



Have you ever apologized for something and it did not feel like it satisfied what your partner was needing or hoping for?

Good news. This is not an uncommon experience so many couples. We want you to know there is a better way forward for couples to apologize that is a far more effective way to make relational repairs. We recommend using this is a template for you to use as you receive feedback from your partner.

Feeling defensive? This may be an excellent structure for you to do some thoughtful journaling. Your ability to connect with the honest feedback you are receiving from your partner is directly correlated with a deepening or diminishing sense of trust and intimacy with your partner.

Take a minimum of 20 minutes to sit honestly with your partner's honest feedback.

(1) **I am sorry for...** (Name the specific behavior that is hurting your partner).

Example: "I am sorry for speaking to you with an angry tone of voice."

(2) **I can imagine** that when I...(Repeat the specific behavior that is hurting your partner) ...it must have made you feel... (Name the specific feelings that you can imagine that your behavior could be experienced by another person.)

Example: "I can imagine my angry tone would make you feel unsafe, defensive, worried, unloved, or shamed."

(3) **I am committed** to not... (Name the specific behavior that is hurting your partner or name the desired behavior you want to adopt). ...anymore.

Example: "I am committed to speaking to you in a more loving and kind tone."

(4) **I will work on...** (Name the specific behavior that is hurting your partner or the desired behavior you want to adopt) ...by doing the following things...

Example: "I will work on having less of an angry tone and adopt a more loving kind tone in the following way; (1) I will go to individual therapy to address my own anger (2) I will read a book about anger (3) I will start keeping a gratitude list in my journal (4) I will meet with a friend and make them aware that this is an area that I am wanting to change in my life.

(5) **You have permission** to bring it to my attention any time... (Name the specific behavior that is hurting your partner) ...is happening because I want and need to know.

Example: "You have 100% permission to tell me when you experience my angry tone and to invite anyone else you think might be a helpful resource for helping me/us in this area. I want for you to know that I am serious and so your having permission is just one of the ways that I can communicate that I am serious about making this change."