

QUEST CLUB

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WHAT SHOULD AN APOLOGY CONSIST OF:

APOLOGIES THAT WORKED AND APOLOGIES THAT FAILED

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Apology has several definitions and consequently takes different forms. Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, defines it as 1. A formal spoken or written defense of some idea, religion, philosophy, etc., 2. An acknowledgement of some fault, injury, insult, etc., with an expression of regret and a plea for pardon, 3. An inferior substitute, makeshift [he is a poor apology for an actor.] Webster's Third International Dictionary, Unabridged, defines apology to a much greater length drawing upon many written works for further clarification in its definition. This is how some words get their most current definition (*Word Histories and Mysteries: From Abracadabra to Zeus, Editors of the American Heritage Dictionaries, 2004.*) Many of us are more familiar with the second simple definition: we are sorry we have hurt someone's feelings and ask for pardon. This is commonly shown by confession of a wrongful deed and expressing remorse. Religion teaches us this form of apology. Some religions provide confessional booths or dividing screens for the personal unburdening of given offenses and being told how required penalties are to be made.

Whether an apology (read: confession) works or fails depends upon you: are you the victim or an observer?

In a recent book review by Katherine Noel, she says the following:

“What does it mean to say, “I’m sorry”? Increasingly, in this age of ceremonial, highly ritualized apology, it’s hard to distinguish between

true remorse and savvy public relations. (this particular novel being reviewed) was written before Lance Armstrong's public shaming, but it speaks to something similar in the zeitgeist (spirit of the time): the idea of confession as business strategy. Is reputation just a form of capital? What does it mean to apologize publicly for private sins, or privately for public sins? When one person grants another forgiveness, which of them is redeemed?" (*Katherine Noel, NY Times Book Review, May 12, 2013.*)

Some events may demand remorse by the actor for some act or deed committed against a person or others for a group.

Philosophical Apologies:

Among Webster's first definition we find philosophical apologies that may offend. For example: Socrates with his basic philosophy that "might does not make right" clashed with the Athenaeum City fathers who saw his offense as polluting young minds. It must be noted that at the time in Greek history, the various city-states were in constant warfare with one another and that the strongest side prevailed. His philosophical apology was determined to be seditious and unpatriotic and was not accepted. Socrates, holding steadfast to his belief, was sentenced to death by drinking a mixture containing hemlock. [See *Trial of Socrates*] To this day his philosophical apology continues to be the basis for deep discussion among philosophers.

Scientific Apologies:

Galileo's teaching that the earth is a planet revolving around the sun, a theory previously espoused by Copernicus, did not convince the Inquisition and he was admonished by Robert Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621) "to not hold, teach or defend the Copernican theory in any way whatever, either orally or in writing," and Galileo's scientific apology was not accepted as it was contrary to Catholic teaching that the Earth, and not the Sun, was the center of astronomical activity. Galileo was compelled to spend many years homebound (read: house arrest.) He had to wait until October 31, 1992 (about 400 years) for the Catholic Church to beg his forgiveness for his teaching and for placing him under house arrest. Too bad he did not live long enough to be redeemed and for the Catholic Church to accept his scientific apology. His forgiveness came rather late in time but he got a proper apology. [*Encyclopedia Britannica*]

Some situations calling for an apology can be humorous, serious and most of the time controversial in nature.

Current Celebrities - Apologies, some with humor that some people think have worked:

Hugh Grant, actor, arrested for his "lewd conduct" with a lady of the evening, apologized on the J. Leno Tonight Show stating that he had been a "bad boy." Those of you who watched this show saw his sad, but humorous look of contrition. His apology appears to have been accepted by the audience as it strongly and loudly applauded in acknowledgment. You might ask just how was he a "bad boy" and what was the "lewd conduct?" In spite of the many implications, he nonetheless continues to enjoy cinematic popularity, here in the United States and in Great Britain and is in great demand as an

actor on stage as well. At last reported, he was on the British stage performing to a packed house. He continues to attract the attention of popular female celebrities such as the wealthy British socialite Jemima Khan, a bond extradition underwriter for Wikileaks' founder, Julian Assange, and the actress Elizabeth Hurley. Apologizing for being a "bad boy" has apparently worked here although "lewd conduct" is not defined. [*New York Times, Style Magazine, Culture, Summer 2013.*]

Rob Lowe, actor, apologized for filming an indiscrete encounter with a girl. Such gave rise to his writing a memoir, remarkably a best seller, elaborating on the encounter and he now is richer, and a favored and successful Hollywood actor. Some might want to see the film to see what is meant by indiscrete encounter. We are not informed whether he has apologized to the girl for filming the encounter. He has since appeared in the television fictional series on the White House. He now is playing the role of President John F. Kennedy in the forthcoming film "Killing Kennedy". Some critics may say he will do justice to the role. [*Politico Magazine, Wednesday, October 30, 2013.*]

Mel Gibson, upon being pulled over by a cop and arrested for reckless driving and for being under the influence, assaulted the officer with an ethnic slur. He subsequently publicly apologized stating that his long time battle with alcoholism and state of inebriation at the time occasioned such bad behavior for which he was truly sorry. He has subsequently enjoyed unparalleled financial, cinematic and theatrical success as an actor and producer of films here in the United States and in Australia. We do not know whether he has apologized to the cop.

Charlie Sheen, whose myriad indiscretions are innumerable and legendary, had the temerity to use, among other derogatory words, the N word in describing Denise Richards, his ex-wife, and further stating that she should go home and cry to her bald mother (who was then having chemo therapy.) He did apologize for using the N word and stated he had used a poor choice of words thus apologizing to Tony Todd, an African-American, who had been best man at his first two weddings. But there was no forthcoming apology to Denise Richards who it seems has forgiven him as she now says that she and Charlie Sheen have their ups and downs and they now are getting along just fine. Charlie Sheen, long known for his brash behavior has employed a spectrum of insults to a wide band of society, but nonetheless currently enjoys a great demand in Hollywood Cinema, Television and Stage. [*NY Daily News, March 30, 2013*]. We are not informed whether he has personally apologized to any individual.

Apology accepted, maybe not.

The Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV apologized to Pope Gregory VII for Church-State conflicts in 1077 by standing in the snow for 3 days. There is no record whether he was forgiven, suffered hyperthermia, caught cold or suffered frostbite. [*Historical Apologies, infra*]

In 1863 President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation establishing Thanksgiving as a national holiday, enjoining the nation to repent for “our national perverseness and

disobedience” to God during the Civil War and asking forgiveness for the sins that led to so many deaths. There is yet no visible record of forgiveness. (*ibid*)

Sins of omission can make it impossible to apologize and obtain forgiveness from a victim

Terry Stephen, a multimedia journalist has written a book: *The Things They Cannot Say: Stories Soldiers Won't Tell About What They've Seen, Done or Failed to Do in War* (Harper Perennial, 2013.) In a recent interview he was asked after taping a Marine shooting and killing a wounded insurgent inside a mosque. The (wounded insurgent) was unarmed and had already surrendered. Another insurgent who was still alive tried to speak with Stephen after the incident, but instead of staying with him, Stephen left to show the video to the Marine's commander. Sometime after he walked out of the mosque, that man was killed also. How did that affect the journalist? He answered: Not being aware of the circumstances, I unwittingly became complicit in a murder. And no matter what I say – that I didn't mean to do it, that it was just an accident – the consequence is (that) a man is dead. So I can't take that back. But this man's death said something to me about my role as a journalist. It said “you might be ultimately aware of your surroundings as a reporter, but you are woefully unaware of your surroundings as a human being. I never thought I would be in a moral dilemma of this magnitude that I would have to actually accept my complicity in someone's death. So I began to think about this, and it really rocked my world. You start to believe that you really can't be forgiven for something like that. Because you can't take it back. And I began to exhibit symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder. The stress began to manifest itself through

self destructive behavior – risk taking, and alcohol abuse. [*Northwestern Alumni Magazine, Summer, 2013.*]

[Sins of Commission may be permanently engraved and unforgiven](#)

Leslie Moonves, a great nephew of David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, and CEO of CBS Television, producer of the popular Television Show: Two and One Half Men, was the target of Charlie Sheen's offensive diatribe on Moonves's ethnicity, perhaps due in part to his not being renewed in the show. Sheen intimated that he was amenable to continue in the role because he was purportedly in demand by fans, to again be in the cast of Two And a Half Men, but Mr. Moonves nonetheless replaced him in the show with Ashton Kutcher. His non-renewal for the acting part, indicates that Sheen's apology, if one can be perceived, was not accepted by Moonves and that the insult stands unforgiven to this day. [*Historical Political Apologies, Graham G. Dodds, Ph D. candidate, political science department, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia PA*]

The US Government on July 18, 1928 formally apologized to Great Britain for violating the sovereignty of the Bahamas in 1927, when the Coast Guard seized a ship suspected of smuggling liquor. We are not told if there actually was liquor on that ship and if so who got to drink it as there were no reports of disorderly conduct among the sailors.
(*ibid*)

In October 26, 1948 Mexico accepted an apology from the U.S. State Department for allowing several thousand Mexican farm laborers to cross the Texas border, in violation of an agreement between the two countries.*(ibid)*. Today the logic of this apology defies comprehension.

Israel, on May 26, 1950 agreed to apologize to the United Nations for the murder of Palestinian mediator Count Folke Bernadotte in Jerusalem. *(ibid)* No further word that the apology was actually made or if made whether it was accepted by the Count or from the UN. It should be noted that apologizing to a dead person has its complications.

Todd Akin in a KSDK-TV interview running what was considered a winnable race in 2012 for election as Missouri Congressional Representative stated “I believe pregnancy can be prevented by a woman involved in a “legitimate rape” (not defined) because “the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down.” He publicly apologized for the statement but his apology was apparently not accepted by some as he lost the race by more than 15 points to incumbent Claire McCaskill who had been slated to lose the race. *[USA Today April 26, 2011]*)

Richard Mourdock, Indiana US Senate hopeful speaking on women’s abortion rights and whether such should be illegal except in those situations where the mother’s life is in danger, stated that “I struggled with it myself for a long time, but came to realize life is that gift from God. And I think even when life begins in that horrible situation of rape, that it is something that God intended to happen.” Mourdock’s many subsequent public

attempts at apologizing by clarifying his statement were obviously not accepted as he lost the support of his Republican party, of Mitt Romney, its Presidential hopeful, and lost his bid for the Senate. [*Slate Magazine, 10/24/2012*]

Lance Armstrong admitted to the media that he was tired of contesting challenges to his winning races in the French Tour de France and subsequently admitted to using performance enhancing drugs and did so on the Oprah Winfrey TV Show [Jan 13, 2013.] He subsequently lost sponsors and honorariums, and is being sued by various parties, including the US Post Office, one of his sponsors. As of this writing Nike has withdrawn support of Armstrong and of his Foundation. His apology has been accepted by some and he is in the process of paying the penalty that may take years to pay-off. No record that he has apologized to those who raced with him and lost because of his ill gotten victories.

Apologies and Non-Apologies

Sometimes apology speeches fail to state the offense committed but the actor asks for pardon from the public nonetheless. Some might call these “Airborne Apologies”.

Kobe Bryant: His apology to his wife, on national television, expressed sorrow for “putting his wife through all of this” but no explanation as to what “all of this” was. This apparently did not work as his wife, Vanessa, filed suit for divorce and because of a no Pre-Nuptial Agreement would stand to get \$75 million dollars, plus ongoing spousal and child support. (*Investopedia, Nov 30, 2012.*) This purported apology may have worked as they now have reportedly reconciled. (*ABC News, Celebrity Homes Video 10/2/2013.*)

Bill Clinton: Speaking before a group apologized expressing sorrow for those who have been hurt – to a wide array of people, including Monica Lewinski; however, the committed offense is not stated. We are left to wonder for what he is expressing sorrow.

Jimmy Swaggart: Begs forgiveness by stating that: “I do not plan in any way to whitewash my sin”.... The sin is not stated and one wonders what he is whitewashing and because of whom.

Rev. Ted Haggard: “I am so sorry... I am guilty of sexual immorality and I take responsibility for the entire problem.” This is titillating by and of itself and makes one’s imagination think of all sorts of possibilities as to what the entire problem is.

Olympian Marion Jones after being charged with use of steroids stated: “I recognize that by saying that I am deeply sorry, it might not be enough and sufficient to address the pain and the hurt that I have caused you. Therefore I ask for your forgiveness for my actions.” No definition of “actions” is given and just “who” might be.

Senator Larry Craig stated “First please let me apologize to my family, friends, staff and fellow Idahoans for the cloud placed over Idaho. I did nothing wrong at the Minneapolis airport I regret my decision to plead guilty and the sadness that decision has brought to my wife, family, friends, staff, and fellow Idahoans. For that I apologize...Let me be clear. I am not gay and never have been.” One can ask and wonder: What did he do at

the Minneapolis Airport that makes him say he is not gay and never has been? Some would ask: What is wrong with being gay?

Eliot Spitzer, who stepped down in 2008 as Governor of New York over a prostitution scandal stated: “I apologize for acting in a way that violates my obligations to my family and violates my – or any- sense of right and wrong. I apologize first, and most importantly, to my family. I apologize to the public, whom I promised better.” Some wonder what he means by “acting in a way.” He announced that he was running for New York City Comptroller. In an interview with the New York Times he hoped New York City voters would give him a chance. Voters gave him their answer at the primary poll in September: he did not survive the primary. [*Journal Gazette July 8, 2013 page 3A; NPR 09/11/2013; News Sentinel, Sept 11, 2013, page 2*]

Anthony Weiner, Congressman from New York, admitted to sending sexually suggestive photos of himself through the Internet under the name of Carlos Danger, and he resigned his office on June 16, 2011. This resignation rang of an attempted apology; however, one was left to wonder what he meant by sexually suggestive photos and such called for further investigation by some inquisitive people. The recipients of the photos are not stated as the objects of the apology. After his resignation and casting his candidacy for Mayor of New York it was revealed that he had resumed his internet photography venture. He apologized to his wife who stated that she forgave him and he affirmed his candidacy for Mayor of New York asking again that the public forgive his recidivistic conduct [*WSJ July 24, 2013*]. His “on-again, off- again, on-again internet photography

venture” apology for his indiscretion in sending these photos on the internet which may have been accidentally viewed by others than the intended recipients did not work as he did not survive the primary.

Some wonder why Senator Vetter, R Louisiana, who admitted to being in the company with a lady of the evening was re-elected to office. His apology worked with his wife and constituents and he continues to hold office. [*NPR 09/11/2013*].

Tiger Woods states: “I want to say to each of you, simply, and directly, I am deeply sorry for my irresponsible and selfish behavior I engaged in.” We are left to wonder what he means by irresponsible and selfish behavior. His wife Elin Nordagren did not accept the apology, filed suit for divorce and got \$110 million dollars in the process and ongoing child support. (*Investopedia, Nov 30, 2012*)

Public apologies

In many instances where a crime, sometimes heinous and deadly, has called national attention there are bystanders who say: “I forgive the murderer” The question here is: Can a bystander, whether or not being asked to forgive, do so? The victim who is dead is not present to grant forgiveness. A mother, whose daughter has been murdered, upon being asked if she forgives the murderer replies “It is not in my power to forgive.” Some say that forgiveness is for intimates. [*Gina Bellafante, Big City, NY Times 07/13/2013*]

Query: Can some one other than the victim of a crime, deadly or not, grant forgiveness?

The Sovereign State takes a given crime against society under judicial advisement and after due deliberation determines if there is guilt and the penalty to be exacted from the perpetrator. Under these circumstances if guilt is found by the jury there is no forgiveness until the penalty has been satisfied. In cases of capital punishment there may be no forgiveness by the jury and apologies (in the form of words spoken in remorse) are not accepted.

Apologies At Large (or so it seems)

Recently the Internal Revenue Service has been accused of targeting Tea Party applicants for tax-exempt organizational status. Congress is conducting a full-fledged inquiry into this matter and critics are calling on the President to apologize for this conduct. No spoken word of apology has been uttered by the President but does the resignation, which may have been voluntary, or not, of the IRS Commissioner and of his immediate subordinate constitute an apology from the President? The subsequent invoking of the 5th amendment by Lois Lerner a ranking IRS official refusing to testify to avoid self incrimination may add more ire to the Tea Party complaint that only a further committee hearing may reveal. She has been placed on administrative leave. (*Washington Post*, 05/24/2013) Will we ultimately also get a spoken apology from her or from the President? The President has gone on record stating that such conduct will not be tolerated. Whether this is a partisan matter or not the IRS says that these Tea Party applicants are no more scrutinized than other non Tea Party applicants for similar tax free classification. (*ibid*) But some feel that the word “apology” to the Tea Party is in order.

Apologies given for others' offenses:

John Schnatter, Chairman and CEO of Papa John's Pizza apologized for the following recent incident:

A Papa John's Pizza delivery man after delivering a pizza to an African American family on a Sunday evening "butt dialed" (accidentally having your cell phone also dial an unintended party) the customer. In a 4 minute voicemail laden with racial slurs to another employee, the deliveryman complained using the N word about the \$5 delivery charge but no tip. The voice mail message was laden with racial slurs. John Schnatter said the employees "responsible for this absolutely unacceptable behavior were immediately terminated." In January 2012 a Papa John's employee in New York City described a customer on paper as "Lady Chink Eyes." No word on an apology here but a lawsuit indicating no forgiveness may perhaps be in the offing. (*ABC News 05/28/13.*)

In April 2013 a CVS customer in New Jersey filed a million-dollar lawsuit against CVS for being called, "Lee Ching Chong." (*ibid*) An apology, if any, was apparently not accepted.

An apology that has not worked (so far):

President George W. Bush, with commentary from his Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, and Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, offered public comments concerning prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib a U.S., Military prison in Iraq. When the President was confronted with world wide disseminated televised photographs of abuse of prisoners at

Abu Ghraib, the President in a Rose Garden address, stated that he had apologized to King Abdulla II of Jordan for abuse to the Iraqi prisoners, further stating that such prisoner abuse was the work of a few people and did not represent the true nature and heart of America. As President he did not state to the American people, the Iraqi people, the prisoners and the Military, America's responsibility in this abuse and if steps were to be taken to correct such prisoner abuse. A form of abuse known as water-boarding has to this day been defended by some in his administration. The prison location and whether such abuse continues remain unresolved. (*Making Peace Through Apology, Aaron Lazare, Fall 2004*) As of this writing no apology has been made to the Iraqi people or compensation and judicial freedom to the abused prisoners.

However, it has been said: Leave it to the British to do things right, recognizing that it is never too late to make a true apology:

According to the Kenyan Human Rights Commission, as many as 90,000 Kenyans were killed or inflicted with unspeakable torture and 167,000 more were forced into concentration camps during eight years of mayhem and bloodshed during the 1950's Mau Mau uprising. I remember the Kenyan freedom fighter Jomo Kenyata whose fearsome photograph frequently appeared in American Newspapers during the uprising and who later after Independence became Kenya's first prime minister:

"The British government recognises that Kenyans were subject to torture and other forms of ill-treatment at the hands of the colonial administration that took more than a half a century ago. It sincerely regrets that these abuses took place and that they marred Kenya's progress toward independence (said Foreign Secretary William Hague making a landmark

apology before Britain's Parliament.) The United Kingdom has expressed regret to the Kenyans who were tortured by the British Colonial forces during the 1950's Mau Mau uprising and will receive pay-outs totaling \$30.5 million in reparations. It will be split between 5,200 victims. Leaving about \$4,100 per claimant in a country where the average person earns just \$821 a year. And the British Government will erect a suitable monument in recognition of the uprising. [*BBC News, 6 June 2013, AlJazeera English, 7 June 2013.*] It should be noted that this settlement was made in spite of statutes of limitation.

Never underestimate the spoken apology even though compensation may have been made. Acknowledgement of guilt is always welcomed by and gives closure to the victim. During the Netherlands' occupation of its colony, Indonesia, special forces from the Netherlands carried out a series of summary executions, in which people were accused of crimes and then killed without trial, in the colony between 1945 and 1949, killing thousands. In total about 40,000 people were executed during the colonial era, according to the Indonesian government; however, Dutch figures mention only a few thousand. The south Indonesian island of Sulawesi was the site of one of the worst atrocities. On January 28 1947, Dutch Special Forces executed 208 men on a field in front of a local government office. It was one of the many mass executions in dozens of villages for a period of three months in a bid to wipe out resistance against Dutch colonization. Neither the notorious captain Raymond Westerling who was long considered a hero in the Netherlands nor his men were ever prosecuted. Compensation and apologies were given to some. But now in a state visit by the Dutch Ambassador, Tjeerd De Zwaan, the Dutch government formally apologized for the mass killing of Indonesians during colonial occupation which ended in 1949.

Representatives of the victims welcomed the apology with one saying, “Look what I have lost back then, my grandmother was shot when she was 80 years old and my father was shot, and another relative, too. All of them shot dead. They should be able to imagine how I as a child have suffered because of this.” [*Al Jazeera,English, 09/12/2013, dutch-apologiesforindonesianexecutions.html*] The individual accepted the apology.

An apology that worked. (It took time)

During the Second World War, Eric Lomax, a Scotsman, was captured by the Japanese in Singapore and held as prisoner of war in Kanburi, Thailand, a notorious prison known for the cruelty by its Japanese captors. After the war, Lomax now at home, a broken man, unable to emotionally adjust to normalcy with a consuming desire to exact revenge of his captor, wrote a book, The Railway Man, in which he described his prison experience: being caged like an animal in a tiny cell, beaten, starved, tortured, his bones broken by his Japanese captors. His Japanese interpreter, Nasgasi Takashi became the object of Lomax’s hostility, object of revenge and ire. He subsequently learned that Takashi had been writing about the wartime wrongs that he and his country had committed and of his desire to be forgiven for his wartime actions. Lomax and his wife wrote to Takashi who in return asked to meet at the site of the prison and then in Japan. Lomax deliberated over time on whether to do so, but agreed to meet. Both Lomax and Nasgasi accompanied by the wives met as agreed. Lomax noted the sorrow and grief exhibited by Takashi, who admitted that he and other captors in the camp, as well as his country, Japan, had treated Lomax and fellow prisoners very, very badly and how truly sorry he was and how after the war he had argued against militarism and built memorials for the war dead. Lomax saw the anguish and grief that Takashi exhibited. After two weeks, Lomax’s anger was gone and he now considered

Takashi no longer an enemy, but in essence, now a blood brother. (ibid) Lomax had indeed forgiven Takashi.

An apology can take innovative forms.

A story goes in seminary that a 24 year old Anglican Church Deacon, apparently still wet behind his ecclesiastical ears, made one of his first pastoral calls. He looked forward with great anticipation to putting his counseling training to the test. He visited a recently bereaved dowager to extend his condolences. A maid ushered him into the dimly lit parlor from the outside bright sunshine. Many years of sitting in seminary classes had given him an ample, comfortable well-padded stern. So it was with relief that he sat down in a black overstuffed chair and felt something crunch beneath him. To his dismay and horror it was a black Chihuahua puppy. He had crushed the life out of it! He then heard footsteps coming down the stairway and said to himself, "I killed her pet puppy. If I hand it to her she may die of a heart attack the way her husband died last week." He asked himself just what did he learn at seminary about coping with a situation such as this? What did pastoral theology say about what do you do when you sit on the dowager's Chihuahua puppy and cause its demise?" Not one word. He had to do something, one way or the other. In this case he put the little dead dog in his pocket, made a short visit with the dowager, extended his condolences and went home and hurriedly buried the creature in his garden. Although nothing is said in this regard we have to assume he gave it the proper animal burial rites as he was filled with great unrestrained remorse,. But burying the puppy was not enough. He slept fitfully that night, tossed and turned, and did not get much needed rest. The stress of the incident had gotten to him. While having his morning tea and still drowsy from lack of

sleep, he opened the newspaper, dropped his biscuit, choked on his tea and almost went into shock to see a full page picture of the Chihuahua puppy's face staring straight at him, eye to eye and nose to nose with the caption of the offer of a reward for its return. The young deacon felt that to avert a nervous breakdown he had to make restitution, as otherwise he felt there would be no forgiveness, now or in the hereafter. After much deliberation he decided that the best way he could do this was to search in the pet shops for a puppy that resembled the one that he had killed. With picture in hand and after finding a close match of one he put it in a shoe box with air holes and took it to the dowager with the explanation that he heard her puppy had strayed and here was one that looked like the picture in the newspaper. The "Restitution" cost him one fourth of his meager monthly salary, but it was worth it to see the delighted face of the dowager as she clasped the little creature to her bosom. And the Deacon obtained his much sought after remission and slept well that night. [*The Dowager's Chihuahua: Religion by the Seat of Your Pants, R. Heber Gooden*]

So how does an apology work, if at all? Confronting the person offended, face to face, and admitting the wrong and asking forgiveness has the possible two pronged effect: The offended party has the opportunity to forgive but more importantly the offender is relieved at having offended.

It has been suggested that an apology can have beneficial effects in that it generates forgiveness and reconciliation if it satisfies several psychological needs. It can restore dignity when the offence itself is an insult or a humiliation. It affirms that both parties have shared values and both agree that the harm committed was wrong such as in racial or

gender slurs. It can validate that the victim is not responsible for the offense such as when a victim irrationally carries some sort of blame as in cases of child abuse or rape. It can assure that the victim is safe from a repeat offense such as a threat of physical or psychological harm. The victim sees the offending party suffer through some type of punishment such as performing community service or jail time. It can provide some kind of reparation or compensation for pain suffered by the victim such as post war reparations or a money judgment. And it gives both parties the opportunity to discuss and express their feelings face to face such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in South Africa. [*Making Peace Through Apology, supra*]

With the foregoing in mind perhaps there is a basic principle that applies:

That for an apology to occur there must involve: acknowledgement of the offense, explanation of the offense and expression of remorse, and if the offense calls for restitution then such must be given.

During my research I came across the 12 Steps of A.A. that recovering alcoholics employ in their daily battle with this disease. Steps 8, 9 and 10 express a form of apology that can apply in cases calling for recognition of an offense and its remission. They read:

Step 8 –Make a list of all persons you have harmed and become willing to make amends to them all.

Step 9- Make direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.

Step 10 - Continue to take personal inventory and when you are wrong, promptly admit it.

I hope you found this paper informative. If you feel otherwise, I apologize.

And in closing please remember what Alexander Pope, the famous English essayist once said: “To err is human, to forgive is divine”

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