



# How do I apologize when I've done something wrong?

## Take responsibility for what you did

Taking responsibility means asking yourself, "What did *I* do that was wrong?" Think about if there is anything that you might have said or done to the other person that you probably shouldn't have. It's important to understand the part that you played because it means that you really understand the reason you are apologizing. Taking responsibility also means that you are not *blaming* the other person or making excuses for what you did. So instead of saying, "You made me do it!" or "I only did it because *you*...", a person who takes responsibility would say, "I *did* call you that name, and I shouldn't have done that".

## Use empathy to understand how the other person is feeling

Empathy is when you try your best to understand how someone else might be feeling about what you did. Think hard about how your words or actions made the other person feel. Instead of saying, "I don't know why you're so mad about it..." or "It's no big deal...", you can say something like, "What I did probably made you feel sad and angry." When you're apologizing to someone, you want to show them that you took the time to really understand their feelings.



## Share how sorry you are

Are you *really* sorry for what you said or did? Make sure to share that with the other person and to say it in a truthful way. When you're giving an apology, it is helpful for the other person to hear and understand that you really mean what you are saying. If you're not really sorry for what you said or did, then wait before trying to apologize to the other person. You should only apologize if you really mean it.

## Ask how you can make things better

When you're apologizing, you want to let the other person know that you'll try your best not to hurt them in the same way again. You also want to ask them if there's anything that you can do that might help them feel better in the moment. For example, if you lose or break a friend's toy, you can ask if you can replace it or try to fix it. There may be something else the other person might need before they are able to forgive you. Keep in mind that people might need to take time before they start feeling better and are ready to forgive.

## Example of a good apology!

**"I'm really sorry for calling you a name. I know that it was wrong, and I shouldn't have done it. It probably made you feel sad. Next time, I'll share my feelings in a better way. If there's anything I can do to make things better, just let me know."**



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