

APOLOGY LETTER TO WIFE

Dear [WIFE NAME]:

I know now that I was abusive to you for a long time throughout the course of our marriage. I want to write this letter to you to tell you that I'm sorry for all the times I made you feel threatened and afraid. I was wrong. You did not cause me to do this or deserve to be treated that way.

There is no excuse for making another person feel frightened or hurt, especially when that person is someone you love and care about.

Often I wanted to blame you and others for things that didn't go the way I wanted them to go. It was scary to think that I was not totally in control of whatever happened around me. I have been very afraid, sad, hurt, and disappointed but I didn't know how to express my feelings in an appropriate way. I didn't want to face my feelings and fears but instead hid behind a mask of disrespectful and explosive anger.

When I felt I couldn't control my life and you, I got angry and tried to control things even more, which only made me that much angrier in the end. Eventually, I stored up enough anger inside so that the burden became too great and then then I would try to dump it off on you and blame you for things that were really my fault or my issue. When you did not take on my responsibilities, I would explode in an angry and violent way toward you.

I have carried a lot of angry and negative feelings in my life. It's not your responsibility to relieve me of those feelings and make me happy. It's my job to take care of myself. I know now that I made a choice to become abusive and violent with you. I chose not to confront my fears directly but to try to avoid them. I chose not to talk about my feelings but to suppress them. I chose not to share my hurt and disappointment but to shift the responsibility for living my life onto you and then I blamed you when things didn't go as I wanted or expected them to go.

Through my anger and abuse group, I have learned:

- ...appropriate, respectful, and healthy ways to express myself;
- ...to understand that I make mistakes and to realize that I have to accept responsibility for them;
- ...that being a man does not entitle me to explode or threaten in order to get my way;
- ...that exercise and moderation in alcohol and caffeine use are an important part of taking care of myself; and
- ...that I've made the choice to be violent in the past and I can actively choose not to be violent with you or anyone else in the future.

I know I've hurt you not only physically but, more importantly, emotionally with my actions of storming around, yelling at you, and putting you down. I've made you feel crazy with passive-aggressive behaviors and my cutting remarks. You did not cause or deserve the wrath of my angry and abusive behavior. Whatever choices we make about our relationship in the future, I'm making an ongoing commitment to myself, to you, and to our children to continue to look inwardly at who I am, what I've done in the past, and what I must continue to do to stop my abusive and controlling behaviors in the future. I will continue to seek support and counseling and practice the tools and techniques I've learned in order to act responsibly and in a healthy and respectful way with both you and our children.

Take care, [YOUR NAME]

