

Apology Letter for Hurting Someone You Love

Dear [RECIPIENT NAME],

I have reached the time in my anger and abuse recovery program where I am ready to write this letter to you. First of all, I want you to know how sorry I feel about what I have said and done to you in our relationship. I have been controlling, disrespectful, and abusive to you in countless ways and situations. My behavior throughout much of our time together has been deplorable. When I think about all the controlling and hurtful things I have done to you, I feel very sad for you. You did not deserve this from anyone, especially from someone who said again and again that he loved you (as I do).

You have endured many of the worst moments of my life and, sadly, you became the scapegoat for much of the emotional pain I was experiencing in the present and for the emotional pain I have carried forward from my childhood. I've abused you physically by standing in your way and blocking you from going around me and by grabbing and pushing you. I've abused you verbally by yelling and screaming at you, calling you awful names and putting you down, swearing and cursing at you, and constantly talking over you and interrupting you when I didn't like what you had to say. I've abused you emotionally by making you feel guilty about who you are, playing "mind games" with you so you ended up feeling confused and crazy, lying to you, being abusive to you in the presence of our children, and making fun of you and trying to humiliate you in front of our family and friends. I've intimidated and threatened you by glaring at you when we disagreed about something, using my size to make you feel afraid of me, and by throwing, hitting, and breaking things around the house. I've abused you financially by excluding you from big money decisions we had to make, making you ask for money as if we were not really a team, and even hiding money from you. And all the while, I have minimized, justified, denied, and even blamed you for my controlling and abusive actions. I now realize that this blaming is also abuse in and of itself and is wrong.

[RECIPIENT NAME], I no longer blame you for any of my disrespectful and abusive actions. I take full and complete responsibility for all of my abusiveness toward you. I was always in control of my behavior and making choices about how I wanted to act. I knew exactly what I was doing. And no matter what the situation was, I did have other ways I could have responded. Unfortunately, I made far too many bad decisions in our time together.

Many of these bad choices were related to my low self-esteem and my overwhelming desire to be in control of you and everything around me because I thought that would help me feel better about myself. Nonetheless, I clearly chose to be disrespectful and abusive with you. And I can see now how my abusive behavior has hurt and frightened you and diminished your trust in me and our relationship. I feel very sad that I have affected you this way. You came into our relationship looking for a life filled with love and happiness and I destroyed what we could have had with my controlling and hurtful behavior. I know that, only after much time of being respectful and non-abusive, is there any possibility that we might be able to develop a truly loving and healthy relationship.

I have learned so very much in going through this anger program over the past eight months. Among other things, I now know how negative self-talk that is an important part of much of my disrespectful behavior can be turned into positive self-talk with great results; how being assertive (rather than aggressive and lashing out) reduces my stress level and leads to better communication with you and everyone else in my life; how controlling myself and my actions instead of trying to control you is a lot easier and works a lot better; how noticing and feeling my emotions is not only okay but is actually a positive and healthy thing to do; how reducing my shame is so very empowering; and how being open and honest may at first be the hard way but is ultimately a much better path for any relationship. Most importantly, I've learned that this recovery process from being controlling and abusive takes a long time. There is no "quick fix." The important thing for me is to take "one day at a time" and to continue to use the knowledge and skills that I have gained in this counseling process.

[RECIPIENT NAME], I pledge to you that I will never be violent to you again. Furthermore, I will continue to work to eliminate the other types of control and abuse that I have done to you and others around us. I can't believe that I expected you to be the scapegoat for all the pain that I was carrying around within me. But I did. And I am deeply sorry for the emotional pain that I have created in your life as a result.

[YOUR NAME]

