questioning or proving the sincerity of the apology only encourages destructive behavior and the repetition of the mistake. Thus, it is also important to check and know the sincerity of an apology before giving forgiveness.

There are certain things that forgiveness can't do. To begin with, it does not remove the results of failure; second is that it may not remove all consequences of the action; and, third is that it does not remove all the painful emotions brought about by the wrong action or words. These are the things that one has to live with even after forgiveness is granted.

Apology to Family and Dating Relationships

Not all mistakes done are intentional, this gives more reason to forgive. In families, it is the courage to admit mistakes and understand situations that helps families communicate better with one another. The usual problem is who initiates the apology first? This is what keeps families from moving forward, and for some cases putting relationships in a deadlock for long periods of time. Life is short and the more time delayed in giving an apology means more time wasted in life.

An apology among family members and dating relationships provides more insight for an efficient apology. With the time spent in these relationships we cannot avoid having misunderstandings and harming one another. Healthy relationships do not require perfection, but it requires that we deal with our failures.

Apologizing to Yourself

There is the same logic with apologizing to yourself and to apologizing to other people. Its end goal is to remove barriers to enable the relationship to move forward. With apologizing and forgiving yourself, the gap you are trying to close is the gap between the person you want to be (your ideal self) and the person you are now (your real self). By removing the emotional turmoil inside, you are able to lessen or even close the gap between your ideal self and your real self.

By successfully forgiving yourself, you also are able to remove the fear of more consequences by holding on to the offense against yourself. Clearing these offenses means getting back on track with your life

Teaching your child to apologize

People are not born knowing how to apologize, that is why it is important to learn the art of apologizing as early as possible. Most children books and parenting books do not tackle the topic on apologizing. And there is no curriculum in kindergarten that specifies the need to teach children how to apologize. As an effect, most people grow up not knowing the importance of a sincere apology.

If there is a need for adults to learn and be fluent in the art of apology then it is only natural that this art learned during childhood.

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