When you realize that your words, actions, or inactions (failure to say or do something important) have hurt someone else, you can attempt to heal the damage to your relationship by offering a sincere apology through the following steps:

1. Say, “I’m sorry…” or “I apologize…” Those direct words conveyed in a respectful tone are important to make your intention clear.

2. Continue with “…for…” and a statement that takes responsibility for your wrongdoing.

3. Add a statement about how you will behave differently in the future to avoid further offense.

4. Ask how you can make up for harm done.

5. Follow through on your commitment to change and to make amends.

Although an apology is not a magic wand to make everything better, it is a crucial step in repairing damage to any relationship where hurt feelings are present.