



## YMCA of Hong Kong Christian College

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### **“Sorry seems to be the hardest word to say?”**

It is a simple small, seemingly irrelevant word. It has been a subject of thesis, songs, folklore, immortalized in each society's fables, dance and song. Misused or withheld, it has torn families, and pitted brother against brother, leader against leader and nation against nation. It is the word that defines revolutions, internecine strife and endless suffering. Practically all judicial courts, human rights commissions from the Rwanda genocide, the South African apartheid, Kemer Rouge victims, the holocaust and slavery commissions are looking for a simple way to find out the truth, but ultimately closure entails holding hands to say the hardest 5 letter word, “SORRY”. Used well, with sincerity, it is the ultimate therapy and healer to both parties. In any language sorry speaks to the humble core of humanity. Sorry turns strife into hope, a future born afresh. A flower ready to blossom. Sorry is the rains of the savanna, refreshing the winter landscape into lush green flowering valleys. Sorry renews friendships, marriages, brotherhood and nations to begin life afresh with trust and belief in the common good. Unfortunately, sorry seems to be the hardest word ever.

To err is aptly human, we are not perfect. We make mistakes in all aspects of life, in our individual capacities and as collective society. We fall short of the glory and cause immeasurable pain to those we hold dear and strangers alike. Usually our actions are never intentional but a result of lack of understanding and empathy. Humans are inherently good. We rarely set out to hurt others and vice-versa. Conflicts, arguments and misunderstandings arise because of viewpoints and acts of ignorance. Sometimes our core beliefs are misguided and stood on wrong moral philosophy in history. We therefore wronged the past, present and future generations. We lost relationships in conflicts and all the world's gold cannot recompense. The only way forward is to go on knees, a simple touch, tears acceptable and the difficult word, “Sorry”.

The gesture of apologizing is easier said than done. Generations are conditioned to construe sorry as an admission of guilt and a sign of weakness, be it in among siblings or from a president. Sorry acknowledges that someone means more than personal petty ego, accepting different viewpoints and self-accountability. Sorry takes effort, it is a verb. It is a word that demands conviction, action and emotion speaking louder than the syllable. Sorry is much more than good manners, politeness, political or social correctness and respect. Sorry is the language from the heart. Sorry is forgiveness of self and others, leaving the past and opening new horizons.

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