**EARNEST APOLOGIES**

Often when a disagreement or conflict occurs in the workplace what’s needed to turn the situation around is a sincere, well-delivered apology. However, for the apology to be effective, it takes more than simply saying *“I’m sorry*.” Outlined below are the essential elements of an effective apology and a comparison to apologies that are ineffective.

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| **EFFECTIVE APOLOGY** | **INEFFECTIVE APOLOGY** |
| **Stating the specific nature of the offense**  “When I interrupted you during your project presentation yesterday…” | **Being vague about what happened**  “About yesterday…” |
| **Taking responsibility**  “I really shouldn’t have behaved that way.” | **Making excuses**  “You know I really hate those long, drawn out presentations, I wish everyone would just get to the point…” |
| **Talking only about your actions**  “I arrived late, then I just launched into my questions before you were finished with your presentation…” | **Adding criticism: “but you also…”**  “I shouldn’t have jumped in with my questions, but you were going on-and- on…” |
| **Acknowledging the impact**  “I know my interrupting made it difficult for you to present all your research to the committee…” | **Ignoring or minimizing the impact**  “I think my questions helped clarify your points for the committee…” |
| **Saying “I’m sorry”**  “I’m really sorry for doing that.” | **Saying everything BUT “I’m sorry”**  “I think you got a bit distracted with the questions…” |
| **Saying “I should have…”**  “I should have arrived on time and waited until you finished your presentation to ask my questions.” | **Avoiding stating the proper actions**  “I’ll bite my lip next time…” |
| **Affirming future intentions**  “In the future, I’ll listen and wait until you’re ready for questions.” | **Disregarding future interactions**  “Thankfully, that’s the last time the committee meets this year…” |