

Ethics After Hours



Apologetical

Radiolab podcast, NPR

Summary:¹

Can you say sorry so many times that it doesn't mean anything anymore? In this Radiolab podcast production, Annie McEwan and Simon Adler explore how "sorry" has been stretched and twisted, and in some cases weaponized. Through examples of sorry-not-sorries, empty apologies, and non-apologies, they reflect on what an apology means, what it does, and what it looks like to make amends.

Duration: 58 min. 29 sec.

Hosted and produced by: Annie McEwen and Simon Adler

Aired: December 21, 2018

Radiolab from WNYC Radio

Available online: <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab/articles/radiolab-apologetical>

Discussion questions:

- In your opinion, what constitutes a genuine apology?
- Why are apologies and apologizing important from an ethical perspective?
- Without an apology legislation in place, an apology may be seen as an admission of fault that can be used in lawsuits. What are some of the benefits and potential drawbacks of apology legislation?
- One way in which health care providers can respond to adverse events is to apologize. Why do you think it is important for health care providers to be able to apologize?
- Discuss what receiving an apology may mean for a patient who has experienced an adverse event.
- Gabriel died because an adverse event occurred in the hospital. When the hospital apologized to his mother, it provided her with the option of pursuing a lawsuit. However, she accepted the apology, decided not to sue, and chose to work with the hospital staff to avoid the same situation from happening again. Why do you think she made this decision?
- How do you feel about the fact that hospitals may use apologies to their own advantage? In your opinion, does this make the apology less valuable?

¹ Summary adapted from Radiolab's website: <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/452538884/radiolab>