



How to Apologize

ACCOUNTABILITY

Never dismiss your poor behavior or choices by turning a situation around on your partner, or by making excuses for why you did what you did.

During an apology, avoid bringing fault on your partner by playing ‘tit for tat.’ This is not the time to try to justify why you did what you did, by highlighting what your partner did. This is the time to take full responsibility for your role in the dysfunction. By simply saying "I was wrong," "I shouldn't have done that," or "I made a poor choice," you let your partner know that you are not excusing yourself, and that you acknowledge your wrong doing. You also need to be very specific about what you are taking accountability for, so that it is understood that you are aware of the actions that hurt your partner. Accountability does not necessarily mean that you must hold your head down in shame, and feel bad about yourself, rather you own your actions fully without blaming others.

EXPRESS GUILT

Express that you feel regret or remorse by actually saying the words "I apologize" or "I am sorry." Oftentimes we substitute these with "oops" or "my bad." Both of which lack emotion and do not show your partner that you feel bad about what you did. Whatever action it is that you feel sorry about, is an action that you should not want to take again, and this needs to be voiced to your partner. This requires you to fully regret your wrongdoing, express your guilt and try not to do it again.



RESTORATION

Ask your partner what it is you can do to restore what has been broken. Because it is your partner that is likely hurt or "broken" their input is essential to restoring the trust and energy. If he isn't capable of verbalizing exactly how you can fix the problem, then do something you know typically brings him happiness in an attempt to restore the positive energy.

PLAN

After you have acknowledged what you've done wrong, regret doing it, and have gotten your partner's input on how to make it right, you need to create a plan. Think of what it is exactly that you can do to ensure you will not make the same mistake again. Once you've figured it out, share the plan with your partner, and ask them to hold you accountable to the following through of your plan.

Without this step, your apology is just manipulation. Your actions must match with your words.

REQUEST FORGIVENESS

A simple "Will you forgive me?" or "Do you forgive me?" lets your partner know that you are considerate of their feelings. Assuming that he will forgive you shows a sense of entitlement, and isn't respectful, nor does it represent a sincere apology.