

# The next time you make a mistake, embrace it as a chance to gain respect

## Why do it?

You mishandled something. Maybe everything in you wants to crawl under a rock or downplay your mistake. But if you really want to be seen as responsible, hiding your errors can do far more harm than good. It might seem counterintuitive, but taking a deep breath and admitting where you went wrong can be an excellent way to boost your credibility. The key is to do it in a way that demonstrates courage, integrity, and a recognition of what you've learned for next time.



## How to do it:

### 1. When you make a mistake or mishandle something, admit it right away.

Not only does this demonstrate a high level of integrity, it also gives you a chance to correct the wrong as quickly as possible, before it has time to impact other people.

### 2. Describe what you did wrong and apologize in a straightforward manner.

Whether you're talking to your boss, peers, or team, direct language helps make it clear that you aren't complaining or making excuses. For example:

- To your meeting attendees: *“I did a bad job planning last week’s update meeting. I’m sorry about that. I know how busy everyone is, and we can’t afford to waste time.”*
- To your boss: *“I haven’t done a good job managing my time recently, and have been letting requests from the client services team get in the way of my highest-priority work. I’m sorry about that. I know how important it is for you to have the financial analysis in order to finalize the sales presentation.”*

### **3. Then immediately explain what you will do to fix the situation.**

Switch to the future tense to steer the conversation toward a solution — and to send the message that you are learning from your mistakes. For example:

- To your meeting attendees: *“From now on, I will send out agendas ahead of time and stick to them. I’ll also be asking for your thoughts about how we can make our meetings better, and I look forward to hearing your feedback.”*
- To your boss: *“I’m going to take the financial report home with me tonight, so I can make sure everything you need is ready by midday tomorrow. In the future, I’ll also be more careful about delaying non-essential tasks.”*