



Apologize Sincerely

"I'm sorry."

These two simple words are often the most difficult to express. How do we forgive those who have wronged us? We live in a society that places a great premium on celebrity. From athletes to actors, we follow our "heroes" on TV, in newspapers, and on the internet. Our children emulate their heroes. From their line of clothing, to their shoes, to a particular Hollywood hairstyle, people in the news fascinate us. We talk about kids in the same manner. We talk about them as "the next LeBron James" or the "next Aaron Rogers." Even non-celebrity comparisons are common: "Can't you act more like your sister?"

Yet when it comes to forgiveness, we have difficulty emulating the greatest forgiver of all time: Jesus. He forgave those who ridiculed him, he forgave those who betrayed him, he forgave those who crucified him, and did this all to atone for our sins. Because we were incapable of asking God for forgiveness, he did it for us. Just as important, he accepted those who asked forgiveness. What better celebrity role model to follow than Jesus Christ?

The problem with asking for or accepting forgiveness is that there is an underlying assumption that I must admit I was wrong. To attain civility, it is more important to ask or accept forgiveness as a means of repairing a damaged relationship. It matters not that one was wrong. What matters most is the desire to "forgive and forget" . . . to "move on." Although the prostitutes, thieves, and tax collectors that asked for God's forgiveness had committed despicable acts, the simple act of saying, "I'm sorry" was all that was needed to repair their damaged relationship with God; it was all that God required to "move on."

Three simple questions may help you determine if a message is gossip: "Is it kind?" "Is it true?" "Is it necessary?"

Credit: Oshkosh Civility Project

Visit the Door County Civility Project for more information: <http://www.doorcountycivilityproject.org>

Civility Keys - Say thank you

"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever." Psalm 107:1

Because It Matters ...

As Melody Beattie, best-selling author and journalist wrote, "Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow." And when you are grateful, the two most important words in your language are "thank you." "You simply will not be the same person two months from now after consciously giving thanks each day for the abundance that exists in your life," wrote Sarah Ban Breathnach. Indeed. There is a reason that saying thank you is one of the first lessons we learn as a child. The trick is in remembering that those words never lose their importance in our lives. Say "thank you" every day, and watch as the spirit of gratitude opens your heart to all of life's possibilities.

Applying it to my life ...

1. Name some things for which you are grateful.
2. Do you say "thank you" at every opportunity - when someone provides you with good service, when a car lets you merge into traffic, when a spouse does something unexpectedly thoughtful?
3. How can we be grateful in times of distress, when we are facing a personal crisis?

Credit: *Because it Matters - Bringing Back Civility* - Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice

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