



The Art to Ask for Forgiveness



People make mistakes. Sometimes out of ignorance, sometimes out of immaturity, sometimes due to beliefs imposed by their culture or upbringing, in the midst of emotional turmoil, or sometimes because of bad advice from others.

Everyone has, at some point and in some way, acted in a manner that hurt or harmed another person. Yet, if you look more closely, the root cause—the reason those aforementioned factors were able to exert influence in the first place—was that you ignored your own unerring compass—what your intuition or soul was telling you—or failed to heed that message.

When looking back at oneself after some time has passed—or, at the very latest, when painfully confronting the consequences of one's own actions (which can sometimes take years)—a desire to undo what was done often arises. One feels deep regret, guilt, and remorse toward someone important. A valuable relationship was sabotaged, potentially even causing that person to vanish from one's life entirely. But time cannot be turned back. If you suddenly realize that your actions have caused a painful loss, you must take action in the present so that guilt and pain do not overshadow your future or impair your mental and physical well-being. The longer you put off reaching out, the more gnawing and self-destructive these feelings become. The longer you wait, the more the injured party gets the impression that they were always a matter of indifference to you and that they simply misjudged you.

Understandable Hesitation

Many people excel at navigating difficult business negotiations and work determinedly to improve their performance in professional or sportive settings. Yet, when emotions come into play, brave heroes turn into cowards who dodge conflict through procrastination and avoidance. The roots of this behavior may lie in childhood, where poor role models—or a lack thereof—demonstrated a tendency to run away from potentially emotionally uncomfortable situations.

Another reason may be a desire to avoid clearly perceiving one's own self. After all, asking someone for forgiveness for one's behavior—authentically, openly, and honestly—brings to light things that are easily concealed behind an agreeable everyday persona. It also requires the courage to be vulnerable, as there is a possibility that the other person will not grant forgiveness. A conversation aimed at reconciliation confronts one with past behaviors that clash with one's positive self-image as a loving, appreciative, and successful person. There is no room for playing hide-and-seek; one might find the very traits one despises in others becoming glaringly apparent in oneself.

A mere platitude is not enough

If you have realized that your past actions were hurtful and damaging to someone who truly matters to you, simply saying "please forgive me" is not enough to restore the image of you that person once held. A mere "forgive me" can be perceived as a lack of interest in building a viable relationship for the future.

For the other person to truly forgive you, they need to see that you genuinely recognize what caused your actions and the impact they had on them. Only when the person responsible clearly identifies, explains, and articulates this can it be assumed that the behavior will not recur. Otherwise, "Please forgive me" remains an empty phrase, amounting to nothing more than "let's just forget about it" or "sweeping it under the rug." The underlying cause of the original actions must be brought to light and made comprehensible; only then is there a chance of regaining trust.

Take Action

The best time to reach out for a conversation is **NOW**, no matter how much time has passed since your actions took place. Ask for a face-to-face meeting via text, email, or letter—but be sure to use your **genuine contact details**. If you make it clear that the conversation matters to you, you will get a response. During the conversation, be open and honest; do not sugarcoat anything or leave out important details. A relationship that ended abruptly due to a hurtful incident often leaves behind "loose ends" and many unspoken words. Addressing these matters now can bring healing to both parties, even if facing the issues feels painful at first. Such a conversation can lay the foundation for an even deeper, more trusting relationship in the future—one where both you and the other person can grow and enjoy being together. Alternatively, you might both decide not to rekindle the relationship and instead go your separate ways—but in peace.



Dr. phil. & HP Cornelia Renate Gottwald, Your Holistic Health Coach since 2006
Von Eichendorff Ring 10 a, D - 84405 Dorfen, Phone 0049-8081-9158, www.best-in-balance.de