Clarion Review

Self-Help

How to Apologize to Your Woman: so that she won't use it against you in the future

Karen Field Bolek
Bolekian Perspective Publishing
978-0-9833646-0-3
Three Stars (out of Five)

A cynic would say that the men who should read *How to Apologize to Your Woman* are the least likely to do so. Moreover, statistics might show that a man who cannot see the value of a proper apology in the male-female relationship is too self-absorbed, too narcissistic, too certain of his own opinions and actions to ever believe he is wrong.

Karen Field Bolek understands this. She writes that many men do not apologize or are bad at apologizing sincerely because of the "…risk of failure and the rejection and abuse failure can bring…loss of power…shame, embarrassment, and humiliation…and…sense of incompetence."

No one enjoys apologizing. No one wants to make an error or transgression that necessitates an apology. However, if any man leafs through a copy of *How to Apologize to Your Woman*, they'll certainly find many effective strategies that can make the often unpleasant task easier to accomplish and more effective in result. Bolek's primary goal is to help readers keep their conversations focused on elements that will provide a positive outcome. That includes such things as using listening skills, refusing to follow negative input, and seeking healing.

There are nine chapters in Bolek's work, with titles ranging from "Why Apologize?" through "Apologies in the Big Picture," and "Handling Feelings: Yours First" to "After the Apology." Bolek writes in succinct snapshots, covering themes like "Why All the Fuss," "Control and Manipulation," and "The Issue of Forgiveness." There are a number of charts, assorted fictionalized confrontations, and, best of all, an examination of how the wrong apology can aggravate a situation. No woman wants a "Vague Apology," a "Poor Me Apology," or "Get Over It Non-Apology."

The dedication offers the book "…to men who want to become more effective leaders in

their relationships with women." Bolek's first chapter discusses the nature of manhood, the complexity of male-female relationships in western society, and then goes on to characterize "leadership" in a male-female relationship.

> *To have a successful relationship in western society today, most men aspire to be equals as well as leaders. This means leading part of the time, letting her lead at other times, and co-leading or negotiating some times so that, on the whole, you both feel powerful in the relationship.*

Bolek says that she was inspired to write this book because she "decided to focus on what I know from experience: how a man can apologize effectively to the woman he loves." Considering the study she has put into the subject (including references from experts like Dale Carnegie to Stephen Covey) and the thoroughness with which she has dissected the need, nature, and effect of apologies, she may have limited her audience. This is even more true considering many people do not subscribe to the post-feminist view that the male is not always able to provide "leadership" in a marriage. Bolek is not a trained counselor or psychologist. She holds a masters in liberal studies from Lake Forest College in Illinois. She has, however, developed the "Man's Apology Survey … with guidance from Dr. Andrea Burleson-Rutter, an organizational psychologist."

This is a well-thought-out book. Any person, male or female, who has trouble knowing whether, when, or how to apologize will find it a useful resource.

Gary Presley