

INTRODUCTION  
TO AN APOLOGY LETTER  
TO: KAREN MARIE (LEMIN) GERHOLT  
BELOVED WIFE

When I was selected to attend the annual "Day of Responsibility" program at S.C.I. Graterford, I knew in my heart that I wanted to participate. As the program came to order that day, we heard from many of the survivors and from family members of the non-survivors, regarding the impact of their particular situation. They spoke about a program called an "Apology Letter" to the victims and they further explained, after receiving such letter, to their surprise, it gave the families peace of mind with their situation and a better understanding and insight of the perpetrator, before and after incarceration. These people truly touched my heart in so many ways. At that moment then, I thought this "Apology Letter" would be exactly what I'd want to write. I've wanted to express my heartfelt remorse for my wife's death, but wasn't quite sure how to move forward until now.

MY APOLOGY LETTER TO MY LATE WIFE,  
KAREN MARIE (LEMIN) GERHOLT- and our families

Karen, as I begin to write this letter, a wave of emotions comes over me, "What could I say?". "What can I say?" Would you, or anybody, even be interested in reading such a letter from me? If I really had the opportunity to talk with you, maybe spend some time with you to apologize face-to-face, what could I possibly say that you would want to hear from me?

Karen, your death was many things; untimely, unfair, unjust, so very wrong. You definitely did not deserve what happened to you, on that horrific afternoon, November 9, 2008, when our paths crossed for the final time.

Karen, I was supposed to be your protector, not your destroyer. My actions caused so much pain, to our children, our families, but most of all, to you. Karen, if I could do anything within my power to change the dreadful events of that regretful afternoon, I would. You deserved so much better. It is unfortunate because the past is fixed in time, never to be altered or corrected. For this, and so many other reasons, I am truly sorry. Karen, my egregious actions caused all of this pain.

I cannot even begin to imagine what I could ever do, to repair the irreparable. Words alone cannot sufficiently express my emotions. They don't really explain the how or what I feel deep within my spirit and soul.

Karen, saying I am sorry don't mean anything; they are simply empty words, if not accompanied by rightful, atoning actions, in order to help others avoid making the same mistakes I've made.

Karen, I don't want your death to be in vain. My irresponsible actions ripped you away from our families, mostly our children. Damon, Kensley and Rance, our precious children, will never be able to know you, every single moment stolen- holidays, birthdays and all other days. They will all pass by. Karen, I am so sorry you won't be able to put our precious princess to sleep at night. You won't be able to play dress up, or join in her tea parties. You won't be at any of our children's graduations, nor their proms, not any of their weddings. And, you won't see any of our grandchildren. I am so very, very sorry. I caused all those things, but I realize merely saying I am sorry, alone, doesn't alter reality. My heart is heavy with pain for those I hurt, unimaginably so.

Karen, unless I live a transformed life, by helping others understand their destiny will be determined by the decisions, they make, nothing I do, think, feel or say will bring you back, and that is the most grievous, horrendous reality.

Karen, it is said that 'time heals all wounds', but nothing can ever remove the permanent scars on my heart. You never had a chance to recover; therefore, your scars were passed down to our loved ones, our children. They were left with the endless nights and unanswered questions of that horrific afternoon. It was all left for everybody to bear.

Karen, your Dad and Step-mother have taken on the responsibility of raising our children. Because of this, I will always be indebted and most grateful to them. Then, the bills that were placed on them, the cost of your funeral, the burial and I can never forget the endless emotional pain, I alone caused. I recognize there is no monetary payment, or other compensation I could ever make, to fix what was done.

Karen, I have no one to blame but myself. I carry the weight of my actions every day. What I cause is permanent in time, never to be changed or forgotten.

Karen, where do I go from here? Just as your blood cried out from the grave, I must do the same. I want to be a Father again to our children; I want you to know that.

I will be an advocate, a voice to everyone, including the young people here, to anyone who is willing to hear what I have to say.

Karen, I will explain to them that all human life is the most precious thing there is, and they should respect that, and live life full of purpose, to seek out help, especially when dealing with mental issues. For anybody in here, or in the free world, I will let them know life without purpose simply means that you waiting to die. When life becomes full of purpose, only then will you to entirely understand what your purpose is in life, to be strong, guide others, to do the right things.

In closing, Karen, I am genuinely sorry for all of this pain; to our families and our children, most of all to you.

I will do everything in my power to help others to end this senseless violence that is destroying our lives and taking our loved ones.

You will ALWAYS remain in my heart.

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