

TEACHING AGAIN TO SAY SORRY

"I am sorry", says a eight year old to his friend, bang comes a reply "What difference it makes ? YOU ARE SORRY, WILL IT MEND THE DAMAGE ?" Hearing this conversation I was wondering, few more such instances and the child might harden and believe we should not apologise, it makes no difference to anybody rather makes you feel insulted. A simple I am sorry seems to loose its impact, Why ? Is this indicative of more conflicts , lesser tolerance and acceptance of others ?

What is the emerging big picture then ? We might have young adults , a whole generation of people who neither say sorry nor accept sorry ie we do not accept our mistakes as well as we do not forgive others. How do we live together then ? May be just being indifferent. Imagine what we are heading towards..... our children would have no realization of hurt caused by them nor would they provide opportunity for others to mend .

I am taking it probably too far ! but I do think these small things become big in due course of time. The generation believing in *its my life* ... if is not trained into finer values of respect for others, respect for others property, appreciating differences, forgiveness it would lead to a disaster. In schools good manners training starts with using good words as *thank you* and *sorry* and *please*. But when child experiences are like the one I cited above he is forced to rethink... As parents we can take care of '*sorry*' and make a big difference.

Parenting is largely about helping children to differentiate right from wrong. Well, we could let our kids know that their behaviour was wrong, that it had a negative impact on others and that there is an alternative and help them think of that. We could firmly but gently reinforce the message that in our family when we hurt others we apologise and say sorry. We could teach the message of forgiveness when others say sorry to us, and show how we say sorry to others...

An apology gives us the opportunity to openly discuss and resolve conflicts. When we graciously accept an apology in front of our children we are teaching them how to be selfless and how to occasionally swallow one's pride in order to end conflict with a loved one.

In fact forgiveness is an essential part of the equation surely? Once we say sorry it is nice to be forgiven and to be able to move on. By forgiving we give up the blame, - **no blame culture, yes please!**

Nine Things parents could do

1. Make "I'm sorry" part of your vocabulary. It's just as important for parents to say "I'm sorry" to our partner and to our children when we get things wrong, as it is for us to teach them the importance of apologizing.

We all know how children mimic what they see-even when you wish they wouldn't

t. So give them something positive to mimic and you will teach them many valuable lessons, including truth, integrity, morality and forgiveness. Lead by your positive example.

2. Accentuate the positive. So often we focus on the things we need to apologize for and we forget to pay attention to the things we're doing right. CATCH CHILDREN DOING THINGS RIGHT ALL THE TIME.

3. When overused, saying "I'm sorry" can lose its authenticity. Teach your children the importance of saying sorry by helping them to use it with meaning.

4. Let go of a grudge. Sometimes situations get to a point where neither person can say "I'm sorry" because the disagreement has gone on for so long-or one or both of you don't even remember what the argument was about.

Reevaluate whether or not it's worth spending your energy holding onto your anger.

5. Accept the apology. When you receive an apology from your children, let them know that it is accepted. Apologies are important, but simply learning to say "I'm sorry" is not enough. Learning to graciously accept an apology is just as important as the apology itself. Most importantly, by accepting the apology we are teaching our children the power of forgiveness.

6. Don't force sorry. When children are forced to say they are sorry, they learn that it's more important to say you're sorry than to tell the truth. They learn that saying a few insincere words easily dismisses people and problems and that they do not have to take responsibility for their actions. They also learn that there's no need to right a wrong. Just say you're sorry, even if you don't mean it and everything will be fine.

7. Learn to make sorry an action, not just a word - Teach your children to make amends and take responsibility for their actions. So if your child has just thrown their food on the floor, get them to clear it up, or if they are very young, get them to just pick up one piece.

8. Help siblings to say sorry to each other. Don't take sides, place blame, or ask who did what. Instead ask children, "Is there something you want to say to each other?"

10. Use praise in young children. When young children show they are sorry for having hurt a friend or sibling, reward them with praise. For example, give them a pat and say "well done, that's being nice" or " I know it takes courage to say that , I am proud of you"

Conflict resolution, problem solving are essential and much talked about skills in the corporate world today but I believe teaching your child to say a simple sorry with belief and respect is the first step towards it.

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