

The One Minute Apology

A Powerful Way to Make Things Better

By Ken Blanchard and Margaret McBride

[Fertig notes]

- Refusing to take responsibility, the president became defensive and combative, and this made things worse.
- The president needed to take a new course of action, or every employee's position would be in jeopardy. Indeed, even the future of the company was at stake.
- *The Toughest Part Of Apologizing Is Realizing And Admitting That You Were Wrong.*
- You need to stop using phrases like *should have, could have, would have, and if only*. Those are "worry words." They make you feel overwhelmed, discouraged, and confused. They keep you stuck in the past and prevent you from taking your best course of action. *They also keep you from being honest with yourself.*
- Done properly, the One Minute Apology is one of the most powerful things anyone can do to repair a situation.
- As soon as you realize you have made a mistake, you need to apologize.
- *The Power Of The One Minute Apology Is Deeper Than Just Words.*
- Mistakes fester and poison relationships. No matter what else is going right, if your president doesn't admit his mistakes right away and then deal with them by changing his behavior, he will lose the confidence of the board, and careers and relationships will be damaged. Apologizing has the potential to not only correct a wrong, but restore the confidence others have in you. In a One Minute Apology you admit you are wrong and you deal with the cause of the damage instead of the symptoms. It's called the One Minute Apology because in most cases it can be said in a minute, even though it requires a good deal more preparation time. The time-consuming part comes in being completely honest with yourself and taking responsibility for your mistakes before you apologize.
- The failure of many leaders begins when they are unwilling to admit to themselves that they've done something wrong. It's their job to accept responsibility for their actions.
- *At The Core Of Most Problems Is A Truth You Don't Want To Face.*
- Any problem you have spins out of control the minute you avoid dealing with the truth. When people attempt to disassociate themselves from the truth, or pretend "it never happened" or that "it wasn't my fault" – they're in denial. Those in denial have lost touch with the truth. They can't apologize because they rationalize they're not at fault. They can never admit they're wrong. *The truth is intolerant of deception.* There is either right or wrong. *The truth doesn't give people a lot of "wiggle room" and for some, that can feel very uncomfortable – especially if you're living a lie.*
- *A One Minute Apology Begins With Surrender And Ends With Integrity.*
- A balance life is not all work – it's having some fun too.
- The surrendering process of the One Minute Apology has two important parts. The first is about *you* and coming to grips with what *you* did wrong. The second is making sure the person or persons you have harmed feel that *you* made a mistake. To surrender, you first let

go of being right, and then confront the truth about your own failings by being one hundred percent honest with yourself.

- *One Minute Of Being Honest With Yourself Is Worth More Than Days, Months, Or Years Of Self-Deception.*
- Once you are honest with yourself, then you must take full responsibility for your actions and the harm you've done to someone else. That requires both humility and courage. Great leaders give everyone else credit when things go well. And when things go wrong, they take full responsibility. However, self-centered leaders take the credit when things go well and blame everyone else when things go wrong.
- When you surrender, you let go of the story you have told yourself, and realize the need to apologize to those you have offended, regardless of the outcome.
- *The Longer You Wait To Apologize, The Sooner Your Weakness Is Perceived As Wickedness.*
- *We all make mistakes and fall short of perfection. What can make us seem evil in the eyes of others is their belief that if we can't be truthful about the incident, we probably lie about other things too.*
- To some people, apologizing is regarded as a weakness rather than a strength.
- The problem with trying to be right all the time is that usually someone else has to be wrong.
- Apologizing isn't just about you or me, it's also about the person wronged. You have to *be specific and tell the people harmed exactly what you're apologizing for.* After you tell someone specifically what you did wrong, the last step is *sharing how you feel about what you did* – embarrassed, sad, ashamed. *And you feel bad enough to change your behavior.* By doing so you make your apology real and demonstrate your sincerity. Without sharing your feelings and a change in behavior, an apology will seem mechanical – as if you are going through the motions without being personally involved. It takes both courage *and* humility.
- When all is said and done, the most important thing we have is our integrity.
- *Honesty Is Telling The Truth To Ourselves And Others; Integrity Is Living That Truth*
- Integrity means consistency. It is being the kind of person you want to be regardless of the situation. That involves making wrongs right.
- *The Legacy You Leave Is The One You Live.*
- We all fall short of perfection. Your integrity is measured by how quickly you correct your mistakes and get back on course.
- *Never get upset with yourself – only with your behavior.*
- There is a big difference between an explanation of why something happened and an excuse. An explanation deals with the reasons why something happened, while an excuse tries to cover up who's to blame and establish a reason to minimize accountability. *You can always find an excuse for poor behavior if you lie to yourself.*
- Sometimes when we're wrong it affects our self-image or pride too much to admit it and then forgive ourselves. The wrong seems like such a violation, we can't get past it. *Making amends shows you are genuinely sincere about earning back lost trust. But you make amends only when you change your behavior and make up for what you did. And in a way the other person can appreciate.*
- *A One-Minute Apology is incomplete without a sincere attempt to make things right.*
- *Without A Change In Your Behavior, Just Saying "I'm Sorry" Is Not Enough.*
- *Apologize Not For The Outcome But Because You Know You Were Wrong And It's The Right Thing To Do.*

- Most people don't really know how to apologize effectively so they just avoid it. And yet when people don't have the guts to admit they're wrong, a small matter can get totally out of control. In some cases, becomes even newsworthy.
- *Never apologize just to appease someone.* Then you are only being dishonest with yourself.
- *Never assume you know what the other person is thinking.*
- *The Best Way To Apologize To Someone You Have Harmed Is To tell Them You Made A Mistake, You Feel Badly About It, And How You Will Change Your Behavior.*
- *Every One Minute Apology Makes You More Aware Of How Much Your Behavior Affects Others.*
- *If you lie to yourself, lying to others becomes second nature.*
- *Trust doesn't return until the person I've offended is convinced I have changed my behavior.*
- Sometimes it's difficult to tell the truth. No one enjoys reporting bad news and most people don't take bad news well.
- How does a person learn to appreciate themselves? From four sources. The first is *fate*. At birth, you don't have a choice of where you were born, who your parents are, or whether you are male or female, or of the color of your skin. The second is your *early life experiences with adults* – your parents, relatives, teachers, and coaches. Third, are your *successes and failures in life*. And the fourth source of self-worth is *your perception of the first three*. Which is the most powerful? Absolutely, the fourth. From that perception you make all of your choices.
Regardless of our fate or our early experiences with adults, or our successes and failures in life – *we choose whether or not we appreciate ourselves.*
- When a person loses perspective and comes to see themselves as the center of the universe – that's the sign of an out-of-control ego. *False pride* (the first way your ego can get you in trouble) is when you're constantly promoting yourself ahead of others. When good things occur, you want all the credit. The second way your ego gets you in trouble is *self-doubt*. That's when you think less of yourself than you should. Your emphasis then is on protecting yourself. People with false pride don't like to share their vulnerabilities. Admitting that they were wrong about something is their worst nightmare. And people with self-doubt are afraid to admit they are wrong because they fear that others will find out how incompetent they are.
- *People With Humility Don't Think Less Of Themselves. They Just Think Of Themselves Less.*
- You have to intentionally separate who you are from what you do.
- *You can't control the outcome of events, but you can control what you think and what you do.*
- If something is bothering you and you don't deal with it, what happens to those feeling? Grudges fester and can sometimes immobilize you. Once you deal with what's bothering you, almost like magic, your negative feelings and fears disappear.
- *When You Honestly Express Your Feelings With Someone You Care About You Show Respect For Yourself And The Relationship.*
- *If the other person doesn't care enough about your relationship to make some amends after knowing he or she has hurt you, maybe the relationship itself is in question.*
- *You are able to accept yourself when:*
 - ◆ *Your self-worth is not based on your performance or the opinion of others.*
 - ◆ *When you make a mistake, you are willing to admit it regardless of the outcome.*
- *A One Minute Apology Can Be An Effective Way To Correct A Mistake You Have Made And Restore The Trust Needed For A Good Relationship.*