

**AHLA**

# **A. Critical Conversations: Strategies for Asks and Apologies**

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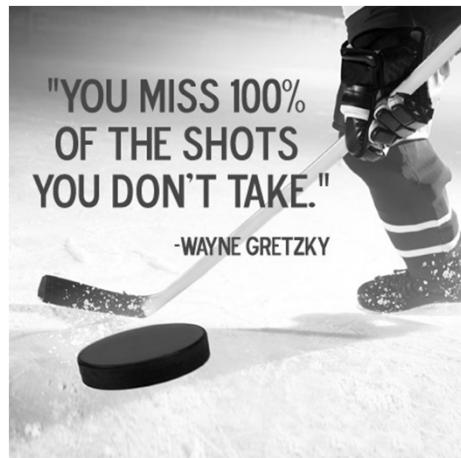
# Critical Conversations: Strategies for Asks and Apologies

Lauren Haley  
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## Agenda

- Determine What You Want
  - Develop Specific, Tangible Objectives
  - Prepare For Your Ask - Understand the Circumstances
  - “No” Just Means No
- \* \* \*
- Why Apologies Matter
  - How to Apologize Appropriately in the Business Setting
  - Identify Common Mistakes to Avoid
  - Realize How Apologies Can Strengthen a Leader

## The Worst They Can Say is “No”



## What is it that you want?

- Imagine your ideal situation
- Think about as many details as you can
- Prioritize

*If you don't know where you are going,  
you'll end up someplace else. – Yogi Berra*

## Develop Specific, Tangible Objectives

- Create “action items” based on priorities
- Map out time frames
- Allow for flexibility



## Strategies for the “Ask”

### **Who, What, Where, When, Why**

- Who are the decision makers?
- What are you going to ask?
- Where will you make the ask?
- When should you ask?
- Why should they say yes?

*Everything is negotiable. Whether or not the negotiation is easy is another thing. - Carrie Fisher*

## You Can't Always Get What You Want

- No ≠ Failure!
- Yes to the person, no to the task?
- What does it mean?
  - Related to where you want to go?
  - In the context of your priorities?
  - Are there alternatives?



## Questions?

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## Consider your Professional Setting

- Write down the worst thing that you could do.
  - Is it to miss a filing deadline?
  - Lose a case?
  - Berate support staff?
  - Lose your temper with your managing partner?

## Consider your Professional Setting

- The worst has happened. You did it.
  - Given what you wrote down, to whom would you owe an apology?
  - Write down the person's position, for example, co-worker, opposing counsel, client.
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## Consider your Professional Setting

- On a scale of 1 to 10 rate how comfortable you are making an apology.
  - A 10 means it causes you no concern at and a 1 means you would be very anxious.
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## Now What?

Jazz great Miles Davis said,



When you hit a wrong note, it's the next note that makes it good or bad.

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apologies  
are  
powerful

DarielleLaPorta.com | Truthbomb

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## Apologies Matter

- An Apology Can Keep a Bad Situation from Getting Worse
  
  - An Apology Can Repair a Relationship that Has Been Bruised
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## Apologies Matter

- You demonstrate authenticity.
  - You exercise your social intelligence.
  - You gain credibility for making an effort.
  - Your honesty sets a tone for the workplace.
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## How Do I Apologize?

- What is *worse* than no apology at all?
- HALF AN APOLOGY!

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## Half an Apology is Worse than None

- A study by J.K. Robbennolt (University of IL) showed:
- “Good” apologies were more likely to lead to settlement – 73%
- 52% were willing to settle with no apology at all.
- **Only 35% were willing to settle with a partial apology.**

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## Simple Apology

- There is No Such Thing as a SIMPLE APOLOGY.
- Acknowledging a wrong, seeking forgiveness and making things right is very complicated

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## Good Apologies

- Acknowledge the mistake or wrongdoing.
- Accept responsibility.
- Express regret.
- Promise that the offense will not be repeated.
- Are Timely and Genuine.

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## Good Apologies

- Step 1: Express Remorse.

“I am sorry that I blew up at you in the meeting. I am embarrassed by what I did.”

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## Good Apologies

- Step 2: Admit Responsibility.

“I am sorry that I blew up at you in the meeting. I am embarrassed by what I did. I am sure that I embarrassed you since it was in a meeting with others. I was wrong to treat you like that.”

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## Good Apologies

- Step 3: Make Amends.

“I am sorry that I blew up at you in the meeting. I am embarrassed by what I did. I am sure that I embarrassed you and I was wrong to treat you like that. I will let the others know that I was wrong, and that your quality of work is not in question.”

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## Good Apologies

- Step 4: Promise it won’t happen again.
  - Step 5: Don’t Do It Again.
  - Step 6: Don’t Do It Again.
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## Be Careful!

- You will probably want to explain your actions.
  - Don't let an explanation turn into an excuse for what you did.
  - Don't shift blame somewhere else.
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## Be Careful!

- Do not expect instant forgiveness.
  - Depending on what you did, it could take time and continued demonstration that you meant you wouldn't do it again.
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## Be Careful!

- Do not wait too long to apologize.
- The longer the issue festers, the greater the adverse impact.

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## Be Careful!

- Do not bring it up repeatedly.
- Follow the lead of the wronged party.

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## Language

- I apologize v. I'm sorry
- "I'm sorry, but..."
- "I'm sorry that you feel that way."
- "I'm sorry this happened."

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## Examples

- Hilary Clinton – "I take responsibility, but I was not making security decisions."
- Justin Timberlake – "What occurred was unintentional and completely regrettable, and I apologize if you guys were offended."

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## Examples

- Nixon spokesperson Ron Ziegler  
“Mistakes were made.”

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## Good Apology

- David Letterman
- He “hurt his wife deeply”
- Had his work cut out to make it up to her
- Demeanor

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## Good Apology

- Gary Oldman
- “I am deeply remorseful that comments I recently made in the Playboy interview were offensive to many Jewish people...I see how insensitive they may be and how they may indeed contribute to the furtherance of a false stereotype.”

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## Leadership

- Apologies can be character-building.
- You will do something in your career that merits an apology.
- A leader is self-aware.
- A leader models the desired behavior.
- A leader “tells” others how to treat him/her by his/her own behavior.

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## Conclusion

- The ability to apologize appropriately is a skill that you will use throughout your career.
- Helping clients through an appropriate apology can be the difference between settling and not settling, and can determine the amount of the settlement.

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## Re-visit the Worst

- Look at your index card.
- Do you feel more capable should the “worst” happen? Rate yourself again on a scale of 1-10.
- My hope is that your number has increased with the information and approaches I discussed today.

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