

The New York Times

Too Many Sorry Excuses for Apology By ANDREW ROSS SORKIN

It seems that just about every day a chief executive, politician or other prominent figure is apologizing for something. Target's chief executive, Gregg W. Steinhafel, apologized for a security breach that affected as many as 110 million customers. Jamie Dimon of JPMorgan Chase apologized, multiple times, for his firm's regulatory lapses. Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey apologized for controversial bridge lane

closings and traffic jams. The venture capitalist Tom Perkins apologized after comparing the treatment of America's wealthiest to the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany. LeBron James apologized for using the word "retarded," calling it a "bad habit." The age of the apology is clearly upon us — and it is not just about being polite. It has

become de rigueur, an almost reflexive response among leaders to a mistake or, worse, a true crisis. The art of the apology has become a carefully choreographed dance: Say you are sorry, show vulnerability, tell everyone you are "taking responsibility" and then end with, "I hope to put this behind me." If you're questioning the sincerity of this apology movement, there's good reason. Dov Seidman, a careful observer of societal trends and the

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founder of LRN, a firm that advises companies on their cultures and how they can translate them into better performance, has been tracking the apology trend for many years. He has become so troubled — and offended — by the ease with which apologies seem to roll off the tongues of our leaders that he called for an “apology cease-fire” in front of several dozen chief executives and politicians at the World

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Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland. He calls the modern apology simply “apology theater.” “The apologies — and the way we react — are so much about the performance. Are those real tears? Are they not real tears?” Mr. Seidman asked. “But we aren’t judging the aftermath.” “Apology-washing changes no one, neither the

apologizer nor the recipient, because the act regurgitates a social norm rather than launching an emotional process,” Mr. Seidman told me.

“Apologies, by their nature, are remedial; they seek to mitigate damage that has already been done. When admitting wrongdoing can cost an organization significant revenue or an individual his or her job, life or liberty, the temptation to avoid this gesture is enormous,”

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So what's an example of a real and meaningful apology? Mr. Seidman points to Reed Hastings, the chief executive of Netflix, who apologized for adopting a strategy that would break the company into two and raise prices considerably. About 800,000 customers revolted.

"I messed up," Mr. Hastings said after it

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became clear the strategy was a mistake. I owe everyone an explanation. It is clear from the feedback over the past two months that many members felt we lacked respect and humility in the way we announced the separation of DVD and streaming, and the price changes." He added, "In hindsight, I slid into arrogance based upon past success."

But it wasn't just the theater of the apology that that made it a success. Netflix reversed course on its breakup strategy, doubled down on customer service and avoided new price increases.

Mr. Seidman suggests that leaders in apology mode conduct a "moral audit" that includes a hard look at "How did I get here and how did I drift from the person I aspire to be?" "

The New York Times

Calling for an Apology Cease Fire By DOV SEIDERMAN

Five essential characteristics of authentic apologies must be met — and during our cease-fire, we must internalize them:

1. They must be painful. If an apology doesn't create vulnerability and isn't therapeutically painful, it's not an apology at all.

2. They must be authentic and not an excuse. An apology can't have ulterior motives or be a means to an end.

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3. They must probe deep into the personal or organizational values that permitted the offense. Apologizers need to conduct a "moral audit" by looking themselves in the mirror and asking, "How did I get here and how did I drift from the person I aspire to be?"

4. They must encourage feedback from the aggrieved. This includes truly opening up to

input and two-way conversation during and after an apology, and embracing ideas as to how to improve.

5. They must turn regret into a real change in behavior. The new behaviors they elicit must be continuing, reinforced by a sustained investment in avoiding the same mistakes in the future.

Aware of

Remember

Understand

Deeply sorry

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The limitations of confession

Aware of

Remember

Understand

Deeply sorry

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James 2:10-11

10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. 11 For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

PRESUPPOSITIONS

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1. We have to deal with God

God is the rule maker and the judge of all mankind - we will all face Him to give an account.

Romans 14:10 For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for

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PRESUPPOSITIONS

the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Worldy Responses

Irritation

Isaiah 30:11 Leave this way, get off this path, and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!"

Mockery

2 Peter 3:3 Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. . . .5 But they deliberately forget . . .

Rely on representatives / mediators

Hebrews 12:18 You have not come . . .19 to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, 20 because they could not bear what was commanded:

2. We must acknowledge our sin

People who deny their need for forgiveness make God out to be a liar

Psalms 32:3 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. 5 Then I

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PRESUPPOSITIONS

acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we

have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

Proverbs 28:13 Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

GOD'S MECHANISM OF FORGIVENESS

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1. God requires shed blood for forgiveness

Atonement for sin was always, only, ever achieved with shed blood

Hebrews 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

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God's mechanism

Hebrews 9:7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.

2. The blood of animals was a temporary solution

Hebrews 10:1 The law is only a shadow of

the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. 2 Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. 4 It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

3. God provided His own perfect atoning sacrifice

Before time began, before creation, God appointed Jesus to be our sacrificial lamb.

Revelations 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.

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God's mechanism

1 John 4:14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

- Jesus was a perfect son

Hebrews 5:7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the

one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. **8 Son though he was,** he learned obedience from what he suffered **9 and, once made perfect,** he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

- Jesus offered His atoning blood in the perfect temple

Hebrews 9:11 But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now

here, he went through the greater and more **perfect tabernacle** that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. 12 . . . but he entered the **Most Holy Place once for all** by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.

- **Jesus offered perfect blood**

Hebrews 9:25 Nor did he enter heaven to

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God's mechanism

offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with **blood that is not his own**. But he has appeared **once for all** at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. . . .28 so **Christ was sacrificed once** to take away the sins of many;

- **Jesus offered a perfect sacrifice**

Hebrews 10:1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the **same sacrifices repeated endlessly** year after year, **make perfect those who draw near** to worship. 2 Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed **once for all**, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.

- Jesus is the perfect High Priest

Hebrews 7:26 Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He

God's mechanism

sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

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WHAT IS OUR ROLE?

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Acts 8:12 when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized,

Acts 16:31 They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

Acts 19:4 “John’s baptism was a baptism of

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WHAT IS OUR ROLE? BELIEVE

He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.”

Romans 3:22 This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

Romans 4:24 to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him

who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Romans 10:9 If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Gal 3:22 what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. **He forgave us all our sins,** 14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross

Hebrews 9:12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered

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WHERE DOES IT SAY WE'RE FORGIVEN?

the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. . . . 26 Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to **do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.**

Hebrews 10:9 Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." . . .
10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 **But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins,** he sat down at the right hand of God,

1 John 2:12 I am writing to you, dear children, because **your sins have been forgiven** on account of his name.

Hebrews 9:26 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; He entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence... nor did He enter heaven to offer Himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy

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WHERE DOES IT SAY WE'RE FORGIVEN?

Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages **to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself.** Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, **so Christ was sacrificed**

once to take away the sins of many people; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.