

DARE TO BE THE BIGGER PERSON

The Art of the Apology Guidebook

CLASSES *for* CLASHES

with *Vera* JONES



“PRIORITIZE PEACE!”

WHY SHOULD I DARE TO BE THE BIGGER PERSON?

Take a trip with me down memory lane. It may be a painful trip, but I promise it's a necessary one. I want you to go back to a place of rebuke and resistance, where somewhere, deep in the trenches of your childhood experiences with conflict, there was an adult authority figure that insisted *you* should say, “**I’m sorry.**”

You may have rebutted: “But he hit me first!” “But she called me ugly, (or stupid, or any other demeaning, hurtful, and provocative adjective); Why on earth should *I* apologize?”

Great question! After all, you probably did NOTHING wrong, right? Or maybe you did do something wrong, but the other deserved it. Or maybe right or wrong you sure didn't feel very sorry at that moment.

You may not actually have to go all the way back to childhood to paint this memory. It could have just happened last month, last week, or yesterday, in your “wiser now” adulthood. You may indeed be wiser now, but not necessarily more equipped or even more desiring now to be the bigger person. Why should you be?

There are many answers in “wiser now” personal and professional adulthood. I offer you three of the most important....

“I’m SORRY?”



WHY SHOULD **I** DARE TO BE THE BIGGER PERSON?

- To **PROTECT** the Relationship
- To Gain **PERSPECTIVES**
- To **PRIORITIZE PEACE**

Whether personal or professional, relationships make the world go around. If you value the relationship, building trust is an important element for improving it. Your ability to be the bigger person and initiate a resolution to whatever conflict may have arisen is a pivotal skill set to utilize for growth and **protection** of the relationship for the future. Initiating an apology often opens the door to invite the other to share emotions and **perspectives** you may have not considered. It may explain why he or she reacted the way they did and offer you greater understanding of how you may have contributed to the conflict. This knowledge may even prove useful in future relationships. So, chalk one up for personal development! They may even be more willing to come clean as to their own remorse for the role they played in the conflict.

Finally, and simply, what greater comfort is there than **peace**? Either you desire it, or you don't. Remaining anchored in this mindset, you will hopefully find the courage and calm to always take a leadership position in **prioritizing** it. Therefore, you must choose to be the bigger person for your own peace as well as to help initiate a healing process for the other.

“I’m SORRY?”



WHY SHOULD I DARE TO BE THE BIGGER PERSON?

Embrace this: Avoiding conflict is often the same as prolonging it because the conflict has never had an opportunity to be resolved. It lives on in external, destructive relationship practices or patterns, or internally through anxiety, fear, anger, guilt, shame, pain, and stress, which has serious emotional and even physical consequences.

Through developmental coaching tools I'll teach you in Classes for Clashes with Vera Jones you will deep dive into the art of becoming the bigger person. You'll develop the skills to initiate and participate in healthy, empathic communication that develops trust in a relationship rather than letting distrust grow into fear and self-protection. I am currently accepting new clients and I thoroughly look forward to personally coaching each one to relationship success.

This guide is designed to be a helpful tool for positive mindset and a basic “how-to” for developing the art of initiating an apology. Apologizing is critical to the mending, healing, and communication process, especially when you know you may have contributed to the conflict in any way. It's critical that you recognize your role in recycling the conflict, whether in active destructive words or actions (i.e., yelling; threatening; demeaning; retaliating), or in more passive destructive behaviors, (i.e., avoiding the other person; yielding with “OK, whatever” practices; or hiding your true emotions), as the first step in daring to be the bigger person. Apologizing is a very helpful conciliatory gesture that opens the door for future, mutual empathy, respect, and understanding.

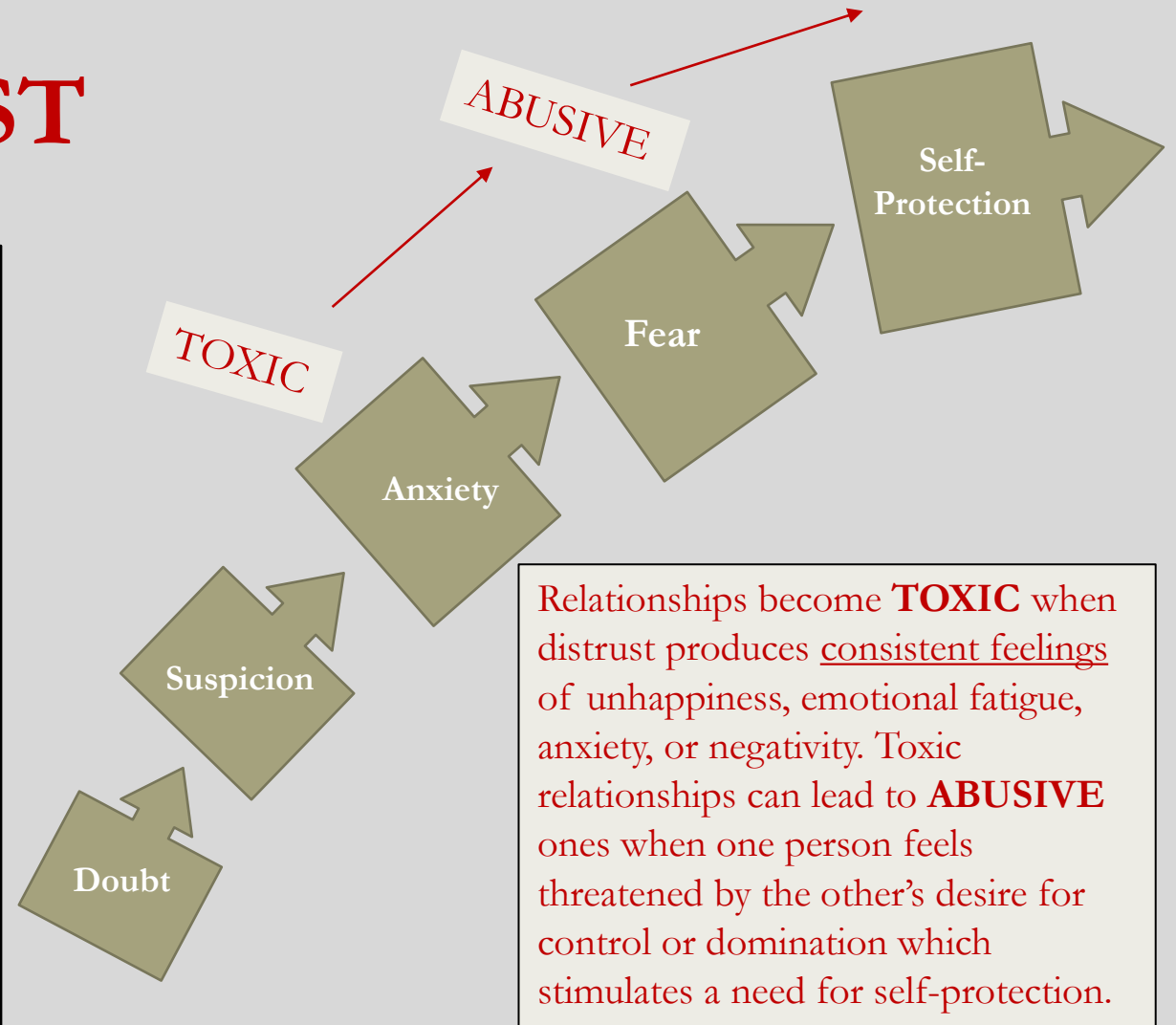
“I’m SORRY?”



WHY SHOULD **I** DARE TO BE THE BIGGER PERSON?

5 STAGES OF **DISTRUST**

In conflict, **DISTRUST** is the common relational enemy, and it is notorious for growing in stages and damaging a relationship if you do not adequately and actively practice communication behaviors that help maintain trust and understanding. In a conflict situation, ask yourself, “How much trust exists in this relationship?” Then ask yourself, “How much will my choosing NOT to take conciliatory action (i.e., apologizing) deepen a level of distrust?” The longer you wait to **BUILD TRUST**, the faster **DISTRUST** grows and the harder it becomes to repair the relationship. Once a toxic relationship turns abusive, it will take critical counseling or coaching to repair. In many cases, desired and necessary trust in the relationship proves to be beyond repair. Dare to reach out and change this negative trajectory with a timely “**Real Apology.**”



“PRIORITIZE PEACE!”

WHY SHOULD **I** DARE TO BE THE BIGGER PERSON?

THE ART of the REAL APOLOGY

Many times, an apology falls short because it is not projected or accepted as sincere. Sometimes our pain or pride get in the way. Quite often, we aren't always aware of HOW to effectively apologize. Here's a simple way to remember:

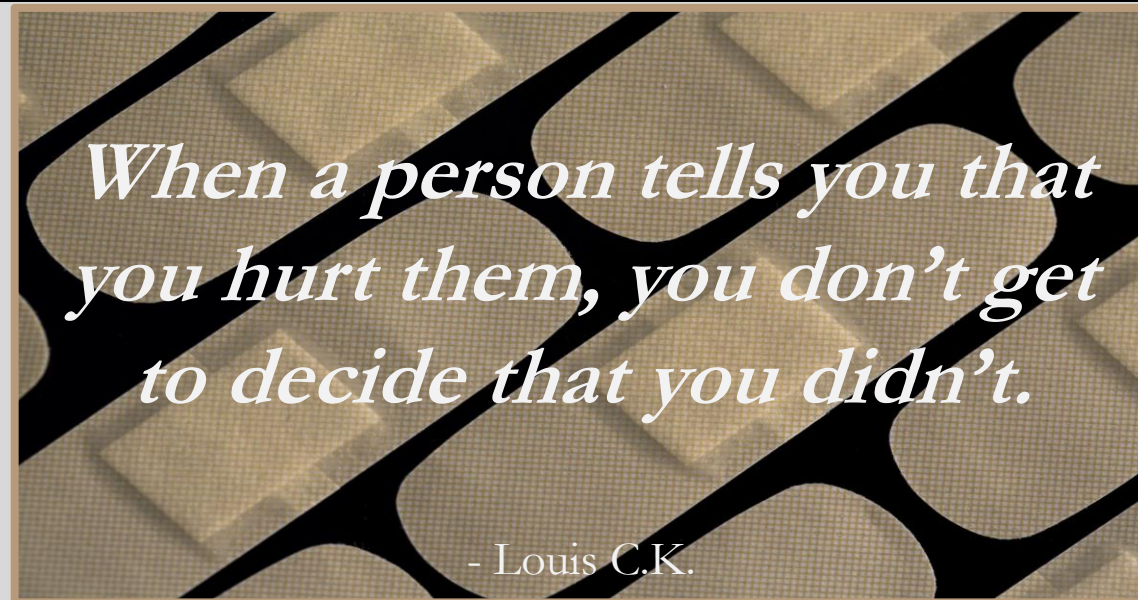
Be REAL (Sincere) in demonstrating:

1 REMORSE (I'm sorry I...)

2 RESPONSIBILITY (I realize I hurt/damaged/caused/contributed to...)

3 REMEDY (I promise/suggest/commit to...to reconcile, improve, fix, or heal)

4 REQUEST (I ask for your forgiveness)



- Louis C.K.

Understand the difference between
Intention and Impact

Initializing the R's of a **Real Apology** sets the stage for having an open, honest, constructive, and conciliatory conversation that can build trust for the future and lessen the conflict's harmful effects. It will not automatically happen. You must **CHOOSE** to **PRIORITIZE PEACE** and be the bigger person.

WHY SHOULD **I** DARE TO BE THE BIGGER PERSON?

Sometimes the conflict was minimal, and an apology is all that is required. You can stop there! However, when a deeper conversation is needed, try following these steps:

(1) Initiate a **REAL APOLOGY!** If you know you did it, ADMIT it! (Remorse, Responsibility, Remedy, Request).



2) Identify reactionary emotions (*Sad? Mad? Relieved? etc.*) and the degree of offense/injury/distrust after apology is communicated.

3) Empathically acknowledge the other's emotions and perspectives. (*"I see... I understand...I empathize."*)

4) Encourage the other to express deeper emotions or thoughts to uncover greater truth or sentiment. (*What else are you feeling?*)

5) Engage in active listening and assure that you understand. Ask for clarity; Playback what you've heard. (*If I understand correctly...*)

6) Discuss and determine mutual solutions if feasible or set a time to follow up to empathically communicate further.

6 STEPS for
REACHING OUT
& PREVENTING
THE GROWTH
OF **DISTRUST**



The ART of the APOLOGY (It's how you say it!)

It is important to understand words are powerful and can easily be taken out of context, especially in emotional conflict situations. Always use words or phrases that suggest complete remorse or responsibility on your part and remove words that could suggest the other is to blame or should act or feel a way you believe is right. Here are some examples:

○ WHAT MAKES IT UGLY:

- "I'm sorry you feel that way."
- "I'm sorry, **BUT**....."
- "**If** I hurt you, I'm sorry."
- "I did/said that **because YOU**...."
- "I **might have** been wrong when..."
- "You shouldn't feel that way....."
- "**You know** I didn't mean it like that."

○ WHAT MAKES IT BEAUTIFUL:

- "I'm sorry **I** made you feel.... (be specific)"
- "I'm sorry and there is no excuse/justification...."
- "I never meant to hurt you and I'm deeply sorry."
- "I did not mean to, and I should not have..."
- "I was wrong, and I did not mean to (specific)"
- "I understand how you feel."
- "I value our relationship and feel terrible that (my mistake) may have jeopardized it...."

OWN THE PICTURE YOU PAINTED

WHY SHOULD **I** DARE TO BE THE BIGGER PERSON?

Here are a few more perspectives it will help to keep in mind:

- 1) Apologizing doesn't always mean you're wrong and the other person is right. It means you value the relationship more than your ego.
- 2) A mature person recognizes that arguing over who is right and who is wrong is not important. What's important is constructively communicating to understand what works and what doesn't work for the relationship.
- 3) Any person can (and will) make a mistake. Only a wise and strong person knows how to accept accountability for the mistake and apologize for it.
- 4) In conflict, there is a retaliatory cycle that keeps conflict and its destructive effects perpetuating. Apologizing helps to initiate a conciliatory cycle which reduces conflict into constructive understanding.
- 5) A sincere apology offers a bonus. It gives freedom and healing to both the deliverer and the receiver.
- 6) If you fear a person's nonacceptance of your sincere apology, apologize anyway, as the only chance to penetrate their closed mind is with your open heart.
- 7) One of the best ways to **Prioritize Peace** is to choose to be the **Bigger Person**.

“I’m SORRY?”



WHY SHOULD **I** DARE TO BE THE BIGGER PERSON

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”



(NOTE: THIS IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE!)

Words **DO** hurt. They also **HEAL!** Be honest about what yours have done in the past. Decide what your words will do today. Choose to use words (and actions) that will most positively impact your future.

In this world there are all types of people. We have varying degrees of sensitivity. What hurts one may barely scratch the surface of another. That's why empathic communication is so important. It is critical to care and to understand how each interpersonal relationship comes with its own set of boundaries and sensitivities.

Even if you subjectively determine a person is “oversensitive” or offends easily, you must still decide if the person and the relationship are valuable to you. If the answer is yes, then it only makes sense that you choose to be the one who begins the necessary process of conflict resolution as the “oversensitive” one may simply be incapable. “I’m sorry” are two words that may not immediately heal the other, but when offered sincerely, they certainly don’t hurt either.

WHY SHOULD ***I*** DARE TO BE THE BIGGER PERSON?

Closing Thoughts:

Initiating a potential conflict conversation can sometimes feel like you are still that little child, being told to say, “I’m sorry” when you don’t feel like you should be the one to apologize first; when you’re angry or hurt because you have been offended or injured; when you’re unsure how you did or said anything wrong; when you think the other person is just being oversensitive. Why should you dare to step out of your comfort zone to be the so-called bigger person?

Remind yourself of these very important but simple reasons:

To **PROTECT** the Relationship; To Gain **PERSPECTIVES**; To **PRIORITIZE PEACE**. Apologizing, like anything else in life, is not about being APPROVED, it is about being **IMPROVED! YOU DESERVE YOUR BEST, PEACEFUL YOU!**

Keep this at the forefront of your mind and be sure to invest in your future personal and professional development in conflict resolution and communication by registering for **Classes for Clashes with Vera Jones** at www.classesforclashes.com.

Peacefully,

Vera Jones

MTI Certified Mediator &
Conflict Resolution Trainer

“I’m SORRY!”



***BECAUSE YOU
DESERVE YOUR BEST,
PEACEFUL YOU!***

Visit www.classesforclashes.com for more information on how you can **prioritize peace** and become a leader in managing conflict.