

Alpine County Choose Civility Campaign

(An initiative of the Child Abuse Prevention Council and County Superintendent of Schools)



November Focus:

Apologize Earnestly

An apology can be defined as an expression of one's regret, remorse or sorrow for having insulted, failed, injured or wronged another. To apologize earnestly means showing seriousness and sincere intent when saying you're sorry. Apologies are one of the most valuable resources we have in our efforts to build good relationships and sincerity is the cardinal rule of apology. Unfortunately, even though it may be the civil thing to do, apologizing is sometimes very hard.

Why is apologizing in earnest so hard? Three things can get in the way of a sincere apology: pride, embarrassment and anger. For some of us, it's hard to admit we're wrong because, quite honestly, we have a pretty big opinion of ourselves so it's hard to admit we are wrong. Other times we're ashamed or uncomfortable about what we did that wronged another so it's hard to face them and apologize. Finally, it can be difficult to calm down when you're still angry with someone. You may feel the situation is more their fault than yours. You may think they should apologize first. Can you find some part to apologize for? That's sometimes all that's needed to defuse the problem. Humility is the key.

Some tips for improving your skills in this area include:

- ✓ Don't say "I'm sorry but...". Instead of taking responsibility for your own actions, when you excuse them, you've instantly ruined any sincerity you started off with.
- ✓ Take responsibility for what you did or said.
- ✓ Try to apologize in person so you can see each other's expressions.
- ✓ Make it right, if possible.
- ✓ Pledge to do better in the future
- ✓ Once you know you've apologized earnestly, let it go. No need to stew over it or stay angry at the other person for not apologizing too.
- ✓ Remember that the person you hurt or wronged might not accept your apology right away. An apology may not instantly erase hurt. Give it time.
- ✓ Also, remember to be gracious when someone apologizes to you. Offer forgiveness and move forward. Forgiveness feels so good!