

Apologies

*We will rupture, more important: Can we repair?
Being able to repair is one of the most important aspects of a relationship.*

I want you to consider the following by yourself and then visit with each other and share your discoveries:

1. How do I remember apologies in my home? Did people say they were sorry; were my parents good role models for self-responsibility and repair? Did we say, "I am sorry, or I apologize", or something else? Was it dangerous to take ownership of something we did wrong? Did we (siblings and me) do everything we could to avoid being "blamed". Did our family recognize shared responsibility or was it all or nothing when we got "blamed".
2. How do I feel about apologizing? Is it fairly easy for me, or very difficult? How do I feel about receiving an apology? Can I take it in or do I have a hard time believing those who apologize? Consider how you each feel about this and then see where the origins of those beliefs might come from.
3. How do I feel about repair in a relationship? How important do I feel it is and what are **my** specific ways of repairing? Sometimes it could be doing something special for the other without acknowledging that we think we did something "wrong", (Rachel is not comfortable with the word "wrong", but we will use it in this context for the moment). Do we repair by saying nice things, doing nice things, giving in to something our partner wants? Do we say we are sorry?
4. What can happen in a relationship where there are no direct amends or attending to hurts in the relationship? Consider the ramifications on the person who doesn't apologize and on the one who doesn't receive the repair. It effects both of you.

After we visit about this and explore, without judgement (it is best just to mirror what the other shares, so we avoid questioning in a way that might feel critical). Our next step is:

Can we decide as a couple that repair is important to us, and then consider why do we think it is important? What is the message that we want to send our partner about our accountability to "us" as a couple? If we decide "yes", then look at the steps below and create a method for making amends that is specific to you both.

What elements do we want to address in our repair?

Here are some suggestions:

- What I specifically think I did that I was not happy with in myself and/or
What I specifically think I did that I believe was hurtful to you?
- You didn't deserve this from me. (In your mind, separate out, "Even though my hurtful response to you might make sense, that doesn't make it 'okay' for me to do it").
- What I would like to be able to do different in the future should this happen again?
- Extra credit: Where I think that response came from in me?

Remember, this can be a collaborative process of co-creation. What one person needs in terms of amends might not be what the other needs. So consider:

1. If I say I don't need apologies, can I be curious about what that is about, because Rachel would say, "that is about something!"
2. If I resist my partner's apologies, can I have a dialogue and explore what that is about?
3. Can I be curious about my own relationship with taking responsibility for my part? How scary is that? How much do I deflect and try to "get out of" my part?
This is probably the most important investigation you can do. I invite you to explore without judgement, just try to stay in curiosity.

It does not serve us nor our relationship to be fearful of accountability. It can be destructive and very frustrating for our partners.