An L2O2 Empathy in Action Workshop

Beyond Sorry

From automatic response to conscious repair



Learning to Love
Ourselves and Others

Sorry, Sorry, Sorry...

- Sorry I'm late.
- Sorry I bothered you.
- Sorry you're upset.
- Sorry for asking.
- Sorry, sorry, sorry...

Notice how quickly the word appears — before you even know what you mean or feel?



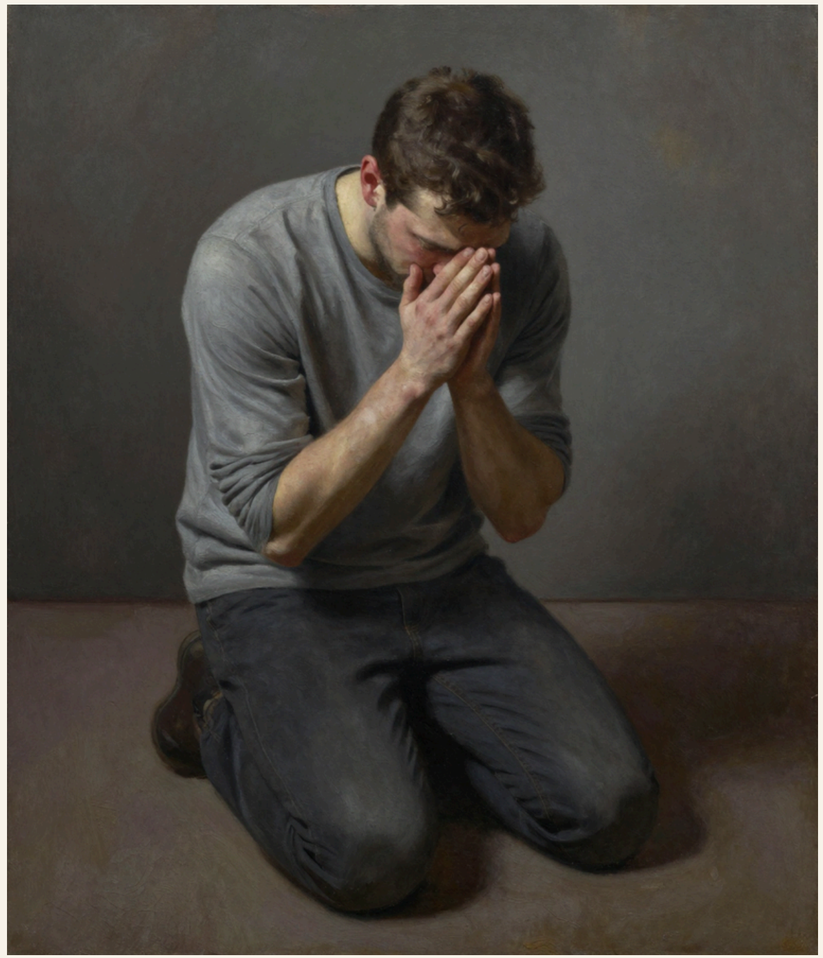
What Happens Before We Choose?

- Automatic response kicks in before awareness
- Discomfort with conflict or silence
- Social conditioning: smooth it over, keep the peace
- Fear of rupture — what if they pull away?



Apology vs. Mourning

The conventional apology



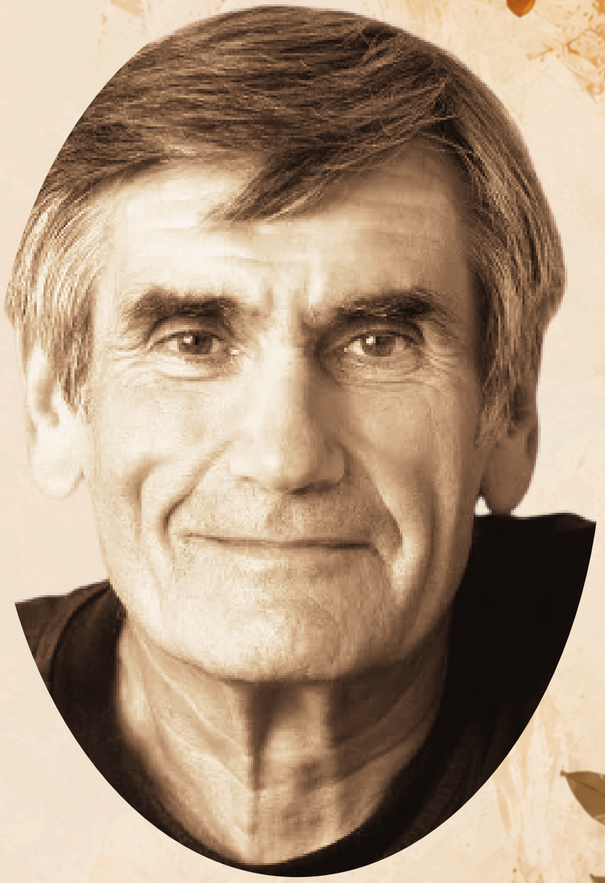
Giraffe mourning



"That's a Sweet Pain"

"What feeling comes from not meeting your need to respond with respect and understanding? Sad... that's a sweet pain. That's giraffe mourning. There's no image in there that I'm a bad person — I'm sad I didn't meet my own need for respecting and understanding."

— Marshall B. Rosenberg



From Shame to Mourning

"I'm bad. I messed everything up. Forgive me."



"I'm sad. I see the impact. I wanted to bring care."



The Giraffe Mourning Process



Notice → Feel → Need → Empathize → Mourn → Repair

Impact Without Self-Punishment

- Acknowledge the other person's experience fully.
- Stay with the impact — without making their feelings your identity.
- Responsibility means: "I see what happened" — not "I am what happened."





Choose the Next Move

Repair can look like:

- Listening deeply
- Naming the impact
- Making a clear request
- Changing your behavior
- Asking what would support connection

What Lives Underneath Sorry?

Interactive Reflection & Sorting

When "sorry" comes out automatically, what is actually alive in you?

Reflection prompt

Pick a recent "sorry" you've had, and ask:

- Which feeling fits?
- Which need was unmet?
- What would it sound like to name that instead?



What Lives Underneath Sorry?

Interactive Reflection & Sorting

Feelings that may be present:

- Sad — something I cared about was not honoured
- Regretful — I wish I had chosen differently
- Concerned — I wonder about the impact on you
- Afraid — of rupture, of being seen as bad
- Tender — I am touched by what matters here

Needs that may be underneath:

- Respect · Understanding · Care
- Trust · Integrity · Connection
- Consideration · Belonging



Slow Down the Sorry

A Interative Roleplay Activity

With the group:

- Pause → Pick an automatic sorry from the next slide. Don't say it yet.
- Identify → What feeling is here? What need is underneath?
- Imagine → What might the other person be experiencing?
- Choose → Say sorry, express mourning, offer repair — or all three.
- Consent matters. Passing is always welcome.



Slow Down the Sorry

Automatic Sorrys

- “Sorry I’m late.”
- “Sorry, I forgot to text you back.”
- “Sorry, I interrupted you.”
- “Sorry, I didn’t get that done.”
- “Sorry, I changed the plans.”
- “Sorry, I snapped at you.”
- “Sorry, I wasn’t listening.”
- “Sorry, I made you wait.”
- “Sorry, I said I’d come and then canceled.”
- “Sorry, I didn’t realize that would impact you.”





You Can Still Say Sorry

The goal is not to police words. If "I'm sorry" genuinely expresses what is alive in you — choose it.



Awareness gives the word its meaning.

A sorry spoken with presence, feeling, and intention
is a gift — not a reflex.

Explore More

Want to go deeper with Marshall Rosenberg and giraffe mourning?

Watch this short video after the workshop:
youtube.com/watch?v=23io32hFv-Q

Scan to watch now

Take what felt alive today and let it continue to move in you.

