

“On Apologies”

Essay

by

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So sorry to bore you all with my little treatise, or essay, rather, on Apologies.

I don't know about you, but I think there is a distinct lack of apology in the air these days; one could even say that art of apology, in today's woe-be-gone world.

It came to me the other day about the lack of true apologies in this world. Face it: we now live in a world (Envision ALL CAPS here – like an FB post) 'Where no one is ever sorry for anything, ever.'

How did we get to this point?

What is an apology, anyway?

Some of the more learned among you know that the word 'apology' has two, diverse meanings, almost in opposition...in etymology, it stems from the Latin '*apologeisthai*,' to speak in defense of, from the root 'logos,' meaning speech, which is we get from the word 'logic'...

-Oh yes, where was I? In a 1960s-era dictionary in my home I found a definition: 1) a statement or explanation expressing regret for some error or offense; and 2) originally, a justification or defense of an action.

However, in finding the word in another dictionary from the dawn of this century, published in 2000, apology is firstly defined as 'a formal spoken or written defense of some idea, religion, of philosophy, etc., with only the more contemporary 'this is what I mean' idea of the word relegated to secondarily being "an acknowledgement of some fault, injury, insult, etc. with an expression of regret, and a plea for pardon.

...for what it's worth, a 3<sup>rd</sup> definition is defined as "an inferior substitute", e.g., 'he is a poor apology for an actor.'

Now, don't get me started on the current reign of would-be thespians blessing our various screens.

You may note that I have avoided presenting examples of current apologies of the day. – because they are so few! Besides, they are not apologies in the truest sense of the word...what is this "If anyone was offended" pablum and "it's all interpretation" of this word or that...

I do have an example, but I had to comb the annals of history – by which I mean a Google search—to find the best apologies, from our friends in Japan. In fact, Japan, a country where one's sense of honor is almost everything, is by far the world leader in giving apologies, and yet they remain a proud people, despite being vanquished.

We'll never admit being vanquished, in anything, have we?

Anyway, Japan has issued various apologies for, among other things, World War II, occupation of Burma, occupation of So. Korea, to the People's Republic of China, for use of the Burmese 'comfort women,' for WWII prisoner treatment and to the Gov't of the Netherlands, for reasons best left to between the countries themselves.

But I digress...But this, to me, the best-stated apology I have ever hear or read: It is sincere, it's to the point AND vague enough, it expresses regret, and now having read it through now realize that it would work, verbatim, in almost any situation which calls for an apology.

Uh, there's no need for anyone here to write this down, is there? ☺ .We're all so well-behaved,

"In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future. I regard, in the spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here once again my feelings of deep remorse, and state my heartfelt apology." – Itaru Umezumi, Consul General of Japan, Aug. 10, 2000

Will the apology make a comeback?

Perhaps more to the point, will Shame make a comeback?

One might think, at first blush, that these ephemeral and attitudinal things, such as apologies, are not that integral to a person, or even a society. But deep down, I think we know they are.

I'm sorry to have bored you with my apology pet peeve, but I have no regrets when I say

Our sorry as-pirations to apologize need to be quicker and more sincere, and actually present a full, unvarnished, unqualified apology to be accepted. Only a Grinch would not accept one, and only a selfish and self-centered type would fail to offer one to...I don't know, the person/persons offended and lastly, to their mothers, because, as we all know or have heard,

"You weren't raised to act that way."

I'm sorry, I've come to the end of my screed. Thank you for listening.