

Mercy in everyday life

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The difference between
'I'm sorry' and
'please forgive me'

Saying 'sorry' is different to asking for 'forgiveness'. When we say sorry to someone, it is an 'I-centred' statement expressing sympathy, but not necessarily inferring that we take any responsibility. As such, it requires nothing from the person to whom we say it. It is always good to say 'sorry' but it is nowhere near as hard to do, or as effective, as asking for forgiveness.

Asking for forgiveness is an act of vulnerability.

Not only does it put us in a position of accepting responsibility for hurting the other, it is a request to be invited back into unity with the person we have hurt. Full reconciliation can only occur in a relationship when we say sorry and ask for forgiveness. This is the basis of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, but applies equally to any intimate relationship.



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The Way of Mercy

The Way of Mercy is four simple steps to heal a relationship based on the principles of restorative justice. When we say or do things that we shouldn't, hurt someone or break the trust of another, it's important to take ownership of our actions (or inactions), apologise for it and rebuild the relationship.



Making an Apology

- Step 1...** Sorrow: I am sorry for...
(State what you did, said or failed to do)
- Step 2...** Empathy: It was wrong because ...
(Say how it harmed the other person)
- Step 3...** Promise: In the future I will ...
(Make a commitment to do it differently)
- Step 4...** Mercy: Please forgive me.
(It takes humility to ask for forgiveness!)

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