

Listening 5.5: Apologies

Summary

- As humans, we will be tired, or hungry, or grumpy - and therefore we will make lots of communication mistakes.
- Apologies work. They reassure, make people feel seen, and repair relational damage.
- To make the most of them, make sure you actually take responsibility for what you did, and - where possible - offer a fix.
- For example: *'I'm sorry I upset you - I was tired and I should have been much more polite. I'm going to work to pause and think about how I'm communicating when I'm tired.'*

Exercises

- 1) What's your relationship with apologising? Too much? Too little? Do your apologies seem to land? (hint - you're often better-off asking someone who knows you about this - we often don't realise our blindspots)
- 2) Think about a person you owe an apology to. Use those two elements of **taking responsibility** and **offering to fix** to think about how you might frame this. If you want to make it even more likely to land, use the 6 elements detailed in the Lewicki (2016) paper below.
- 3) Communicating badly and letting people down are totally normal and understandable parts of work. What are the times at work where you are most likely to communicate badly? What are the times at work when you might let people down? What role might apologies play in minimising the damage from that?

Resources and links:

- <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2010-17510-010> Meta-analyses on the impact of apologies
- <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ncmr.12073> Lewicki (2016) paper on the structure of successful apologies
- <https://mediate.com/when-sorry-cant-be-the-only-word/> Blog summarising the Lewicki paper and other apology tools

Evaluation:

We would really appreciate your feedback through these short questionnaires on the videos and their usefulness. Your feedback will help us improve future content.

Prior to watching the videos



After watching the videos

