

About Non Apologies

Narcissists are masters of the non apology.

A non apology is when someone says the words "I'm sorry", yet their actions don't back up the words. They accept no responsibility for what they did, make no changes in their behavior, they offer lame excuses &/or they blame you for making them do whatever it was they did. Some examples are when someone says:

"I'm sorry you feel that way.
I wouldn't have done what I did if you wouldn't have done what you did.
I'm sorry I said/did that.. I was just upset.
I'm sorry if what I said/did upset you.
My sponsor/therapist says I have to make amends with you, so I'm sorry."

Some non apologies don't even involve saying "I'm sorry". Sometimes narcissists will simply give you some space, then resume contact with you, acting as if nothing happened. My mother did this. She would give me the silent treatment, then call me days or weeks later, acting as if nothing happened. Her record was an 18 month long silent treatment. I was stunned when she called after so long, but she acted like we'd just spoken the day before & all was fine between us.

Non apologies let the narcissist apologize to pacify you without making any changes in her behavior or accepting responsibility for it.

If you confront a narcissist & they provide you with a non apology, then later repeat the behavior, they can make you look like the bad guy. They'll say something like, "I said I was sorry!" "Nothing I do is ever good enough for you!" Unless you're aware of the non apology, chances are good you'll shut down & possibly even apologize to the narcissist. You also won't say anything the next time the behavior is done. This is a huge dose of narcissistic supply. The narcissist gets a free pass to do this behavior again, made you feel bad & even apologize all on top of doing whatever it was that hurt you in the first place. It's like a narcissistic supply jackpot!

Due to the supply jackpot factor, chances are excellent you'll have to deal with a non apology at some point. There are some ways to handle this awkward situation.

First, I really recommend praying. Not only asking God to help you to recognize them when they happen but also to give you wisdom on the best way to deal with them.

You also need to recognize what is happening. Know the signs of a real apology & a fake one. You don't want to mistake a real one for fake or vice versa! Either way can't end well. Real apologies involve remorse, & someone taking responsibility for & changing their behavior. Even if that is all you remember, it'll help you to spot non apologies easily.

Also be creative in your response. Neutral is often the best way to go, especially in situations like a work environment or if you don't want to deal with any narcissistic conflict or drama. Something like, "Thanks." "Thanks for saying that." "I appreciate what you said." can be useful. This shows the narcissist their so called apology was accepted & the matter will be dropped.

If you want to let the narcissist know you're aware this is a non apology, try something like, "That's a start." "Thanks for trying." "Ok." "If you say so." You also can ask them what exactly they mean by their non apology... "I'm sorry, I don't understand what you mean exactly." is a good way to say it. Asking narcissists to explain their actions in a calm, logical manner throws them for a loop. They realize they can't rage at you without looking foolish, so they usually try to drop the topic immediately. If they try to change the subject, keep going back to it in that calm, logical manner. They will feel so uncomfortable, they may just decide what they did wasn't worth feeling this way so they won't repeat it again.

Non apologies are an annoying part of life, but you can cope with them successfully.