



# PARENT GUIDE : HOW TO APOLOGIZE

## Why apologizing is important

- ❖ Apologizing can be very healing for us and others if it is done right.
- ❖ It is an important part of fostering healthy relationships such as friendships, parenting, marriage, leadership.
- ❖ Avoiding the hard conversations around apologizing can create distance and put up an invisible wall between people.

## Most common mistakes when apologizing

- ❖ *"I am sorry, BUT..."*  
Adding "but's" to your apologies makes the apology false. You can do that but don't call it an apology.
- ❖ *"I apologize that you felt..."*  
Apologizing for another person's emotions is not a sincere apology. Focus on what you did. Not how you made them feel.
- ❖ *"You started it..."*  
A true apology doesn't seek to find blame or point out who started it. Apologize for your part that you can agree to. When the other person is being the biggest jerk, you are being called to be your better self.
- ❖ *"I am sorry I broke your mug" and then walking away without any action.*  
Action matters! Make amends by cleaning up after breaking something. What happens after the apology matters.



## 2 Big Reasons Why Kids Don't Apologize

- ❖ The #1 reason children do not apologize is because parents often start lecturing or criticizing their kids when they apologize which creates “icky” feelings for the kids.

When our kids apologize, instead of just saying “Thank you for the apology. I appreciate it.” we often say things like *“It’s not ok. This is the 100th time I told you not to do this.”* *“Look me in the eye. Stand straight.”*

We can save the lesson and next steps for another time. Just accept their apology in the moment.

- ❖ It’s not modeled! If parents can’t apologize to their kids, why should they? Parents may say “if I apologize to my kids, they won’t respect my authority.” It’s actually the opposite. Kids respect their parents even more when they see that they are able to make mistakes and also apologize. This holds true in any relationship including the workplace.

## 3 Gifts of a Good Apology

### **Gift to the other person**

When we apologize to someone it helps them feel safe again in the relationship. It shows them that we care and recognize their hurt or pain.

### **Gift to myself**

A good apology allows us to grow and mature. When you can see yourself objectively and take responsibility for your mistake by apologizing, you increase your sense of self worth and self respect.

### **Gift to the relationship**

Apologizing helps our relationships become healthier and stronger. Relationships cannot function if we can’t repair the hurt and actually talk about the hard things.

## Tips on teaching kids how to apologize

We call it “CIVIL Sorries”



### **CALM DOWN FIRST**

Find privacy to Breathe or do a calming activity. This may take 5 minutes or may require you to wait until you are home alone with your kiddo 2-3 hours later.

### **IMAGINE**

Tell them to re-imagine the story of what happened in their head or say it out loud.

### **VOICE**

Give all FEELINGS a voice for the story. Ask them: “What did you feel? What did your friend feel?” And remind them “Remember you are perfect just as you are. What you did, is not who you are. We can always do better.”

### **INVESTIGATE YOUR PART**

Tell them to pretend to be a detective and find the answer to the mystery. You can say “Can you find your part in the story? What did you do that may have made the other person feel bad?”

### **LOVE**

Let them know: “When you are brave enough to say sorry for your part, you give yourself even more love. Go give yourself some love.”



## Further reading/listening

Podcast: Unlocking Us (Harriet Lerner and Brené – I’m Sorry: How To Apologize & Why It Matters)

<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/harriet-lerner-and-brene-im-sorry-how-to-apologize-why-it-matters/>

Book: Why Won't You Apologize?: Healing Big Betrayals and Everyday Hurts by Harriet Lerner

## About the authors

Amna Mazin & Neha Patel are the co-founders of Hatch Brighter. They are on a mission to help parents change the world, one child at a time, by raising a generation of happy kids who love themselves for who they are. With 40 years of learning personal development & spirituality between both of them, they provide tools to translate these complex principles into fun, engaging, easy to understand activities for kids and parents to do together.

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