THE APOLOGY YOU'LL NEVER GET

THE COMPANION

Exercises and pages to write in, at your own pace.

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Free to download, print and fill in on screen, for personal use.
An educational companion to the book. Not a substitute for professional care.

HOW TO USE THIS COMPANION

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This companion holds the exercises from the book, with room to write. Nobody will read it but you.

It works whoever you are waiting on: a parent, a partner or an ex, a sibling, a friend who disappeared, a boss, someone you still see every week or someone you will never see again. Wherever a page says *them*, put your person there. If a question doesn't fit your story, change it or skip it.

There is no order to follow and no right answer. Some pages take five minutes; some you may come back to months from now. A single word is enough. A blank page is fine too.

These pages can bring up a lot. If it starts to feel like too much, stop, put it away, and do something kind and ordinary for yourself. If what you're carrying involves abuse or violence, or is affecting your sleep, your work or your safety, please read the last page first.

> **Filling it in on a screen.** Open this file in a free PDF reader such as Adobe Acrobat Reader (computer, iPad or Android) or Preview on a Mac, then click or tap inside any box and type. Save a copy when you're done, so your answers stay with you. On paper, simply print it and write in the boxes.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01	The name	*Chapter 1*
02	The bill	*Chapter 3*
03	The one I owe	*Chapter 6*
04	The real audience	*Chapter 8*
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+	If you're the one who owes it	*Chapter 6*
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FROM CHAPTER 1 · EVERYONE HAS ONE

01 THE NAME

Who are you waiting on? You don't have to write their full name. Initials are enough.

THE PERSON

Now write what you actually need them to say. Not "sorry" on its own, but the real thing, in your own words: that it happened, that it hurt, that you didn't imagine it. If something else comes out, write that instead.

WHAT I ACTUALLY NEED THEM TO SAY

> *If there is more than one person, print this page again and give each one their own. One wound at a time is plenty.*

02 THE BILL

FROM CHAPTER 3 · THE COST OF KEEPING THE DOOR OPEN

This isn't about blaming yourself. It's about seeing clearly what the waiting has been costing you, so that you can decide whether you want to keep paying it.

WHEN IT HAPPENED, AND HOW LONG I'VE BEEN WAITING

THE PEOPLE OR MOMENTS THAT COULDN'T REACH ME WHILE I WAS WAITING

WHO HAS RECEIVED ANGER OR DISTRUST THAT WASN'T REALLY MEANT FOR THEM

WHAT I'VE PUT ON HOLD UNTIL THE APOLOGY COMES

03

FROM CHAPTER 6 · THE ONE YOU OWE

THE ONE I OWE

Think of someone you have hurt. Not to punish yourself, and not because what you did is the same as what was done to you; it may be much smaller. Write one or two names, and next to each, what you would say if you were the kind of person who could say it.

THE PERSON, AND WHAT I WOULD SAY TO THEM

EVERYTHING IN ME THAT WANTS TO ADD A “BUT”

> *You can’t know for certain what happens inside the person you’ve been waiting on. What this page shows you, from the inside, is how heavy that sentence can be. Whether you ever deliver yours is up to you; there is a page about it near the end.*

04

FROM CHAPTER 8 · YOU'VE BEEN EXPLAINING YOURSELF

THE REAL AUDIENCE

The next time you catch yourself in the imaginary conversation, in the shower, in the car, at three in the morning, stop for a moment and ask who you're really talking to. Not their name: the age you were, and where you were, when it happened.

WHO I WAS REALLY TALKING TO

THE ONE THING THAT PERSON NEEDED TO HEAR

Now say it to them, out loud if you can, or to an old photograph, or simply write it here. If picturing your younger self feels strange, write it as a message to yourself today. That counts too.

WHAT I SAID

05 WHAT WOULD I BE ADMITTING?

FROM CHAPTER 9 · ANGER IS A WAY OF STAYING CONNECTED

Whether what you feel is anger, sadness, love, or all three at once, ask yourself one question and answer it honestly. Don't decide the answer before you start writing. Whatever comes out is worth listening to, even if it surprises you.

IF I STOPPED WAITING, WHAT WOULD I BE ADMITTING?

WHAT I STILL FEEL FOR THEM, GOOD AND BAD, WITHOUT HAVING TO CHOOSE

> *A good memory doesn't cancel a bad one, and loving someone is not the same as excusing them. Both can be true on this page.*

FROM CHAPTER 10 · GIVING YOURSELF WHAT THEY COULDN'T

06 THE WITNESS STATEMENT

Write the sentence you've been waiting for, as if it were being said to you by the one person who saw everything and has nothing to defend: you. Then read it out loud, once. If you don't know where to start, here is the example from the book. It isn't anyone's real story; take what helps and change every word you need to.

> *You were twelve. You were sitting at the kitchen table with your homework, and you heard what you heard, and you saw what you saw, and the next morning everyone behaved as if nothing had happened, so you did too. You were very good at it. You got so good at it that for years you weren't sure it had happened at all.*
>
> *It happened. I was there. I'm the only one who was there the whole time, and I'm telling you now: it was real. It was not a small thing. It was not your fault that the grown-ups looked away, and it was not your job to make it easier for them by forgetting.*
>
> *You weren't crazy. You weren't too sensitive. You were a child who noticed, in a house that needed you not to. I'm sorry nobody said this sooner. I'm saying it now. You can put it down.*

It may not land all at once. Some people write it once and feel something close; others come back to it a month or a year later. For some, especially when what happened was severe, it needs to be said in a room with someone trained to hear it. None of that is failing.

MY WITNESS STATEMENT

WRITTEN TO ME, BY ME

DATE

07 | CLOSING THE FILE

FROM CHAPTERS 12 AND 13

Not the date it happened. Today's date: the day you decided to stop waiting, even if it takes a while for the rest of you to catch up. Then keep this page somewhere safe. You know where it is. You don't need to visit.

THE DATE I DECIDED TO STOP WAITING

THE SENTENCE I'LL USE IF THEY BRING IT UP

For example: "That's not something I talk about anymore."

WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO WITH THE TIME AND ENERGY THE WAITING USED TO TAKE

> *Some days you'll find yourself back in the old argument. That doesn't undo this page. Notice it, put it down again, and carry on with your day.*

FOR HOLIDAYS, BIRTHDAYS, WEDDINGS, FUNERALS, OR ANY DAY IN THE SAME ROOM

BEFORE THE TABLE

If you're going to see the person soon, a few minutes of preparation can make the day much easier. You don't have to have a conversation, win anything, or pretend. You only have to decide, in advance, what comes into the room.

THE EVENT, AND WHO WILL BE THERE

MY SENTENCE IF THE SUBJECT COMES UP

HOW I'LL GET THERE, AND HOW I CAN LEAVE WHENEVER I WANT

THE TIME I PLAN TO LEAVE, AND WHAT I'LL SAY

SOMEONE I CAN MESSAGE, AND SOMETHING KIND I'LL DO FOR MYSELF AFTERWARDS

> *If the person is still hurting you now, not only in the past, you don't owe anyone your presence at that table. Distance is a decision, not a failure.*

FROM CHAPTER 6 · PREPARING AN APOLOGY OF YOUR OWN

IF YOU OWE IT

If exercise 03 left you with an apology you want to give, these questions can help you prepare it. They're built on what this book says people need to hear: that it happened, that it hurt, and that they didn't imagine it.

WHAT HAPPENED, IN PLAIN WORDS, WITH NO "BUT" AND NO EXPLANATION YET

WHAT I THINK IT MAY HAVE COST THEM

WHAT I WOULD SAY, IN TWO OR THREE SENTENCES

> *Before you send anything, ask whether it would help them or only you, and whether reaching out could hurt them or anyone else. An apology is something you offer, not something they owe you a reaction to. They're allowed to accept it, set it aside, or tell you they'd rather not hear it. And you're allowed to keep this page and never send it.*

WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT

WHEN A BOOK ISN'T ENOUGH

A book can walk beside you. It can't replace care from someone trained to give it. Please reach out to a professional, a doctor, or a support line if:

- what you're carrying involves abuse, violence, or someone who is still hurting you;
- it is affecting your sleep, your eating, your work or your relationships for weeks at a time;
- you feel hopeless, numb, or unable to function, or these pages leave you feeling much worse;
- you have thoughts of harming yourself or of not wanting to be alive.

Where to start. Your doctor can listen and point you to the right support. A therapist or counsellor can help you work through what happened at your own pace. To find a free, confidential helpline in your country, for listening, family difficulties, abuse or crisis, visit **findahelpline.com**, a directory of helplines in more than one hundred countries.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call your local emergency number straight away.

Thank you for doing this work, whatever pace it takes.

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