We at Touchstone Climbing apologize to Emily Taylor, to her clients and her clients’ families, to our Black community, and to our community at large.

To Emily Taylor, we are sorry. The way we terminated our relationship was abrupt, unprofessional, and unkind. We are sorry for the letter we sent to your clients’ parents. Our conduct was truly unacceptable, and we are ashamed by it. You deserved better.

To the families that were affected by our decision and by the way we implemented it, we are sorry. We fundamentally misunderstood what our gyms were lacking that Emily Taylor’s programs provided. We deeply regret the potentially irreparable harm we have done to you and your children’s relationship to rock climbing. It is our sincerest hope that they continue climbing and find the healing, support, power, and freedom in it that they deserve.

To the Black community that has been so deeply wounded by our silence, we are sorry. We hold ourselves accountable for the trauma our conduct has inflicted on you, and take full responsibility for the breach of trust. We say that climbing is for everyone, but we have not given you reason to believe us. We should have listened to you, and we acknowledge all the work you have been doing trying to get us to listen. We failed you, and we know that we have to do better. We are listening now.

To our broader climbing community, we are sorry. In failing Black climbers, we have failed all of you. Collectively, we are at our strongest when the lives of our marginalized community members are valued and their voices are included in the conversation. We won’t always get it right, but we are recommitting to cultivating a vibrant, accessible, and equitable climbing community we can all feel safe in and proud to be a part of.

We are grateful to be a part of a community of climbers that are willing to hold us accountable. We know this is just the beginning, and Touchstone is committed to the long haul work of educating ourselves, investing in learning from others, and healing our communities. We understand that an apology can’t fix the harm we have caused. This is the first step in our plan to be more accountable to the communities we serve. In the coming days we will share our action steps moving forward, but for now please know that we recognize we have work to do.

Sincerely,
Touchstone Climbing