

# Difference Between Apology and Forgiveness

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## Key Difference – Apology vs Forgiveness

Apology and forgiveness are two sides of the same coin. **Apology is the expression of regret or remorse for an offense or injury. Forgiveness is the pardon for something that has been done.** This is the key difference between apology and forgiveness. Making apologies and granting forgiveness are vital aspects in any type of relationship. Both these acts help to resolve problems as well to move forward in a relationship.

## What is an Apology?

Apology is the expression of regret or remorse over an offense or injury one has caused. The noun apology is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “an admission of error or discourtesy accompanied by an expression of regret.” In Oxford dictionary, it is defined as “regretful acknowledgment of an offense or failure.” As all these definitions explain, the act of apologizing includes the acceptance of one’s faults/mistakes and expression of one’s regret and remorse. Apologies may be made by individuals as well as other entities such as organizations or even countries.

An apology is a way to repair a relationship that has gone sour by your wrongdoing. Your willingness to accept and acknowledge your fault and express your regret can be a healing process for the person you have hurt. An apology should always contain two aspects: it should show your regret over your actions and it should acknowledge the hurt your actions have caused the other party. Words and phrases like sorry, I’m sorry, I apologize, and please forgive me are often used in apologies.



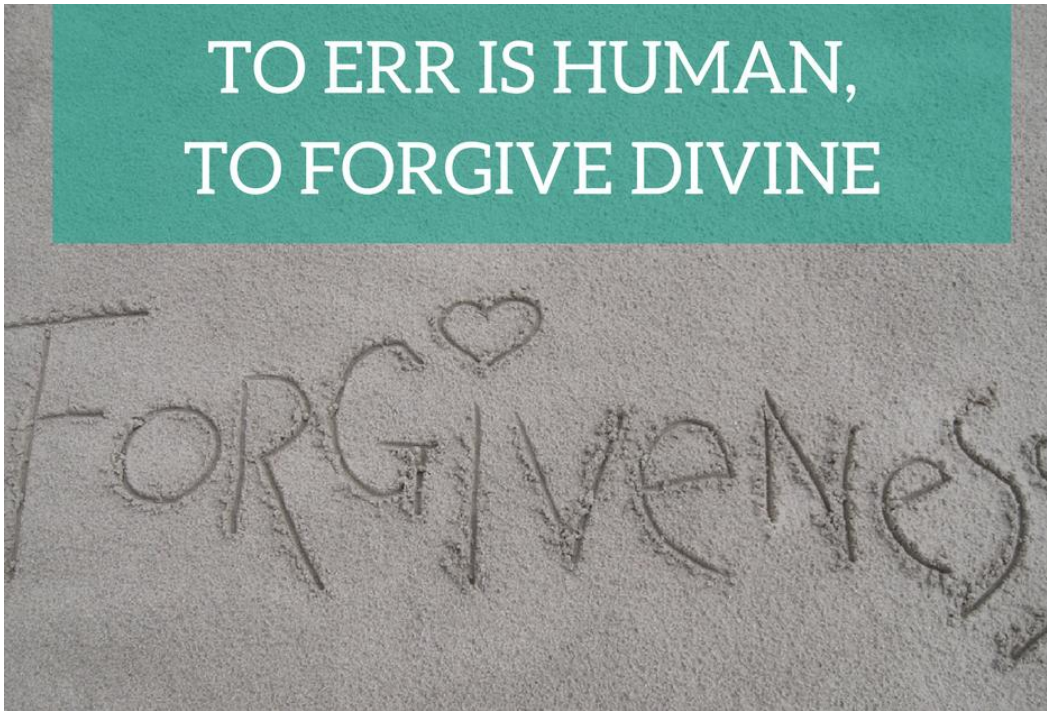
**Figure 01: Apology**

It is also important to keep in mind that the person you apologized to would not accept your apology instantly. You should be also prepared to accept this and be ready to give time for the other party to forgive and forget.

## **What is Forgiveness?**

Forgiveness is the act of pardoning something that has been done. Forgiveness includes giving up [resentment](#), vengefulness, and anger towards someone for an offense, flaw or mistake he or she has committed. Real forgiveness is an intentional and voluntary process where the person who was wronged undergoes a change of feeling towards the wrongdoer.

For example, imagine that your friend has lost the book she borrowed from you. She will come to you and apologize for her fault; when you accept her apology and let go of the resentment caused by this incidence, this can be called forgiveness.



**Figure 02: Forgiveness**

Many religions, as well as scientific and psychological theories, encourage the act of forgiveness. Forgiving an offense helps you to forget the whole unpleasant incident and move forward in your life. Moreover, filling your mind with negative emotions like anger, vengefulness, and resentment is harmful to your mental well-being.

However, it is also important to know that certain offenses are often considered to be unpardonable. Thus, forgiveness may depend on factors like the magnitude of the offense, mindset of the two parties involved, etc.

## **What is the Difference Between Apology and Forgiveness?**

### **Apology vs Forgiveness**

Apology is the expression of regret or remorse over an offense or injury one has caused.

Forgiveness is the act of pardoning that has been done.

## Actions and Emotions Involved

Apology involves acknowledging one's fault and expressing regret and remorse over it.

Forgiveness involves letting go of the anger and resentment towards the person who wronged you.

## Parties Involved

Apology is expressed by the wrongdoer.

Forgiveness is given by the person wronged.

## Summary – Apology vs Forgiveness

Apology and forgiveness are two interrelated concepts that are essential for the maintenance of any relationship. Apology is the act of acknowledging one's fault and expressing remorse over it. Forgiveness is the acceptance of the apology and letting go of the resentment and anger towards the wrongdoer. This is the basic difference between apology and forgiveness.

### References:

1. "How to Apologize: Asking for Forgiveness Gracefully." MindTools.com, [Available here](#). Accessed 17 October 2017.
2. "Beyond Intractability." Apology and Forgiveness | Beyond Intractability, [Available here](#). Accessed 17 October 2017.

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