

Chapter 9 Lesson 1: Causes of Conflict

Introduction:

In this lesson, you have learned about how conflicts occur and how they can harm relationships. You have also learned about the importance of stopping conflicts from escalating into fights. One of the simplest ways to smooth over a conflict is to simply apologize. However, many people find apologizing difficult. They may think it shows weakness, or they may just not know how to do it effectively. At this Web site, you can learn more about how saying you're sorry can be useful and how to make an effective apology.

Links to Explore:

The Power of Apologies

<http://www.colorado.edu/Ombuds/Apologies1.pdf>

Directions:

- Click on the link and read the article.
 - Then answer the following questions:
1. What is the advantage of apologizing?
 2. What type of apology is likely to heighten conflict? Explain why.
 3. If you did not offend someone on purpose, is it still a good idea to apologize? Why or why not?
 4. What is the risk of explaining your behavior as part of an apology? When is an explanation useful?
 5. After someone apologizes to you, what can you do to further mend the relationship?

Answers:

1. An apology can often be the first step to better understanding in a damaged relationship.
2. An inadequate or insincere apology can heighten conflict because it may feel dismissive to the offended party.
3. Yes. Even an unintentional offense can still cause harm.
4. It can sound defensive or appear to be an excuse for bad behavior. An explanation is only useful when combined with other elements of an effective apology.
5. If you feel ready to forgive the offender, show that you accept the apology by some method such as a handshake. If not, acknowledge the value of the apology and ask for more time to heal. If appropriate, offer an apology for your own role in the misunderstanding as well.

Additional Links to Explore:

Use the links below to gather additional information on the activity topic. When appropriate, have students extend their research to include important concepts contained in these Web sites.

Conflict Resolution

<http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/conflict.asp>

BAM! Guide to Getting Along

http://www.bam.gov/sub_yourlife/yourlife_conflict.html