

A Nuanced Look at Relational Repair & Its Barriers

Reasons people apologize

- They realize they were wrong
- They want the conflict to end
- They are willing to accept blame for someone else's mistake to protect them
- They are worried they might have over-reacted

Reasons people don't apologize

- They struggle to separate action from character (if they did something bad, they are bad)
- They fear the apology will open the floodgates to more accusations and conflict
- They worry apologizing will be interpreted as acceptance of full responsibility and absolve the receiver of any blame

Reasons people forgive

- To free themselves from the past
- To restore hope to the relationship
- They are genuinely not upset anymore (time or an external factor healed the pain)
- They weren't as impacted as the apologizer had thought

Reasons people don't forgive

- Their anger or resentment is still serving them in some way
- The other person either isn't sorry or isn't expressing remorse in a way that is received as genuine to the harmed person
- They believe forgiving would mean letting go of their power
- They fear forgiving would be interpreted as permission to do it again