

EARNEST APOLOGIES

Often when a disagreement or conflict occurs in the workplace what's needed to turn the situation around is a sincere, well-delivered apology. However, for the apology to be effective, it takes more than simply saying "I'm sorry." Outlined below are the essential elements of an effective apology and a comparison to apologies that are ineffective.

EFFECTIVE APOLOGY	INEFFECTIVE APOLOGY
<p>Stating the specific nature of the offense</p> <p>"When I interrupted you during your project presentation yesterday..."</p>	<p>Being vague about what happened</p> <p>"About yesterday..."</p>
<p>Taking responsibility</p> <p>"I really shouldn't have behaved that way."</p>	<p>Making excuses</p> <p>"You know I really hate those long, drawn out presentations, I wish everyone would just get to the point..."</p>
<p>Talking only about your actions</p> <p>"I arrived late, then I just launched into my questions before you were finished with your presentation..."</p>	<p>Adding criticism: "but you also..."</p> <p>"I shouldn't have jumped in with my questions, but you were going on-and-on..."</p>
<p>Acknowledging the impact</p> <p>"I know my interrupting made it difficult for you to present all your research to the committee..."</p>	<p>Ignoring or minimizing the impact</p> <p>"I think my questions helped clarify your points for the committee..."</p>
<p>Saying "I'm sorry"</p> <p>"I'm really sorry for doing that."</p>	<p>Saying everything BUT "I'm sorry"</p> <p>"I think you got a bit distracted with the questions..."</p>
<p>Saying "I should have..."</p> <p>"I should have arrived on time and waited until you finished your presentation to ask my questions."</p>	<p>Avoiding stating the proper actions</p> <p>"I'll bite my lip next time..."</p>
<p>Affirming future intentions</p> <p>"In the future, I'll listen and wait until you're ready for questions."</p>	<p>Disregarding future interactions</p> <p>"Thankfully, that's the last time the committee meets this year..."</p>