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Real Women Love Martha

By Kristin Johnson

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by: **Kristin Johnson**

Martha Stewart will make sugar cookies and a whopping pitcher of lemonade out of lemons after she's finished serving her sentence at "Camp Cupcake" and house arrest.

Why?

Let's look beyond the "she said/she didn't say" particulars.

Savemartha.com, Marthataalks.com, and other Web sites indicate that Ms. Stewart is not the most hated woman in America.

Why?

Despite all the jokes about Martha passed on the Internet and by Jay Leno/Conan O'Brien/Jay Leno (pick on John Kerry instead, please), real women do love Martha.

Feminists, who conveniently remained silent while a largely male conspiracy degraded a strong, independent, successful woman, often derided Martha as setting an impossible and unrealistic standard of perfection.

You want to talk unrealistic? The media portrays the ideal woman as size 2 with breast implants. And the marketing machine pretends Britney Spears can sing and Jessica Simpson actually has something to say worth listening to.

But aren't we supposed to be beyond those traditional feminine roles?

Hey, weren't the feminists saying that Woman is all-nurturing and any labor that comes from Womyn's hands is superior to (cough) males of any race but especially white males?

Real Women Love Martha

No wonder they love John Kerry. Like Senator Flip–Flop, they want to have it all ways. And they conveniently find a way to blame Martha's jail term on President Bush and those bad old white males in the Republican party. Methinks the ladies do protest too much. Maybe feeling awkward about their own domestic skills? Guilty over a standard they themselves repudiate? Afraid of their own feminine urges to make crepe paper decorations and make a cake?

Real women bake pies. Or choose not to—that's fine. Real women decorate for Christmas. Real women garden. Real women can be difficult to work with, the same as the real men. People just notice it more when the refusal to compromise comes from a pair of size seven high heels. But hey, even Dennis Rodman and RuPaul got away with that.

And speaking of athletes, real women know that it's not okay for people who dribble a ball all day to get billions of dollars a year while people like Martha who embody the American Dream, who give us

products that actually enrich our lives instead of hours of mindless television and sports talk, get a prison sentence. The entire NBA has been in prison. I don't see anyone threatening to stop buying Nikes and Air Jordans.

Real women bake cookies. It's a no–brainer: Chocolate chips! As in, chocolate chip cookies! Which, by the way, the male of the species has also been known to eat. It's interesting to note that half the messages and letters on Savemartha.com are from men.

Real women bake for Christmas. We know you're out there. So show your support and send your recipes (do not send gifts or packages of any kind) to:

Martha Stewart
Register No. 55170–054
FPC Alderson
Glen Ray Road, Box A
Alderson, W. Va. 24910

Send your Hints from Real Women, because Martha will make a comeback.

Kristin Johnson is co–author of *Christmas Cookies Are For Giving: Stories, Recipes and Tips for Making Heartwarming Gifts* (ISBN: 0–9723473–9–9). A downloadable media kit is available at our Web site,

, or e–mail the publisher (

) to

receive a printed media kit and sample copy of the book. More articles are available at

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I'm Sorry! Blame–Game or Accountability?

By Sharon Ellison

A powerful tool for health as we approach the new year can be to focus on giving and/or receiving only real apologies when we want to heal a rift with a family member, friend, or co–worker. We hear apologies all the time, but I don't think many of them are sincere. An apology has to be real to heal.

Trang Lei spent the day helping Martha buy furniture and art for her remodeled living room, but Martha never even offered to buy Trang Lei's lunch and so she felt unappreciated. Later when she told Martha she felt hurt, Martha said, "I'm sorry. I was just so excited about what I was buying that I didn't even think about it." Trang Lei did not feel better. In fact, she felt worse.

What was wrong with Martha's apology?

Martha's apology came with a built–in excuse, implying that however she behaved was unintentional—beyond her conscious control. Moreover, Martha has an expectation that Trang Lei will accept the excuse. Thus, Martha perpetuates the original problem by continuing to be more focused on herself than on Trang Lei. I call this kind of apology "Sorry–Excuse."

Even Martha wasn't consciously manipulating, her goal was not to take responsibility but to find a way out of it. In most cases, if you don't accept other people's excuses when they apologize, they will quickly get irritated at you, blaming you for not being understanding.

When we receive a counterfeit apology we often sense it and so rather than the hurt being healed, it is deepened—as in the old saying, "adding insult to injury." I think almost all of us give such apologies. And we model it for our children.

Guidelines for making real apologies:

One: Identify common formats for apology that are "counterfeit."

If you clearly various types of bogus apologies, it will help you recognize when you give or receive an one. Here are some examples of common phrasing.

"Sorry—Excuse"

Example: "I'm sorry I didn't call—I've been really busy."

Translation: Please be understanding about the fact that other things were more important than you."

"Sorry—Denial of Intent"

Example: "I'm sorry you took it that way. It wasn't what I meant."

Translation: I think it's too bad that you had difficulty understanding me correctly.

Example: "I'm sorry if I offended you."

Translation: I can't think of anything I did wrong, but if you think so, I'd be happy to apologize so I can get back in your good graces.

"Sorry—Blame"

Example: "I'm sorry I didn't call sooner. Have you been feeling Insecure about our relationship lately?"

Translation: If you are upset about my not calling, the real cause is your own insecurity, not anything I did.

Two: Only say "I'm sorry," when you mean it and can specify exactly what you are apologizing for

When we give what I believe is a "healthy" or authentic apology, we can state clearly what we did that was disrespectful or inconsiderate without: immediately explaining why we did it, telling the person that however it looked or sounded, it wasn't our real intention, or, bringing up some other issue that suggests that the other person contributed to or caused the problem.

For example, instead of focusing on why she didn't buy Trang–Lei's lunch—her excuse, Martha could have taken full responsibility, saying,

"I'm so sorry I hurt you. There is no excuse for me to forget to buy your lunch. Even that would have been a small thank you for how much you helped me. And you spent your only day off doing it."

Here, Martha uses her apology to show her real appreciation as well as her sadness that she didn't do so earlier.

Three: Decline to accept an apology that is not given sincerely.

When you accept an apology, and then walk away knowing it wasn't real, you enter a world of make-believe where you pretend an issue is resolved while harboring resentments. Gently, firmly, without anger, you can decline a hollow apology. For example: If you believe that I simply misunderstood you, then I would rather not have an apology from you. Only if you believe you did something hurtful would I want one.

When you refuse to accept an insincere apology, you refuse to surrender to being manipulated or pacified and you hold the other person more accountable—without having to argue or try to force an apology. You are likely to feel greater confidence.

Real Apologies Build Character and Respect

If we can change how we give and receive apologies, we can become less defensive, gain insight, grow wiser, and strengthen all of our relationships. We can also, then, be a strong model for others, including our children, teaching them that real apologies show strength of character, gain the respect of others, and have great healing power.

This article is based on the book

by Sharon Ellison, available

through your local bookstore or favorite online bookseller. Sharon Ellison, M.S. is an award winning speaker and international consultant.

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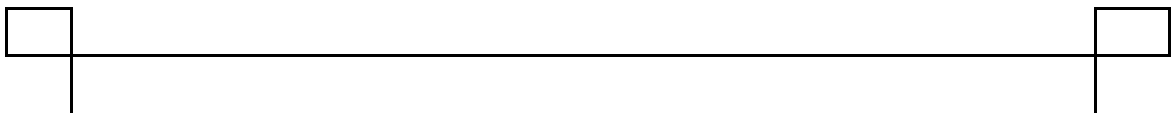
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