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How to Apologize

Apologizing is the act of expressing regret for something you said or did. A sincere apology includes being aware of your actions, taking responsibility for them, and making changes in your behavior for the future. Giving an apology can help repair a damaged relationship.

REFLECT ON YOUR ACTIONS

Think about how your actions affected another person or contributed to a problem, even if they were not the sole cause of the problem.

Think about what role YOU played in what happened, even if you weren't the only one who contributed.	Think about what the other person may be thinking or feeling. How could they feel because of what was said or done?

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Say "I'm sorry" and show that you regret your actions. It's important to speak clearly and sincerely. In most cases, it helps to identify what you are apologizing for. This helps to show your understanding of the mistake.

Example: I'm sorry I snapped at you yesterday. That was not fair and unhelpful.

I'm sorry for...	I apologize for...	I take responsibility for...
It was wrong of me to...	I feel terrible. I shouldn't have...	This was my fault. I should have...

WARNING:
Do not make an excuse for your behavior. An apology is about seeking forgiveness, not justifying your actions:

e.g.: I'm sorry that I snapped at you yesterday, but I just get tired of saying the same thing over and over.

LISTEN AND MAKE CHANGES

Give the other person a chance to express themselves without interrupting. Listen to understand their perspective rather than using that time to decide what you're going to say next. Remember, forgiveness can take time and is not guaranteed. Be prepared to discuss what changes you will make to help prevent this from happening again in the future.