

Member's Quarterly

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President's Message

Never Too Late to Say You're Sorry

In this crazy world, we have lost the art of making an apology. In fact, it almost seems like a sign of weakness. But saying you're sorry when you are wrong or even partially wrong is actually a signal of strength. It's amazing how few people recognize this. So, be the better person and I promise you won't regret it!

So many people suffer great trauma admitting they were wrong or made a potential mistake. At work, taking responsibility for mistakes is how we learn - it's a fact. Making an apology when it's our fault is how we grow, not just inside ourselves, but in the stature and opinion of others. Also, keep in mind that unless you intend to leave very shortly, the people whom you've hurt or disappointed are going to be there, at a work station beside you tomorrow. We spend almost as much time with our work colleagues as with our family, so we don't have to like or love everybody at work, but we must find ways to get along.

Now that you've decided to do the right thing, make sure you do it the right way. Experts in the art of an apology say that how you do it could make things better - or make them much worse. They recommend making your amends in person. Don't email, text or even phone in your apology. It has much more weight if you deliver it in person, and much more chance that it will achieve your desired result. If you can't see the person within the next day or two, phoning them would be a good option, better than texting or emailing which are so impersonal and can be perceived as fake.

When you apologize, take responsibility for your part of the problem and do not focus on what anyone else has done. There may be others who share some of the blame, but that's not why you're there. Make your regrets specific and sincere. Apologize for exactly what you did, the actions that may have hurt the other individual. Don't wait for the person to come seeking you out before you act. Be proactive and deal with your issues quickly. Yes, if you don't act quickly, they will deteriorate.

Here's another note on apologies at work. Even if you feel aggrieved or hurt by someone else's actions or behaviour, do not seek out or expect an apology. That is simply setting yourself up for disappointment and resentment. People apologize when they're ready and, on their timeline, not yours. That said, those who don't apologize within a short period of time set themselves up for failure in the long run.

Finally, making an apology is only the first step- the story doesn't end there. An apology is about the past. Others may let you off the hook this time. However, if you repeat the pattern in the future, you may not get off so easily. Say you're sorry and then change your behaviour. That's the true secret for workplace success and harmony!

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