



Before you start: Think of a recent conflict at home or at work that you wanted to repair. Hold it in mind as you answer. For each of the 25 pairs below, circle the letter beside the apology that would mean more to you. Both might fit, or neither—just pick the one that’s truer for you, most of the time. Take 10–15 minutes. Do it relaxed, and don’t rush.

1. It’s more meaningful to me when I hear someone say...

- A — “I deeply regret having embarrassed you like I did.”
- E — “Our friendship really is important to me. Will you please forgive me?”

2. It’s more meaningful to me when someone says...

- B — “OK, I admit it- I made a big mistake.”
- D — “I want to grow from this experience. Would you be willing to help me figure out steps to handle this type of situation better?”

3. It’s more meaningful to me when someone tells me...

- C — “What can I do or say to make things right between you and me?”
- B — “I had a bad attitude and it showed. I should have thought more about what I was doing.”

4. It’s more meaningful to me when someone says...

- D — “I don’t want to do this again. So I will come up with ways to avoid mistakes like this in the future.”
- E — “I apologize for my actions. You obviously don’t have to forgive me, but I hope you will.”

5. It’s more meaningful to me when someone asks me...

- E — “Can you possibly forgive me?”
- C — “What can I do to mend our relationship?”

6. It’s more meaningful to me when I hear someone say...

- B — “I totally messed up. I could make excuses, but really, I have no good excuse for my actions.”
- E — “You have every right to hold this against me, but will you please consider forgiving me?”

7. It’s more meaningful to me when someone asks me...

- C — “I’d like to make things better between us. What can I do to make things right?”
- E — “You don’t have to answer immediately, but will you consider forgiving me for making this mistake?”

8. It’s more meaningful to me when I hear these words from someone...

- E — “I want to ask you to forgive to me.”
- A — “It deeply pains me to see you hurting like this.”

9. It’s more meaningful to me when someone says...

- B — “I’ve really messed up this time. We missed the deadline because of me.”
- C — “Can we back up and let me try to fix this? I really want to mend the damage I’ve caused.”

10. It’s more meaningful to me when I hear someone say...

- A — “I am upset with myself over how I handled our disagreement. I cringe when I recall the way I acted.”
- D — “I know that what I’ve been doing is not helpful. What would you like to see me change that would make this better for you?”

11. It’s more meaningful to me when someone tells me...

- B — “I know that what I did was wrong.”
- A — “I’m so sorry- I feel terrible that I let you down.”

12. It’s more meaningful to me when someone asks me...

- D — “What changes could I put into place so that you might begin to trust me going forward?”
- E — “I hope this won’t permanently damage our working relationship. Will you please accept my apology?”

13. It’s more meaningful to me when someone says...

- A — “I can see my actions caused you pain, and I feel terrible about what I did.”
- C — “Is there anything I can do to repair the damage I’ve created?”

Continue on the other side...

14. It's more meaningful to me when someone tells me...

- B** — "If I had only thought about what I was doing, I would have realized it was wrong."
E — "I know that I've caused you a significant amount of trouble. I would greatly appreciate it if you would forgive me."

15. It's more meaningful to me when I hear someone say...

- A** — "I am truly grieved and sorry for my actions plus the ways they affected you."
D — "If I am ever again upset with you, I promise to gather my thoughts and approach you directly and respectfully."

16. It's more meaningful to me when someone says...

- E** — "I hope that you can find it in your heart to forgive me."
B — "I simply should not have done that."

17. It's more meaningful to me when I hear someone say...

- D** — "I realize that talk is cheap. I'll work to show you that I'm changing."
C — "Is there anything I can do to make up for what I did?"

18. It's more meaningful to me when someone tells me...

- A** — "I really am embarrassed about my behavior- and I'm so, so sorry."
B — "No if's, and's or but's. I admit that I was wrong."

19. It's more meaningful to me when I hear someone say...

- E** — "I apologize. Will you please forgive me?"
D — "Going forward, I will manage my time and prioritize my schedule so that I won't have the same difficulties."

20. It's more meaningful to me when someone says...

- D** — "I want so badly to avoid this type of error again. Let's talk about what I can do in the future to follow through on my commitments."
C — "I don't feel right just saying 'My bad.' I want to make up for what I've done. What would you consider appropriate?"

21. It's more meaningful to me when someone tells me...

- B** — "I know that my actions were totally unacceptable. I own that."
A — "It stresses me out to know that you had to stand there waiting on me. I regret the frustration and worry that I caused you."

22. It's more meaningful to me when someone says...

- C** — "I know that I've inconvenienced you. What can I do for you that could help balance things out?"
A — "I am unhappy with how I've hurt you- I'm enormously disappointed in myself."

23. It's more meaningful to me when I hear these words from someone...

- C** — "What can I do to make this situation right for you- immediately?"
D — "It may take some time to rebuild your trust in me- meanwhile, what I'm working hard on changes to prove that I am trustworthy."

24. It's more meaningful to me when someone says...

- A** — "I am so sorry about that. I feel truly awful about having disappointed you."
C — "Saying 'I'm sorry' doesn't feel like it is enough. What more can I say or do to make this up to you?"

25. It's more meaningful to me when someone says...

- D** — "I'm confident that everything I've learned from this bad experience will prevent me from doing it again."
B — "I know what I did was inappropriate- no two ways about it."

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RESULTS:

Go back and count the number of times you circled each individual letter and write that number in the appropriate blank below.

A:	EXPRESS REGRET
B:	ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY
C:	MAKE RESTITUTION
D:	PLANNED CHANGE
E:	REQUEST FORGIVENESS

Scoring: The letter that received the most points is your primary apology language. If you scored the same for two apology languages, that means you are biligual. If you scored high on one and there's a close second, the second highest score is your secondary apology language.

Knowing the apology languages is powerful, but knowing *how* they work in your relationships is a real game changer.

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