

# Art of Repairing

Learning how to regulate our emotions and behaviors is part of the growing process. The natural fight, flight, freeze response can create a feeling of helplessness and often results in choices that make the situation worse rather than better. We all make mistakes and react or act in ways that are not inline with the person we want to be. Learning the art of repairs is a way to counter the feeling of shame and move towards the person we want to be.

This can be seen as a 5 step process

## **Step 1 “I am sorry...”**

“I am sorry” should be seen as an indication of a willingness to make things better. This should be done with sincerity and with using good eye contact.

## **Step 2 “....For...”**

This is where you identify the behavior. It is important to be specific and be willing to take ownership of the behavior. Taking responsibility can be hard and many times we use minimization, denial, or blame. Minimization is when we try to make the behavior smaller or less significant. We might say things like “I only” or “I just.” Denial is when we try to escape responsibility by rejecting and part in it. Statement like “I don’t know how it happened” or “I found it this way” are ways we use denial. Blame is one of the most common ways we avoid taking responsibility by deflecting on someone or something else. Watch for statements like “they/you made me do it” or “I am not the only one who...”

Name the behavior that you did. This is your chance to practice responsibility and show how strong you are. Avoid minimization, denial, and blame because it will stop the apology from working.

## **Step 3: “...I sent you the message \_\_\_\_\_...”**

Tell them how you think the behavior affected them.

## **Step 4: “...and I want to fix it by...”**

What could you do to pull them back close to you and undue the message you sent through your behavior. This is your chance to fix the situation. This can be very empowering as you become aware of your ability to correct the situation. It takes some practice to come up with fixes and you might need to ask for help. That is ok.

## **Step 5: “Will you please tell me if that will work?”**

Make sure you agree on when, where, and how the fix will take place