

HOW*TO



The Power of Forgiveness in Resolving Conflict

It wasn't the first time their conversations about the ranch had gotten heated. They had argued before, but always calmed down by the next day. But this time felt different. Alice knew it the moment she stormed out of the barn after Jack's one-too-many comments about her age and how she couldn't keep up with the work anymore. Jack regretted his words almost immediately. He was just frustrated with not being given more responsibility. Watching her leave the barn, his heart ached, knowing he'd crossed a line.

Later, Bill found Alice in the kitchen. "You need to talk to Jack," he said gently. "We can't let this tear us apart." Alice knew Bill was right. The ranch depended on both her and Jack, each filling roles critical to keeping things running. Swallowing her pride and taking a deep breath, she approached Jack.

"Mom, I'm sorry," Jack said. "I didn't mean it." Alice felt a wave of relief and understanding wash over her. "I know. I'm sorry too." They hugged tightly, both realizing only forgiveness could keep the ranch, and their relationship, strong.

Conflict

Conflict is a fact of family life. In the heat of the moment, it is easy to do or say things that we later regret. Stress, and other strong feelings that often arise during conflict, can cause us to lash out at someone in anger or frustration. Emotions can be even more raw around those we care about, where we feel safe, and, consequently, allow our emotions to be more real.

People disagree because they see things differently, want different things, have thinking styles which encourage them to disagree, or are predisposed to disagree. It is rare to hear someone describe conflict in

a positive way; for example, saying “Our family just went through a positive conflict to reach a new, improved level of trust with one another.”

Conflicts can be defused and even resolved. De-escalation is an effort to reduce the severity of a conflict. Keep these points in mind when considering the best strategy to resolve a conflict:

- Not everyone has the same level of commitment, honesty, or even integrity
- It is important to define a process that resolves the problem and encourages the parties to talk
- Many people are conditioned to avoid conflict at any cost
- Sometimes conflicts can't be resolved

Saying “I’m sorry”

This is an act all too often overlooked in our daily interactions. Some may see it as being weak or giving-in if they admit that they are sorry to someone else. In reality, it often takes more courage to be the one to go first and you might find that the other person feels the same way.



Not That Easy

You may feel that you don't need to apologize or that the other person should apologize to you. Sometimes it is about being the one to make the first move. To preserve or re-establish connections with other people, someone must let go of concerns about who's right or wrong and try instead to understand the other person's experience.

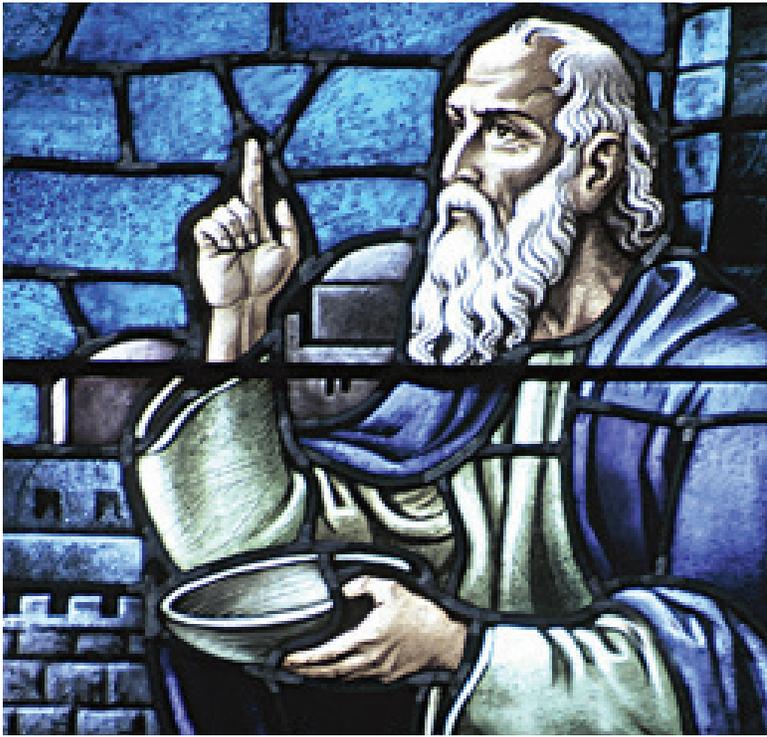
Obstacles

What are some of the obstacles that keep us from saying I'm sorry?

- Don't Realize We Hurt Someone
- Don't Think About It
- Are Stubborn
- Feel Ashamed
- Feel Afraid
- Lack Self-confidence

What About Forgiveness?

Saying “I'm sorry” is just the beginning. The complete process involves the other person offering forgiveness or us extending forgiveness if we are the ones receiving the apology.



Forgiveness is the conscious and deliberate decision to release resentment or anger, but does not necessarily mean reconciliation. The person who forgives is not required to return to the same pattern of relationship or accept the same harmful behaviors from another.

Benefits of an Apology

Honesty and accountability are the two elements on which trust is built. An effective apology helps begin the healing process by:

- Acknowledging the Offense
- Explaining What Happened
- Expressing Remorse
- Offering to Make Reparations
- Listening

This process can help to rebuild trust. However, an apology does not let the other person off the hook. When the other person is not sorry, forgiveness is still an option on your part.

Moving Forward

Forgiveness is a creative act that changes us from prisoners of the past to liberated people at peace with our memories. It is not forgetfulness but does involve accepting the promise that the future can be more than dwelling on memories of past injury. To not forgive another person is like taking the poison (continuing to suffer for what they did or didn't do to you) and then expecting THEM to die!

We will all leave a legacy whether we plan to or not. You might consider forgiveness if the legacy you leave behind is more important to you than making sure that you keep the conflict going to the bitter end. Remember, forgiveness is a gift you give to yourself and your legacy.

Online Modules

AGLEGACY.org hosts a set of online modules to allow individuals and families to explore legacy concepts further. Modules are available free of charge to all who are willing to register to participate (self-registration is available 24/7).

Modules, posted in Moodle courseware, offer the opportunity for individuals to engage anonymously around the topic of leaving a legacy. Sections of this module provide participants the chance to interact with one another, explore the topic of leaving a legacy and what it means, discuss strategies that work and those that have not, and test their knowledge about available resources. Each module includes several components to allow participants to engage the topic from several different perspectives.



Does Sorry Have A Place in Your Ag Legacy?

This online component offers the opportunity for individuals and families to engage anonymously around the topic of legacy. Sections of this module provide participants the chance to interact with one another, explore the topic of legacy and what it means, discuss strategies that work and those that have not, and test their knowledge about available resources.



Should Forgiveness Have A Place in Your Ag Legacy?

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AG LEGACY Best Practices

Best Practices: offers the chance to learn when others teach. In this section you will be able to review a recorded version of the live webinar and view the slides presented, complete with the speaker's notes.

Best Practices -

Best Practices begins with a short recorded presentation on the topic. Slides with narration is one format, but materials are also available in audio-only (MP3) format, as well as a version with the slides and accompanying narration as text, for those more

AG LEGACY Ideas to Build On

Ideas to Build On: offers the chance to learn by observing others. In this section you will have the opportunity to engage in a discussion forum. You will have the chance to share what has worked for you and to learn what strategies others have used and how they worked as you each react to the posted discussion questions.

of techniques that have worked for others. In addition, you might also learn what strategies others have used and how they worked as you each react to the posted discussion questions.

Tips for Success -

The Tips for Success section offers a set of AGLEGACY newsletters for further reading, as well as a chance to teach others about resources you are aware of, approaches you have tried and that have worked, or to describe methods that

AG LEGACY Practice

Practice: allows participants the chance to learn by practicing the concepts covered previously. Practice may include completing an assignment, submitting a document you've prepared for comment, or checking your knowledge level with a short quiz.

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ACCESS:

To access the online module, point your browser to AGLEGACY.org. Click on the Modules tab (at the top) and select any module from the list with a Moodle icon. 

Click a title to begin your registration process if you have never registered for an Ag Legacy module before. Then click the Create New Account button to enter your registration information. An email message will be sent to the address you enter that includes a link allowing you to finalize your registration once you complete the form. Now login and enjoy your AGLEGACY online module!

comfortable reading the presentation offered. A short Q&A session offers participants the opportunity to hear others' questions and the presenter's response.

Ideas to Build On -

Ideas to Build On offers discussion questions for families or individuals to respond to. These responses might include relating what has worked for you or stories you have heard

AG LEGACY Tips for Success

Tips for Success: provides a chance for participants to teach others about strategies that have worked. In this section you can teach others about resources you are aware of, approaches you have tried and that have worked, or describe methods that families you are familiar with have used. In this way, you may uncover new ideas for yourself or help others refine an approach they might try.

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